

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 115th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 16th April 2009 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mr M Fairchild** **Chairman**
 Mr A Morris)
 Mrs C Piccolo)
 Mr J Purvis) **Councillors**
 Mr T Skidmore)
 Mr G Williamson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and **82** members of the public.

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 17th April 2008 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 7th April 2009, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **Review of the Year: Mike Fairchild, Chairman of the Parish Council**
The Chairman reviewed the activities of the Council during the past year. [Appendix 1]
4. **Financial report: Bev Evans, Clerk, Parish Council** [Appendix 2].
5. **Mrs Liz Stockley, Head of Little Hadham Primary School**, gave a presentation describing the 'Thinking Keys' programme that the school had adopted. [Appendix 3]
6. **Policing in Little Hadham: Insp Damian Kennedy, Jill Dockley, PC Tracey Fegan and PCSO Lee Watson**
Insp Kennedy reviewed the new Policing Plan. The Plan would address problems in town centres, youth problems on the Thorley Estate and rural areas. He said that staff would be redeployed from less useful tasks. Insp Kennedy introduced PC Tracey Fegan and PCSO Lee Watson. He said that he had a high regard for the work of PCSOs and noted that Standon Parish Council had part funded the cost of a dedicated PCSO at a cost of £14,400 over two years. Insp Kennedy said that the Policing Pledge was to make police more accountable by meeting local residents to identify issues that were of most concern. Insp Kennedy said that he was the Rural Lead for the area and had a particular interest in travelling criminals passing through the area.
Jill Dockley said that she was the Neighbourhood Watch liaison officer who was also responsible for horses and small rural businesses in East Herts. She invited residents to join their local Neighbourhood Watch group and subscribe to the Online Watch Link [OWL] that sent out information on criminal activity and gave advice on crime prevention.
Ms Dockley described the Rural Intelligence Gathering System [RIGS] which loaned paggers to people out and about in the countryside. The system gathered and circulated information on suspicious activity in the rural areas.
7. **Local charities: Richard Beckett, Trustee, Little Hadham Charity** reported on how monies from the local charities had been distributed.
8. **Little Hadham bypass.** Mr Richard Boutal of HCC gave a presentation on progress on designing the bypass. [Appendix 4].
A resident asked why the latest plans appeared to follow the shorter northern route despite most local people voting for the longer route. Mr Boutal said that there had been clear support for the northern route but HCC had been concerned about how the longer route affected nearby residents and made some fields unusable. The residents affected by the changed route had been consulted but in future the Parish Council would be included in the consultation. Asked about lighting and noise, Mr Boutal said that there would be lights at the

ends of the bypass but not for most of the length. Methods for reducing noise to local people were included as part of the plan. These included the creation of bunds to deflect sound away from houses.

Asked about funding, Mr Boutal said that HCC was pressing the EERA to make the scheme a priority – the A120 was a major route.

A resident asked why there would be no access to the bypass from Albury Road so that traffic for the Pelhams would not have to use the traffic lights. Mr Boutal said that the policy was not to have access points in the middle of bypasses, as they tended to encourage rat running and housing developments.

9. Parish Plan Group Mike Smith gave a presentation [Appendix 4].

Jonathan Forgham spoke about 'Nature Watch'. He said that the Parish Plan Group wanted to get people from the hamlets involved in the parish biodiversity plan – including birds butterflies and insects. He said that the geological survey would show which trees should be present. He hoped to make a number of proposals in the spring of 2010 of trees for gardens to improve biodiversity. He called for volunteers to help with the survey.

John Purvis talked about the Fun Run. It would start at 10:30 p.m. on Sunday 14th June at the village hall and end at the Nag's Head. There would be 5 km and 10 km routes taking in almost all the hamlets. There would be a certificate and a free drink for the finishers.

Application forms were available on the web site – entry £5 per person. After costs, half the profit would go the CRY and the other half to the Parish Plan Group to pay for future events.

10. Cllr Mike Tindale – local District Councillor. Cllr Tindale spoke of the EHC budget. The council would move to smaller offices in Bishop's Stortford though this would have little effect on residents – council tax and planning would remain.

Cllr Tindale said that the Alternative Refuse Collection [ARC] would start in November 2009 with brown and black bins collected on alternate weeks. Food waste would be collected every week – one week it could be included with card in the brown bin and on the other week it could go in the black bin. He said that EHC had improved the facilities at Grange Paddocks in order to provide a better service.

Cllr Tindale said that EHC was working to improve exit from the Jackson Square car park by creating a new exit.

11. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Appendix 1 – Chairman’s presentation.

Review of the Year,

Overview

The past year (2008/9) has been a busy one for your Parish Council with a heavier-than-usual agenda involving a large number of significant consultations and important planning issues. On-going matters such as the threat from airport expansion, concern over the possibility of a traveller site, and risk of flooding have also kept us busy.

On your behalf, I would like to thank parish councillors for giving freely of their time, and Bev Evans, our Parish Clerk, for his conscientious support. I would also like to thank those residents who regularly attend our monthly meetings and urge more people to come along to support the Parish Council.

Highlights of the year

The Council has experienced a heavier workload resulting from major consultations concerned with Stansted Airport, traveller sites, NHS services, regional planning, the Post Office, water resources, byelaws, standards in local government, sustainable communities, and the Policing plan.

We have strongly resisted the possibility of a gypsy and traveller site in Little Hadham. The views of the Council were reflected in evidence submitted by Little Hadham Conservation Society to the public inquiry into plans to increase pitches in East Herts. Public consultation will now follow the Government’s recent endorsement of the inquiry’s recommendation that East Herts should have an additional 20 pitches.

Following extensive consultation, the Little Hadham Bypass has now been approved by the County Council – with amendments to the route – but the start date will depend on Government funding. Although the route will not please everyone, the bypass will eventually bring significant benefits to the village.

There has been no resolution to the problem of rat-running through Bury Green and Westland Green but the situation has been eased somewhat by ‘intelligent’ traffic light phasing on the A120, which moves queuing traffic on the main road more quickly at busy times.

One of the biggest projects sponsored by the Parish Council and the Parish Plan Group – the total refurbishment of the Village Hall playing field – was completed recently with a new notice board as well as seating in the area earmarked for five-a-side soccer and other games.

The sorry state of the wall surrounding the war memorial should be tackled this year if third party funding can be obtained to top up the amount the Council has ring-fenced for the project. The Council continues to support the work of the Parish Plan Group, which has produced the latest version of the Plan in time for this Assembly. A clearer division of responsibility between the Parish Plan and the Parish Council has been agreed, with the Council providing the strategy for the village and the Parish Plan committee devising community events that support the strategy and help to create greater community spirit. The Plan has led to a more dynamic Parish News, and computer lessons that have grown in popularity.

The Council welcomes production by the Parish Plan committee of the long-awaited Village Guide, which will be useful for both residents and visitors with its account of the village today, its history and a handy list of services.

Through the Parish Council, opposition to the expansion of Stansted Airport has been maintained with continuing support for SSE including attendance at the pre-public inquiry hearing and High Court appeal. Delays to a public inquiry into a second runway and increasing doubt that an extra runway will go ahead have been driven by the strength of local opposition, environmental concerns, the demand by the Competition Commission that BAA sells the airport, decline in passenger numbers and BAA’s weakening financial position.

The Council has also lobbied National Air Traffic Services, with support of other parish councils, for changes to the latest proposals for flight paths and stacking areas, currently being reconsidered by the air traffic authority.

Flooding continues to be a concern but the risk has been reduced by improvements to drainage along The Ford and, longer term, the incorporation of flood prevention measures into the bypass

scheme. The Council continues to support the work of the Flood Forum.

We have dealt with more complex and controversial planning applications, and called extra meetings to discuss the bypass. We have raised concerns with EHC planners over the potential threat to the Conservation Area status that covers large parts of the village and risks to its rural character, and the Conservation Society has supported us in this. Future issues include changes to regional planning (Local Development Framework) and the recent 'call for sites' that could result in new planning applications.

The Council is pleased to report a busy year for village organisations. We continue to support our local school and note that activities for youngsters are thriving including the Young Ones, Brownies and our karate club and with the promise of more activities taking place in the new playing field. We enjoy an active church with its annual music festival, a thriving farmers' market, our perennially successful pantomime productions, and other activities ranging from bowls, cricket and badminton to gardening, social and toddlers' clubs, most of them taking place here in this very active Village Hall.

To help the Council manage its busier agenda, we had a 'cabinet reshuffle' with new roles for councillors: Andy Morris became chairman of the planning committee as well as vice-chairman; John Purvis assumed responsibility for highways; Geoff Williamson took on flooding as well as being our Village Hall representative; our relative newcomer Mary Wilkinson became responsible for Police liaison; Carmela Piccolo assumed additional responsibility for Bury Green as well as the Council's involvement with young people; and Tony Skidmore took responsibility for the Local Development Framework and NHS matters.

The Council has developed closer links with the Police and was pleased to see members of our Police neighbourhood team attending council meetings.

We have had the support of local councillors: district Cllr Mike Tindale, and Cllr Mary Bayes who retires this year after 12 years as our representative on Herts County Council.

We have increased our networking locally by joining the Parish Paths Partnership and collaborating with the 3Veg eco group to provide advice on thermal insulation of homes.

A very sad note this year was the passing of Tom Feather, who gave many years' service to the community as a parish councillor, village archivist and as a former housemaster at Hadham Hall School.

Higher costs and maintenance and lower revenues required an increase in the precept over the previous year, amounting to a rise of just over £4 pa for a 'D' band home.

To provide the Council with a clearer strategy for the way ahead and to enable it to become more proactive, it is in the process of creating a Business Plan. This is timely in view of the Government's intention to offer local councils greater autonomy

Appendix 2 Parish Clerk's report – Mr Bev Evans

The Parish Precept for 2008/09 was £11,885 – an increase of £1,080. The precept for the current year is £13,500 – an increase of £1,615. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services, insurance and materials. The cost of grass and hedge cutting at the playgrounds is a major Council cost.

A detailed breakdown of the accounts is shown over the page and the Council's books will be available for inspection later this year.

At the close of business on 5th April 2009, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £5,530.04 in its Bank Accounts and petty cash. This includes £2,250 that could be used to repair the surround of the war memorial – the Council is still trying to find a method of repair that it can afford and which will survive being hit by road vehicles.

The Council litter picker is Miss Mandy Windmill – I'm sure you will want to greet Mandy and her sister Melissa when you see them at work around the parish. Melissa and Mandy are also the litter pickers for Much Hadham. East Herts Council funds our litter picker – £1,170.37 pa.

Despite Mandy's hard work, it is not possible for her to clear every part of the parish on a regular basis. I would like to see parishioners taking care of the areas around their homes by clearing some of the litter left by the thoughtless and uncaring. Mrs Karin Green, Karin Green Garden

Services, cuts the grass around the Village Pump and at the war memorial and empties the parish litter bins. Thanks, as usual, are due to the residents of 'Marshalls', opposite the War Memorial, who voluntarily plant out the flowerbeds at the War Memorial and generally keep them in pristine condition.

Financial position for the year 2008 to 2009

Receipts	2008/09	Comments
C/F from 2007/08	£6,125.06	
Precept	£11,885.00	An increase of 10% on 2007/08
Rent	£363.28	Mainly for Westland Green
Interest	£1.14	
EHC playground grant	£2,487.94	
VAT refund	£1,210.88	
Litter picker	£1,170.37	Paid by EHC
Total credit	£23,243.67	

Payments

Pay	£6,094.84	To the Clerk, litter picker and Karen Green Garden Services
Mileage	£102.25	
Playground refurbishment	£5,329.45	The final costs half paid by an EHC grant
Telephone	£216.00	
Post	£24.07	
Copying	£53.00	Mainly using the church copier
Office supplies	£103.84	Mainly paper and printer ink
P/News	£185.00	The Council is one of several organisations who fund the Parish News
Donation	£475.00	To the village school, graveyard upkeep, and SSE
Subscriptions	£651.41	Mainly to HATPC for legal and other help and advice
Maintenance	£2,445.99	Mainly grass and hedge cutting for the playgrounds
Repairs	£160.46	
Rent	£244.37	Mainly Village Hall hire
Chairman	£90.00	For phone, post and travel expenses
Insurance	£926.87	To cover the new play equipment as well as general Council risks
Audit	£479.92	
Misc	£131.16	Mainly refreshments for public meetings
Total payments	£17,713.63	

Surplus to carry forward to 2008/09	£5,530.04	Includes £2,225 insurance money paid for damage to the war memorial.
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Appendix 3: Presentation given by Mrs Liz Stockley, Head of Little Hadham

Our Journey to becoming a 'Thinking School'

Thinkers Keys

P.M.I. – children think of positive or negative comments or interesting facts about a picture or text.

Thinking Hats

Different coloured hats require different kinds of thinking.

- White Hat – Factual Thinking
- Yellow Hat - Positive Thinking
- Black Hat - Problem Solving
- Red Hat - Emotional Thinking
- Green Hat - Creative Thinking
- Blue Hat - Thinking about Thinking

Future Plans – including organising thinking in written work.

Thank you for joining us on our 'Thinking Journey'

Appendix 4 Presentation on the Little Hadham bypass given by Mr Richard Boutal of HCC

The design team has been working hard though few of the public see what they do.

Funding for the bypass is planned to be from two principal sources

- 1 - Regional Funding Allocation
- 2 - developer contributions

Regional Funding Allocation

A bid for funding from the RFA was made at the end of 2008 - but the scheme was not included in the advice the Region submitted onto Government for the ten year programme.

However – NO new schemes were added to the previously existing list due to limited funds. The Region's proposals suggest a "Challenge Fund" for smaller schemes – if and when agreed, a bid for the Bypass is possible as the bypass is a relatively smaller scheme at about £20 million.

Developer Contributions

Contributions have been sought from BAA in relation to the impact of the expansion of Stansted Airport. Planning Obligations for the "G1" proposals include a contribution of £250,000 toward the cost of the Bypass. In the Planning application for "G2" proposals BAA accept there will be an increased impact at Little Hadham.

Members have asked officers to seek a contribution but currently the process is delayed, following postponement of the planned Public Inquiry until BAA have decided their response to the Competition Commission's report on the future of the airport.

The scheme remains one of HCC's three 'Major Projects' as recognised in the Local Transport Plan. Development work on the scheme continues to ensure that as and when funding opportunities arise, the scheme is in the best position to be delivered quickly.

Ongoing Design Development Works (for the Year 09/10)

The traffic model for the area is being updated, the results of which will feed into noise and air quality impact modelling and also detailed junction modelling.

Further environmental studies are due to take place in the spring of 2009.

An archaeological study has been completed and we await the final report.

There has been soil survey and the testing and interpretative report is expected shortly.

Appendix 5 Presentation by Mr Mike Smith on the Parish Plan Group

I'll start with the Village Guide. This is the last part of the proposals included in the original Parish Plan adopted in 2006. It has taken some time to put it all together and is in no small part due to the considerable time and effort involved in researching, writing, editing and raising the necessary finance – partly by Parish plan Group activities such as a Bingo Night and the Barn Dance but mainly by a Grassroots Grant from the Hertfordshire Foundation.

Most of you will have had a chance to look at the production proof exhibited at the back of the hall. It is a major result that extends the quality and scale of our other publication the Parish

News which is much admired outside the village where other people have to pay for an inferior product. Those involved are to be congratulated on its quality and scale. I am sure that it will introduce many, if not all of us to some new or unexpected aspects of the parish.

Ranging from geography and wildlife, of which we will hear more from Jonathan Forgham, to transport and mobility, more from John Purvis, the Guide will be of help to everyone.

Of course, one of the principle objectives of the Parish Plan is to provide continuing and ongoing development and evolution of community interests and activities. We don't want to stand still – we want to move forward.

We are constantly on the search for new ideas and new things to do and for new people to join us in helping to make them a reality. Perhaps some of you present here have an idea which would hold interest and enjoyment or help for us all. Why not join us and help push that idea through to a successful conclusion. It doesn't have to be a sporting or social event – we need fund raising too. Without cash to support other idea we can't always hold events that would otherwise make a loss. So, if you like planning and doing come and join us.

2009 has seen several functions and activities appear in our schedule. These include:

Back to nature – a survey of local geology and geography and how it controls the natural world around us. This is a must for anyone who wants to be involved in outside activity.

There will be a Fun Run in June. You will find an entry form on your seat. If you later lose it or want an extra copy, you can download it from WWW.TheHadhams.Com - our very own website.

We are promoting walking as a healthy activity that is suitable for both young and old and for families. From July onwards we want you to help us survey the parish footpath network and restore it as necessary.

Last year during the summer holidays we trailed 5-a-side football on the playing field. This was very successful but somewhat limited because many people were away on holiday. This year we hope to develop it further by having a September knock out competition between youth teams from the parish hamlets.

The computer classes run by Bev Evans at the village school have been very popular and successful. This, we hope, will provide the foundation for a village wide email network for information and security leading to the formation of a Little Hadham Computer Club.

Earlier this year we held a Barn Dance in the village hall. This was enjoyed by all who attended.

We hope to make this an annual event but feel it is more of a winter activity so we have moved it to 24th October. We shall be using the same experienced caller.

Is there something you really want to see happen? Once again, please come and join the planning group. It's great fun!