

Little Hadham Annual Parish Assembly

Thursday 16th April 2015 at 7:00 pm

Programme

7:00: Refreshments. A chance to chat to some of the speakers and browse the exhibits of local organisations

7:30 Meeting and discussion

Policing in Little Hadham: Inspector Chris Hunt and PCSO Karen Broad

Herts County Council – Cllr Graham McAndrew

Little Hadham Primary School: Mrs Liz Stockley – Head Teacher

Little Hadham Charities – Mr Richard Beckett

Little Hadham Conservation Society: Mr Don Gibson

Being on the Council – Cllr Chris Bhatt

Review of the year – Cllr Jonathan Forgham, Chairman, Parish Council

8:50: Close

This event is organised on behalf of the local community by Little Hadham Parish Council.

All residents are invited to meetings of the Parish Council - the next one is on

Tuesday 5th May 2015 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 120th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 16th April, 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham

Present: Mr J. Forgham
Mr C. Bhatt
Mrs E. Lloyd-Williams
Mr G. Pearson
Ms W. Woodgate
Mr B. Evans – Clerk and 63 members of the public

Policing in Little Hadham – Inspector Chris Hunt and PCSO Karen Broad

Inspector Hunt opened his presentation by describing the neighbourhood policing area he looks after which now includes both towns and rural areas in East Herts. Coming from Hatfield in 2001 he now lives in Bishops Stortford with his wife Nicky Hunt who is the local police constable and knows the area well. He also introduced PCSO Karen Broad who patrols the area in a four wheel drive vehicle and on horseback. Inspector Hunt then outlined some of the matters of concern in the district.

- Little Hadham Traffic Lights: these are a huge bone of contention and problems have been frequently reported in the local press. The most serious issue concerns drivers jumping the red lights. This has even involved school buses full of children. The police have carried out quite a number of operations to catch offenders and have encouraged people to make the community aware of the dangers of pulling out and overtaking vehicles stopped at the lights. This is particularly important on account of the proximity of the primary school and the pedestrian traffic crossing the roads at this junction. Inspector Hunt urged people not to risk breaking the law as they will ultimately end up in prison, a message especially pertinent to local people who represent 90% of those prosecuted.
A question from the floor wondered if there was any way in which drivers' frustration could be reduced on account of the long waits encountered at the lights. It appears that the main priority is to keep the A120 traffic flowing freely to prevent very long tailbacks. The lights are however timed differently at peak times on the C15 allowing 8 to 10 cars through rather than the 4 or 5 at other times.
- Rat runs through the village: these are roads which are used to avoid the congestion on the A120. Problems arise because pedestrians are endangered by people driving too fast along narrow roads; cars end up on their roofs and lorries get stuck in the narrow lanes. The road through Bury Green and down Ford Hill and Chapel Lane are particularly badly affected. Inspector Hunt said that measures are being taken to look into the problem on the road through Bury Green and into the village. In late April 2015 a monitoring box will be fitted on this rat run which will count the number of vehicles, their size and the time of day they pass. When this information has been

gathered some attempt will be made to find a solution to the problem although the police have no powers to stop people using the road.

- **Crime:** One of the main sources of crime in East Herts is the targeting of builders' transit vans. These vehicles may contain up to £7000 of tools and equipment and are picked out by criminal gangs frequently travelling out from North London. There has been an instance in Little Hadham, chosen by thieves because it is in an affluent area and there are plenty of things to steal. The police have used covert patrols at night in the Hadhams. They have had some success in apprehending a gang in the Church End area where they blocked the escape of the criminals across a field, with a dog van. The dog was then used to search the field and found a sock in which a master key was found. This key could be used to access any transit van without the need to break into the vehicle.

Another example of criminal activity in the area was the theft of a hand bag from the front seat of a car. This took place while the owner was unloading her shopping into the boot of her car in the Tesco car park. The woman was able to describe the getaway van which had a distinctive yellow school bus badge on the back.

Fortuitously the vehicle was spotted by PC Nicky Hunt, who was able to catch the occupants as they ran off over the fields. The vehicle was a former London Borough council school bus which had been specially bought by the gang for their criminal activity and when searched was found to contain a large sum of money.

Local people are to be encouraged to be the eyes and ears for gathering information about crimes.

- **Rural Policing:** It has been found that landowners, farmers and workers cannot always manage to get to meetings at police stations about policing the countryside, so the police have taken the meetings to the rural areas. Discussions have taken place in well attended gatherings in barns and one of the topics covered has been the choice of the most suitable vehicles for use in the countryside. The result has been the provision of quadbikes for rural police work. Honda provided one, a landowner bought a second and a consortium of farmers in late 2014 bought a three seater quad bike for police use in the countryside.

Inspector Hunt concluded his review of policing in the area by referring to the Office of National Statistics Crime Survey which stated that 73% of Herts residents said that the police were doing a good job.

He also drew people's attention to the free Community Messaging Service known as the Owl Service which keeps the public in touch with police matters and local crime.

There was an opportunity for questions and Mrs Stockley (Primary Headteacher) asked what could be done about abandoned cars in the school parking area. PCSO Broad said she would visit the school the next day to see what could be done.

Herts County Council – Cllr Graham McAndrew

Cllr McAndrew opened his presentation with a review of works which have been completed or were in the process of being carried out.

On the 22nd April 2015 the Green Street road will be due for closure to enable the drains to be cleared and checked by the use of CCTV cameras.

The district Council has been in contact with the Marquis of Salisbury on a number of occasions concerning the drainage of the land. The matter has now been transferred to HCC but it appears to be a long term project.

Gully (grid at road level) clearing should almost be finished in the Hadhams and High Wych areas. Completion is marked by blue paint on the grids and any gullies which remain uncleared should be reported by email to Cllr McAndrew.

The School fence needs repairing and this is being looked into.

The damage to the grass verge by parked vehicles outside the garage just east of the Little Hadham lights is being considered.

A tree surgeon has trimmed the willow trees on the Standon side of the Little Hadham lights.

Cllr McAndrew then went on to discuss the effect of the increase in passenger numbers at Stansted Airport on the A120 traffic and how this in turn will impact on the building of the Little Hadham Bypass. So far 21 million passengers have passed through Stansted in the first three months of this year, a rise of one million on previous figures. During June and July this year there could be a further 2 to 3 million extra passengers. These increases must be taken into consideration by the planning officers before they publish a formal planning consultation. Any changes will then be available for public scrutiny and comment and people will be able to say whether they are in favour or not.

There was then an opportunity for questions. Concerns were raised about the lack of footpath provision on the popular walk for early morning dog walkers to Albury woods especially at a time of heaviest road use. It appears that there will be footpaths provided underneath the bypass in order to avoid crossing the busy road.

With the forthcoming election, which will take place on May 7th, 2015 the question of whether funding would still be available should there be a change of government, was raised. A new government could prove to be a problem but although the application for funding has still to be made, money has been set aside together with contributions from the Environment Agency and Stansted Airport. All the allocated funds must be spent by 2019.

Time for a Public Enquiry has been factored into the planning process and we should know if the bypass is to go ahead by the end of 2015.

Little Hadham Primary School – Mrs Liz Stockley, Headteacher and School Captains Beth Cockburn and Ryan Askew

Lego Day: Mrs Stockley thanked the Parish council for a generous donation matched by a local firm “Connect Scaffolding” which enabled the school to hold a “Lego Day” organised by a company from Stockport. Children worked with many thousands of pieces of Lego brought in by the company, to create a city with houses, sports stadia and railways. The day was divided up so that the younger children worked in the morning and the older ones in the afternoon.

School Awards; since the last Parish Assembly the school has successfully gained the following awards and accreditations:

- Silver Eco Schools Award
- E Qualities
- International Schools Award – achieved foundation and intermediate awards; nominated as the best international new comers school and awarded £2000
- A good Ofsted Report

Forest School Approach: research has shown that physical play has a very important part to play in promoting sound mental health and wellbeing, energising brain power. The Forest School Approach offers creativity, imagination, exercise, team work, problem solving, bush craft skills and fun. Already at the school there is an area known as “The Forest” so a member of staff was sent on a Forest School Approach course in Barnet last year, to see how this resource could be utilised. On January 5th this year Forest School U.K. was invited to Little Hadham to conduct an Inset Day outside in the school grounds. The day was spent doing bush craft skills, imagination activities and keeping warm plus toasting marshmallows. The day was a great success and inspiration and staff then set about involving the children in the Forest School Approach.

The first activity was to make the school area safe by building a fence around it. A teacher with Forest School expertise was brought in to help the children construct two kinds of natural fences using stakes and weaving techniques. The younger children used a log circle as a meeting place and discussed the safety aspects of being outside including how to handle sticks without hurting anyone.

The culmination of their outdoors education was a very enjoyable trip to Hatfield Forest to put into practice the skills they had learned.

Little Hadham Charity – Mr Richard Beckett

Mr Beckett explained that the funds for the Little Hadham Charity originate from £200 invested in South Sea Annuities by John Hammond nearly three hundred years ago. When he died in 1720 he left a bequest for this money to be invested and the revenue to be distributed amongst qualifying parishioners. The money was used to buy land in Bury Green and the income from the rents used by the charity. Eventually the land was sold and the money invested. In 1997 seven small charities were absorbed into the Little Hadham Charity with assets to date valued at £17,000.

Last Christmas, 2014 the three trustees for the charity, Richard Beckett, Eileen Booth and Colin Brookbanks were able to give £60 to each of 24 parishioners who lived in Little Hadham, Bury Green, Cradle End or Westland Green and qualified by virtue of their age and their long time residency in the parish.

Little Hadham Conservation Society – Mr Don Gibson

The following is a copy of the presentation given by Mr Gibson
Proposed Gipsy & Traveller Sites in Little Hadham

Seven years ago LHCS was set up to counter the very real possibility that two G&T sites would be built on the A120 junction with Millfield Lane.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then and every two years I've reported the current position to this meeting.

In October last year I attended a meeting of the DC at Hertford when they were to discuss and, I had hoped, decide on the preferred places for the Gypsy 8 sites this part of Hertfordshire had been directed to find.

But no decision was made at that meeting. However, a sub-committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of acquiring suitable land many miles to the west of LH which was due to become available in the early part of 2015.

This sub-committee was asked to make their final recommendations in March this year – they have not yet reported. However, I feel quite optimistic about the future. There has been no indication that the two Millfield Lane sites, or indeed any places in LH, are a serious option for G&T camps.

District Councillor Geoff Williamson who advises our own group believes we are unlikely to acquire any Traveller sites in LH. Of course, circumstances can change – but, on balance I think the danger has passed.

The District Plan for East Herts is due for publication next year, and then the definitive answers to our concerns will be set-out in black and white and we will know our plight. If the DC sub-committee report before the DP is printed I will make sure that a note is made in the PN.

In due course two other matters will need to be decided:

- 1 If we find ourselves no longer in danger should the CS continue? (Nothing of any consequence has taken place in the name of the CS for over a year!) But my 4 colleagues of the Conservation Society are of one voice that LHCS should continue. Future dangers!!!
- 2 There's £1500 in our bank account. This was donated when we started the fighting fund to oppose G&T sites in LH. At some stage we might have to consider what to do with this money. (Return to (a) donors, (b) split it between village organisations or (c) give to charities?)

There's not much more I can say BUT after publication of the DP or the Report of the sub-committee we may be able to sit back and relax.

Being on the Council – Cllr Chris Bhatt

Chris Bhatt has been a parish councillor for about a year and in his presentation he outlined a little of his background and why he had decided to put his name forward for a place on the council. He moved from Broxbourne some two years ago with his family and his daughter attends a local school. He explained that he was no stranger to rural Herts having grown up in the village of Kimpton, although at the time he was not very interested in his home area. Since moving to Little Hadham he has come to appreciate the rural setting. While waiting for a bus to go to work one day he saw a poster appealing for parish councillors in Little Hadham and although his wife did not think he had time to spend on council business, he nevertheless put himself forward to join the council. He feels he does the least work compared with the other councillors but thought he could do some recruiting as there are three vacancies this time.

Cllr Bhatt thinks that Little Hadham is a lovely parish in which to live. If you like a place he feels one should care about it and give something back. One can do this by representing the interests of the community.

He went on to say that some council meetings that he had been reading about can prove quite lively. On one occasion fighting broke out over sheep grazing rights and elsewhere spoof planning notices were issued to attract more people to the council meetings. He assured everyone that the Little Hadham Parish Council Meetings were not like these.

Notices about the vacancies will be put up in the near future.

Review of the Year – Cllr Jonathan Forgham

Review:

- Footpaths – The Green Lane at Westland Green has proved to be a problem as there has been a lot of off- road traffic over the Green in the early hours of the morning. This has resulted in vehicles getting intentionally stuck in the mud and then requiring assistance from each other to get pulled out. The resultant ruts are both dangerous and unsightly. Nicholas Maddex who is responsible for Herts footpaths has been called in to help solve the problem. A protective surface has been laid to discourage vehicles from travelling over the rough ground but this has not been a great success. It is hoped with the assistance of the Environment Agency and the Gascoigne Estate to sink some hundred donated posts into the ground to prevent vehicles crossing the Green. Calls to close the Green are not feasible as it is a right of way and requires an Act of Parliament for this to take place. Other footpaths are well maintained on the whole and with the spring crops growing the farmers will be out delineating the routes, especially where they cross fields.
- Bypass - The Parish council encouraged everyone to fill in the form about concerns and suggestions thus allowing everyone to have their say. There have been some dissenters but the council supported what they thought was the majority opinion while at the same time appreciating that it was not the ideal solution.

- Allotments – There have been some issues concerning the allotments but there has been some work to improve the site. Posts have been put up, a notice board has been erected and a picnic bench installed. It is hoped that sometime during the next eighteen months there will be an apple day sourced from the orchard fruits.
- Willow Trees – These are to be found by the River Ash at the Ford. Some four or five years ago some attempt was made to discover who owned the land on which these trees were growing. It was then felt that permission could be obtained to trim the willows back, as they had grown too large. The search was in vain so this time when the trees needed cutting the Parish council took responsibility and cut them right down, although they did not remove them completely. Joel Hammond the village handyman, Jon Fardell and Mike Smith were thanked for their help in carrying out this task.
- Defibrillator – Cllr Lloyd-Williams thought that the village should have access to a defibrillator as lives locally have been saved by having one available. The cost was estimated as being in the region of £2000. The siting of the equipment is a critical factor and it was thought that with the agreement of the Village Hall Committee, outside the Village Hall would be the most central place for its location. A 999 emergency only phone will have to be installed as mobile phone signals are poor in the area. A training session will be organised for people to learn how to use the defibrillator. It will be for public use as a first response as people treated within 10-15 minutes stand a much better chance of recovery.
- Speeding Issues – A question from the floor brought up the problem of speeding in the Albury road which is particularly dangerous when there are children making their way to school. A fine of £80 and 3 points on a driving licence can be expected with a speeding infringement and there have been a number of discussions as to how drivers' speed can be reduced. It has been suggested that speed bumps might be put in or chicanes erected. It was also suggested that speed monitoring could take place close to South Cottages on the C15. This is a favourite stretch of road for drivers to accelerate. It was pointed out that the bend in the road makes it unsuitable for a speed trap because the police have to give the motorist a clear 100 yards view of the equipment. Without this drivers would brake sharply and cause accidents.
- Grass Verges – The damage to the verges on the A120 from the traffic lights up to Stonehouse Farm is mainly caused when vehicles travelling west are waiting to turn into Church End Lane. Cars impatient to get by and through the lights undertake these stationary vehicles and drive down the grass verge. A request has been made to put up some reflective posts but funding for this may not come until 2016-17 when money will be available.
- The parking of vans outside the commercial vans sales place is also being discouraged for safety reasons.

- Millennium Wood, Bury Green – this is now fifteen years old and needs some management as it has been planted by humans and is not a natural habitat. The fast growing elders are crowding out the slower growing trees, such as the cherries and hornbeams. Cllr Forgham has spent some time cutting back this growth, but a volunteer party is required to do some serious managing with a committee. The involvement of the Woodland Trust for professional advice might also be useful.
- Bury Green Pond – Originally designated as a pond to be run-off for sewage several hundred years ago the water can smell and requires a flow through. The presence of moorhens and dragonflies indicates that the water quality is not too bad at the moment. The Environment agency and sewage experts have been to inspect the pond and will be reporting back. Cllr Forgham hopes to develop the pond as a small conservation area.
- Planters – Cllrs Forgham and Woodgate have organised the planters on the C15 road. There are now four, two with daffodils and two to be planted. The planters made of man-made timber (plastic) are expensive and very heavy and have to be moved around by Stephen Stigwood with his grab and JCB. The plants have been subject to vandalism. Perennials purchased with council money were removed and some plants have been pulled up.
- Old Telephone Boxes at the Ford and Bury Green – Cllr Woodgate has been responsible for turning the telephone boxes into libraries with the help of Mick Foskett, who has put in shelves. The libraries have been very successful with a good turn over. New books are always welcome but not magazines or old annuals and all donations should go on the shelves not the floor.
- Flood Issues – Cllrs Forgham and Pearson have met up on several occasions with Sir Oliver Heald M.P., Thames Water, the Environment agency and Herts Highways to discuss flooding matters. It has been established that one of the pumps at the pumping station is broken and the other is only working at 50% capacity. New pumps were promised by 30th December, 2014 but have yet to be installed, although the authorities have been reminded.
- Gullies have still to be cleared and parishioners are encouraged to report any that are blocked.
- New councillor Co-option – Cllr Forgham thanked Cllr Bhatt for his presentation and also thanked the councillors who are standing down. Cllr Geoff Williamson hopes to become a District Councillor in the May Elections; Cllr Wendy Woodgate who was responsible for the Assembly refreshments is stepping down for family reasons. The Chairman Jonathan Forgham explained that he is now fully involved in his company's business and feels he does not have the time to devote to Parish Council work.

- Village Plan – this was looked at several years ago. Standon Parish council is now considering it and Little Hadham will be interested in their findings. It was felt that the council needed to wait until after the General Election in May to find out what is happening about localism before committing many thousands of pounds to the project. The Plan involves the council but is not driven by it.

The Chairman rounded off his review of the year by a résumé of his nature observations around the parish:

- Bird species 107
One bird of note is the Ring-necked Parakeet which is now very common and a resident bird in some parts of the South east of England. It has been spotted in Westland Green. It is bright green and very destructive.
- Butterfly species 24
- Mammal species 15
The examination of owl pellets is a good indication of mammals in the area without actually seeing the creatures. A bank vole has been recorded.
- Dragon flies and damselflies 14
About nine years ago this number would have qualified Little Hadham for an area of SSSI. A small amount of money was donated for this cause but as more and more sightings were made the money ran out so the number has been increased. A rare example has been seen in Amwell and it is hoped it will move northwards.
- Plants 134 and probably a good many more
- Moths 422
- Insects 75
This includes an insect from Algeria which is only 9mm long

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Little Hadham Parish Council

Parish Clerk's Report – 2014/15

The Parish Precept for 2014/15 was £12,800 which was unchanged from 2013/14.

The precept for 2015/16 remains at £12,800. The Council has received £4,177.00 as its share of the government New Homes Bonus.

A detailed breakdown of the accounts is shown over the page and the Council's books will be available for inspection later this year. Council minutes, agendas and audit documents [when available later this month] are available on the 'TheHadhams.com' website.

At the close of business on 5th April 2015, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £13,977.47 in its Bank Accounts and petty cash. This surplus will allow the Council to make a number of outstanding repairs and improvements around the parish. If the Council agrees to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, this will incur considerable costs.

Our litter picker is Mr Ben Petch – I'm sure you will want to greet Ben when you see him at work around the parish. East Herts Council funds our litter picker – £1,374.88 pa. Despite Ben's hard work, it is not possible for him 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.

Our new handyman is Mr Joel Hammond who maintains the areas around the war memorial, the village pump and the allotments as well as emptying the litter bins and carrying out a number of small maintenance jobs round the parish.

Thanks, as usual, are due to the residents of 'Marshalls', opposite the War Memorial, who voluntarily supply the flowers at the War Memorial.

Mr Bev Evans – Parish Clerk

Continued

Financial position for the year 2014 to 2015

Credit	To date	Notes
B/F From 2013/14	£11,709.32	
Precept	£12,800.00	Unchanged
Council Tax rebate grant	£354.28	Government grant to cover changes in Council tax rebates
Rent	£347.13	Rent from Westland Green and wayleaves for power cables
Interest	£0.08	
VAT refund	£859.14	Parish Councils can reclaim VAT
Litter picker	£1,374.88	EHC pays the litter picker's salary
Sales	£3.00	
New Homes Bonus	£4,177.00	EHC has shared the government's bonus for building new homes with the parish
Total credit	£31,624.83	

Debit

Salaries	£7,102.16	To the Clerk, litter picker and Handyman
Mileage	£39.04	The Clerk tries to walk or cycle for most parish business trips
Playgrounds	£3,196.30	Mainly hedge and grass cutting
Street furniture	£744.00	New planters
Telephone	£150.00	
Post	£29.10	
Copying	£58.12	Mainly using the copier at the school
Office supplies	£41.03	Mainly paper and printer ink
P/News	£290.00	The Council is one of several organisations who fund the Parish News
Donation	£1,680.00	To the village school, graveyard upkeep, and several parish organisations
Subscriptions	£737.24	Mainly to HATPC for legal and other help and advice
Maintenance	£241.99	Litter disposal and maintaining flower beds
Repairs	£135.25	Mainly refurbishing pump area
Rent	£129.25	Mainly Village Hall hire
Chairman	£100.00	For phone, post and travel expenses
Insurance	£574.25	To cover the play equipment as well as general Council risks
Bury & Westland Greens	£519.98	
Audit	£120.00	The government appoints an external auditor
Allotments	£20.00	
Training	£130.60	
Defibrillator	£1,422.00	The defibrillator will be installed on the Village Hall
Misc	£187.05	Mainly refreshments for public meetings such as the Assembly
Total debit	£17,647.36	
Surplus to C/F to 2015/16	£13,977.47	