

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 17th meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2015 – 2019 Session) held on Tuesday 7th February 2017 at 8:17 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mrs E Lloyd-Williams** **Chair**
 Mr T Hoodless **)**
 Mr G Tooke **) Councillors**
 Mrs M Wilkinson **)**
 Mr W Wright **)**

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 10 members of the public.

17.1 **Absent.** Cllr Pearson [family matter]. The Chair said that Cllr Bhatt had reluctantly stepped down due to pressures of work. She thanked him for his efforts and wisdom. She expected to take up his offer of help on a voluntary basis in the future.

17.2. **Declarations of interest.** None.

17.3. **Democratic ten minutes.**

A resident said the flood prevention works with the bypass dealt with three water courses – the Ash, the Albury tributary and the Lloyd Taylor tributary. It was the latter that had caused the most recent flood and he would like the Council to ask that this tributary be prioritised in any work on the bypass.

Cllr Wright said that the Neighbourhood workshop had raised a number of issues not strictly part of the plan such as dog waste. He thought the Council should address the issue, perhaps by posters or taking out a Public Space Protection Order which included fines for offenders. He thought the police could be invited to speak at the Parish Assembly on the subject.

A resident running a business from his home in Westland Green spoke at length about the provision of SuperFast broadband to Westland Green and the rest of the parish. The current broadband speed was very poor and was unlikely to improve significantly because of the distance between homes and the Open Reach cabinets in which fibre was being installed. He thought Open Reach was being dishonest about the improvements to Internet access residents would actually experience. Westland Green would see no improvement. He wanted the Council to write to HCC encourage them to apply pressure on Open Reach to make real improvements.

17.4. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Tuesday 6th December 2016 to be agreed and signed as a true record. Agreed.

17.5. **Matters arising from the minutes.**

17.6. **Strategic matters**

17.6.1. Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Wright Spoke about the results of the workshop. He said time would be needed to process results.

17.6.2. Neighbourhood Plan. Progress on the character assessment of the parish and housing needs survey. Cllr Wright said this was in progress. He said there would be a meeting in the Village Hall to on 18th February to consider the vision for the parish in future years. The steering group was actively considering an up to date housing needs survey. He noted that a government minister had said that, if Neighbourhood Plans allocated building sites, this would carry more weight than

Action
WW

the district planning office. Cllr Wright said that suggested building sites would be assessed by consultants. The Chair asked the councillors be given a more feedback as she thought it important that the steering group and the Council be closely linked.

17.7. Highways

17.8. Consultation with residents on traffic matters including: traffic calming measures, the Drive Safe Scheme and parking near the village pump. The Chair said she had studied the existing documents and would produce a paper for the Council to consider. Action ELW

17.8.1. Vehicles jumping the A120 lights. The Chair had no new news.

17.9. Outstanding road repairs including potholes. The Chair had no new news.

17.9.1. Bypass. The Chair said the planning application was passed by HCC Development Control Committee with 43 conditions. The next step was the compulsory purchase of the land. The earliest start would be in 2018. She said that she had asked that the Council be kept informed of any progress and she would take up the matter of expediting work on the Lloyd Taylor tributary. Action ELW

17.10. Environment affairs

17.10.1. Condition of footpaths. Cllr Hoodless said paths were muddy and some repairs had been made.

17.11. Groups and Amenities

17.12. Community

17.12.1. The maintenance of Bury Green. The Chair said that at the last meeting the Council agreed to cease paying for cutting Bury Green. The Chair read statement from Mrs Carmela Piccolo concerning the cutting of Bury Green [appendix 1]. The Clerk said the term “good heart” in the lease referred to keeping the green fertile. Cllr Wilkinson said both greens should be cut once a year to stop then changing to woodland. Perhaps Bury Green could be left as a hay meadow. Currently Council was spending more than its income. Cllr Wright thought it was unfair for others to pay for Bury Green to be cut. He thought residents should be asked if they wanted to pay to get it cut. The Chair thought the tone of Mrs Piccolo’s letter was not a true reflection of residents’ feelings. She proposed that the Council pay for one cut of the green a year. She would consult residents on what to do with the remaining money in Mrs Piccolo’s possession. Agreed. Action ELW

17.12.2. Millennium Wood. The Chair said money raising continued. The sale had been paused though the wood should be back on the market in March 2017. The owners were still keen on selling the wood to the community.

17.12.3. Playgrounds. Cllr Tooke said there was little to report though the catches on all the gates were insecure. The Chair said she would investigate the cost of more secure gates. Action ELW

17.12.4. Playground hedges. The Clerk said the hedges had been cut.

17.12.5. Allotments. Cllr Wilkinson said there was nothing to report.

17.12.6. Christmas Dinner for senior residents. The Chair said that the dinner had been a great success and thanked Mr and Mrs Bhatt for organising it.

17.12.7. To consider inspection of trees for which the Council is responsible. Cllr Hoodless proposed that the Council accept the quotation of £640 from Meadowcroft Ltd. The company had been recommended by EHC. Agreed. Action Clerk

17.13. Consultation and Public Relations

17.13.1. Parish website. The Chair said the site was slowly moving up in the Google search. She said she would contact Cllr McAndrew about SuperFast Broadband. Action ELW

17.14. Flooding. There had been no recent issues.

17.15. Security Matters

17.15.1. The Chair said they had not heard from the local PCSO. She would chase the matter. Action ELW

17.16. Parish Council matters.

17.16.1. To consider whether councillors should be able to claim travel expenses. The Chair said she had spoken to HAPTC who had said that it was unusual to claim for travel outside the parish. However, she proposed a change to standing orders so that councillors could make a claim for travel outside the parish. The Clerk said he would present a change affective in the next financial year. Agreed. Action Clerk

17.16.2. Chair's report. None.

17.17. Clerk's Report

17.17.1. Financial statement

Period ending 7th February 2017

Unity Trust Bank	£25,218.31
Petty cash	£4.15
Total	£25,222.46

Included Above

Paid

Little Hadham PCC	Graveyard upkeep [paid 20/12/16]	£50.00
P Knott	Playground hedge cutting [paid 20/12/16]	£380.00
J Fardell	Neighbourhood Plan refreshments [paid 20/12/16]	£148.10
Unity Trust Bank	Bank charges [paid 31/12/16]	£18.00
Little Hadham Village Hall	For Neighbourhood Plan workshop [paid 19/1/17]	£65.00
Carroll Planning & Design	Parish Structure Maps for N. Plan [paid 25/1/17]	£240.00
Herts County Council	Copy paper [paid 19/1/16]	£9.54
Mrs G Bhatt	Food & wine for Christmas dinner [paid 31/12/16]	£502.41

To be agreed

Received

UK Power Networks	Easement Village Hall playground	£44.32
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To Pay

Staff salaries	January	£514.78
Clerk's expenses	January	£12.50
Little Hadham Village Hall	Use Hall Council meetings Oct to Dec	£75.00
	Disposal of rubbish Oct to Dec	£58.50
	Neighbourhood Plan meetings	£182.00
Personalise Your World	Neighbourhood Plan workshop banner	£144.00
Gascoyne Cecil Estates	Back rent March 2015 to March 2017	£6.56

Total payments £993.34

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £24,273.44

- 17.17.2.** Proposed to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.
- 17.17.3.** Proposed to accept the accuracy of the financial statement.
- 17.18. Planning matters.** The transactions of the Planning Committee were noted.
- 17.19. Date of next ordinary Council meeting – Tuesday 7th March 2017.**
- 17.20. The Chair closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:35 p.m.**

Appendix 1 Report from Mrs Carmela Piccolo

Firstly I should like to apologize for not reading this letter myself, I felt it best that the chairman should read it on my behalf.

I should like this letter recorded in LHPC records, furthermore I should like it recorded that I, on behalf of the residents and visitors to The Green, Bury Green, object in the strongest possible terms to LHPC's proposals to withdraw its contribution towards the mowing of The Green, Bury Green. LHPC cites that they need to take cost-cutting measures even though it has a healthy bank balance of nearly £27,000.

I find it very difficult to understand the council's reasoning behind the panic, surely the point at which to panic is when the council's bank balance is down to, say a couple of thousand pounds. To my mind this cost-cutting represents PENNY PINCHING beyond the pail. As it stands the residents of Bury Green contribute, via Council Tax, a good portion of the annual precept this council receives. In fact we could argue that with over 60 homes Bury Green's contribution to the precept justifies LHPC's contribution towards the mowing; LHPC's contribution works out at just £8 per household per annum, a pittance in reality. The residents' contribution toward the mowing amounts to over £300, the council contributes £500.

The council needs to understand and take into consideration that LHPC is bound as lessee to "keep The Green in good heart", thus it should assume its responsibility and continue part funding the mowing. The Green is a beautiful asset and forms a very important part of the conservation area - it's a gem enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

I urge LHPC to give us a pat on the back, instead of a slap in the face, and to reconsider the continuation of its contribution. It's a small price to pay to keep this little gem looking its best.

Is LHPC ready to acknowledge and act positively upon all of the above? I truly hope so.