

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 111th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 14th April 2005 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mr T Skidmore** – **Chairman**
 Mr M Fairchild)
 Mr T Feather)
 Mr P Foreman) – **Councillors**
 Mrs M Gibson)
 Mr S Stigwood)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and **32** members of the public.

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 29th April 2004 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council Meeting on 7th June 2004, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.

3. **The Chairman**

The Chairman introduced the councillors. He said that there was one vacancy on the Council as Cllr Graham Pearson had submitted his resignation following his promotion in the police force. The Chairman thanked Cllr Pearson for all his hard work, especially on flooding and highway issues. He said it would be difficult to replace him. The Chairman wished Mr Pearson and his family well in the future.

The Chairman said that it had been hoped that the vacancy would be filled by co-opting a new councillor. However 10 parishioners had been persuaded to write to the district council asking for a by-election. This was likely to cost up to £900. The Council had not budgeted for this so the money will have to come out of money put aside for reequipping the playgrounds.

East of England Regional Plan. The Chairman said that the Council opposed the Plan as a whole as the logic behind it was too vague. The Council does support East Herts District Council in designating the different parts of the parish either Cat 2 or Cat 3 which should help resist infilling within the parish. The Council was continually concerned with increases in traffic along the A120. This would be exacerbated by any extensive new housing in the area and by developments at the airport.

Bury Green. The Council had worked with local residents, including a site visit, to consider the EHDC development brief for the old GlaxoSmithKline site. The brief was amended following the Council representations to EHDC to recommend a maximum of 15 houses – including some lower cost affordable homes. The Council was not sure when this amended brief will go to EHDC Development Control Committee. Currently there had been no formal planning application from Romehold who own the site.

BAA Stansted Airport. The Council had held a joint meeting with Much Hadham and Mr Terry Morgan of BAA in November 2004 to discuss areas of concern, other than the second runway which is being handled elsewhere. The issues of flight paths and housing were discussed. The Chairman said that it had been planned to have an update on those issues from BAA at the Assembly meeting. A joint Much Hadham and Little Hadham meeting will now handle this.

Parish Plan. The Chairman said much has happened – Cllr Fairchild would talk about it later.

Development of the Village playground(s). The Chairman said that this was Medium/longer term project that would be covered later. Some immediate refurbishment had been commissioned and this would happen very soon. He said the Council had some

scope to increase the frequency of grass cutting.

Finally the Chairman paid tribute to the Rev Tony Raven the local vicar, and his wife Dorothy. Tony was also vicar of Albury. They would be moving away from the area after 4 years in Sept/Oct and they would be sorely missed in the community. Tony had reached out to all of through his work with the two schools. He had taken the initiative when the flood disaster struck around the immediate area. The Chairman wished Tony and Dorothy well and thanked them for all they had brought to the parish.

4. **Financial Report by the Parish Clerk** – Copy enclosed

5. **Mr Max Ashley Little Hadham Charities** gave details of the Annual Meeting of the Charity Committee and monies disbursed. Report attached.

6. **Questions on Council matters**

Mr Don Gibson expressed concern that a by-election had been called. He wondered if any of the 10 people who had signed the request were aware that it would cost almost a £1,000 that had been earmarked for the playground. He thought that for a non-partisan council like Little Hadham, co-option had worked as a suitable way to replace councillors for many years. Mr Gibson asked why the election could not be held at the same time as the national election. The Chairman said that the district council decided the timing and this was out of the Council's hands.

7. **Presentations**

a. **Inspector Paul Lawrence – Hertfordshire Constabulary**

Inspector Lawrence spoke of last year's crime figures. There had been 83 crimes reported in Little Hadham. This was low compared with other parishes in the area and very low compared nationally.

Inspector Lawrence spoke about Neighbourhood Watch. He said a project was currently being undertaken to improve Neighbourhood Watch. Problems had been recognised in the past – poor communication, lack of feedback and lack of evaluation on how successful Neighbourhood Watch had been. The new structure of volunteers would include: Area Co-ordinators – Fred Strevens; Two area Deputy Co-ordinators; Ward Co-ordinator; Street Co-ordinators. Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer Jill Dockley would support them. Inspector Lawrence said there would be improved communication and feedback to co-ordinators – a two-way flow of information with a much more professional approach. He mentioned that the Chief Constable is the ACPO lead on Neighbourhood Watch. A programme of meetings for Neighbourhood Watch was being implemented.

Inspector Lawrence spoke of changes to Locality Policing (Citizen Focus). The Shape of future policing would include a Ward Manager responsible for problem solving in the locality. This officer would call upon the assistance of: PCSOs, accredited persons, special constabulary, local authorities and other relevant partners. The Police would encourage community engagement and consultative groups that would set some of the policing priorities for the locality. Policing Plan Objectives would still exist but there will be greater emphasis placed on local policing for local problems.

Inspector Lawrence warned parishioners of burglaries by artifice. There had been a spate of these in Puckeridge and Cottered on Tuesday 12th April. The offenders regularly pretended to be from the water board or another official body. They could have fake ID. If in doubt people should ring the company first to ensure they are genuine. A professional person would be happy to wait while this is done. He asked people to watch out for their neighbours – particularly if elderly – and report suspicious vehicles.

Inspector Lawrence reminded people of burglary crime prevention advice, particularly in summer. Keep windows secure when not in, close windows and lock front doors when in the back garden, don't leave gardening tools in the garden as these might be stolen or used to break into the house, fit timer switches for lights and radio if you are out, plant

dense shrubbery and fit locks on gates, sheds and garages and bring in wheelie bins after emptying.

The inspector mentioned Operation Agrarian that would concentrate on specific rural areas at weekends. It would focus on off road motorcycling, hare coursing, outbuilding burglaries and rural crime.

Finally Inspector Lawrence talked about the mobile speed indicator. He said it was available for the Parish Council to use if they so wish. As long as the health and safety advice is adhered to the constabulary's insurance would cover any claims made as a result of usage. The Parish Council would be consulted outside of the meeting to discuss this further.

Questions Mrs Kain thanked PC Chris Hunt and PCSO Julie Cooke who had made a marked improvement to the area.

Someone asked if the speed indicator equipment could log the registration numbers of speeding cars. Inspector Lawrence said this could be possible.

Cllr Feather asked why adjustments to the new traffic light system were taking so long. People were adjusting the lights sometimes three times a week.

b. County Cllr Mary Bayes – Highways and roads through the parish including progress on a possible bypass

Cllr Mary Bayes spoke of the work of the County Council. She said that she was a member to the Transportation Panel and this was very aware of the problems with the A120 – especially the Little Hadham traffic lights. She hoped that a proposal for a by-pass would be included as one of three major projects to be submitted to the government for funding. She said that she was working with the County Council to oppose a disproportionate increase in housing within the county as proposed by the East of England Regional Plan. The creation of a large extension to Harlow together with many smaller developments in the local market towns and villages would have a deleterious effect on the area.

Cllr Mary Bayes then gave a wide-ranging talk discussing the services provided by the County Council and giving her ambitions for the future should she be re-elected in the May elections.

Mrs Elton-Barratt asked how long it would take to build a by-pass and when the route would be known. Cllr Mrs Bayes said that it could take eight or nine years before it was opened. She did not know when a route would be announced but she would inform the Council of the date as soon as she knew.

c. Mrs Liz Stockley – Head Little Hadham JMI School

Mrs Stockley said there were 136 pupils on roll, including morning nursery, in five classes. There was also an afternoon playgroup. The subjects taught included: numeracy; literacy; science; ICT; R.E.; history; geography; music; P.E.; art; design technology; P.S.H.E. In addition French and recorders were taught as part of the curriculum and there was an opportunity to learn a brass or woodwind instrument. There were many lunchtime clubs including: I.C.T.; Recorders - beginners, intermediate and advanced; Guitars; Choir; School Newspaper. There were many after school clubs including: Kicks 4 Kids; netball; art & craft.

Other experiences available to pupils include: Roving Theatre Groups; 'Digging the Dirt'; 'Cinderella'; 'Gunpowder, Treason & Plot'; 'Science Investigation Day' - 'Exploring Materials'; Class 5 B.S. Music Festival Workshop.

There were links to local secondary schools with The Bishops Stortford High School 6th Formers supporting ICT, Birchwood High School helping with after school Year 6 Science Club and Hockerill Anglo-European School helping with French.

The school had taken part in a number of charity events including: Conker Sale - £24; Chron's Disease; Samaritan's Purse - 60 boxes given; Silver Towers - £160; Tsunami

Appeal; Comic Relief Activities - £177; World Vision - £60; Water Aid Collection - £29; Children in Need -£60. The total raised was £510. In the next year the school would focus on helping a school in Uganda.

Talking of future developments Mrs Stockley mentioned improving drama facilities such as the staging, lighting, sound and an outdoor stage. Future activities would include 'Alice' for KS2 – a whole school Pantomime, a visit to Kingswood for Years 5/6, a visit to East Mersea for Years 4/3 and a Science Museum Night.

Finally Mrs Stockley spoke of a School Promotion Group that would work to promote the many activities of the school.

d. **Cllr Mike Fairchild – The Parish Plan questionnaire**

Cllr Fairchild said that, with the help of a team of helpers, 300 households had taken part in the questionnaire. This was 60% coverage that was well up to scratch!

The aims of the survey were to gather peoples' views on Little Hadham, to identify the 'issues' and to consider what changes people would like to see over the next 10 years.

The survey recorded household profiles including: the occupations, means of transport, places of education and organisations people belonged to. It also collected data on local facilities, where people gain local information, what was the appeal of Little Hadham, what were people's concerns and what developments in housing did people hope to see.

Cllr Fairchild showed charts showing the age distribution of Little Hadham residents and how long people had lived in Little Hadham. Speaking of occupations, Cllr Fairchild said it was a community of entrepreneurs – 30% were self-employed with 16% running a business from home. Parishioners followed 30 different careers but only 14% work in the village.

The village was very car dependant and there were concerns about the busy roads and rat running through Bury Green. There were mixed views about the bus service though there was a demand for more off-peak buses.

Young people in the parish attended fifty different schools and colleges and the local village schools were popular.

40% of houses in the parish were generally old with 30% listed. 80% were owner occupied.

Cllr Fairchild said that membership of all local organisations was very low. Many used the Post Office and Farmers' Market though few used the mobile police station or the travelling library. There were mixed views about the parish council. People were generally satisfied with medical care and refuse collection. There were mixed feeling about the police service and there was a general dissatisfaction with the lack of activities for children. People got most of their local information from the Parish Newsletter and the grapevine. 75% of parishioners have access to the Internet.

The reasons people gave for living in Little Hadham included its being rural, friendly, close to work and its lack of crime. Some of the concerns were airport expansion/roads, urbanisation, crime, flooding, speeding and the A120 lights!

Most people wanted very limited extra housing and development with some infilling to provide low cost housing for local people. There were concerns about developments at Bury Green. There was no desire for new industry though people would like to see the return of a village shop.

Some of the things people would like to see were a fitness club, book club, better recycling facilities, affordable homes for youngsters and a by-pass!

At the same time as the main survey, young people in the parish completed a Junior Questionnaire. This showed that there were five local groups for young people though most people travelled to activities outside the parish. Many used the playgrounds. The things young people liked about the parish were the peace and quiet and that it was a small village. They didn't like the amount and speed of the traffic, the isolation and the

lack of things to do. They were worried about the planes, the risk of flooding, country smells and grumpy people. Young people would like to see a number of improvements including a youth club, Beavers and Cubs, a theme park and a Little Hadham tram tour! Cllr Fairchild then described the next steps in completing the plan. There would be a number of discussion groups each with a separate topic – community, local information, roads, organisations, housing, recycling and a crystal ball group. There would also be a group for young people, ‘Kids’ Talk’; what would they spend a notional £50,000 on to help village facilities? Cllr Fairchild asked people to volunteer for the discussion groups by filling in the relevant forms.

e. **Developments at the village hall playground – Cllr Paul Foreman, Cllr Mrs Mags Gibson and Cllr Tony Skidmore**

Cllr Foreman said that agreement had been reached with EDF to remove existing overhead cable, poles and Transformer from in and around the village hall playground. The Council had agreed to sell a 9m square parcel of land for the siting of a transformer box. Great care had been taken to ensure safety for the users of the playground and from flooding.

It was hoped that the work would be completed by Christmas 2005.

The Chairman spoke about refurbishing the playground. He said that the Council had been in consultation with playground users, the district council and potential suppliers. He said that a plan had been prepared. This would initially cost £25,328 although there was only £13,750 currently available – a shortfall of £11,000. The Council was actively investigating other funding although there could be an increase of the precept for 5 years. Other possibilities include funding arising from the Parish Plan and more donations.

Questions Someone asked how many young people were able to use the playground as the parish is so wide spread. The playgrounds were of little use to Bury Green children. Someone asked if any research had been done on how many would use a refurbished playground. The Chairman said there was some data. Many did not use the playground as it is currently so unattractive. This is what the Council wants to improve. Mr Graham Pearson said that there was little at the playground for older children.

8. **The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:00 p.m.**

Annual Report of the Little Hadham Charities 2005 **Presented by Mr Max Ashley**

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

The meeting of the Trustees of the Little Hadham Charity was held at 'Ashford House' on December 8th 2004.

Present were Mrs Ann Clayton, Mrs Eileen Booth and myself. Also attending was Dr Brookbanks who acted in an advisory capacity.

The previous year's minutes were read, agreed and signed.

Unfortunately, three beneficiaries had to be taken off our Register; Mrs Wardley had died and both the Miss Kents moved away.

As reported last year, the tenancy of Hammon's Field had been terminated and, therefore, no income was received.

Receipts from Treasury Stock amounted to £86.42, £1.05 was received from C.O.I.F Charity Funds and an anonymous donation of £50 was gratefully accepted

Our investment in Treasury Stock 2004 matured last October and was re-invested in 7¼% Treasury Stock 2007. The appropriate certificate is on our file.

We started 2004 with a balance of £449 and after paying out £312 to twenty six parishioners, giving them £12 each, £274 was left on deposit.

After a protracted process the Land Registry has finally granted the charity a 'possessory title' for Hammon's Field, and the sale is to proceed in the near future.

Documents and accounts are in my possession and are available for inspection by anyone who may be interested.

Clerk's Report

The Parish Precept for 2004/05 was £9,150.00 – an increase of £650. The precept for the current year is £9,600 – an increase of £450. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services and materials. Some money has been budgeted for the refurbishment of the playgrounds – many local people and businesses have made donations totalling £4,800 and EHDC has made a Capital Grant of £5,000. The cost of the by-election for the Parish Council will mean that the Council will have about £700 less of its own funds available to spend on the Playgrounds.

The total Council Tax for a Band D home for this year is £1207.27 of which only £19.49 comes to the parish – about 37p a week.

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

Last year the Council gave a donation of £600 to Little Hadham JMI School for a new Key Stage 1 and 2 reading scheme. The costs of cutting the grass and hedges at the playing fields have increased this year to £881.24. We are grateful to Romehold, the owners of Bury Green Farm, who have agreed to continue cutting the grass at Bury Green saving the Council a great deal of money.

At the close of business on 31st March 2005, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £14,091.24 in its Bank Accounts and bills of about £1,600 to be met in early April (before the first precept payment from East Herts is credited to our bank account).

East Herts DC funds our Litter Picker, Mr David Whillis (£1,023.36 pa) – if you have any places near you that need his attention let me know and I will make the necessary arrangements. 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 2003 to 2004

Credit	2004 to 2005	2003 to 2004	
Brought forward	£1,295.00	£1,312.36	
Precept	£9,150.00	£8,500.00	Paid by parishioners as part of Council Tax
Rent	£359.74	£324.00	Allotments, Westland Green and wayleaves
VAT refund	£369.36	£398.41	
Parish Plan	£1,630.00	£205.00	Most is a grant from the Countryside Agency
Interest	£1.51	£1.28	
Other	£100.00	£1,167.20	Cost of transferring an easement
Litter Picker	£1,023.36	£993.51	EHDC pays the litter picker's salary
Playground	£9,800.00		£5,000 Capital Grant and £4,800 donations
Total credit	£23,728.97	£12,901.76	

Outgoings	2004 to 2005	2003 to 2004	
Pay	£4,902.70	£5,486.03	To the Clerk, litter picker, handyman and Post Office cleaning
Maintenance	£885.21	£763.74	Mainly hedge and grass cutting of playing fields
Expenses	£409.06	£559.57	Mainly mileage
Telephone	£141.19	£57.71	Email and the Internet are used increasingly
Rent	£107.13	£100.63	Hire Village Hall and allotments
P/News	£0.00	£91.35	Mainly paper
Donation	£1,270.00	£945.00	Mainly to the Village school and graveyard upkeep
Subscriptions	£495.93	£431.21	Such as HALC, SLCC and CPRE
Insurance	£661.25	£602.50	
Banking costs	£0.00	£0.00	
Repairs	£6.74	£597.55	Mainly to the playing fields
Parish Plan	£395.42	£415.79	Partly paid for by Albury PC
Notice Boards	£0.00	£742.54	For the local PCC – they gave a donation in gratitude
Post	£18.55	£21.36	
Copying	£44.10	£52.51	
Misc.	£13.37	£142.28	
Training	£0.00	£195.00	New Clerk
Election	£0.00	£80.27	
Audit	£152.00	£150.98	
Office supplies	£164.13	£175.63	
Total outgoings	£9,666.78	£11,611.65	

Carried forward to 2005/06	£14,062.19	£1,290.11
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Breakdown of monies carried forward to 2005-2006

Playground donations and Grant	£9,800.00
Parish Plan	£1,234.58
For general expenditure	£3,027.70

Bev Evans – Parish Clerk