

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 112th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 13th April 2006 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 **61** members of the public.

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 14th April 2005 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 6th March 2006, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **The Chairman**

The Chairman introduced the councillors including a new councillor Mr Andy Morris. Cllr Morris would be responsible for roads and highways and would be on the Flood Forum. The by-election cost almost £800 – meaning less was available to be spent on the playground.

Volunteers, lead by Cllr Fairchild, using materials supplied by the Council, had refurbished the village pump and surrounding area. Mr Burton had restored the village sign.

On roads and highways, the parish gullies had been cleared, road repairs had been reported to Herts Highways and the Council was working to improve the pavement from Hadham Hall to Cradle End. The Herts CC Transportation Plan had spoken of a possible by-pass. The Parish Council was continually working to improve road safety in the parish including trying to reduce rat running. In four years time, as part of a rolling programme involving all parishes in the county, there would be a detailed consultation with Herts CC on ways to calm traffic and improve safety.

The Council had made a donation to the village school for improvements to the library. In the village hall playground the new transformer was in place and the overhead cables would be soon removed. Grass and hedge cutting was now carried out by a new contractor MoKut. Dangerous equipment had been removed from the playground using Cllr Stigwood's tractor. Remaining equipment had been made safe and the benches restored. New apparatus and improvements were imminent. The result of the Council's application for a Biffaward should be known in June. This would enable more new equipment to be provided so that the playground would become a focal point of the Village Centre as proposed under the Parish Plan.

The Council had made a detailed response to Stansted Airport's planned expansion using the single runway. The Council was preparing its response to plans for a second runway. The Parish Plan would soon to be published. This would be of great help when considering planning applications for new housing.

The Council was working to reduce the risk of river flooding – the Environment Agency had prepared a report and had organised a Flood Clinic to advise residents on how to alleviate flood damage.

The Council had gathered views and concerns from local residents on the new proposed public house opening hours. A sensible compromise had been reached.

On planning matters the Council had represented local concerns about the cottages next to May Cottage, Cradle End – including the destruction of a listed building and the intimidation of local residents. On the developments at Bury Green Farm, the Council had

organised a display of the plans for new housing and represented the views of Bury Green residents to the District Council. A Friends of Bury Green group had been set up to represent views of the residents to the Council.

Quotations for repairs to the edging of the war memorial had proved too expensive. The Council would use volunteer help to make repairs. Cleaning the memorial would also need volunteers. The flowers that decorate the memorial throughout the year were supplied and maintained by Nicholas Fulcher and Hilary Davies of 'Marshalls' next to the war memorial. The Chairman thanked them for their skill and efforts.

The parish litter picker, Mr David Whillis, had left at the end of January. The Chairman thanked him for his hard work. He welcomed Mr Mark Dedman as the new litter picker and asked parishioners to welcome and encourage him. The Chairman encouraged residents to take responsibility for the area around their homes by clearing litter left by thoughtless people. Mark had too little time to visit the whole parish on a regular basis.

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**

None.

7. **Presentations**

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

Inspector Lawrence said that he was the community inspector for the local area. The former local constable, Chris Hunt, had been promoted to sergeant responsible for fighting rural crime in East Herts. Crime rates in the area were relatively low but crime could have a large impact on individuals. The Rural Action Plan was gathering information and taking action on criminals operating in villages.

Operation Agrarian was using an automatic number plate recognition vehicle that identified the owners of vehicles and checked if vehicles had been used in crimes or were owned by wanted individuals. Over 10,000 checks had been made in 3 months and a number of stolen vehicles recovered and criminals arrested. Use of this apparatus helped deter criminals from rural areas.

The Rural Intelligence Gathering System used pagers to quickly pass information to key people in local communities. The cost of the pagers has become restrictive. Within the next year there will be a new system using mobile phones.

The local PCSO, Julie Cooke, had moved to a new job. The new area constable would be Constable Anna Germain and the PCSO Clare Andrews. The number of PCSOs in the area was likely to increase.

Inspector Lawrence thought the Neighbourhood Watch in the area was fairly good and he was keen to keep it going.

On national matters, the Hertfordshire force was likely to be merged with surrounding forces – probably with Beds and Essex. The Police Authority was not in favour of the merger as there were too many unanswered questions.

However, the Home Secretary might impose it. Inspector Lawrence thought that little change would be noticed locally. The mergers were to help fight serious and organised crime as well as terrorism and civil disasters. Criminals did not stop at county borders and mergers would lead to better information gathering.

Questions

Cllr Fairchild spoke of the danger from speeding traffic on the A120 and of rat-running on parish byroads. The County Council had been able to do little and he asked if the police could help.

Inspector Lawrence said that the police concentrated on different areas that

changed from month to month. These were generally accident hotspots. Areas of concern could be added to the list and he asked Cllr Fairchild to speak to him after the meeting.

ii. **County Cllr Bernard Engel – Roads through the parish including a possible bypass.**

Cllr Engel said that at the time of the Transport Plan Settlement for 2001/2006, the County Council had tried to get the Little Hadham by-pass included but failed as, at the time, it was suggested that the bottleneck could act as a deterrent to the expansion of Stansted. The County Council succeeded in getting the by-Pass adopted as the No 1 new scheme for the whole County in the 2006/11 Transport Plan Settlement despite opposition from the District Council, and some members of the County Council. In fact the District Council had strongly urged the County Council not to progress the possibility of a by-pass for Little Hadham in the 2006/11 Transport Plan.

Despite this opposition, local members were able to keep it in but, due to the development of the concept of Regional Planning, instead of each County's Plan being considered individually for funding as in the past, this time round the Eastern Region was assessed as a whole and Little Hadham's by-pass did not even make the short list of possible schemes to be funded. Of these only three have been allowed to go forward. He said that there would be no Government funding at least for the next five years.

At the insistence of local members, the by-pass issue was not being allowed to rest. Cllr Engel said that it had always been his view that BAA should contribute towards the bypass, as at least part of the congestion is attributable to direct and induced traffic associated with the expansion of Stansted. There was no doubt that the A10 dualling up to Puckeridge was, at least partly, aimed at opening a back door to Stansted in preparation for continuing expansion up to 70m ppa. However that was a personal opinion that probably coloured his conviction that a bypass for Little Hadham should come sooner rather than later.

In the meantime, the village was an accident black spot. Traffic, surprisingly, did not show an increase although he understood 2005 was again over 15,000. The County is continuing with the re-assessment of the whole of the A120 westward from Bishop's Stortford, including a by-pass at Little Hadham in preparation for opportunities that may arise for finding funding from any source in the future.

He thought that this looked like an exercise in re-inventing the wheel but County Officers assured him that this was the best way forward. The County Council Transportation and Highways Panel had already received three reports on this re-assessment and Cllr Engel showed slides taken from the third report that was considered at the end of March. He emphasised that the panel had gone back to absolute fundamentals. There were still major problems to be overcome. Not least of these was the idea that if the A120 from Bishop's Stortford to the A10 at Puckeridge were improved, there was the risk of opening the door to the old idea of continuing westward and opening up the area from the A10 westward to the A1M and, in effect, creating part of an outer M25 – from the East coast ports to the Midlands. There was also a strong feeling, especially from those living in Standon, that by-passing Little Hadham on its own without by-passing Standon would be a wasted opportunity. Cllr Engel was surprised to note that there were still people who thought that congestion at Little Hadham contributed towards stopping the expansion of both Stansted and Bishop's Stortford. He said the battle continued.

iii. District Cllr Michael Tindale – the workings of the District Council and the status of the East of England Plan

Cllr Tindale spoke about changes within the District Council particularly concerning planning and licensing.

The council had quasi-judicial powers in making planning decisions. Once a month, officers advised on planning issues and the local plan explaining how applications fitted with local policy. Ward councillors could deal with local issues but he could not express a view on particular cases. He thanked local people for giving their views concerning May Cottage, Cradle End and on the Bury Green Farm developments. Cllr Tindale said that he was keen to see the Bury Green Farm plans adhere to the framework document that had been already published.

Public examination of the EERA East of England Regional Plan had just been completed. There would be a further two months of consultation with the final plan due to be published in spring 2007 – a much shorter period than most plans.

The plan will set down projected increases in housing for the region – probably half a million new homes between 2001 and 2021 with 20,800 in East Herts. Currently about 500 homes were built annually in the Stortford / Ware area which is 10,000 over twenty years. The plan would expect these numbers to double. An extra 10,000 are expected in Harlow.

Five years of the plan had already passed so there was a need to catch up. The regional plan would set the numbers but the district council would have to decide where the extra homes went. The district council when making decisions would take Parish Plans into account.

The new licensing regulations had a number of objectives: the prevention of crime; improvements to public safety and reduction on nuisance; and protection of children from harm. The opening hours had been generally relaxed.

A government White Paper expected in July would signal a move to single authorities with the County and District councils merged into a unitary authority.

Questions

Cllr Morris asked why EHDC was against a by-pass. Cllr Tindale said that the district council had been consulted. It was concerned that no account had been taken of wider issues such as Stansted. A by-pass might lead to pressure for extra housing as was happening around the old A10 following the opening of that bypass.

iv. Mrs Liz Stockley – Head Little Hadham JMI School

Mrs Stockley quoted the school motto – ‘Believing and Achieving’. She said that the Education Act 2005 ‘Every Child Matters’ required five outcomes for education: being healthy; staying safe; enjoyment and achieving; making a positive contribution; economic well-being. Mrs Stockley then explained how the school addressed these.

Being healthy

The school had Healthy Schools Accreditation. The children received a daily portion of fruit and there were clubs for football, dance and tag rugby.

Children were supplied with water bottles with the school logo.

Children were given physical challenges and had raised £700 by sponsorship.

Every week there was a playground craze such as hula-hoops or skipping. A new ‘Trim Trail’ had been installed that was also used as a parents’ waiting area.

Staying Safe

All members of staff were trained in basic first-aid and the use of Epipens – currently six children had nut allergies. All food supplied by the school was nut free. An accident recording system is in place. All parent helpers and other helpers were checked by the police. The school was working on improving security systems such as ensuring that all gates were locked. The school had applied for a travel grant to encourage parents and children to walk to school. Outside visitors such as the police and electricity company were invited to talk to children about safety.

Enjoyment and achieving

Care has been taken to improve the school environment such as improving the KS3 boys toilets and revamping the KS2 library. The school had been raising standards with greatly improved KS 1 and KS2 results. There had been a number of theme days such as an owl day, when eight owls were brought into school, and a colour day when each class organised events using one colour as a theme. The school had organised a multicultural week including a Chinese Day demonstrating Chinese food and clothing. The school is in partnership with Hockerill Anglo-European College and KS2 classes had one lesson a week in French. There were a number of drama opportunities – the whole school was very excited to see Snow White at the Gordon Craig theatre. Musical opportunities included ‘rhythm and rhyme’, individual instrument lessons and an opportunity for whole classes to play an instrument under the guidance of Herts Music. All pupils in years 3 to 5 learn the recorder. Sporting activities took place on the school field as well as weekly trips to the swimming pool and activities at Wodson Park Sports Centre.

Making a Positive Contribution

The school meets Herts Quality Standard and has gained the Healthy Schools award. It has overseas links with a school in Uganda and is building a new link with Perigord in France. The school has organised a number of charity events such as a skipping competition and a sale of Easter eggs. There were a number of links with local secondary schools. The school has a Council that advises on how some monies should be spent.

Economic well being

This is largely covered in secondary school.

Mrs Stockley concluded with the school vision statement:

‘We believe in providing a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which everyone feels supported and challenged to achieve their full potential.’

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

Cllr Mike Fairchild presented himself as chair of the Parish Plan steering group that had produced the Little Hadham Parish Plan.

The story so far

2003 – a parish meeting gave an overwhelming ‘Yes’ vote for the development of the plan and a steering group was formed

2004 – feedback was given at the Parish Assembly and a grant of £3,000 was received for a questionnaire.

2005 – survey results were reported to the Parish Assembly, focus groups were set up and the plan took shape

2006 – drafting began, an Action Plan devised and funding for printing the plan was awarded.

Why do we need a parish plan?

There was a changing lifestyle in the village community, the parish has a scattered geography and the parish wants a bigger say in its own affairs.

The aims of the plan were

To build a stronger community spirit and to give the means to make changes –

or preserve the best of what we have.

To devise a strategy for the next 5 – 10 years including the resources and manageable timescale.

Community involvement in the plan

The questionnaire was completed by over 60% of households and more than 70 took part in the focus groups. There had been numerous updates on progress at parish meetings and in the Parish Newsletter. The plan had a considerable focus on the young.

The plan was created in partnership with a number of other authorities including: CDA for Herts; East Herts Council; Aston, Braughing, Albury parish councils; a number of local organisations.

Successes of the plan to date

Little Hadham Village Centre concept – a ‘quick win’ backed by a Biffaward bid; a ‘road map’ to 2015 and beyond; many stimulating ideas from a buying group to a Good Neighbour scheme.

What happens next?

There would be a Parish Plan launch meeting in May/June and there would be a copy of the summary for all households. The full report would be available to stakeholders. Project teams would be set up and there would be regular updates.

What’s in the Parish Plan?

There were 20 projects to make Little Hadham a better place in which to live – short, medium and long-term. It was hoped that it would be a sustainable, ‘living’ plan. In the first 6-18 months there would be: the establishment of a Little Hadham Village Centre; playground improvements; community events; a housing needs survey; a community newsletter.

In the medium and longer term: Little Hadham online; ‘Welcome to Little Hadham’; a campaign to promote the need for a by-pass; the opportunity for young people to have more say; and Village Centre live events.

Cllr Fairchild reminded parishioners that it was their Parish Plan and that it couldn’t be done without them. Their ideas, skills and time were needed to make Little Hadham a stronger community and a more enjoyable place in which to live. He said that taking part must be as rewarding as much for the sheer enjoyment of joining in as for the sense of achievement for a job well done.

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

Annual Report of the Little Hadham Charities 2005

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Annual Meeting of the Trustees of The Little Hadham Charity was held at 'Ashford House' on December 8th 2005.

Present were Mrs Ann Clayton, Mrs Eileen Booth and myself, Max Ashley. The previous year's minutes were read, agreed and signed.

Unfortunately, during the preceding year one beneficiary had died and, as is the rule, one further person's name was added to the list to retain the number of recipients at twenty-six.

Receipts from Treasury Stock amounted to £86.84 and £1.46 was received from C.O.I.F Charity Funds.

We started 2005 with a balance of £275.02 and after paying out £312 to twenty six parishioners, (£12 each) - £49.93 was left on deposit. At last year's Annual Parish Assembly I mentioned that in light of current financial conditions a decision had been made to sell Hammon's Field, which is the main source of the charity's income, and invest the proceeds in a more profitable manner. I can now report that an offer was made to buy this land and it was accepted, and next year I hope to report the completion of the sale.

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

For many years now at this annual meeting I have presented a report on the finances of the Charity. You all listen very attentively but very few of you know the background of this charity, when it started, by whom and the conditions attaching thereto!

In 1770 (236 years ago) the death occurred of a certain JOHN HAMMON, a haberdasher from London. He was 80 years of age and was buried in the family tomb at the east side of St Cecilia's churchyard. His Memorial Plaque is affixed on the south wall inside the Church and records the precise details of his bequest. In essence, he left £200 in New South Sea Annuities, forever, on trust, to the minister and churchwardens to be 'laid out in land'. (This money was subsequently invested in a piece of land measuring 5.5 acres off Acremore Street and known as Hammon's Field.) The profits accruing from the rent of this field were to be distributed to the poor housekeepers of Little Hadham.

Also mentioned in the bequest is the upkeep of the family tomb - a task that the Trustees currently have in hand.

First official documents obtained from The Hertfordshire Records Office show a rental income, from Hammon's Field, of £3 for the year 1899 - 1900. In the following years a gradual rise in the income occurred and by 1928 - 1929 records in our possession show the annual receipts stood at £7.2.9. The final yearly rent obtained from Mr Hammon's bequest, in March 2003, amounted to £230, and 26 local people benefited by way of a small financial gift just before Christmas that year.

This then is a brief history of John Hammon's bequest and, at the request of some parishioners, has been included in the 2005 report. I hope you find it of interest.

Max Ashley

Parish Clerk's Report

The Parish Precept for 2005/06 was £9,800 – an increase of £450. The precept for the current year is £10,290 – an increase of £490. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services and materials. Some money has been budgeted for the refurbishment of the playgrounds. This will be added to the £4,900 donated by many local people and businesses, £2,500 from EDF for the land required for the new transformer and the Capital Grant from EHDC of £5,000. The cost of the by-election for the Parish Council means that the Council will have about £800 less of its own funds available to spend on the Playgrounds. The Council awaits the result of a Biffaward application for £50,000, which, if successful, will fund a significant refurbishment of the playgrounds and help the creation of a focal point for the parish as described in the Parish Plan.

The total Council Tax for a Band D home for this year is £1267.70 of which only £21.25 comes to the parish – about 40p 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 £300 to Little Hadham JMI School for improvements to the library and we have budgeted a further £300 in 2006/07. The costs of cutting the grass and hedges at the playing fields increased last year to £1145.62 from £881.24 as extra cuts were required. This year the Council will use a new contractor, working to a higher specification and with more cuts, at a cost of £1,821.25. We are grateful to Romehold, the owners of Bury Green Farm, who have agreed to continue cutting the Green and have cleared the pond at Bury Green.

At the close of business on 5th April 2006, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £13,641.85 in its Bank Accounts. Several bills for the refurbishment of the playgrounds are expected within the next two months. The final part of the grant towards the Parish Plan, £1,277.26, has just been received from Rural Action East.

The parish litter picker, Mr David Whillis, resigned at the end of January. I thank him for his conscientious efforts. The new litter picker is Mr Mark Dedman – I'm sure you will want to greet Mark when you see him at work around the parish. East Herts DC funds our litter picker – £1,048.32 pa. Despite Mark'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.

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 2005 to 2006

Income

	2005 to 2006	2004 to 2005	
B/F precept	£3,027.61	£1,632.07	
B/F Playground donations	£9,800.00		£5,000 Capital Grant and £4,800 donations
B/F Parish Plan	£1,234.58		
Precept	£9,600.00	£9,150.00	Paid by parishioners as part of Council Tax
Rent	£326.38	£359.74	Allotments, Westland Green and wayleaves
Interest	£1.69	£1.51	
Sale to EDF	£2,355.62		Sale of land for the transformer
Playground	£100.00	£9,800.00	Donation
Parish Plan	£71.03	£1,630.00	Part of a grant from the Rural Action East
VAT refund	£244.03	£369.36	
VAT refund - Parish Plan	£53.12		
Other	£250.00	£100.00	Payment for using online reporting for PAYE
Litter Picker	£1,048.32	£1,023.36	EHDC pays the litter picker's salary
Total credit	£28,112.38	£24,066.04	

Outgoings

	2005 to 2006	2004 to 2005	
Audit	£153.00	£152.00	
Banking	£0.00	£0.00	
Chairman	£100.00	£80.00	
Copying	£102.38	£44.10	
Donation	£575.00	£970.00	Village school and PCC for graveyard maintenance
Election	£788.37	£0.00	
Insurance	£350.11	£661.25	
Maintenance	£1,297.79	£885.21	Safety inspection and hedge and grass cutting of playing fields
Mileage	£161.62	£321.61	
Misc	£30.15	£13.37	Mainly refreshments
Office supplies	£85.54	£164.13	Mainly paper and ink
P/News	£44.00	£0.00	Share of paper cost
Parish Plan	£2,893.97	£402.87	Largely funded by Rural Action East
Pay	£6,074.52	£4,913.70	To the Clerk, litter picker, handyman and P.O. cleaning
Post	£20.67	£18.55	
Rent	£120.00	£107.13	Hire Village Hall and allotments
Repairs	£803.94	£6.74	Repairs to playground equipment and furniture
Subscriptions	£639.47	£495.93	Such as HALC and CPRE
Telephone	£234.00	£141.19	
Training	£0.00	£0.00	
Total	£14,474.53	£9,377.78	

Monies carried forward to 2006 – 2007

Playground donations, land sale and grant	£12,255.62
For general expenditure	£1,382.23

In past years the accounts have been calculated on 31st March. As salaries and expenses for March are paid early in April, these appear in the next year's accounts. This has been corrected so, for this year only, the accounts show salaries and expenses for 13 months.

Bev Evans – Parish Clerk