

# Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the thirty-eighth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2003 – 2007 Session) held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 8:32 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

**Present:**        **Mr M Fairchild**                    **Chairman**  
                       **Mr P Foreman**                    )  
                       **Mr A Morris**                        ) **Councillors**  
                       **Mr S Stigwood**                    )

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and **13** members of the public.

- 38.1** **Absent** Cllr Feather [unwell], Cllr Skidmore [on holiday] and Cllr Mrs Gibson.
- 38.2** **Declarations of interest** Cllr Fairchild declared a prejudicial interest in the proposed donation to SSE as he was on the SSE committee. Cllr Fairchild left the room when this was discussed.
- 38.3** **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006 having been previously circulated were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Stigwood and seconded by Cllr Morris.
- 38.4** **Matters arising from the Council minutes**
- 38.4.1** **Bus shelter.** Cllr Stigwood said that he had repaired the roof and seat and would paint the shelter in the spring when the weather was drier. He had a number of cedar tiles left. The Clerk said that the notice board next to the bus shelter had been temporarily removed as part of the drainage works. Vandals had damaged the bench near halfway cottage.
- 38.4.2** **War memorial surrounding wall.** The Clerk said that the loss adjuster had told him that the insurers of the lorry would pay £2,250 towards the repair of the war memorial surrounding wall. The quotation for the repair was for £2,500 but an adjustment had been made due to the original poor state of the wall. The Clerk said the quotation was for the reinstatement of the yorkstone wall but it would be more appropriate to use kerbstones because of the number of vehicles who hit the wall. He was obtaining quotations but feared that the extra cost would be too much for the Council budget.
- 38.4.3** **Computer grant** The Clerk said that he had made an application to HALC for a scanner and laptop computer. If awarded, the grant could be up to £675 – the Council would have to pay 10%. Cllr Fairchild said that the laptop would help in setting up the Internet café proposed in the Parish Plan. He would continue discussion with Mr O'Regan. It might be possible to use the computer suite at the village school.
- 38.5** **Road works**
- 38.5.1** **Road repairs** Cllr Morris said that the recent heavy rain had caused flooding near Chapel Lane. Herts Highways had agreed to unblock the gullies. The traffic lights were still causing problems due to loss of software and power cuts. The lights appeared to be working correctly at the moment. Analysis of the survey of waiting times near the lights was still awaited.
- 38.5.2** **Drainage works on the C15** Cllr Morris said the work was nearing completion. A silt trap was being installed to prevent the blocking of the ditch. Cllr Morris said that he had reported that the newly installed gully at 'Houghtons' appeared to be blocked. Cllr Fairchild spoke of the difference between the original statements from Herts Highways and the reality. There appeared to be a serious breakdown in communications. The bus companies were supposed to have been informed of road

closures four weeks in advance. In practice the buses were so unreliable as to be unusable.

**38.5.3 Buses during the roadworks.** Cllr Fairchild said that the bus service during the drainage works had been a disaster and he was still trying to keep people informed about changes. He expected the 351 service to run normally in the coming week. He would check when the Chapel Lane gullies would be repaired and whether the work would affect the buses.

**38.5.4 Bypass.** Cllr Fairchild said that, following a request from the Council, Cllr Mary Bayes had brought up a number of issues with the Herts CC Transportation Panel. The plan would go out to public consultation in February 2007. The Panel was aware of local concern about what would happen about traffic congestion before a bypass could open in 2016.

Cllr Fairchild noted that there was 'only' £3 million difference in cost between the different routes and that the northern routes would solve the problem of the flooding of the Ash. The added cost of this route would be only slightly more than the special flood alleviation scheme.

### **38.6 Village Hall playground**

**38.6.1 Biffaward** The Clerk said that he had received 17 replies to the questionnaire on what apparatus to install in the playground. Cllr Fairchild reported that Cllr Skidmore had invited suppliers to submit plans and quotations. Cllr Forman said that he had not seen the details of the request to the suppliers. Cllr Fairchild said a detailed costing for the project would have to be prepared before Biffa would confirm the grant. He hoped that the different plans would be put on public display before a final decision was made.

### **38.7 Parish Plan**

**38.7.1 Progress report** Cllr Fairchild said that the new steering committee would meet on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006. Each project had a manager. The committee would first review the plan and the progress made.

### **38.7.2 Relationship between the Council and the Parish Plan Steering Committee**

Cllr Fairchild said that this would be an urgent topic for the first meeting. The committee would have to agree a draft constitution in preparation for the creation of a charitable trust.

**38.7.3 Housing needs survey** Cllr Fairchild said that 160 questionnaires had been completed and returned. This was 34% of those sent out and EHDC considered this sufficient to make a meaningful analysis. There would be feedback for the Council in January 2007.

### **38.8 Stansted Airport**

**38.8.1** Cllr Fairchild reported what he judged a major achievement in that Uttlesford DC had unanimously rejected BAA's planning application to expand the airport using the existing runway. The rejection was largely based on environmental grounds, as the expanded airport would cause unacceptable increases in pollution, noise and rail and road congestion. BAA had announced its intention to appeal and had called for a public enquiry. SSE had launched an appeal for £100,000 to provide legal representation at the appeal.

### **38.9 Budget**

#### **38.9.1 Donation to SSE**

Cllr Morris temporarily took the chair.

Cllr Morris proposed: the Council to make a donation of £100 to SSE in the financial year 2006/2007. Cllr Stigwood said that he did not agree. The precept was raised within the parish and should be spent on local things such as the war memorial. Cllr Morris said that all surrounding parishes should be seen to support

the campaign against airport expansion. Cllr Foreman said that the Council should make the donation if funds were available as refusal of permission to expand the airport would be a good result for the parish. The proposal was agreed by two votes to one.

- 38.9.2 Replacement cost of depreciating assets** Cllr Fairchild said that a number of surrounding councils had been asked about their policies. Councils with large precepts were able to put aside significant amounts towards the replacement of assets such as playgrounds. Small councils such as Little Hadham could not afford to do so. Cllrs Morris and Foreman said that the Council could not justify a large increase in the precept. Such a decision might be considered by the new council to be constituted in 2007. Cllr Fairchild proposed that money should not be put aside to pay for the eventual replacement of the playground. Agreed.
- 38.9.3** Cllr Fairchild presented the draft budget prepared by Cllrs Fairchild, Morris and Skidmore and the Clerk and circulated to councillors before the meeting. The budget predicted that £1,500 would be carried forward into 2008/2009. Cllr Fairchild proposed: the Council to adopt the draft budget for the financial year 2007/2008. Agreed.
- 38.9.4** Cllr Fairchild proposed: The precept for the financial year 2007/2008 to be £10,805 – an increase of 5%. Agreed.
- 38.10 Chairman's report.**
- 38.10.1** Cllr Fairchild reported on the government white paper on 'The Future of Local Government'. The white paper proposed more powers to parish councils though there was no detail, particularly on where extra resources would come from. The white paper's main objectives appeared to be the setting up of parish councils in towns and cities and to give a boost to 'inactive' rural councils.
- 38.10.2** Cllr Fairchild reported that the CDA Puckeridge office had been closed and the workers made redundant. The office had been of great help in creating the Parish Plan and in making the Biffaward application. The CDA continued from its office in Hatfield.
- 38.10.3** Cllr Fairchild reported that the Council had received a letter from Mrs Stockley, Head of the village school complaining of dogs fouling the pavements. Children had been tracking the mess into school and the carpets had become fouled. Cllr Fairchild reminded the Council that they had earlier discussed the installation of dog bins and had rejected the idea because of cost and the uncertainty that offenders would use them. Cllr Fairchild said that dog owners needed to be reminded of their duty and a notice had been put into the latest newsletter.
- 38.10.4** Cllr Fairchild reported on the letter from Herts Police consulting on their priorities for the next year. There would be a presentation in March 2007.

**38.11 Democratic 10 minutes**

**The meeting closed at 9:29 p.m.**

A resident reported that the gullies at Cradle End were blocked leaving puddles across the road. Cllr Morris said that he would investigate.

Another resident complained about the donation to SSE. He thought that if they wanted to make a donation, councillors should donate their own money. He also complained that there was no mention of the parish gardening club on the website. The Clerk said that the content of the site was partially the responsibility of the users. If anyone would like something added they should email Denis O'Regan who ran the site. The Clerk said that he would mention the gardening club to Mr O'Regan. Finally the resident complained that a resident was leaving a wheely bin on the roadside through the week rather than in their own drive. The Clerk said that he would report the matter to Herts Highways.

A number of residents reported that several acts of criminal damage occurred in the early hours of Friday morning 1<sup>st</sup> December 2006. A number of cars and garages near Lloyd Taylor Close had been broken into and a car had been stolen. The police had been informed but had apparently failed to attend the scene. Cllr Fairchild said that he would mention the incident in reply to the consultation on police objectives. It might be a suitable opportunity for the Council to meet the new local inspector. Mr Ted Oliver said that he had not been informed of the incident as head of the local Neighbourhood Watch until that day – four days later.

**The meeting reopened at 9:42 p.m.**

**38.12 Clerk's Report**

**38.12.1 Financial statement**

**Period ending 4th December 2006**

Barclay's Bank C/Acc		£4,994.73
High Rate BP Acc		£4.92
BP Acc		£165.39
Petty cash		£33.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,198.21</b>

**Included above**

**Receipts**

Rent from allotment holders		£24.00
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**To be approved for payment**

Mr B Evans	(P/Clerk - (Nov + Dec)	£643.64	
	Exp (Nov + Dec )	£39.69	£683.33
Mrs K Green	Grass bins (Nov + Dec )		£81.26
Mrs E Booth - P.O. cleaning	Oct to Dec		£30.00
Royal British Legion	Wreath		£25.00
SLCC	Subscription		£75.00
Mrs Jann Finn - delivery housing needs survey questionnaire			£50.00
	<b>Total payments</b>		<b>£944.59</b>

**Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £4,253.62**

**38.12.2** Resolved to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

**38.12.3** Resolved to accept accuracy of financial statement. Proposed Cllr Stigwood, seconded Cllr Morris. Agreed.

**38.13 Planning matters.** The transactions of the Planning Committee were noted.

**38.14 Correspondence.** The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant councillors

HCC Community Involvement – notification of adoption of statement

HCC Mineral Local Plan Review – consultation on amendments

**TF**

HAPTC newsletter

**MF/TS**

SSE Newsletter

**MF**

CPRE Fieldwork magazine

**MF**

**38.15 Any other business.** None.

**38.16 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:45 p.m.**

**38.17 Date of the next meeting Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2006.**