

# Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the forty first meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2003 – 2007 Session) held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 at 8:15 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

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

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 55 members of the public.

**41.1**    **Absent** Cllr Morris [on holiday] and Cllr Mrs Gibson.

**41.2**    **Declarations of interest**    Three councillors declared interests in the bypass.  
 Cllr Skidmore said that he was a resident of Hadham Hall and two of the possible routes would pass near to his home.

Cllr Feather said that he lived on the C15/A120 crossroads and any bypass would greatly improve his situation.

Cllr Stigwood said that he owned farmland over which parts of the two possible southern routes would pass.

## **40.6**    **Little Hadham Bypass**

Because of the considerable public interest in the bypass following the public meeting held immediately before the Council meeting, the Chairman proposed that the matter be dealt with first. Agreed.

**40.6.1**    **Feed back from parishioners and from the exhibition in the village hall.** The Chairman said that the cards returned to HCC by parishioners showed a majority preferring the northerly routes for the bypass with the largest number voting for Option 5 – the route furthest from the village.

Cllr Fairchild summarised views expressed in the public meeting. The residents showed a clear preference for a major new road linking the M11 to the A10 rather than the proposed bypass. However, in the absence of this major scheme, most people would prefer one of the bypass options in the consultation rather than do nothing.

There had been complaints that the measurements given in the consultation leaflet were often inaccurate and that Hadham Hall had not been marked on the maps.

There were comments that the bypass would not reduce traffic on the Albury Road and that the southern routes would increase the risk of flash flooding during heavy rain. There was some speculation that the increase in air traffic during the 2012 Olympics might result in more congestion on the A120.

The Chairman said that a new road from the M11 to the A120 was not part of the consultation.

## **40.6.2**    **Council response to the bypass consultation**

Cllr Fairchild summarised the main points in a consultation document circulated to councillors before the meeting.

While regretting the loss of farmland and the likelihood that a bypass would result in still more traffic using the A120, the Council agrees that there should be a bypass. The Council rejects the two southern routes despite the fact that they would take least farmland and would probably be cheapest. They would divide the village even more than the A120 – something the bypass scheme sets out to solve. The 7m embankment and 150m viaduct would be an eyesore, would introduce elements of urbanisation into a rural village and would be likely to attract graffiti. The

carriageways would pass very close to housing at an elevated level creating unacceptable levels of intrusion to residents. One of the routes would pass through the village hall playground that was being extensively refurbished at considerable cost as part of the village centre regeneration.

Considering the routes north of the A120, Cllr Fairchild said that these would take the bypass away from the village but would take more farmland and would be more expensive. They would expose more land to possible development, something that would be strongly resisted by the community. Access to the Albury Road would be more difficult and travellers to Albury and the Pelhams might be tempted to use the dangerously narrow Albury End road. However the northern routes would give the opportunity to create a flood alleviation scheme for the River Ash.

Considering the different northern routes, Cllr Fairchild said that the shorter routes passed unacceptably close to Hadham Hall and the houses to the east of Albury Road. The short route would not solve the difficult access at the Cradle End Junction. The longer northern route would pass Hadham Hall at a greater distance and in a cutting and would pass houses on the east of Albury Road at a greater distance. The road through the village would be diverted to the Lancaster Road roundabout in Bishop's Stortford helping to reduce traffic through the village.

In summary Cllr Fairchild said that the Council recommended that a bypass be built following the longer northerly route as described in Option 5 in the consultation document.

The Council recognises that whichever route is chosen some residents will experience an increase in noise and pollution and deterioration in their outlook. All possible efforts should be made to keep these to a minimum.

The Council stressed the need for measures to be taken to control the volume of traffic on the A120 and rat running through Bury Green and Westland Green in the years before a bypass could open although it had no easy solutions to offer.

Finally Cllr Fairchild said that, once a bypass was open, every measure should be taken to reduce and calm the traffic continuing to pass through the village.

Cllr Fairchild proposed that this discussion document be used as the basis of the response to the consultation. Cllr Foreman proposed that mention should be made of the fact that most residents would prefer a new route from the M11 to the A10 and would only accept the bypass as second best. With this amendment the proposal was agreed.

A number of members of the public left the meeting after this item.

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:30 p.m.**

**The meeting was reopened at 8:40 p.m. after the Planning Committee meeting.**

**40.3 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007 having been previously circulated were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Stigwood and seconded by Cllr Feather.

**40.4 Matters arising from the Council minutes**

**40.4.1 Bench near Halfway Cottage.** Cllr Stigwood said that the bench seat had been repaired though he noted that the top rail was missing. The new wood had yet to be stained.

**40.4.2 War memorial surrounding wall.** The Clerk said that he was delaying proceeding with a repair, as he wanted to keep cash in the Council account in order to avoid a cash flow crisis during the playground refurbishment.

**40.4.3 Computer grant.** The Clerk said that the Council now possessed a laptop computer, printer and radio router. These would be used by the Clerk and also for IT lessons as part of the Parish Plan. A cheque for £675 had been received from

HATPC meaning that, after reclaiming VAT, the cost to the Council would be about £70.

**40.4.4 The late Miss Ruth Hughes.** The Chairman said that Miss Hughes funeral had been well attended and that he had gone together with a number of other councillors. The relatives had asked that any donations in Miss Hughes memory be made to Médecins Sans Frontières – at the last meeting the Council had agreed a donation of £25.

#### **40.5 Road works**

**40.5.1 Road repairs** The Chairman distributed the list of ongoing repairs supplied by Cllr Morris. Cllr Stigwood commented on the number of potholes in roads though the parish. The Albury Road and the C15 seemed to be particularly bad.

**40.5.2 Problems following the drainage works on the C15.** The Chairman said that a meeting with Herts Highways was being set up though a date had yet to be agreed. Cllr Fairchild said that the flooding seemed worse than ever following the work that had caused so much disruption last year. There appeared to be some poor workmanship.

**40.5.3 Speeding on the A120 near the traffic lights.** The Chairman said that the council had applied to Herts Highways for a safety audit of the A120 through the village.

#### **40.7 Village Hall playground**

**40.7.1 Biffaward** The Chairman said that the Council had received official confirmation of a grant for £45,445 from Biffaward for the purchase and supply of new play equipment to the village hall playground.

Cllr Fairchild said that few parish councils had this sort of money available. As well as reequipping the playground, the Parish Plan called for a link between the playing field and the hall as part of the Village Centre.

**40.7.2 Application for a Partnership Investment Fund grant from EHDC.** Cllr Fairchild said that the Council had applied for a grant of £10,000 to create a gateway to the Village Centre, to lower the hedge to improve visibility into the playground, to replace the gates and fence into the playground, to provide tarmac for the basket ball post and to reposition the basket ball post. The Chairman noted that the Council had made a number of improvements to the Ridgeway playground in 2006.

**40.7.3 Re-equipment of the Village Hall playground by SMP Playgrounds Ltd.** The Chairman said that orders would be placed with SMP Playgrounds Ltd. as soon as the final details had been agreed. SMP had agreed to set up an exhibition at the Parish Assembly.

#### **40.8 Parish Plan**

**40.8.1** Cllr Fairchild said that the first ‘Internet Café’ IT lesson had been held using the village school IT suite. Six local people had attended a lesson introducing the Internet. The next lesson would be on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

**40.8.2** Cllr Fairchild said that the newly appointed trustees for the Parish Plan Group had signed the trust documents. As soon as approved by the Charity Commissioners the Charitable Trust would be legally in existence.

**40.8.3 Housing needs survey.** The Chairman said that a group of councillors would meet Ms Sally Smallwood of EHDC on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007 to discuss the results of the survey. He said that the survey would put the parish in a strong position when it came to resisting unwanted developments.

#### **40.9 Stansted Airport**

**40.9.1** Cllr Fairchild said that he had received five or six replies following his request for local effects of the expansion of the airport. A number of people had mentioned the knock on effect on traffic congestion.

**40.9.2** Cllr Fairchild said that BAA was consulting on the effects of the possible second runway on surface transport and would hold an exhibition in the village hall on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Most of the effects involve the M11. BAA claims that no more than 13% of traffic on the A120 is associated with the airport and they are unlikely to contribute towards the bypass. Cllr Fairchild said that he would be speaking on behalf of the Council at the enquiry into the planning application for airport expansion using the current runway.

**40.10 Chairman's report.**

**40.10.1 Parish Assembly.** The Chairman reminded the Council of the Assembly on Thursday 12th April 2007. The Clerk said that he had been informed that Inspector Piper would attend accompanied by some of his staff. Mrs Stockley from the school would be unable to attend as she was on holiday. The Chairman said he would see if he could persuade a school governor to come in her stead. Cllr Fairchild said that he would organise the refreshments. [Note: since the meeting, Mrs Stockley has said she can now attend].

**40.10.2 Consultation on Code of Conduct.** Mr Bob Sewell had studied the document. He reported that it would remove some over restrictive rules. He thought there was no need for the Council to respond.

**40.10.3 EHDC consultation on Community Involvement.** Mr Denis Olliver had studied the document. He thought there was no need for the Council to respond.

**40.10.4 District and parish elections.** The Chairman said that the election for the Council would be on Thursday 3rd May 2007 and that the next meeting would be of the new Council.

**40.11 Democratic 10 minutes**

**The meeting closed at 9:25 p.m.**

A resident said that the rat running through Bury Green was not in the Council response to the bypass consultation. Cllr Fairchild said that it had been included. A resident asked if the Village Hall Committee had been consulted on the Village Centre. Cllr Fairchild said that he had discussed it with Mr Jon Fardell and he assumed he had discussed it with his committee.

A resident complained that the village hall playing field was very bumpy and there were a number of holes making it difficult to play ball games. Cllr Stigwood said that he would investigate if it was possible for him to use a heavy roller to smooth the ground.

A resident questioned the legality of a decision made by three councillors at a previous meeting to make a £100 donation to SSE. The Clerk said that the quorum for the Council was three and that a majority of two was legal. The resident said that he would write to the Council as he did not think that Council money should be spent on what he thought was a political campaign.

A resident enquired about the cutting of Bury Green. The Clerk said that he had spoken to the site manager of Bury Green Farm who said that the grass would be cut soon. The resident said that the current system of grass cutting was unsatisfactory. The Chairman said that the new Council would have to consider the matter.

A resident spoke of the overgrown brambles at the Smithy. EHDC and South Anglia Housing Association both said the other was responsible. The Chairman said that the Council would investigate.

There were complaints about the lack of sound system at the Council meeting. The Chairman said there were technical difficulties about using the system in the committee room and the move to the hall for the public meeting had been at too short notice for it to be set up.

A resident wanted the Council to set up flashing speed warning lights similar to

those at Standon. The Chairman said that the Council had applied for a safety audit that might result in the installation of the signs.

**The meeting reopened at 9:34 p.m.**

**40.12 Clerk's Report**

**40.12.1 Financial statement**

<b>Period ending 2nd April 2007</b>			
	Barclay's Bank C/Acc		£7,922.10
	High Rate BP Acc		£5.00
	BP Acc		£165.80
	Petty cash		£41.25
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,134.15</b>
<b>Received</b>			
	HAPTC - computer grant		£675.00
<b>To be approved for payment</b>			
Mr B Evans	(P/Clerk - (Mar)	£222.06	
	Exp (Mar)	£22.74	£244.80
Mrs K Green	Grass bins (Mar)		£40.63
Miss A Windmill	Litter picking (Mar)		£89.61
Mr B Evans	Computer purchases		£851.93
Mrs E Booth	P.O. cleaning		£30.00
Gascoyne Cecil Estates	BG and WG rent		£3.13
Mr T Skidmore	Gift to retiring councillors	£30.00	
	Chairman's expenses (Mar)	£10.00	£40.00
H.M.Customs & Excise	PAYE		£849.42
Mr S Stigwood - bench repair materials			£20.00
Little Hadham P.C.C.	Copying		£15.64
Médecins Sans Frontières - in memory of Miss Ruth Hughes			£25.00
		<b>Total payments</b>	<b>£2,210.16</b>
<b>Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills</b>			<b>£6,598.99</b>

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

**40.12.3** Resolved to accept accuracy of financial statement. Proposed Cllr Stigwood, seconded Cllr Fairchild. Agreed.

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

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

HAPTC Newsletter	<b>TS/MF</b>
SSE Newsletter	<b>MF</b>
EHDC AGRE Newsletter	<b>MF</b>
CPRE Fieldwork magazine	<b>MF</b>

**40.15 Any other business.**

**40.15.1** Cllr Fairchild reported on a 'fantastic' production of Bully put on by The Young Ones drama group. He congratulated Mrs Ros Barron and her production team on all their efforts. Mrs Barron said that she wanted to stand down and called for volunteers to keep the group going.

**40.16 Date of the next meeting Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2007.**

**40.17 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:43 p.m.**