

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 113th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 12th April 2007 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 **58** members of the public.

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 13th April 2006 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 4th September 2006, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **The Chairman**

The Chairman reviewed the activities of the Council during the past four years. 2003/04 saw: the launch of the Parish Plan; pressure applied by the Council for the removal of the overhead power lines from the playground; the Council support for the continuing campaign of SSE; work to improve community policing in the parish; the Council's efforts to improve flood defences and the change of ownership of the Bury Green Farm site.

2004/05 saw the publication of the East of England Plan; plans for major improvements to the playgrounds and the successful work by Cllr Mags Gibson to raise local funds for new play equipment.

2005/06 saw the overhead cable at the playground removed and new equipment installed at the Ridgeway playground.

The current year had seen: consultation on the bypass; more progress on re-equipping the village hall playground; the awarding of £45,000 from Biffaward to pay for the new equipment; after years of pressure from the Council major repairs to the C15 road drains; continuing work by the Council to reduce the risk of flooding; consultations on improvements to the war memorial; continuing work on monitoring planning applications, particularly for developments at Bury Green Farm; an investigation into housing needs within the parish and further consultation on the East of England Plan.

The Chairman spoke of the retiring councillors, Mags Gibson, Tom Feather, Paul Foreman and Stephen Stigwood and thanked them for their tireless efforts on behalf of local residents. He welcomed the new councillors, Nigel Darken from Bury Green, Carmela Piccolo from Cradle End, John Purvis from Westland Green and Geoff Williamson from the Ford who would join the re-elected councillors at the May 2007 meeting – Mike Fairchild from The Ford, Andy Morris from the Ash and Tony Skidmore from Hadham Hall.

Looking forward the Chairman mentioned: the completion of the playground project; further work on the housing needs survey; continuing the implementation of the Parish Plan; improvements to road congestion in the period before the construction of the bypass and facing changes to Council powers.

The Chairman said that what ever the future held the Council would continue to be proactive and not reactive. Most important of all it would continue to listen to “our customers”.

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

5. Questions on Council matters

None.

6. Presentations

- i. **Richard Allison Area Sales Manager for SMP playgrounds** gave a presentation about the new Village Hall Playground equipment that was soon to be installed.
- ii. **Mr Max Ashley Little Hadham Charities** gave details of the Annual Meeting of the Charity Committee and monies disbursed. Report attached.
- iii. **Inspector Andrew Piper – Hertfordshire Constabulary**

Insp Piper said he was new to the area and was neighbourhood inspector for 280 sq miles of East Herts. There were 11 new officers in the area – the new ward constable for Little Hadham was PC Phil Lord who also had responsibility for several other villages.

Insp Piper said that in the January to March period crimes in Little Hadham had fallen from 7 last year to 3 this. The number of local PSCOs had increased and he expected them to play an important role in local policing.

Insp Piper said that, despite there being a low crime level in the parish, there was a high perception of crime. Allaying people's worries was a major challenge to police this year.

Speaking of traffic issues Insp Piper said that the local police officers were being given training in the use of the laser speed detectors and the traffic patrols staged regular speed traps.

The Policing Plan for next year was published on the Herts Police website. Insp Piper said that the police were working to reduce antisocial behaviour especially by tackling the high drinking levels of young people in Bishop's Stortford.

He spoke about the 'Ride-along scheme' in which local people were invited to accompany police on duty. This was a public part of partnership with police. Anyone interested should contact Insp Piper.

Answering questions Insp Piper said that:
People on 'ride-along' would wear body armour but not reflective jackets.
The trips would be risk assessed.
The traffic management police would work on the bypass in an advisory capacity.
Drivers of emergency vehicles were trained to use sirens near the traffic lights because of the blind junction – a resident complained that the noise was intrusive, especially at night.
Stortford Police Station was open from 9 to 5. He would check if it was closed for lunch.
- iv. **County Cllr Mrs Mary Bayes – An update on Herts Highways**

Cllr Bayes said that Hertfordshire Highways affected every resident nearly everyday. Hertfordshire was the most densely populated county in the UK with 1.2bn car journeys per year (23 million per week), 35% more traffic than national average, and almost double the national average traffic flow on its motorways, trunk and A roads. Settlements were no more than five miles apart and consisted of small and medium sized towns, creating complicated traffic movements. 40% of Hertfordshire households had two or more cars and there were 480,000 jobs in the county meaning lots of home-to-work journeys.

Cllr Bayes said some of the UK's primary routes ran through Hertfordshire – M25/A1M/M1. The road infrastructure was struggling to cope with current demand. The wear and tear on network cost £50m a year, meaning more roadwork repairs, which again, contributed to congestion.

Hertfordshire Highways is part of Hertfordshire County Council's

Environment Department. Its services are delivered through a three-way partnership between Amey Lafarge, Mouchel Parkman and Hertfordshire County Council under Vince Gilbert, Head of Hertfordshire Highways. Talking of road maintenance, Cllr Bayes said the county council had invested an additional £20m on roads for years 05/6 and 07/08, delivered through its Highways Extra programme. Hertfordshire Highways maintained 3000 miles of roads and pavements – some of the busiest roads in the country, meaning roads deteriorate quickly.

In order to provide the best value for money, Cllr Bayes said Herts Highways adopted an Asset Management approach. This means carrying out work on strategic routes before they get too bad, rather than automatically fixing the roads which look worst. This was more cost-effective – if action is taken when a road first starts to deteriorate, the cost of maintenance is much less. However Cllr Bayes said the approach could lead to criticism – why carry out work on some roads which don't look like they need it, while ignoring others which are in a worse state?

The county had 136,000 streetlights and lit signs. The network was scouted every 10 days. There was a planned cyclical maintenance with over 14,000 faults repaired in 05/06. 98% of streetlights were working and 97% of faults were fixed within 5 days. There were about 25 EDF faults outstanding. Cllr Bayes said gullies were a major challenge. 154,000 gullies had to be emptied at least once a year – that's over 3,000 per week. Herts Highways faced some challenges as: 20% of gullies were inaccessible (notices were delivered in good time because cars park over them); many gullies were damaged by traffic and therefore needed more extensive work and many were blocked by silt and required extensive dig-outs.

Cllr Bayes said that Herts Highways was only responsible for some drainage. Extra resources had been allocated to get the work done and new systems had been introduced to follow up on gullies that couldn't be cleaned. Cllr Bayes said Herts Highways was working hard to get issues resolved.

On winter maintenance, there were 59 gritting lorries covering 55 routes with, on average, 55 outings a year. Each trip spread 300 tonnes of salt over 1,500 mile of road at a cost of £35,000. There were 800 salt bins at known problem locations. Salting routes are reviewed over the summer – the A10 and Baldock Bypasses were included for the first time this year. Herts Highways have been trialling new type of salt at one depot.

Talking about road safety, Cllr Bayes said there was a target of reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads by 40% by 2010 and this target was already being approached. This was being achieved by a combination of: education (cycling proficiency, pedestrian skills training for younger children, motorcycle and car training etc); engineering (30 casualty reduction schemes a year and many more schemes had a safety element) and enforcement (safety camera sites must meet strict criteria, close work with the police).

Cllr Bayes described ways that congestion could be reduced such as: adjusting traffic light timings to improve traffic flow; the 'Safer Routes to School' programme to help reduce the school run traffic; better roadworks management and night working on busy areas or during less busy school holidays. She said Herts Highways was working on better early co-ordination with Highways Agency utilities, police, buses etc. They needed a quick and responsive service to manage the traffic in extraordinary circumstances (such as London bombings, or Buncefield).

Speaking about local issues, Cllr Bayes said Highways cut the grass on the

A120 but all other roadside verges were cut by EHC. Grass was kept down to 25cm on rural roads and 15cm in villages. The cuttings were not collected but were swept off pavements and roads. Some 'heritage verges' were not cut in the same way. Talking about tree and hedge cutting, Cllr Bayes said it was often difficult to establish who owned a tree and Tree Preservation Orders sometimes limited what could be done. There were lots of trees but only a small budget. Dead, diseased and dangerous trees took priority.

Cllr Bayes said a drainage scheme had been carried out and Little Hadham – gullies had been cleared and repaired. She said Herts Highways could not solve land drainage problems alone. A meeting had been planned with EHC and the Parish Council for when the current work was complete.

Talking about rat-running through Bury Green, – Cllr Bayes said that traffic speeds and volumes had been measured in the previous year. Traffic and environmental studies had been carried out and the schemes had been added to the list for consideration this year – the Joint member panel would make a decision on which schemes to fund.

810 leaflets had been delivered consulting on the Little Hadham bypass. 470 response cards had been returned – 58% return rate which was exceptionally good. There was a strong preference for northern routes with the outer northern route being most popular. Detailed analysis was underway and the HCC Cabinet would decide on the preferred route.

Cllr Bayes advised residents to report faults (potholes, streetlight, flooding) to the Customer Service Centre on 01438 737320 or to use www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults. For local highway issues people should contact Chrissy Jacques, the Assistant District Manager on 01992 526937 and for information on the A120 bypass speak to Richard Boutal on 01707 356220.

Answering questions Cllr Bayes said:

She would check why apparently sound existing lighting was being replaced when roads were in need of repair.

She would check why the pavement from Hadham Hall to Stortford had not been cleared.

She agreed that increases in traffic indicated the need for a dual carriageway bypass but others on the panel did not agree.

She said that Herts had much less to spend on its roads than Essex whose roads were often better maintained.

She said she would investigate the repair of parish pavements.

v. **Mrs Liz Stockley – Head Little Hadham JMI School**

Mrs Stockley explained 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.'

This lead to the 5 Outcomes of Every Child Matters – being healthy, staying safe, enjoyment and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being.

The school had held a multicultural Around the World Week with a Book Week and Theme Days including Roald Dahl, Gunpowder, Treason & Plot, Puppets and Magic Shows. There had been Cooking Fridays, Reindeer/Bunny Drives and several school clubs met on a regular basis.

All children learnt French – there was a link with Hockerill Language College – and there was a KS1 French Club.

Mrs Stockley said there had been many school trips including to Celtic Harmony, to Duxford, Local studies, the Library and to the Pantomime in Stevenage. She said there had been drama productions of 'Oliver' and 'The Bossy King' and a visit to the Royal Albert Hall.

Mrs Stockley said pupil health had been improved with a skipping workshop and a visit to a Dance Workshop. There was a new pupil choice menu and a Breakfast Club. Trim Trails had been created at school and there was a PE link with Birchwood School. She said there had been pancake races as well as football, netball and athletics matches.

Talking of making a positive contribution Mrs Stockley mentioned the Harvest Festival and Carols around the Christmas tree. Pupils had been involved in Uganda fund raising with cake stalls, competitions, raffles, toy sales and conker stalls. They had also raised money for Children in Need on Red Nose Day and for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Looking forward Mrs Stockley talked about ICT including interactive whiteboards, Digiblue cameras, visualisers and the community internet café. There would be extended school clubs – Saracens Tag Rugby, Basketball and KS1 & KS2 Drama. Other innovations included a Performing Arts Week, Inter-School Challenge Days, a School Grounds Trail and a Kingswood Residential Trip.

Mrs Stockley said that a safer school would be encouraged by the School-Walking Bus and by new school signs on the A120.

In conclusion Mrs Stockley said that Little Hadham Primary School upheld the motto of ‘Believing and Achieving’ and that **every child really did matter!**

vi. **Cllr Mike Fairchild – The Parish Plan: A report to Stakeholders**

Cllr Fairchild said the aim of the Parish Plan was to make Little Hadham a better place in which to live by building a stronger community spirit. To achieve this the Plan had to build on what was already there. It had to embrace the hamlets involving everyone. It would be phased over five years. Most importantly everyone had to have fun.

Cllr Fairchild identified three groups within the Plan: the ‘Drivers’ – a second steering group was being set up; the ‘Customers’ – most in the parish have benefited and the ‘Partners’ – including CDA, RAE, EHC, and other funders. Describing the successes of the Plan Cllr Fairchild spoke about the Village Centre. The playing field was about to have a £45,000 ‘refit’ with the help of Biffaward. As well as new play equipment there would be seating and a ‘hangout’ shelter, new gates and fencing and better sports facilities. The Ridgeway playground had already had a revamp.

The Parish Plan Group had organised a Fun Day at the village hall. Over 700 people had attended and £2,500 had been raised. A donation had been made to the Village Hall and some of the money had been used to buy two new marquees for parish use. The Fun Day would be a biannual event.

With the Plan’s encouragement, the Council had asked EHC to carry out a Housing Needs Survey. This was to discover if there was a need for low cost housing. The draft report was expected soon.

An ‘Internet Café’ giving help with computers and the use of the Internet had been set up using ITC equipment at the village school. Cllr Fairchild encouraged people to sign up.

Speaking of future events Cllr Fairchild mentioned plans for the creation of a Youth Council, a ‘Little Hadham Safari’ event at Bury Green in the summer and events to help put Little Hadham ‘on the map’.

Cllr Council said that the Little Hadham Parish Plan Group was applying for charity status and its work was on schedule.

Finally Cllr Fairchild said he wanted to give a big THANK YOU to all Stakeholders

7. The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Annual report of the Little Hadham Charity 2007
Presented by Mr Max Ashley

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our annual meeting of the Trustees of the Little Hadham Charity was held at Ashford House on December 4th, 2006.

Present were Mrs Ann Clayton, Mrs Eileen Booth, Max Ashley and Richard Beckett, who has agreed to join us as Trustee and whose presence we welcome very much. Dr Colin Brookbanks also attended the meeting in an advisory capacity.

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

Two of our beneficiaries had sadly died, and another four had moved away. With funds being available, we decided to increase the number of beneficiaries from 26 to 30 and they received the sum of £40.00 each.

As reported in 2006, the Charity was granted a Possessory Title to Hammon's Field by the Land Registry, and the sale of it could go ahead and was concluded shortly after that. Completion of the sale was on July 26th 2006. The total amount raised was £77,510.00.

Below is a breakdown of the expenses incurred:

Solicitors	£8,225.00
Estate Agents	£4,553.71
Premium for Indemnity Insurance	£210.00
Registry Official Copies	£5.22
Oath and Search fees	£135.00
Land Registry Revised plan	£40.00
Oath fees	£14.00
Bank transfer fee	£29.38
Total expenses	£13,212.31

The sum transferred to our bank account came to £64,297.69.

Other incidental expenses incurred since then were:

Grass cutting Hammon's Field	£70.50
Opening up overgrown entrance	£221.31
New hardback accounts book	£94.75
Recorded delivery	£4.10
Total	£390.66

With help and advice from Michael Snyder, an investment account has since been set-up with Brewin & Dolphin Securities. A cash sum of £32,500.00 and 2 Treasury Stock certificates (5% Treasury Stock 2012 and 7.25% Treasury Stock 2007) have been transferred to them.

This leaves £1,400.06 in our current and deposit bank accounts. Also, still in the charity's possession are 4.5 units in a Unit Trust administered by the Charities Commissioners which we might be tempted to cash in and add to our portfolio at Brewin & Dolphin.

No decision has been made about the tomb of John Hammon, the repair of which is a responsibility of the Charity.

Documents and accounts are with me and are available for inspection for anyone who might be interested.

Parish Clerk's Report

The Parish Precept for 2006/07 was £10,290 – an increase of £490. The precept for the current year is £10,805 – an increase of £515. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services and materials. Some money has been budgeted for the refurbishment of the playgrounds. The Council has been awarded a Biffa Award for £45,455 [the Council contributed £5,000 towards this] that will fund new equipment for the Village Hall playgrounds and the creation of a focal point for the parish as described in the Parish Plan.

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

This year the Council has used a new contractor for cutting the grass, 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 2007, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £6,598.99 in its Bank Accounts. This includes £2,250 that will be used to repair the edge of the war memorial. Several bills for the refurbishment of the playgrounds are expected within the next two months. A number of payments, including some donations, have been deliberately deferred so that there are sufficient funds in the Council's accounts to avoid a cash flow crisis during the playground refurbishment.

The parish litter picker, Mr Mark Dedman, resigned at the end of January. I thank him for his conscientious efforts. The new litter picker is Miss Mandy Windmill – I'm sure you will want to greet Mandy and her sister Melissa when you see them at work around the parish. East Herts DC funds our litter picker – £1,075.36 pa. Despite Mandy's hard work, it is not possible for her 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 2006 to 2007

	2006 to 2007	2005 to 2006	
B/F General	£1,395.59	£3,027.61	
B/F Playground Sale & donat'n	£12,255.62	£9,800.00	
B/F Parish Plan		£1,234.58	The Parish Plan is complete
Precept	£10,290.00	£9,600.00	
Rent	£361.41	£326.38	Mainly Westland Green
Interest	£1.18	£1.69	
Playground donations	£0.00	£100.00	
Land sale to EDF		£2,355.62	
Parish Plan	£2,802.26	£71.03	
VAT refund	£2,121.32	£244.03	
VAT refund - playground	£144.38		
VAT refund - Parish Plan	£243.46	£53.12	
PAYE	£250.00	£250.00	For reporting online
Insurance	£2,250.00		Lorry crashing into war memorial
Sales	£40.00		
Grant	£675.00		
Litter picker	£1,075.36	£1,048.32	EHDC pays for the litter picker
Totals	£33,905.58	£28,112.38	

Debit

Audit	£209.74	£153.00	
Banking	£0.00	£0.00	
Chairman	£100.00	£100.00	
Copying	£90.16	£102.38	
Donation	£561.50	£575.00	Mainly Graveyard and Village Hall,
Election	£0.00	£788.37	
Insurance	£566.94	£350.11	New Equipment insured
Maintenance	£1,847.77	£1,297.79	
Mileage	£119.10	£161.62	
Misc	£114.19	£30.15	
Office supplies	£926.60	£85.54	
P/News	£86.00	£44.00	
Parish Plan	£1,671.94	£2,893.97	
Pay	£5,331.96	£6,074.52	
Playground refurbishment	£14,545.44		New equipment at the Ridgeway and £5,000 as 10% share of Biffaward
Post	£20.35	£20.67	
Rent	£163.13	£120.00	
Repairs	£86.06	£803.94	
Subscriptions	£647.71	£639.47	
Telephone	£198.00	£234.00	
Training	£20.00	£0.00	
Totals	£27,306.59	£14,474.53	

Surplus	£6,598.99	£13,651.21	
----------------	------------------	-------------------	--

Bev Evans – Parish Clerk