

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the third meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Monday 2nd July at 8:40 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:	Mr M Fairchild	Chairman
	Mr A Morris)
	Mrs C Piccolo)
	Mr J Purvis) Councillors
	Mr T Skidmore)
	Mr G Williamson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 6 members of the public.

- 3.1 Public session.** The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to ask questions and make comments on agenda items.
The owner of Hadham Barn asked why the Council had objected to the plans to convert surplus garages into a playroom. Cllr Skidmore said that the alterations could potentially create a separate dwelling, as the garages were not attached to the main house. The Chairman said that the Council had to work to EHDC planning guidelines. The Council did not have powers to decide the matter and he recommended the owner contact the planning office to discuss the policy.
A resident said that new 30 MPH signs had been erected near New Road on Chapel Lane for traffic travelling east. However the derestriction sign for traffic travelling west was further down the hill leaving a length of road with different speed limits in each direction. Cllr Morris said that he would contact Herts Highways.
- 3.2 Absent** Cllr Darken [on holiday].
- 3.3 Declarations of interest** None.
- 3.4 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Monday 4th June 2007 having been previously circulated were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Skidmore and seconded by Cllr Williamson.
- 3.5 Matters arising from the Council minutes**
- 3.5.1 Bury Green Farm.**
The Chairman said that the owners wished to clear some scrub from the Green around the most westerly entrance to the new houses. Mr Roat and Cllr Darken have agreed that nothing would happen until Cllr Darken and Mr Phil Roberts, the site manager, have had a site meeting.
The Chairman noted that a new fence had been erected between Bury Green Farm House and the Green and he had received comments that it was an improvement.
- 3.5.2 Sound amplification at Council meetings.** Cllr Williamson said that he had discussed the matter with Mr Fardell who had said that it was possible to install an amplification system in the committee room. However Cllr Williamson said that it would be very inconvenient as a microphone would have to be passed from speaker to speaker, making discussions difficult. It was agreed to take no action except to have the system in reserve for particularly crowded meetings
- 3.5.3 Upkeep of Westland Green.** Cllr Purvis said that Mr Stigwood would ‘top’ the grass on the Green to about 9 inches when conditions were suitable. Cllr Purvis would then consider what to do about the ruts. Residents might erect unofficial notices requesting visitors not to drive across the Green.
- 3.5.4 Scrub near the Smithy.** The Clerk said that he had visited the site and discussed the matter with Mrs Barron. The hedging and scrub around the Smithy seemed in satisfactory condition at the moment – largely due to Mrs Barron’s efforts. The Clerk

said that South Anglia Housing agreed it was responsible and Ms Warwick, the neighbourhood officer, said she would send workmen to cut the hedging on request. However the Clerk said it might be more appropriate for the residents to maintain the relatively small amount of hedging themselves. The Clerk would discuss the matter with Mrs Barron.

3.6 Road works

3.6.1 Road repairs. Cllr Morris said that Herts Highways had received £10 million of extra funding. Some of this was being used to resurface Church End Lane and Ford Hill. Cllr Morris said that the ownership of the passing places on Ford Hill was clear but funds were not available to re-grade the banking to keep mud off the road. A road closure order for Chapel Lane was still awaited so that the drains could be cleared.

3.6.2 Herts CC report on the sequencing of the traffic lights. Cllr Morris said that the aim of the report was to maximise traffic flow and reduce waiting times on all the roads. If the queues grew too long on the A120, drivers would be tempted to use the rat runs. Cllr Morris thought that the current timing was the best compromise. The report reviewed requests to lengthen the 'green time' for Albury Road. The modelling showed that this would reduce waiting times for Albury Road a little but would greatly increase times for the other roads. The Clerk said that some people had asked for a week's experiment of different timings but the report said that it might take over a month for drivers to discover the rat runs when queues on the A120 increased. Cllr Morris said that the report did not recommend flashing lights near the school. These were for roads where pedestrians might be crossing. However it did recommend improvements in the warning signs including signs on the road surface.

3.6.3 Hazardous sites on the A120. Cllr Morris said that he and Cllr Darken had identified a number of particular hazards including the Cradle End turn out, the brow of the hill when approaching the traffic lights from Standon and the footpath from Hadham Hall to the Tesco roundabout. The East Herts Transportation report had agreed to seek funding for the footpath. It was agreed that Cllrs Morris and Darken would circulate a report for discussion at the next meeting.

3.6.4 Meeting with Herts Highways to discuss flooding on the C15 near the village hall. Cllr Morris said that the meeting had been held on 5th June 2007. Mr Kyan, of Herts Highways, had said that the completed drainage works meant that any flash flooding would not be caused by the road drainage. The silt traps near the village hall were on the vulnerable clearance list meaning they would be inspected regularly. Transco would repair a drain near Red Brick Cottages damaged when a gas pipe was installed. All pipes would be checked to ensure they were free running and the notice board opposite the Nag's Head would be replaced.

Mr Stephenson, East Herts land drainage officer, said that all land drains and ditches were being satisfactorily maintained and he had no powers to force landowners take further flood prevention measures. Possible ways of preventing flash floods were considered such a catchment pond in the agricultural field opposite the hall and a new drain from the road to the river but there was no funding available. An investigation by a drainage consultant to identify the best solution might cost over £10,000.

The Chairman proposed that the situation should be monitored to see if the problem had been solved before considering further action. Agreed

3.6.5 Reducing rat running through Bury Green, Ford Hill and Westland Green.

Cllr Williamson said that the concerns seemed to be traffic at peak times, excessive speed endangering pedestrians and horse riders and damage to the road surface and edges leaving mud and ruts on the road. He thought there was little chance of reducing traffic numbers but it should be possible to reduce speeds – perhaps by extending the 30MPH area. Cllr Morris said the road was very low on the list of roads

considered for traffic calming measures. The Chairman thought that lorries used the road very cautiously and Cllr Williamson thought most were visiting local properties. Cllr Morris would discuss the problems, including the possibility of extending the speed limit, with Herts Highways.

3.6.6 Construction vehicles using the Cradle End road. Cllr Piccolo said there had been a significant increase in the number of construction vehicles using the Cradle End Road. The Chairman said he had been told that it was unlikely to be traffic to Bury Green Farm but the site manager had agreed to remind contractors that they should use Millfield Lane to access the site.

3.7 Village Hall playground

3.7.1 Application for a Community Capital grant from EHDC.

The Chairman said the application would be decided at the start of the following week. The community consultation carried out by the Parish Plan had been particularly praised.

3.7.2 Lowering the hedge and siting the tarmac. Cllr Williamson had spoken to Mr Stigwood who would put him in contact with possible contractors for lowering the hedge to improve visibility. However there would be a cost so the Council might have to call on volunteers. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that she would discuss moving the football shooting apparatus and the best site for the tarmac with Mr Mynott and with local young people. Cllr Skidmore asked why moving the apparatus was being discussed as considerable thought had gone into its current position. The Chairman said that reversing the basketball net could be one solution but the apparatus would be safer if moved further away from the swings and the whole structure reversed so that footballs were kicked towards the soccer pitch. Cllr Purvis said that the football pitch had never been used as such despite the presence of the goal posts and thought should be given to making it 'playable'.

3.7.3 Re-equipment of the Village Hall playground by SMP Playgrounds Ltd.

Cllr Purvis said that SMP had started work and expected to finish by 13th July 2007. Cllr Williamson said that an extra grass cut would not be needed before installing the matting. Cllr Purvis and Cllr Williamson would decide on the positions of the seating and the hang out shelter. Cllr Purvis would talk to Mr Trevor Waldoock of EHDC who had agreed to make a post-installation safety inspection.

The Chairman said that he would make arrangements for an official opening ceremony.

3.7.4 Insurance to cover the new equipment. The Clerk said that he had obtained a quote for increasing the Council insurance cover to include the new apparatus. The additional cost would be about £500 p.a. – £200 more than in the budget. It was agreed to pay for the extra cover.

The Clerk asked the Council to appoint a work party to inspect the work of the Clerk, especially the management of finance and risk. It was agreed that Cllrs Purvis and Williamson would advise the Clerk and Council.

3.7.5 The Clerk said that he had requested EHDC to carry out an annual inspection of the Ridgeway playground. The village hall playground would be in the middle of being refitted so would not be inspected.

3.8 Parish plan

3.8.1 Family event at Bury Green. The Chairman there would be a Teddy Bears/Boys Picnic at Bury Green on the afternoon of Sunday 26th August 2007. Included would be; children's entertainment; a nature trail through the Millennium Wood; a barbeque and a band. There would be a work party to clear a path through the wood. Details would appear in the Newsletter.

3.8.2 Housing needs survey. Cllr Skidmore spoke of the planned meeting with EHDC offices to clarify the policy on affordable housing. It was agreed that Cllrs Skidmore, Williamson, Fairchild and Darken and the Clerk would attend. The Chairman said that there should be a meeting with the local housing association in order to identify the affordable housing stock available to local people and the rules governing the occupancy of affordable housing. He noted that young people with families now occupied most of the old people's maisonettes in Ford Field and there was now a serious shortage of parking spaces.

3.9 Stansted Airport

3.9.1 Consultation on rail transport for an expanded airport. The Chairman outlined a draft letter he had circulated to councillors earlier. He said it was difficult to answer the questionnaire as it presupposed that the airport would be expanded. He said that the railway service and the stations should be improved as outlined in the consultation but not just because of airport expansion. The Chairman proposed that the letter be sent as the Council's response. Agreed.

3.10 Chairman's report.

The Chairman spoke of a number of matters on which the Council was being consulted.

3.10.1 Consultation on Gypsy and traveller sites. The Chairman said that 30 pitches were needed in East Herts – probably on two sites. EHDC would send the Council a copy of their completed report.

3.10.2 Consultation on rights of way. Cllr Williamson said that this concerned landowners' rights to extinguish or divert footpaths. The changes were to processes and procedures to ensure consistency. He thought the Council should make no response.

3.10.3 Consultation on NHS quality of local health provision. Cllr Skidmore agreed to consider any response.

3.10.4 Consultation on EHDC parks and open spaces. Cllr Purvis agreed to consider any response.

3.11 Democratic 10 minutes

The meeting closed at 10:03 p.m.

A resident asked about damage to the pavement between Red Brick Cottages and the Nag's Head caused during the road works. Cllr Morris would investigate.

A resident said that a dustcart using the Westland Green road had damaged the ditch. He asked if Herts Highways could clear the ditch. Cllr Morris would investigate.

A resident thought the decision for Ashcroft Farm seemed rather rushed. Cllr Morris said that the school was very keen to be offered a school field though he was concerned that allowing the houses might set a precedent.

District Cllr Tindale said that the decision would have to be made within the eight-week period. He would ensure that the matter went before the Planning Committee rather than be decided by a planning officer. If the Parish Council's response was late it could still be read out to the committee at the meeting on 15th August 2007. Cllr Tindale said that, although the school wanted the new school field, he thought that it seemed a very small cost to be paid by the developers to avoid including affordable housing.

The meeting reopened at 10:08 p.m.

3.12 Clerk's Report

3.12.1 Financial statement

Period ending 2nd July 2007

Barclay's Bank C/Acc	£10,075.93
High Rate BP Acc	£5.03
BP Acc	£166.32
Petty cash	£36.73

Total	£10,284.01
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Included above

To be approved for payment

Mr B Evans	P/Clerk - (June & July)	£535.40	
	Exp (June & July)	£46.54	£581.94
Mrs K Green	Grass bins (June & July)		£83.70
Miss A Windmill	Litter picking (June)		£101.73
Mokut Ltd	June [2 cuts]		£232.65
Herts CC	Office materials		£28.27
	Total payments		£1,028.29

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £9255.72

3.12.2 Resolved to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

3.12.3 Resolved to accept accuracy of financial statement. Proposed Cllr Williamson, seconded Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Agreed.

3.12.4 The Clerk said that he intended to attend a course organised by HATPC on council finances at a cost of £25. Agreed

3.13 Planning matters. The transactions of the Planning Committee were noted.

3.14 Correspondence. The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant councillors

EHDC Consultation on East Herts Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2007 **JP**

HCC Consultation on Waste Development Plan **CP**

Rural Housing Trust Invitation to 'Open House' Newport, Essex. Affordable houses. **TS**

EHDC Draft Supplementary Planning Document – Affordable Housing. **TS**

EHDC Sawbridgeworth Community Voice public meeting notice **CP**

NHS Consultation on delivering health care in Hertfordshire **TS**

CPRE Countryside Voice magazine **MF/TS**

NALC LCR magazine **MF**

SSE Invitation to picnic Broxsted Sunday 8th July 2007 3 pm to 5pm **MF**

3.15 Any other business.

3.15.1 Cllr Williamson said that one of the gateposts at the Ridgeway playground had broken at the base. Cllr Mrs Piccolo would obtain a quote from Mr Mynott for the replacement.

3.15.2 Cllr Morris reported that his garage had been broken into for the second time. The Chairman said that the incident should be publicised to warn people to take care.

3.16 Date of the next meeting Monday 3rd September 2007.

3.17 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 10:15 p.m.