

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 114th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 17th April 2008 at 7:30pm 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 **64** members of the public.

The Assembly was preceded by an entertainment by members of The Young Ones who performed numbers from their recent hit show, “Old Time Variety Music Hall”.

1. **Apologies** None
2. **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 14th April 2007 having been previously seen, agreed and signed at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 5th March 2007, were placed on the Chairman's Table for examination by anyone present.
3. **Review of the Year: Mike Fairchild, Chairman of the Parish Council**
The Chairman reviewed the activities of the Council during the past four years. [Appendix 1]
4. **Financial report: Bev Evans, Clerk, Parish Council** [Appendix 2].
5. **Local charities: Richard Beckett, Trustee, Little Hadham Charity** [Appendix 3]
6. **Little Hadham Conservation Society:** Don Gibson and Graham Farrant gave a presentation [Appendix 4].

Questions.

A local farmer said that there were many gypsy and traveller sites in East Anglia because the horticultural industry there needed casual labour for harvest. There was little commercial horticulture in East Herts. Local farmers have to block field gates to prevent illegal pitches that might take months to remove. He said that he had called the police three times in three months to remove people from his farm. He thought the sites should be further from existing homes. Mr Gibson said that preconceptions were often worse than the reality.

A resident asked where the gypsy and travellers were now. Mr Gibson said that most sites were in the area east of our region. Mr Farrant said he was concerned that the existence of local sites might create a demand.

Mr Gibson finished his presentation by asking those present to raise their hands to show support for the aims of the society. The vote was unanimous with one abstention.

7. Policing in Little Hadham – Sgt Chris Hunt

Sgt Hunt said that he had once been the local rural officer – currently it was PC Foot. There were 17 PCs and 18 PCSOs in the area, which was the most successful team in the county. Sgt Hunt spoke of Operation Tarantula that combated vehicle crime. More people were affected by vehicle crime than any other. The financial cost was high and all residents were affected in one way or another.

Another initiative, Operation Agrarian, concentrated on rural crime. This was a multi-agency operation to tackle cross border criminals (travelling criminals) and rogue traders. It involved Specialist Officers, Neighbourhood Team, VOSA, Customs & Excise, Immigration, Council, Insurance, and Essex Police Officers as criminals don't stop at the border. So far there had been three arrests for burglary, theft of trailer from Harlow, two for theft and the Green Man PH closure.

East Herts Council issued 13 tickets to people carrying waste without a licence. A £300 fine can be imposed if a waste licence is not produced. VOSA issued 30 Prohibition Notices meaning vehicles were required to stop and not travel any further until the defect was rectified.

116 commercial vehicles and 3 private had been diesel dipped. The illegal use of red diesel was often associated with other crime.

Overall: 330 vehicles stopped; 13 seized for no insurance; 2 arrests made; 33 tickets issued for Road Traffic Offences.

A resident asked how often police visited a gypsy and traveller site on the A414 as he said visitors were often harassed. Sgt Hunt said that police might visit as much as twice a week.

8. Question time – Community Matters.

Members of the panel gave brief presentations before answering questions from residents.

i. Liz Stockley Head Teacher Little Hadham Primary School.

Mrs Stockley thanked the Parish Council for its generous donation that enabled KS2 children to visit the Tutankhamen exhibition at the O₂ Centre in London.

Children in Class 1 had spent a day at Wimpole Hall.

As part of the National Curriculum the school had to include the social and emotional aspects of learning. The first half of the term focused on relationships while in the second half they would concentrate on ‘going for goals’. Pupils were given £1 and asked to make it grow to buy new equipment for the playground. There had been many innovative schemes including: £113 made by selling pashminas; £49 raised by a raffle; a sponsored bike ride; cake stalls and collecting goods for recycling at £1 a time. One pupil sold the £1 for £27 on an eBay charity site. Altogether the support of parents and children raised £1,010.

ii. Rev Chris Boulton – Leader of the Ash and Quin Valleys Team.

Rev Boulton said that he was pleased to see the school pupils following the parable of the talents. He said that he was a member of the team, including assistant and retired clergy, that was dedicated to keeping local churches open. There was a monthly cycle of services using each of the churches. He thanked the Council for its contribution to the maintenance of the St Cecilia graveyard which was an amenity for all members of the community.

Rev Boulton said that he was pleased that the local school welcomed his visits. He invited residents to call him in times of need.

iii. Mike Smith – Chairman of the Parish Plan Group

Dr Smith reminded residents that they had approved the setting up of the group at two public meetings. The group had organised a number of events in the past year including a bingo session, a fun day and a teddy bear’s picnic at Bury Green. This year there would be a barn dance and a bingo session. The local good cause to benefit from fund raising had yet to be identified.

iv. County Cllr Mary Bayes.

Cllr Bayes spoke of the plans for the bypass that had been recently published. She said there were many concerns – mainly about how it might affect homes. The Council had consulted local home and land owners particularly at the ends of the new road. Significant changes had been made. Cllr Bayes said she would be pleased to talk at a Parish Council meeting on the subject. The County Council needed to think strategically – especially with the developments at Stansted.

v. District Cllr Michael Tindale

Speaking about gypsy and traveller sites Cllr Tindale thought government quotas were wrong. He thought creating sites in the area might attract more travellers to the area. He was impressed by and supported the work of Little Hadham Conservation Society (LHCS). He said that 15 pitches for east Herts was fewer than for other districts though there was no guarantee that this number would not increase. He noted that a site near Buntingford met all criteria and he thought the existing site could be expanded. He would press for an expanded site or, failing that, the Buntingford site.

Speaking of recycling by EHC, Cllr Tindale said that people should have received their brown bin for garden vegetable waste. In future plastic would be collected as well as metal and glass. The black bin would be emptied once a fortnight.

vi. Questions

- a. Mr Robert Collins, owner of Church End Farm, spoke of the new church car park that had been constructed at the farm. He said that the car park would be available to all visiting the church or the churchyard. There would be an access road built across the graveyard. He asked people not to leave plastic bags on the bonfire as these often blew into the farmyard.
 - b. A resident asked if there was sufficient room at the School for children from gypsy and traveller families. Mrs Stockley said that the school currently had 120 pupils and that number could increase to 150. Gypsy and traveller children were members of an ethnic minority and must be given equal opportunities with other children.
 - c. A resident noted that many people did not have room for several bins. Could there not be one with two compartments? Cllr Tindale said that the black bin rubbish went to landfill and more had to be recycled. Cllr Fairchild said that the Council would investigate how residents stored the different bins.
 - d. A resident noted that Romehold had cleared an area of scrub that had shielded the view of the new houses from the green. Cllr Fairchild said the Council would talk to Romehold.
9. The Chairman closed the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Appendix 1 – Chairman’s presentation.

Browsing through the minutes of parish council meetings to remind myself of the highlights, it struck me that what we get up to, broadly, falls into two categories:

THE BIG ISSUES:

- the really important things that affect the lives of people in Little Hadham – or could affect them – and where the parish council’s role is to try to protect your interests

And what I have called the:

BOOMERANGS:

- the things that, no matter how hard you try to dispose of, they just keep on coming back!

So, in a quick resumé the year, these have been some of the BIG ISSUES:

One of the things that has made Little Hadham famous is, unfortunately, congestion on the A120 and, in particular, long delays at the traffic lights, especially if you are using the Albury Road or the C15.

Talking of which, isn’t it sad that this key thoroughfare through the village is known officially by the very unglamorous name, ‘the unnamed C15’. Maybe we should have a competition to name it. Suggestions on a postcard to Bev Evans.

After a great deal of badgering, including from the parish council and, I might add, after the revelation that the now-notorious ‘clickers’ that would give local drivers priority, was just a cruel joke, the so-called intelligent traffic lights have started to live up to their name.

You may disagree but we are told that we now have the optimum balance between the main road, which is clearly going to get the lion’s share of the green light, and the local roads.

More importantly, this year saw another kind of green light: for the Little Hadham By-pass.

Following a public exhibition and representations by the parish council, Herts Highways were persuaded to go for the longer northern route, which will have the least detrimental effect on the village.

I will leave Mary Bayes to bring us up to date on the latest in terms of timing and a further suggestion we subsequently made to avoid traffic coming in to the village to reach the Pelhams. However, the council does have to remain vigilant that any industrial development that is allowed in the village does not generate a volume of traffic on the A120 that negates the benefit of the by-pass.

Which takes me neatly on to another Big Issue: flooding. All attempts to solve flooding of the River Ash have so far been unsuccessful. In a nutshell, the cost of a radical solution outweighs the likely cost of damage to homes in the village. That’s Government policy according to the Environment Agency.

So it was with relief that we discovered the northern route of the by-pass would incorporate a flood relief scheme up-river, which will reduce the likelihood of flooding post 2016.

Still on flooding, after a lot of what I believe in the building trade they call snagging, which in this case was more like a load of bricks left in new piping, the new drainage system installed by Herts Highways in the main road through the village (the ‘C15’), is now working well and seems to be reducing the worst effects of heavy rain and run-off from the fields.

One of the biggest projects in the village for years, and certainly one of the most expensive, was the completion of our new playground next to the village hall, and also the re-equipment of the Ridgeway playground.

That was made possible by some energetic fund-raising by the parish council to create a starter fund; an enormous amount of work putting together a bid for a Biffaward; and a great deal of planning by the council and the Parish Plan Group. We now have one of the best equipped playgrounds for a community of our size in the county.

We decided to go for top of the range equipment that was suitable to be used not just by children but also by adults. Appropriate then that, as a man of faith, Chris Boulton was one of the first to have a go on the aerial runway.

New gates, a much reduced hedge to make it safer for kids to play unsupervised, and we are well on our way to the final stages of the project to rejuvenate our main playing field. They are likely to include re-positioning and improvements to the basket ball net and soccer shooting wall and,

the next phase, the possibility of a five-a-side soccer pitch to replace our existing Wembley meadow.

Not only did we manage to raise around £50,000 to cover the cost of the playground, we learnt this week that our entry in the Biffaward has been entered for the Biffaward Awards 2008 and we could win a further £2,000 or even £7,000.

This year, an enormous amount of time was spent on consultations.

Most intensive has been our work in responding to BAA's plans to expand Stansted Airport.

We gave evidence in person on the first day of the six-month public inquiry into plans to expand the existing runway and submitted detailed responses on other issues such as road and rail access.

We have strenuously objected to the plans for expansion on the grounds that they are unsustainable and unjustified, socially, economically and environmentally. The debate on airport expansion has totally exposed the Government's hypocritical position on aviation and protecting our environment.

At the same meeting we will also provide guidance on yet another consultation, this time the proposals to change the flight paths over this area.

Other consultations have included commenting on the East of England plan – again expressing opposition to a level of development that we feel is unjustified and appears to be based on a presumption that Stansted expansion will go ahead.

Another potentially very Big Issue on which the parish council will formally respond at the May meeting is the identification of two areas in Little Hadham as potential locations for a travellers' site. Don Gibson and Graham Farrant, representing Little Hadham Conservation Society, whose views on this matter we totally share, will examine that whole issue in some detail in a moment. Rat running is the bane of people's lives in Cradle End, Bury Green, on the skidpan known as Ford Hill, and along Chapel Lane through Westland Green.

Not an easy one to solve because drivers are trying to dodge the mayhem on the A120. But frustration, fast cars and unfamiliarity with driving on narrow country lanes is a dangerous cocktail.

Quite rightly, people living on that racetrack keep reminding us of the dangers. So, having got nowhere by conventional routes we presented a petition to Herts CC who have agreed to take a serious look at the implications of closing off the turnings into Cradle End and Millfield Lane at peak times.

By no means a foregone conclusion because it will clearly increase traffic on the A120 and make life difficult for people living in Cradle End and Bury Green who simply want to get home.

The other snag – and it's an example of the kind of frustration that we have to put up with, that WE would have to pay for the study – and that will cost £5,000. That's the equivalent of half our precept. So, we are looking into the possibility of third party funding to pay for it with the proviso that if the study finds a solution, Highways will put it into effect. We are still awaiting that assurance.

There has been a great deal of collaboration between the Parish Plan Group and the Council. One example is on housing. The council weighed up the odds of inviting EHC to carry out a housing survey but decided that on balance it was better to know the facts than to have a solution forced on us because we simply didn't know if there was a need or not.

The idea of a housing survey sprang from the parish plan but it was the Council that put it into effect. As it happens the study established a very small need, four affordable houses in the parish, and even that number is under question because of the provision of affordable housing as part of the Romehold development at Bury Green and the existence of at least one cottage that has been empty for several years.

The council has continued to support our primary school with a financial contribution, not easy when, as you will hear in a moment, there are growing demands on our meagre resources.

But here's a perfect example of community spirit and the way in which parish plans and council matters have gelled. The parish plan came up with the idea of what we rather grandly called an Internet Café to offer computer lessons to get people familiar with emailing and the Internet.

Snag, we didn't have any computers or anywhere to run the lessons. Until we realised that the school had a computer suite that wasn't used in the evenings. Problem solved thanks to Liz Stockley's support.

I understand from Bev and some of the students that the lessons are proving really useful and the numbers are growing. So if you feel like a surf and don't know how get on board, have a word with Bev afterwards.

One of the Parish Council's most time consuming issues is planning. We have a planning committee, which is the same group of councillors wearing different hats, chaired by Cllr Tony Skidmore.

It's worth reminding you that we have no actual powers in planning, merely the right to comment on a planning application based on our feel for the area and a working knowledge of the planning rules – and keeping up to date with those is not easy as the goal posts are constantly changing, as those of you who came to the recent consultation meeting on the Local Development Plan will know.

There can be half a dozen applications to consider each month, most of them requiring a site visit.

Planning is typical of many issues that we deal with as a parish council. It's a balancing act: recognising that many people are quite happy with the village exactly as it is, but also recognising that while trying to preserve the essential character of the place, we have to accept a certain amount of change.

For example, by working closely with Romehold, we hope that we will achieve the best solution to the redevelopment of the former Glaxo site at Bury Green.

Now, how about the BOOMERANGS:

Take drains, for instance. The problem is that apart from the smart new ones on the C15, it appears we've either got the wrong sort of rain, or the wrong sort of drains for a rural village. We just have to keep complaining to get them cleared.

Then there's the grass cutting. As fast as we cut it, it grows again, which is what grass does. But it is no exaggeration to say that because our climate is changing, the grass is growing faster, which means it needs cutting more often, which puts the bills up. And so it goes on.

It's triangular in shape but a boomerang nonetheless. Some of us didn't realise that continually patching up the wall of the war memorial came with the territory. But we've now accepted that we need a long term solution to the consequences of frequent collisions and vibration that continually damage the wall.

Then there's May Cott at Cradle End. We have been complaining to East Herts Council for years now about the dilapidated state of what remains a listed building fronting May Cottage itself.

The best we can say is that, partly due to our complaining, there is now legal action pending against one set of developers and some hope that other developers will get on with the job.

This rogues' gallery is your Parish Council. There are six of us at present and we are fortunate to have had three applications for the existing vacancy. I say fortunate because some of our neighbouring councils are really struggling for lack of volunteers.

If any of you feel that you would like to serve on the council at some time, or volunteer to help us – perhaps using some relevant skill that you have – please have a word with Bev, me or one of the other cllrs.

Although we don't get paid I can honestly say we do get rewarded by the satisfaction of doing a good job.

We are of course only as well equipped to do the job as the amount of support we get from you. Please come to meetings and make your views known. I can't always promise you a glass of wine (probably not even a cup of tea) but you will be very welcome.

On your behalf I would like to sincerely thank your parish councillors and our very hard working Parish Clerk for their efforts this year, and in the year ahead.

Talking of which, what of the future?

As I said earlier, more repeats, more consultations on big issues like:

- threats to our way of life through aircraft noise and the risk of growing urbanisation

- maintaining the standard of local services
- listening to your views – all the easier if you come to meetings
- working with the Parish Plan Group to improve community spirit
- in a nutshell continuing to do what the parish council has been now for over 110 years: making Little Hadham a better place in which to live and work.

Appendix 2 Parish Clerk's report – Mr Bev Evans

The Parish Precept for 2007/08 was £10,805 – an increase of £515.00. The precept for the current year is £11,885 – an increase of £1,080. This increase is to cover the expected increases in salaries, services and materials. Although the new play equipment for the playground was largely paid for by the Biffaward grant, the Council's insurance premium has increased by over £500 a year to cover this new equipment. The cost of grass and hedge cutting at the playgrounds has also increased over the last few years.

This year's increase in the precept is 10%. However, the tax base for the parish has changed because new houses have been built and some houses have been extended so that they move into a higher council tax band. This means that the increase charged to parishioners will be 5.49%. In 2007/08 the net increase to the precept was 5% but changes to the tax base for that year meant that parishioners only paid an extra 1.2%. The annual increase in cost to parishioners averaged over the two years is 3.3% p.a.

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

At the close of business on 5th April 2007, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £6,125.12 in its Bank Accounts and petty cash. This includes £2,250 that could be used to repair the edge of the war memorial – the Council is still trying to find a method of repair that it can afford and which will survive being hit by road vehicles. The Council plans to carry out some extra work on the Village Hall playground and almost half of this cost will be paid for by a grant from EHC.

The Council 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. Melissa and Mandy are also the litter pickers for Much Hadham. East Herts Council funds our litter picker – £1,123.75 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 2007 to 2008

Receipts	2007/08	Comments
B/F from 2006/07	£6,599.51	
Precept	£10,805.00	An increase of 5% from 2006/07 – residents paid 1.2% more
Rent	£386.33	Mainly for Westland Green
Interest	£2.59	
Playground	£45,455.00	Biffaward
VAT refund	£370.24	
VAT refund - playground	£7,833.82	
Litter picker	£1,123.75	Paid by EHC
Total receipts	£72,576.24	

Payments

Pay	£5,956.28	To the Clerk, litter picker and Karen Green Garden Services
Mileage	£146.68	
Playground refurbishment	£54,147.89	
Telephone	£216.00	
Post	£32.37	
Copying	£86.04	Mainly using the church copier
Office supplies	£104.82	Mainly paper and printer ink
P/News	£65.00	The Council is one of several organisations who fund the Parish News
Donation	£975.00	To the village school, graveyard upkeep, and SSE
Subscriptions	£650.26	Mainly to HATPC for legal and other help and advice
Maintenance	£1,858.48	Mainly grass and hedge cutting for the playgrounds
Repairs	£363.13	
Rent	£209.88	Mainly Village Hall hire
Chairman	£90.00	For phone, post and travel expenses
Insurance	£982.49	Much increased from last year to cover the new play equipment
Training	£25.00	
Audit	£344.87	
Banking	£0.00	
Election	£0.00	We expect a bill for about £200 as our share for the May 2007 election
Misc	£196.93	Mainly refreshments for public meetings
Total payments	£66,451.12	

Surplus to carry forward to 2008/09	£6,125.12	Includes £2,225 insurance money paid for damage to the war memorial.
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Appendix 3 Annual report of the Little Hadham Charity 2007 – Richard Beckett

The annual meeting of the trustees of the Little Hadham Charity was held at Ashford House on 3rd December 2007.

Present were Mrs Ann Clayton, Mrs Eileen Booth, Mr Max Ashley and Mr Richard Beckett. Also present was Dr Colin Brookbanks who attended the meeting in an advisory capacity.

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

At the meeting, Max Ashley stood down as Treasurer and Mr Richard Beckett was appointed in his place.

There were 28 beneficiaries of the charity this year. Of those from last year, 5 had moved away from the area or had died. An additional 3 were added.

It was agreed that each of the beneficiaries should receive £40 again this year. This figure to be reviewed at next year's meeting when it would be clearer what income the new investments were likely to create.

All the charity's investments are now managed by Brewin & Dolphin. The most recent valuation on 11th April 2008 was £63,700. It is intended to draw down from this each December to fund the distribution to the charity's beneficiaries.

Appendix 4 Presentation on behalf of the Little Hadham Conservation Society by Don Gibson and Graham Farrant

Part A By Don Gibson

A group of interested and involved local people has formed itself into The Little Hadham Conservation Society [LHCS] to fight the proposed construction of a gypsy and traveller site here in Little Hadham. There are 8 of us. One will be Chairman, though no one has volunteered yet! – with the others on the committee.

All are members of LHCS in their private capacities.

At the end of this presentation I will ask, "do we have a mandate to act on your behalf?"

We have held 3 or 4 Meetings so far - a vast amount of information has been requested from EHC under the Freedom of Information Act. Letters of objection have already been sent and many local people and DC and CC members have been spoken to.

Caution - gypsy and travellers are defined in Race Relations Act as a 'minority ethnic group'. Many of you will know that the Government, by legislation, has directed local councils to establish new gypsy and traveller sites. Their reason for this is to provide accommodation for gypsy and travellers at supervised places and, most importantly, dispense with unauthorized camp sites and divisive trespassing which brings conflict and disorder of the type we all know so well.

In consequence of this 'Government. Directive', the East Of England Regional Authority (EERA) (an un-elected body 'set-up' by Downing Street) was tasked with implementing the Government's directions. EERA decided that its 54 Authorities should find a total of 1187 new pitches which will be made available to the Travelling Community by the year 2011.

Several local District Councils, coming within our part of the EERA area of responsibility, together commissioned an independent company (ORS Consultants) to find sites which complied with the Government's requirements: close proximity (1 km) to

Primary & Secondary Schools & Doctors Surgeries and should not cause significant hazard to other road users.

The survey to find these sites, carried out mainly from behind a desk, but with cursory, external, street level visits to certain parishes, identified seven suitable places or sites in the EHC area: 3 in Buntingford; 2 in Hunsdon and 2 in Little Hadham.

Why these parishes - and why us you may ask yourselves?

The policy is that not all new pitches will be put on one site, nor will all pitches be placed in other already authorized sites.

The two identified Little Hadham sites, fields either side of Millfield Lane where it meets the junction of the A120, are privately owned - one site, if used, will occupy land 20 yards from the owners' sitting-room window.

As an aside you may wish to know that Fenland DC has 183 authorised pitches at present and has to find another 89. South Cambridgeshire has 215 and must find 59 more. In EHC we have 7 and must find room for another 15 PITCHES on identified sites. Doesn't sound too bad when compared with Fenland but the truth of the matter is that this area is not a recognised and used through-route or place that gypsy and travellers visit.

What is a site? It is an authorised place where gypsy and travellers may lawfully stop/remain in their caravans for a determinate period - it represents a recommended area of about .4 hectare - just smaller than a football pitch.

How many gypsy and travellers are allowed to live on it? Depends on the number of pitches authorised.

What is a Pitch? An area roughly equivalent to 1.7 caravans.

What sort of supervision will be carried-out and by whom?

Of course, no risk of flooding there, but sewage, water supply, electricity and many other matters, some of which we are aware and others which have not yet been thought of, will cause major problems. Three families in this parish whose identities I will not disclose have told me they will have to closedown all or part of their business.

The A120 roadway from Cradle End to Millfield Lane is the most dangerous in the EHC area - cars roar along there at frightening speeds and to my certain knowledge there have been four, possibly five, separate, unconnected, fatal accidents on that 1/2 mile stretch of road in the past ten years - one of them, co-incidentally, was a Gypsy man driving a truck not belonging to him, being pursued by Police, which crashed on the A120 by the side of the eastern site nominated by the consultants.

Mrs Stockley may tell you that traffic build-up on that road during the morning peak hours causes many parents to arrive late at school with their children - more gypsy and traveller traffic coming out of Millfield Lane bringing their children to school will not improve that situation.

Blight - the value of your homes will plummet. Although Land Registry Searches will not throw-up information on proposed gypsy and traveller sites in Little Hadham, there has been considerable publicity in local papers and if you intend selling, your HIPS package report could show (before 2011) "identified sites for proposed gypsy and traveller in parish."

There are many reasons why LHCS is fighting the proposals - I've mentioned a few. Others are: It would mar the appearance of a stretch of unspoilt green space; It would be

less than ½ mile from homes in Green St, Millfield Lane & Bury Green; It would occupy productive agricultural land and the need for a site here in Little Hadham has not been proven.

Blight and the disregard for planning regulations hit one of our Government Ministers last month. I wonder how she and the people who live nearby feel?

A Statutory consultation period of three months started on 26th February and ends on 16th May by which date objections must be lodged. There will be an examination in public - late October 2008.

Final policy is to be approved in Autumn 2009 by the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government. The Government will decide the final number of pitches by 2009. Local District Councils will decide locations of pitches. The sites will be in operation by 2011.

The Parish Council wrote a formal letter of objection on 8th November 2007. Oliver Heald MP has also written opposing the sites and he argued in the House of Commons against the methodology used to arrive at the number of sites required. Mary Bayes, our ferocious County Councillor, has written a letter in support of our objection.

Legislation provides for Compulsory Purchase if present owners decide not to sell - and they won't!

A few years ago, at Smithy Fen, Cottenham, Cambs, 1,000 residents threatened to withhold their Council Tax if action was not taken to reduce the size of an 11 acre site which had, to use their words, 'spiralled' in 2 years.

A Fighting Fund has been set-up for expert advice should it be needed - £15k required - to date we have £2.5k. This includes cash, cheques and pledges. Jon Fardell is our Treasurer and he will be seeking further financial pledges or cash later.

We shall return to question of mandate after Graham Farrant.

Part B Graham Farrant

There have been a number of consultation and background papers

- Regional Spatial Strategy Examination in Public accepted the need for regional policy re appropriate numbers of gypsy and traveller sites.
- Government Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites - RSS should identify the number of pitches required for each LA in light of G&T Accommodation Assessments and a strategic view of needs across the region.
- "East of England has the highest number of caravans of any English region (4044 in Jan 06 – 26%)"
- Consultation Document 05/07 – is 1220 net additional pitches the right number for EoE? – Conclusion – "yes". Where should they be? The current question.
- Consultation with gypsy and traveller Communities on policy options for the draft revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy to address the provision of gypsy and traveller Accommodation in the East of England – Ormiston Children and Families Trust. 2007
- EERA response to consultation with gypsy and traveller communities on the policy options ... 11/07 (EERA – "useful background information" despite poor representation and badly worded questions.)
- RSS Single Issue Review: Planning for G&T accommodation in the East of England – Draft Policy 02/08
- SIR - EERA Pre-Submission Consultation Statement 02/08

- SIR - Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment 02/08
- SIR - Sustainability Appraisal 02/08
- SIR – Non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal 02/08
- Scott Wilson Report – Identification of Potential Areas to Accommodate G&T pitches in the Study Area (Northern and Eastern Hertfordshire)

The Policy for the provision of pitches for gypsy and traveller caravans

The total number of sites should be increased as shown in the table:

Area	2006 Authorised pitches	Additional pitches (15 minimum)
East Herts DC	7	15
Braintree	25	16
Chelmsford	35	46
Epping Forest	94	49
Uttlesford	37	15
Welwyn Hatfield	51	17
North Herts	6	15
Welwyn Hatfield	51	17

The other main elements of the policy are:

- LA’s should seek to achieve levels of provision required by 2011 asap through the development control process particularly when opportunities present themselves in respect of new major developments and through the preparation of Local Development Documents. The preparation of joint or co-ordinated Local Development Documents to identify suitable locations for pitches is encouraged. Where joint or co-ordinated documents are produced provision can be redistributed across the areas concerned.
- Beyond 2011 provision across the region should be made for an annual 3% increase in the level of overall residential pitch provision... Where Local Development Documents look beyond 2011 they should seek to continue the distributional strategy for 2006-11 outlined in H4 .

The main points of the LHCS strategy are:

- Gather information and put into perspective by understanding the policy.
- Challenge the publication of Scott Wilson report on potential sites.
- Challenge the content of Scott Wilson report on potential sites.
- Respond to the consultation in numbers.
- Work with EHC concerning their response.
- Challenge the distribution of pitches to EHC.
- Challenge the identification of sites before the policy is agreed.
- Seek a new review of possible sites.
- Participate strongly in the consultation at all stages.
- State the case that Little Hadham is not the appropriate place for gypsy and traveller accommodation.

What are the questions in the consultation?

- Q1 –Comments relating to proposed new Policy H4 (including the pitch numbers in the table) and supporting text.
- Q2 – Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal?
- Q3 Any other issues – general comments re the Single Issue Review

Each question has options: Support/Object/Observation.

We will circulate our draft for individuals to send their own response. It is important for individual responses to be worded differently and cover different points

What do we need from you?

A commitment to reply to the consultation. Your e-mail or postal addresses