

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the fifteenth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2007 – 2011 Session)
held on Tuesday 7th October 2008 at 8:30 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 14 members of the public including County Cllr Mrs Mary Bayes.

15.1 Public session.

There were no comments.

15.2 **Absent** Cllr Mrs Wilkinson – attending councillor training course.

15.3 **Declarations of interest.** Cllrs Fairchild, Skidmore and Mrs Piccolo declared an interest in Gypsy and Traveller sites as they were members of the Little Hadham Conservation Society.

15.4 **Minutes of the Parish Council** meeting held on Tuesday 2nd September 2008 having been previously circulated were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Williamson and seconded by Cllr Mrs Piccolo.

15.5 Matters arising from the Council minutes.

15.5.1 **Litter bin at the Ford.** The Clerk reported a site meeting with Mr Kellet of EHC concerning litterbins. EHC had recently replaced the bin opposite the Nag's Head pub though the Council was still responsible for emptying it. It was agreed that the roads in the parish did not have a serious litter problem and that it would be uneconomic to install more bins. The Clerk noted the hard work of Mandy Windmill, the parish litter picker, whose conscientious efforts kept the pavements generally clear.

15.6 Possible locations for gypsy and traveller sites.

The Chairman said that Mr Graham Farrant had been selected to give oral evidence at the enquiry into the EERA policy on the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites. Mr Farrant would represent himself and the Little Hadham Conservation Society. Mr Farrant would also express the published views of the Council though he would not be a formal representative. The Chairman presented a statement for Mr Farrant to read at the start of his evidence [enclosed] and proposed that the Council approve it. Agreed.

15.7 Road works.

15.7.1 **Proposed changes to the bypass route including the effect of the changes on Lime Kiln Cottage.** Cllr Morris said that HCC had spoken to landowners who would be directly affected by changes to the bypass but this did not include nearby residents. The owners of Lime Kiln Cottage had spoken to HCC officers who had discussed a possible claim for compensation. The Chairman said that the Council regretted the lack of consultation but accepted the reasons behind the changes to the route. From the floor Cllr Bayes said that consulting all residents would have been

very expensive. However she agreed to hold a meeting with the owner, together with Cllr Morris, to discuss the effects of the changes.

15.7.2 Vehicles parked on the C15 between ‘Houghtons and the old post office. Cllr Morris said that the view of residents entering the road from their drives was often very restricted by cars and vans legally parked in the road. He said that this was a long-standing problem and the only possible solution he could see was off street parking using people’s gardens. The Chairman asked Cllr Morris to consult with Herts Highways about other solutions. Cllr Skidmore noted that parked cars acted as a safety measure as they tended to slow traffic through the village.

15.8 Playgrounds

15.8.1 Trimming the hedge of the village hall playground. Cllr Williamson said that the hedge was cut once a year but it grew so quickly that it should be cut more frequently. He said he would ask a local contractor to give an alternative quote.

15.8.2 Recommendations following the annual playground inspections. Cllr Williamson said that the report made a number of recommendations. Most of them were relatively straightforward and he would prepare a list for a work party of volunteers. The Clerk said that he would discuss safety matting for the seesaw at the Ridgeway with Mr Trevor Waldock of EHC. The matting would be very expensive and the seesaw was only reckoned to have about two year’s of life left. Cllr Williamson said that he would talk to SMP about the very stiff roundabout.

15.8.3 Cllr Williamson asked if graffiti on the hangout shelter was vandalism or just young people taking ownership. He proposed that he should remove only the small amount of offensive graffiti. Agreed.

15.9 Stansted Airport.

15.9.1 NATs proposed changes to flight paths. Cllr Morris said NATS had published feedback on the consultation on the changes to the flight paths. He was pleased to see that they were considering alterations to the proposed Buzad route over the parish. The proposals had been for all planes to follow a longer, lower path over the area to allow for the relatively few old planes that could not follow a preferred high-level route. Cllr Morris said that he had Oliver Heald MP’s support and Much Hadham Council were seeking the support of Mark Prisk MP.

15.9.2 Recent developments

The Chairman noted that David Cameron had expressed opposition to a second runway and the Sustainable Development Commission had asked the government to look at the proposals again. The Chairman said that he had SSE Christmas cards and Calendars for sale.

The Chairman noted that UDC had called an extra-ordinary meeting. This could be to discuss BAA’s revised assessment of the environmental impact of an expanded airport. He said that he hoped to attend. He said that the public enquiry into the second runway would start on 15th April 2009. It was expected to last about a year. The Chairman said that UDC had agreed to share the costs of its opposition with HCC, ECC and EHC.

15.10 Chairman’s report.

15.10.1 Changes to Council officers and procedures. The Chairman proposed a number of changes.

Cllr Morris to remain as vice-chairman and take over as chair of the planning committee. This was one of the more important and busy functions. The job of

commenting on planning applications and visiting properties, as required, would still be shared out among councillors, co-ordinated by Cllr Morris and the Clerk.

Cllr Skidmore to retain his responsibility for housing needs, especially as regards the Regional Plan. This was one of many examples where there would be a logical overlap between responsibilities, in this case Cllrs Morris and Skidmore working together where planning matters had a housing implication. Cllr Skidmore would remain village school representative.

Cllr Purvis would assume responsibility for Highways. This would include the bypass. Cllr Morris was keen to retain an interest in the bypass issue and both councillors would work together on the project.

Cllr Williamson would assume responsibility for flooding. Cllrs Morris and Williamson should make recommendations as to whether there was a need for a separate flood forum. Cllr Williamson would also take over total responsibility for the playground. With most of the refurbishment completed, it was more a matter of maintenance which fitted with Cllr Williamson's other role of village hall rep, which he would keep.

Cllr Mrs Piccolo would retain her role of young people's interests. The Chairman said he was conscious that she was responsible for three adjoining hamlets: Cradle End and Green Street, and also Bury Green where quite a lot was happening.

Cllr Wilkinson would continue her responsibilities for police liaison and projects with environmental issues (where again there could be overlaps with other councillors' interests).

The Chairman said, if the Council wished, he would continue as chair, take the lead on consultations and retain responsibility for Stansted-related matters and the Parish Plan.

The changes were agreed.

- 15.10.2 East of England Regional Plan consultation on draft Project Plan. The Chairman proposed:** The Council to retrospectively approve the written response to the new draft plan [enclosed]. Agreed.
- 15.10.3 Dilapidated seat and notice board at Westland Green.** Cllr Purvis said that in the past the Council had agreed not to use the badly decayed noticeboard and instead to use email to send out notices and agendas. A resident had offered to make a replacement noticeboard. Cllr Purvis said that he had never seen anyone sitting on the seat. The seat would be very difficult to repair. Cllr Purvis said that he would consult local residents and present a proposal at the November meeting.
- 15.10.4 War memorial.** The Chairman presented a letter to Herts Highways [enclosed] asking that the county take some responsibility for replacing the surround wall to the war memorial and proposed that it be sent in the Council's name. Agreed.
- 15.10.5 Department of Health Change4Life initiative.** Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that the initiative was from the NHS to encourage young people to take part in physical activity. She proposed that the Council should become a partner, at no cost, so that it would receive details of events that could be promoted within the parish. Agreed.
- 15.10.6 Consultation on the making and enforcement of byelaws.** The Chairman said that the Dept of Communities and Local Government was proposing that local councils should have more powers to pass and enforce new byelaws. He would prepare a response for the Council to consider at the November meeting.

15.11 Clerk's Report

15.11.1 Financial statement

Period ending 7th October 2008

Barclay's Bank C/Acc		£11,154.64
High Rate BP Acc		£5.18
BP Acc		£169.63
Petty cash		£27.31
	Total	£11,356.76

Include above

Received

EHC - Second half precept [received 25/9/08]		£5,942.00
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Uncleared cheque

Alzheimer's Society in memory of Mr Tom Feather		£50.00
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To be approved for payment

Green Barnes Ltd - noticeboard	[Paid 23/9/08]		£1,357.14
Mr B Evans	P/Clerk - (Sept)	£289.69	
	Exp (Sept)	£18.59	£308.28
Mrs K Green	Grass & bins (Sept)		£43.11
Miss A Windmill	Litter picking (Sept)		£97.53
HM Customs & Excise	PAYE		£217.20
EHC	Allotment rents		£20.00
CPRE	Annual subscription		£28.00
BDO Stoy Hayward LLP	Auditors		£470.00
Mower Services - Grass cutting	September		£244.40
	Total payments		£2,835.66

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £8,521.10

15.11.2 Proposed to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

15.11.3 Proposed to accept the accuracy of the financial statement. Proposed Cllr Mrs Piccolo, seconded Cllr Purvis. Agreed.

15.11.4 To approve the completion of the external audit and to consider any recommendations. There were no recommendations. Agreed.

15.12 Democratic 10 minutes

The meeting closed at 9:40 p.m.

A resident asked why the anomalous 30MPH signs on Chapel Lane had not been sorted out. Cllr Morris said that the signs 150m from the C15 were legal. The signs near New Road should have been removed. Cllr Bayes said that she would speak to Herts Highways again. The Clerk was asked to write if the matter was not resolved. The resident said that road vehicles were driving off the edge of the road and damaging drainage ditches.

The resident also said that builders' waste had been fly tipped into a field at Westland Green though he was unsure who owned the field.

A resident reported a blocked gully outside Ash Farm on the Standon Road. Cllr Morris said that he had reported it. Cllr Bayes said that she would take up the matter.

The meeting reopened at 9:47 p.m.

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

15.14 **Correspondence.** The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant councillors
SSE Newsletter

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15.15 Any other business. Cllr Morris spoke of signs appearing on the A120. In particular one advertising logs. The Clerk advised that unauthorized fly posting should be removed.

15.16 Date of the next meeting Tuesday 4th November 2008.

15.17 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:50 p.m.

Appendix 1

Statement to be read by Mr Graham Farrant at the start of his oral evidence to the enquiry into the EERA policy on Gypsy and Traveler sites.

“My comments today are on behalf of myself, as a resident of Little Hadham; Little Hadham Conservation Society, of which I am a committee member; and Hadham Hall Management Company, of which I am chairman.

The principal point I am making, namely that there is insufficient evidence to justify the case for an arbitrary allocation of additional pitches across each district, is also supported by the evidence submitted by Little Hadham Parish Council.

However, I am not a member of the parish council and therefore not qualified to represent its views but two members of the council are here if it is considered helpful to involve them in discussion or expand on the council’s written submission.”

Appendix 2

Response to EERA on latest draft of the regional plan

Dear Sirs

East of England Plan: draft project plan and statement of public participation

Little Hadham Parish Council re-states its opposition to the scale of development proposed and the timescale both for the process of consultation and the Plan itself.

Our position was set out in our letter to the East of England Regional Assembly dated 7 March 2005 and our response of March 2007 to the draft revision to the RSS. In those responses we highlighted:

- Unjustified employment forecasts resulting in unsustainable housing provision
- A threat to Green Belt that would change the character of the region
- Over-reliance on the expansion of Stansted Airport: now subject to major question marks over ownership, the future of leisure-based aviation and the consequences for the regional economy
- Pressure on road and rail infrastructure to support the Plan
- Insufficient water supply: recently underlined by the current consultation by Three Valleys Water
- The threat to Little Hadham by the unsustainable nature of planned development North of Harlow. We support the opposition expressed by STOP Harlow North

We also note – and support – the legal challenge mounted by Herts County Council and believe that any further development of the plan should be put into abeyance until that challenge is responded to.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3 Letter concerning the war memorial

Dear Mr Kyan

Re. Surround wall to Little Hadham war memorial

The enclosed photographs show the latest example of damage to the wall of the war memorial in Little Hadham. This is further evidence that the condition of the wall represents a traffic hazard.

When the war memorial was built in 1920, Ford Hill was a track that carried little more than horse drawn farm traffic. Today Ford Hill is a busy road that carries numerous cars and many large heavy lorries. The war memorial has become a traffic island subject to heavy vibration and frequent collisions from road vehicles. The surround wall is constructed of York stone and as a result, slabs are easily dislodged. This can result in slabs being thrown into the carriageway, creating a danger to traffic. The hazard is worse in poor visibility and during the winter months. You will be aware that because Ford Hill is part of the rat run used by traffic avoiding the A120, traffic on this road is heavy at peak times.

In addition to increasing the risk of accidents, the deteriorating condition of the wall detracts from the appearance of the green surrounding the Little Hadham war memorial, an important focal point of the village and the site of the annual Remembrance Day ceremony.

Twice recently we have requested assistance from the Herts Highways in replacing the wall with, for example, granite kerbstones. The cost of doing so is beyond the financial means of a small parish council like Little Hadham, in particular because we are advised that an expensive traffic management system would be needed during construction.

The Council requests that Herts Highways re-examines the possibility of replacing the wall or providing a significant contribution towards the cost. As the memorial has become a traffic island it might be more appropriate for the surround wall to be adopted by the County Council and maintained by it at the public expense. Previous attempts to 'patch and make do' have failed. Total replacement – in keeping with the historical nature of this part of the village – is the only sustainable solution. A further consideration is that the work might enable the wall to be set back slightly and the road made marginally wider and therefore safer at what is a partially blind junction.

The Council hopes that you will look favourably on this proposal.

Yours sincerely