

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the twenty-eighth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 at 8.16 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mr J Purvis** **Vice Chairman**
 Mrs C Piccolo)
 Mrs M Wilkinson) **Councillors**
 Mr G Williamson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 12 members of the public.

28.1 Public session.

There were no questions or comments.

28.2 **Absent.** Cllr Morris [Away on business].

28.3 **Declarations of interest.** None.

28.4 **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting** held on Tuesday 1st December 2009 had been previously circulated. The minutes were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Williamson and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson.

28.5 **Council vacancies.** The Clerk said that no resident had requested an election so the Council was in the process of co-opting two members.

Action
BE

28.6 Road matters.

28.6.1 List of outstanding repairs. Cllr Purvis said that he had spoken to the Herts Highways officer responsible for local roads. The officer would send him details of outstanding repairs in the parish before the next meeting. However the county is currently focused on repairing potholes. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that the repair of the pothole near the top of Ford Hill would have to wait for warmer weather as it was continually being filled with water from the fields.

Action
JP

28.6.2 **Failure of the timing system for the traffic lights.** Cllr Purvis said that the sequencing of the lights seemed to be have been corrected. More cars were being let through from the side roads though people were still jumping the lights.

28.7 **Bus shelters.** Cllr Williamson said that plans had been made for repair of the bus shelters. He was waiting for warmer, drier weather.

Action
GW

28.8 **HCC Waste Core Strategy and Development Policies Consultation.** Cllr Mrs Wilkinson proposed that the response, previously circulated, be retrospectively agreed [Appendix 1]. Agreed.

28.9 **HCC Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation.** Cllr Mrs Wilkinson proposed that the response, previously circulated, be retrospectively agreed [Appendix 2]. Agreed.

28.10 Red telephone kiosks.

28.10.1 **Progress with adoption including electricity payment.** The Clerk reported that he had applied for the Council to adopt the kiosks at The Ford and Bury Green though he had yet to receive confirmation. He had had to obtain an MPAN in order to pay for the electricity to the kiosks which was estimated to cost £250 pa for each kiosk. It was agreed that the Clerk should try to have the power disconnected before

Action
BE

adoption. If this was not possible the power should be disconnected as soon as possible.

- 28.10.2 Arrangements for the use and maintenance of the kiosks.** Cllr Williamson said that a number of people had volunteered to help maintain the kiosks. The kiosk at The Ford had been recently repainted though that at Bury Green was in poor repair. It was agreed that the kiosks be a regular agenda item in order for the Council to monitor progress. Action
GW
- 28.11 Police matters.** Cllr Mrs Wilkinson said that she had spoken to the local constable concerning vehicle jumping the A120 traffic lights. The constable had said that she would try to monitor the lights, including speeding and light jumping, on a weekly basis.
- 28.12 Chairman's report.**
- 28.12.1 Dog fouling on parish pavements.** Cllr Purvis said that the Council had received an email complaining of dogs being allowed to foul the pavements. Cllr Purvis said that the Council had considered dog bins in the past and had decided that the cost was too great. Those allowing their dogs to foul the pavement were unlikely to use the bins. Cllr Williamson agreed to write a notice for inclusion in the Parish News. Action
GW
- 28.12.2 Trimming of the willow trees at the Ford.** The Clerk said that he had received a request from residents at The Ford for the Council to pay for a number of willow trees between the river and the bridle path to be trimmed. The owner of the land could not be identified and the residents had been advised that, as the Council had trimmed the trees in the past, it was responsible for doing so now. The Clerk said that he had sought legal advice from HATPC on whether the Council was responsible. The advice was that the Council was not obliged to pay for the trimming – in fact it would be unlawful for it to do so as it would be to the benefit of individuals rather than all residents or a group of residents. The residents had since amended their request to asking the Council to share the cost with them. However the Clerk said that his advice was that, having received the legal advice, it should not pay towards the cost. Agreed.
- 28.12.3 Request to use Bury Green for a wedding reception.** Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that the Council had received a request for a wedding reception to be held in a marquee on Bury Green. On principle she thought this was a good idea though she was concerned that other residents should be in agreement and that vehicles should not drive on the green in wet weather. She wondered if a returnable deposit might be a good idea and whether a donation should be made to the Parish Plan Group. It was agreed that Cllr Mrs Piccolo should speak to the people making the request. Action
CP
- 28.12.4 Parish Assembly Thursday 22nd April 2010.** Cllr Purvis asked for suggestions for possible speakers – Mrs Stockley Head of the village school, local police, HCC spokesman on the bypass, EHC spokesman on recycling, Mr J Forgham on biodiversity, EHC on call for sites and Mr R Beckett on local charities. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that she would advertise for local business owners to make a display concerning their business for the assembly. Action
BE CP

28.13 Clerk's Report

28.13.1 Financial statement

Period ending 2nd February 2010		
Barclay's Bank C/Acc		£8,990.05
StepSaver BP Acc		£5.19
BP Acc		£169.92
Petty cash		£31.95
	Total	£9,197.11

Included above

Received

EHC - grant for war memorial £150.00

Uncleared cheque

Mrs T Northcote Donation £25.00

To be approved by the Council

Received

Mr S Stigwood Westland Green rent £300.00

To be paid

Mr B Evans	P/Clerk - (Jan)	£316.01	
	Exp (Jan)	£25.21	£341.22
Mrs K Green	Grass & bins (Jan)		£44.40
Miss A Windmill	Litter picking (Jan)		£97.53
Little Hadham PCC - contribution to Parish News			£95.00
Royal British Legion - surplus war memorial donations			£90.00
CDA for Herts - annual subscription			£30.00
Little Hadham Village Hall	Rent		£50.61
	Total payments		£748.76

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £8,723.35

28.13.2 Proposed to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

28.13.3 Proposed to accept the accuracy of the financial statement. Proposed Cllr Williamson, seconded Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Agreed.

28.13.4 Council Risk Assessment and arrangements for Internal Audit. Cllr Purvis proposed that the Risk Assessment and arrangements for Internal Audit of the Council, that the Clerk had previously circulated, be accepted for the coming year. Agreed. Cllr Mrs Wilkinson said that she was willing to serve on the internal audit work party.

28.14 Democratic 10 minutes.

A resident complained that it was often difficult to hear as the councillors were saying and requested that they face the audience.

A resident thought that a charge of £5,000 should be made for using Bury Green for a wedding reception – similar to what other venues charge. He wondered about toilet arrangements. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that they wanted to use the green so that a sick relative could attend. Cllr Purvis said the matter was in hand.

A resident said that people became impatient waiting for the lights when drivers in front of them were not paying attention and missed their opportunity to drive through.

A resident asked about a digger being used in the field behind Ashcroft Farm. The Clerk said that the digger was not in the field with planning permission for houses.

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

- 28.16 Correspondence.** The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant members.
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| Clerk's and Council's Direct magazine | AM |
| HCC – Transport services for disabled, older people and those with limited mobility. | CP |
| CPRE Fieldwork magazine. | MW |
| HAPTC newsletter | JP/AM |
| NALC magazine | AM |
| CDA for Herts newsletter | CP |
- 28.17 Any other business.** None
- 28.18 Date of the next meeting Tuesday 2nd March 2010.**
- 28.19 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:13 p.m.**

Appendix 1 Response to HCC consultation on waste disposal

This document was discussed at the meeting of Little Hadham Parish Council held on Tuesday 1st December 2009.

The Council believes that the real solution to waste disposal lies with the reduction of waste creation at source and in the recycling of as much of the unavoidable waste as possible.

HCC, together with the national government, should work with retailers and manufactures to reduce packaging and other waste and to make them responsible for the collection and recycling of empty containers, redundant equipment, etc. Retailers have to collect redundant fridges, etc. and this should be extended to other items. This will encourage retailers and manufacturers to reduce the volume of waste created and to make the materials in redundant objects easier to recycle.

The Council should educate local people to change their shopping habits to avoid over packaged goods and even consider whether they really need to buy some things at all. We need to move away from a society that wastes the world's resources and creates vast quantities of waste that has to be disposed of.

HCC must increase its efforts to collect more waste for recycling. There should be recycling centres near every community – the nearest depot to Little Hadham is 4 or 5 miles away on the other side of Bishop's Stortford. The Council is pleased that East Herts Council is collecting more recycling materials from homes though too much is still going to waste.

The Council accepts that there will still be some materials that it is not economic to recycle. Neither of the available alternatives is attractive.

Landfill sites are unsightly, noisy, smelly places that attract vermin when in use – no one wants one near their home. When full they release green house gases into the air and potentially allow toxins to leach into the water table. There are few landfill sites left and the government is discouraging their use by taxation. The only thing to be said about landfill sites is that they are only used for a finite time and landscaping can help soften their appearance once they are closed.

Incinerators greatly reduce the volume of waste for final disposal and the heat can be used to generate some useful energy. Modern incinerators can burn waste at a high enough temperature to destroy toxic chemicals such a dioxins. Filters should remove almost all solids from the flue gases such as heavy metals. However large quantities of carbon dioxide are released.

The Council reluctantly supports the use of incinerators over landfill. No one would willingly want an incinerator near their home but it is unreasonable for us to expect our rubbish to be taken away without accepting some responsibility for its disposal.

HCC must convince local people that an incinerator would cause no danger to the health of them and their unborn children. When an incinerator is new it is likely to be very efficient and its fumes will be carefully monitored. As time passes the plant is likely to become less efficient and those running the plant may become less vigilant about pollution. HCC needs to convince local people that they have an ongoing scheme for monitoring the incinerator's output. The monitoring should be independent of the company running the plant and the results should be made public.

The Council is not convinced about HCC's intention to be open with the public about their proposals. You have to search very hard through the document to find any mention of incinerators – the word 'incinerator' is not used. People are understandably concerned about the risk of pollution from an incinerator and HCC must demonstrate that it is willing to be open and honest about any problems.

Appendix 2 Response to HCC Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

The report is very long and gives most time and effort to describing the situation as it is, which has a value, but makes the report very long and thus I would question the cost and the value of the report. Who will read this "general document" with very "soft" targets and what value does it serve other than ticking the box to say it is done and will not prove an exacting master to the Council to achieve its targets. It does not come out with any objectives for sustainability that could make a difference to the amount of carbon produced and improve the quality of life for residents. It describes what we have and repeats general themes on sustainability, green spaces etc without give real "meat" to possible responses to the situation ahead.

One of the crisis situations we have is our natural water courses, our rivers, which are mostly drying up, because of the over pumping of water in this area and swift run off of rain water. There is a fairly simple solution to both of these issues. Slow down rain fall run off by having small ponds in farmer's fields, these are very cheap to create, give lots of areas for nature to prosper, a haven for frogs, newts, damsel flies etc. Porous parking and hard standing areas in towns slows down the water runoff as do "green roofs" and add to a much better street scene with reduced mid summer temperatures and more areas for nature to prosper. Basically we use far more water than we should if we want to have rivers and underground water systems half of it is wasted flushing toilets, rainwater should be used directly for this. We need to ensure no more large-scale housing is built in the area, but the report does not state this obvious fact nor does it suggest any of the above fairly basic ideas that I support.

Local Sports Facilities

We have very poor sports facilities in many towns but our planners turn down applications for very viable projects, (a Hockey all weather facility in Bishops Stortford, a Swimming pool for public use in Much Hadham,) just to quote two that I know of, but the report does not state sports facilities should be a priority . Local Sports facilities give local communities a focus, reducing the need to travel miles to enjoy sports and are healthy pursuits.

Housing

They have not researched sustainable housing in the area, I know of two projects that are both very energy efficient (one on EHDC website so not research needed!) and show how housing can easily be built that does not need central heating, but no mention is made of these houses. Houses built this way reduce carbon emissions to minute amounts and can in fact be carbon

positive, producing more energy than they use this is possible now! They talk about only 2 pv applications, in East Herts but we have one on the house we have so I suspect the true level is much higher than quoted.

They could look at basic needs in new housing to have vegetable patches. This one change would ensure houses are not squashed together, people would have a means of producing their own food, thus reducing packaging, shopping and driving and giving people a healthy interesting home based project!

Transport

Proper cycle lanes to me are a vital way of reducing reliance on cars. These are not mentioned. By proper cycle lanes I refer to cycle lanes that are separate from roads, free of the fear of being run over by cars and free of pollution of car exhausts. These can be upgraded bridle ways in many cases so already exist. Children could then cycle to school and adults cycle to work and shopping, what a wonderful resource for us all! This would increase our opportunity for healthy pursuits as well.

Air Quality

In my experience when we report people who persist in burning plastic on bonfires, the Environment Health department at EHDC are fairly unhelpful, but no response from EHDC results in people continuing with this anti social behaviour. For example it could easily be a condition of planning applications. I know that many new building projects where the builders have daily bonfires, burning their plastic and other combustible waste thus producing toxic air quality for the neighbours. I live in Westland Green and my neighbour is often burning plastic and I know of other areas in Stortford where burning happens on a weekly basis but when reported to the Environment Department nothing happens, there is always some reason given why they cannot act! This is very sad, as people will not stop burning unless encouraged to learn that the sky is not a big dustbin. If the Council changed and enforced no burning of plastic this would greatly enhance air quality. These bonfires produce far more toxins in the air than licensed incinerators.

I am sorry not to be enthusiastic over this report but to me it is a typical council document, long, expensive and basically pointless. If one were cynical it could be said that it has been produced to tick a box to say it is done with no "hard" targets only "soft" ones that the Council will achieve, rather than a document that could make a difference! We can make a difference, stop building loads of houses in this area, improve the efficiency of housing stock, ensure all new houses are passiv haus standard. Encourage lots of small rain water sink areas, encourage people to have "green roofs", have more electric charging points for electric cars, have good, safe cycle paths. We have been able to build passiv haus houses for 10 years – they do not need standard space heating systems!!!! All new house to have vegetable plots, all new houses to have solar panels and p.v.s., support wind turbines applications especially community projects. Be positive for applications for Sports Centres, stop building flats, bring land back into growing local food not corn, encourage people back on the land, improve our food security by growing and eating locally produced food. It's not that difficult. This report will not halt climate change. The crisis is here!