

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the Thirty-eighth meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council (2007 – 2011 Session) held on Tuesday 1st February 2011 at 8.36 p.m. in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:	Mr A Morris	Chairman
	Mr J Forgham)
	Mrs C Piccolo)
	Mr J Purvis) Councillors
	Mr G Williamson)
	Mrs M Wilkinson)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 16 member of the public.

38.1 Public session.

A resident spoke about the damage caused by off roaders using the unrestricted byway across Westland Green. The Green was covered in unsightly ruts that made walking difficult and the use of a bicycle or baby buggy impossible. The vehicles were likely to be causing damage to the ecology of the Green. She urged the Council to take action.

A resident spoke of the flooding of his, and others, gardens in Lloyd Taylor Close as well as ‘Spindle Hill’ on Stortford Road. The water came from a ditch running across nearby farmland. The resident said that EHC were responsible for the matter and that they had contacted the local land owners with proposals to slow the flow of water at times of high rainfall. However the landowners were unwilling to allow the work to be carried out and EHC had suggested that the Parish Council might write to them in the interest of local residents. Mr Stephen Stigwood said that he owned one of the farms the ditch crossed. The proposal from EHC was to pass the water from the ditch through a narrow gauge pipe. At times of high rainfall this would cause up to 2 acres of his land to flood with the resultant loss of some of the crop for which there would be no compensation. The Clerk said that Mr Stephenson of EHC had spoken to him about the matter. He had hoped that the Council might be able to persuade the landowners to allow the flood alleviation measures though there was no money in the budget to pay compensation.

38.2 Absent. Cllr Gregory [previous engagement].

38.3 Declarations of interest. None.

38.4 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 7th December 2010 had been previously circulated. The minutes were agreed as accurate. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Piccolo and seconded by Cllr Williamson.

38.5 Matters arising from the minutes.

38.5.1 Refurbishment of the village noticeboard. Cllr Mrs Piccolo said that Mr Tim Mearing had completed the work and she proposed that his invoice for £45 be paid. She noted that Mr Mearing had only charged for materials and she thanked him for his contribution to the community. Agreed.

38.6 Damage caused to Westland Green by ‘off roaders’.

38.6.1 Cllr Purvis read a paper, previously circulated to councillors, concerning the damage to Westland Green caused by 4x4 vehicles. [Appendix 1].

38.6.2 Cllr Purvis proposed that the Council request HCC to reinstate the byway across Westland Green and take measures to stop vehicles from straying onto the Green. Agreed.

38.7 Playgrounds.

38.7.1 Programme of work to correct matters arising from the latest playground inspection. Cllr Williamson said that he would organise a work party when the weather improved. Action
GW

38.7.2 Quotation from SPM Playgrounds for repairs to play apparatus. Cllr Williamson said that the quote from SMP Playgrounds for repairs to the aerial runway and roundabout was for about £9,000 – far more than the Council could afford. However, he noted that the repairs were labelled as ‘low risk’ by the inspector so repairs were not urgent. The Clerk said that he had written to Mr Trevor Waldock at EHC. It was agreed that the Council would await Mr Waldock’s advice. Action
Clerk

38.7.3 Hedge cutting. Cllr Mrs Wilkinson presented quotations from two contractors for cutting the playground hedges. The Clerk said that he would like consider them together with the current contractor. Action
Clerk

38.8 Road matters.

38.8.1 List of outstanding repairs. Cllr Purvis said there was nothing to report. However he encouraged residents to report road damage to Herts Highways as soon as it appeared. From the floor a resident spoke of flooding at Pig Green, Westland Green. She said that EHC were responsible. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact EHC. Action
Clerk

38.8.2 Damage to the Cradle End to The Ford road. Cllr Mrs Piccolo reported a conversation she had had with a Herts Highways officer concerning the damage to the roads verges caused by excessive traffic using the road as a rat run. There were a number of options but none of them was likely to bring much improvement. The Chairman asked Cllr Mrs Piccolo to prepare a report on the matter for consideration at the next meeting. Agreed. Action
CP

38.9 Parish Plan Group.

38.9.1 Cllr Mrs Piccolo said the Fun Run would be on Sunday 12th June 2011.

38.9.2 Little Hadham Ecology Survey. Cllr Forgham said that he had found a cheaper commercial printer for the survey. He hoped that copies of the survey would be available by the end of February.

38.10 Telephone kiosk. To consider a request to hold an art exhibition. Cllr Forgham said that he had been in contact with Mrs Flynn who wanted to use the kiosk to exhibit some of her art work – mainly textiles. The exhibition could be on the day of the Fun Run. He would keep councillors informed of any developments. Action
JF

38.11 HCC consultation on school transport. Cllr Williamson said that he had an interest as he worked for HCC transport. Cllr Forgham said that he had contacted the heads of local schools but had received no response. He proposed that the Council did not respond to the consultation. Agreed.

38.12 Chairman’s report.

38.12.1 Parish Assembly Thursday 21st April 2011. Cllr Mrs Piccolo proposed that local clubs and societies be invited to put on a display. Agreed. Action
CP

38.12.2 Flooding at Lloyd Taylor Close. Cllr Mrs Wilkinson said that the flooding sounded dreadful. The Chairman proposed that he should arrange a meeting with Mr Stephenson of EHC to find out the facts of the matter. Agreed. Action
AM

38.12.3 Former Cllr Mary Bayes. The Chairman reported the sad death of Cllr Bayes who had worked hard for the community for many years. She would be missed.

38.12.4 New houses at Ashcroft Farm. The Chairman noted that a new fence erected by the new houses might restrict the free flow of water leading to flooding near the A120 traffic lights. He said that he would send the Clerk a photograph of the fence and asked that he report the matter to the Environment Agency. Agreed.

Action
AM
Clerk

38.13 Clerk's Report

38.13.1 Financial statement

Period ending 1st February 2011

Barclay's Bank C/Acc	£12,419.46
StepSaver BP Acc	£5.19
BP Acc	£170.00
Petty cash	£0.29

Total £12,594.94

Uncleared cheques

Mr A Purvis - litter picking (December)	£101.59
HM Revenue and Customs - PAYE	£237.40
EHC - election charge for May 2007	£127.02

Total uncleared £466.01

To be agreed for payment

Mr B Evans	P/Clerk - (January)	£315.61	
	Exp (January)	£19.20	£334.81
Mrs K Green	Grass cutting & bins (January)		£44.40
Mr A Purvis	Litter picking (January)		£101.59
Little Hadham PCC - contribution to Parish News			£95.00
Little Hadham Village Hall - Use of Hall Oct to Dec			£50.61

Total payments £626.41

Total in all accounts and petty cash after payment of this month's bills £11,502.52

38.13.2 Proposed to accept payment of accounts. Agreed.

38.13.3 Proposed to accept the accuracy of the financial statement. Proposed Cllr Mrs Wilkinson, seconded Cllr Mrs Piccolo. Agreed.

38.13.4 Council Risk Assessment and arrangements for Internal Audit. The Clerk referred to the Council risk assessment that had been previously circulated to councillors and proposed that it be accepted for the next year. Agreed. The Clerk invited a small work party to conduct an internal audit at his home to ensure that the work of the Council was being carried out correctly. Agreed.

38.14 Democratic 10 minutes.

There were no questions or comments.

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

38.16 Correspondence. The Clerk distributed items of correspondence to relevant members.

CPRE Newsletter	CP
NALC LRC magazine	AM
The Royal British Legion – Poppy Party Weekend	CP
Clerks & Councils Direct magazine	AM

38.17 Date of the next meeting Tuesday 1st March 2011.

38.18 The Chairman closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:15 p.m.

Appendix 1 Cllr Purvis's paper on Little Hadham Byway open to all Traffic [BOAT] 10 – Westland Green

Over the Xmas and New Year period, the byway across the green in Westland Green has been heavily used by a number of recreational 4 x 4 vehicles. This has resulted in deep ruts, some three vehicles widths wide across the green and the 4 x 4 vehicles now drive further into the green and away from the path of the byway to avoid the deepest of ruts. Many times the 4 x 4's have got stuck and then arrive "en masse" to execute an extraction, this also serves to increase the damage across the green. It is now dangerous underfoot with residents complaining that they can't walk, cycle, push buggies, etc. across the green and are unable to get their horses out of the adjoining fields. One of the residents was told to "f... off" when she confronted one of the 4 x 4 drivers, who had got stuck on the green. It is only these 4 x 4 recreational users who make use of this byway and when they do, they also deposit large amounts of mud on the road at a point where the 30 mph speed restriction starts and just before a blind bend, which in itself is a danger.

On 7th January, I had a meeting with Nicholas Maddex, the Countryside Access officer at Hertfordshire County Council to discuss possible management steps to reduce the impact of the 4 x 4 vehicles using the byway and the misuse of the green and these were the options proffered by him:

- Ask the official 4 x 4 groups to offer voluntary restraint – unlikely to be successful, since it only takes one group to use the byway for the damage to be done
- Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO), which would require evidence that the byway was incorrectly labelled – unlikely to be successful, since we do not have such evidence
- Public Path Extinguishment Order (PPO), where we would aim to prove that it is no longer required as a byway – unlikely to be successful, since it would only need one person to say that they use the byway for the PPO to fail
- Permanent Traffic Regulation Order (PTRO), this would prevent the use of motorised vehicles along the byway either permanently or at specific periods of the year on grounds such as safety and/or environmental factors. These are only made after alternative measures have been tried, which might include signage and surfacing.

Nicholas suggested a possible way forward as follows:

- Resurface the byway across the green to a width of 2 or 3 metres as an unsealed surface. This would effectively be a firm surface made up using reconstituted materials with a top soil covering and then seeded.
- Temporary closure of the byway for a 6 month or 1 year period to allow the resurfacing to become established.
- Provide signage to show the route of the byway and state that driving across the green, off of the byway, is trespass.

Nicholas indicated that he would be willing to consider an application for the above work, temporary closure and signage. It is not clear if the infrastructure of the green would support this resurfacing once it was being used again but so far this seems the only way forward identified to date. The Parish Council would also need to consider how it might restore the surface to the green alongside the byway.