

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 119th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 10th April 2014 at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present: **Mr J Forgham** **Chairman**
 Mr G Pearson)
 Mr G Williamson) **Councillors**
 Ms W Woodgate)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 73 members of the public.

1. Little Hadham Primary School – Mrs Liz Stockley and School Captain Anna

Mrs Stockley's report was accompanied by a visual presentation listing the awards the school had gained during the year and those they were working towards.

- Gold county Travel Plan: this is designed to work with the Highways Dept. to try to support the rather tricky location of Little Hadham School. Parents and children are encouraged to walk to school and with help with funding from the award, a gazebo has been erected so that parents can wait sheltered from the rain and sun.
- Healthy Schools Award: the school has a tuck shop which sells only raisins and no sweets.
- School Games Bronze Award: the school belongs to the Bishop's Stortford Partnership which encourages children to take part in many sports including golf and cricket. Under the leadership of Mrs Nicklin the pupils are organised into a Sports Crew where older children encourage younger ones in such activities as football skills. The school is working towards the Gold Award.
- Get Set School: this was in preparation for the Olympics in 2012. The legacy of this was a class trip to the Olympic park to watch the Paralympics.
- Excellent East: the school is an accredited centre for this charity which advises and supports activities for gifted and talented students. A number of enrichment days has been organised, the most recent being a French Day.
- ICT accredited school: a lot of time has been spent gathering evidence and producing portfolios in order to assure creditors that the school was ICT skilled. The school has lots of support and local resources now and the children have their own laptops for lessons.
- Eco Schools Bronze Award: Under the leadership of Mrs Brown the latest activity held in the last week of term was an attempt to reach the next level which was the Silver Award. The children were encouraged to bring in empty plastic bottles in order to build a "Bottle Mountain". The bottles were then taken to be recycled.
- National Thinking School: Little Hadham is very proud to be just one of only fifty seven Thinking Schools in the country and one of the four in Hertfordshire. The aim is to cover all activities which encourage children to think. To help this different coloured thinking hats are displayed on the walls of the school. The School Captain Anna's favourite was the green hat which denotes creative thinking such as making up stories.
- Fair Trade Achiever Award: this is one of the latest awards and Little Hadham is now a Fair Trade School. In February the school celebrated a Fair Trade Fortnight with the Fair Trade Team organising competitions, a coffee morning, raffles and a football game. On the last day everyone was encouraged to "wear trainers for fair trade". As part of this the children brought in £1.00 in exchange for a badge.

- Herts Anti-Bullying Initiative: the school is about to hear after the Easter Holidays if it has been accredited. There is not necessarily a problem with bullying but the school has to be aware and put in place strategies for dealing with it should it arise.

Mrs Stockley added that it was not just achieving these awards that was important, but the journeys towards these goals. Apart from the Eco School Silver Award they were also working towards the Equalities Award and the bronze International Schools Award which promoted international links.

Mrs Stockley concluded that she was very proud of Little Hadham Primary School and all the pupils.

2. Little Hadham By-Pass- Hertfordshire County Council- Cllr Graham McAndrew and Damian Higgins

East Herts councillor Graham McAndrew introduced the presentation. He thought people were not entirely clear about what was going to happen concerning the A120 By-Pass and directed everyone to the web site [www.hertsdirect.org/A120 Bypass Little Hadham](http://www.hertsdirect.org/A120BypassLittleHadham) which shows the exact route, a time line for what is going to happen and sources of funding.

Damian Higgins (HCC representative) then gave more details about the project which was first discussed in 1971 in order to alleviate the congestion at Little Hadham. Work on gathering data for the present scheme was begun in 2006 with the final design being ratified in 2008. This plan not only included a solution to the traffic congestion and a reduction in journey times but also a scheme to alleviate the flooding problem in conjunction with the Environment Agency.

The 2008 design which starts 300 metres west of the Tesco roundabout curves in an arc northwards before joining the old A120 road just west of Tile Kiln Cottages. It is this route on which a bid for funding can be made. Most of the funding will be coming from two sources, the local transport body and the local enterprise partnership. Once the bid is approved, which should be by May 2014, the planning application can go ahead. This is due in January 2015 at which time people will be encouraged to make their comments known. The route chosen is thought to present the least severance to the village.

The total cost of the bypass at this point is £29.86 million with £18.5 million coming from the local districts and parishes and is the county's priority in terms of highway projects. If plans go ahead the majority of the construction will take place in 2018 to 2019.

Flood modelling is still work in progress as much of the data collected initially is now out of date and the most recent flooding data (Spring 2014) needs to be included. A number of road surveys are also currently taking place. These will look at the volume and type of traffic and the platooning effect on traffic caused by the pinch point at Little Hadham through to Puckeridge and Standon.

Highways drainage will be kept separate from flooding drainage so the two do not mix.

Mr Higgins concluded that all stakeholders, for example landowners and Hadham Hall residents, would be kept informed of the project's progress.

A question was then raised about noise levels at Albury End but as no data was available the questioner was directed to the website. The length of time traffic surveys were in place was also queried; on average this is two weeks.

When asked what the biggest risk of the project was not going ahead no problems were anticipated. However any change in the plans would result in the project not proceeding and dropping down the list of highway priorities.

3. Policing in Little Hadham- Sgt Duncan Wallace accompanied by PC Nicky Hunt

After an eventful year in 2012 with the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Sgt Wallace said that they had been looking forward to a much calmer 2013. This had not happened and policing in rural East Herts had been just as busy. The focus for the year had been on crime reduction and this had been achieved in Little Hadham right up until two days in December 2013 when there were a number of burglary related offences. This had prompted quite a response from the rural team with firearms, dogs and traffic support. A police presence during nights in January resulted in arrests and brought an end to the spike in the criminality figures.

Nationally Herts maintains its performance being in the top five in the country for low recorded crime. Rural crime is however increasingly difficult to detect once it has happened and it is much easier and more effective to put resources into preventing crime before it happens. Crime in town centres is much easier follow up because of the installation of CCTV and with a larger population there is a greater potential for witnesses.

Little Hadham as well as Puckeridge and Much Hadham suffered badly from the flooding on February 7th, 2014 and Sgt Wallace commended the community on their ability to pull together and help each other at the time. He reminded parishioners that there was to be a "drop in centre" at the Village Hall on April 24th, 2014 at 4pm about the flooding with representatives from the Environment Agency and police attending.

Issues concerning the infringement of the traffic lights in Little Hadham will continue to receive attention where resources allow. Queries about the phasing of the lights have been put to the Highways Dept. An audit of the lights has shown that they are working totally in line with specifications.

In April David Lloyd the local Police commissioner visited the area which is overseen by six constables and six PCSO's and confirmed that rural Policing is now recorded as part of the Strategic Policing Plan for 2014-2015. There will also be collaboration between Herts, Beds and Cambridge in the fire arms, dog sections and road policies ensuring economies of scale.

4. Annual report of the Little Hadham Charity- Richard Beckett

The bequest for this charity goes back to the eighteenth century where money derived from shares left by parishioner John Hammond, was distributed to the elderly poor of the parish and also used to maintain the benefactor's tomb in St Cecilia's churchyard.

The shares were then sold and a field was purchased in Bury Green and the income from this was then given to the needy in the parish.

Six years ago this field was sold and the proceeds were then invested in a share portfolio which is now managed by a firm of stock brokers.

Each year the trustees Richard Beckett, Eileen Booth and Colin Brookbanks consult about who should receive the money based on age and long term residency in Little Hadham, Bury Green, Cradle End or Westland Green. Just before Christmas money is distributed; in 2012 twenty three people received £40 each and in 2013 twenty people received £50 each.

5. The Parish Plan Group- Chairman Mike Smith

Mike Smith reported that The Parish Plan Group has several projects in hand for 2014 to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

There are plans to brighten up the village at by planting Flanders poppy seeds at The Ford, Bury Green and the school and other appropriate places. Free seeds and advice on planting and care of the poppies will be available to volunteers from Karin Green and the Gardening Club, who have agreed to manage the project.

The major event of the year is centred on the research which has been carried out on the soldiers whose names appear on the Little Hadham War Memorial. Maggie Smith has put together a dramatic review reflecting the impact of the war on the lives of people in the parish and how the war years changed the world. A local archive written by Frederick Harris between 1910 and 1920 has been used to establish where these soldiers lived in the village but even so there is very little personal information about individuals. One photograph has been traced from the Hertfordshire Mercury and can be found on the website for the Thiepval War Memorial in France. Other photographs, which have been tracked down, show village scenes and interesting personal messages but are not directly linked to the soldiers. To help with further research the names on the Little Hadham War Memorial will be published in the Parish News in the near future. This might jog the memories of local family historians who might be able to add to the information already gathered. There are some names of soldiers who died, which do not appear on the war memorial for several reasons. For example one widow returned with her child to her home village and her husband's name appears on that war memorial.

It is hoped that Frederick Harris's memoirs will be published in book form to coincide with the show, which will take place on August 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 2014. At the performances the audience will sit at tables of 6-8 and will be served with food appropriate to the time. A beer brewed according to the tradition of the period will also be served.

6. Little Hadham Conservation Society- Chairman Don Gibson

Don Gibson opened his presentation by outlining the background to the Society,

At the Parish Assembly in 2008 a local group was elected called the Little Hadham Conservation Society to act on behalf of the village to ensure that a gypsy and traveller site was not set up in the locality. The problem had arisen from a government initiative to find 1157 new gypsy and traveller sites in the East of England area. East Herts District Council commissioned a report to identify suitable sites two of which was located on fields either side of Millfield Lane where it touches the A120. The reasons for its selection were that it was near a school, close to a doctor's surgery and on a national trunk road. The society felt that it would blight the area and reduce the value of houses.

The Chairman approached the head of the primary school who assured him that any traveller children attending the school would be educated in exactly the same way as the others. Parents had mixed views on the situation.

Under the auspices of an organisation known as East of England Regional Authority (EERA) a formal enquiry was carried out in 2009 and it transpired that Little Hadham would have a substantial number of places.

In 2010 EERA was disbanded and District Councils were made responsible for finding sites but on a less urgent timetable.

The clearing of the Dale Farm Site in Basildon raised fears that travellers might come to Little Hadham, but East Herts Council said that they and the police had plans for dealing with such an eventuality. When a camp was set up near to Grange Paddocks in Bishop's Stortford the occupants were quickly moved on.

In February this year The District Council sent the Parish Council a consultation document in the form of a questionnaire about traveller sites. The Parish Council's view was that there was no perceived need or requirement for sites and they are now awaiting the analysis of the consultation.

Don Gibson finished off his summary by stating that because of the uncertainty of the situation, the Society would continue for another year at which point it would then decide on its future and what to do with the money collected (£1500). They would report back at the next Parish Assembly.

7. A Report from Rev. Giles Tulk read by Angela Fardell

The Reverend Giles Tulk was unable to attend the Little Hadham Parish assembly so he wrote a report which was read by Mrs Fardell.

Rev Tulk said that he had very much enjoyed his first year as the team rector of the Ash & Quin Valley's Ministry Team and in particular as rector of St Cecilia's Church.

The highlight of the autumn was the Teddy Bears' Parachute Jump and Fun Day. Children from the village and school enjoyed watching their teddy bears parachuting from the Church Tower across the car park and into the fields.

Just before Christmas he judged the Brownies' Talent Show and was impressed by their singing, musical instrument playing and dancing.

In January he had his first experience of the Little Hadham Pantomime which both he and his wife Sara greatly enjoyed.

The Rector and his wife like to attend the Farmers' Market where they can meet people and buy cakes.

During the year Little Hadham Primary School pupils were welcome visitors to St Cecilia's. They came to special services at Harvest time Christmas and Easter and filled the church with their singing. The Rector thanked Mrs Stockley and her Staff for bringing the children.

Rev. Tulk commented that it was a truly sad time when Mr Mick Crace, a long-time supporter of the church died in December 2013. Over 260 people attended his memorial service at St Cecilia's which spoke volumes about the wonderful person he was.

The new communion service on the third Sunday of the month has attracted new families to church and is an addition to the more established services.

The "Way-In" soup lunch on the third Thursday of the month in the Village Hall is also proving a great success.

The Rector thanked everyone for their support and kindness over the past year and sent his best regards.

8. Review of the Year-Cllr Jonathan Forgham, Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman began by noting apologies he had received from Cllr Mary Wilkinson, Sue and Pat Knight, Rev. Giles Tulk and District Cllr Michael Tindale.

Review:

- Co-option of two Parish Councillors: The Chairman thanked Robin Gregory and Carmella Piccolo for their hard work and especially Carmella for her contribution to planning matters. In a recent meeting two new councillors had been selected: Elizabeth Lloyd-Williams who moved to Bury Green last year and Chris Bhatt who lives at the Maltings, The Ford.
- Flooding: various suggestions concerning the alleviation of flooding in the village have been considered. They include the installation of a new pump at the sewage pumping station, siting of flood ponds on local farmers' land, clearing of the river by the Environment Agency and attending to blocked drains at Green Street and Millfield Lane. In September 2014 a multi-agency meeting will be held to review the progress made. The Parish Council Planning Committee will look very carefully at any building plans which will increase run off and will oppose new building in the flood plain until flood alleviation schemes associated with the by-pass have proved to be successful.
- District and Neighbourhood Plan: it is suggested that the Parish draw up a Neighbourhood Plan which will then become part of the District Plan. The process will take about three years and is intended to involve a cross-section of people such as

landowners, business people, lawyers and those who work in insurance. This group numbering twenty to thirty will meet on a regular basis in order to draw up a plan for submission in 2017 to the District Plan. The East Herts District Council has organised a meeting on May 1st, 2014 in the Village hall to discuss how the Neighbourhood Plan will fit in with the District Plan. A Summary Document has been made readily available to assist in the discussion. In 2017 an officially organised referendum (at a cost of £1000 to the Parish Council) will be held and provided 50% of those voting, vote yes the plan will go ahead. The first thing to be decided however is whether the parish wishes to proceed with the Neighbourhood Plan in the first place.

- Conservation Area Status: Certain areas in the parish have been moved out of the Conservation Area. These include The Ash (area around the old windmill and the field on the east of the C15 opposite The Smithy), The Ford and Bury Green. A meeting to explain these changes will take place on April 29th, 2014 at the Village Hall.
- Allotments: the problems which have arisen are now hopefully resolved with the drawing up of a tenancy agreement. Rules and regulations have been put in place and allotment holders are being given the opportunity to set up a management committee. This will comprise of two tenants, the Parish Clerk and Cllr Mary Wilkinson who will oversee the running of the allotments. Some finance has been made available for some bin and benches for the area.
- Bury Green Grass Cutting: for some time the landowners Romehold cut the grass at Bury Green for free. This no longer happens. As grass at the Ford and the Ash is cut at no cost to the residents it was felt that the Parish Council should contribute to the grass cutting at Bury Green. An annual donation of £500 is to be made for cutting. Any extra maintenance to be funded by voluntary contributions from the residents which will be supervised by Carmella Piccolo, a resident of Bury Green.
- Bury Green Pond: the Chairman and about fifteen volunteers recently tidied up the pond with the help of local resident Jeff Findlay, who was able to borrow a JCB to clear much of the debris in the water. Gascoigne estate workers also trimmed the willows close to the water. Parishioners were warned that the pond is very deep and allegedly there is a car at the bottom driven in accidentally, in the 1940's. The clearance has already resulted in some new wild life moving into the area.
- Telephone Box Libraries: the telephone boxes at the old Little Hadham Post Office and Bury Green were bought by the Parish Council some years ago. Since then shelves have been put in at Little Hadham and will soon be in place at Bury Green in order to house small libraries of donated books for anyone to borrow. The boxes are well used and borrowers are encouraged to keep the kiosks tidy and supplied with books only.
- Footpaths: the Chairman who regularly walks the footpaths in the Parish reports that they are mostly in a good condition. There has been some concern about Nut Walk between Hadham Hall and St Cecilia's where some coppicing has taken place and the stile at Westland Green has still to be mended. The kissing gate near South Cottages has not yet been constructed. Westland Green is still being used by Sports Utility Vehicles (SUV's) at weekends and at night. The police are aware and there are works in progress by HCC Highways to lay down sand and aggregate over the "green lane" to minimise the damage to this area, which is a unique habitat for a number of plants and animals.
- Village Planters: two planters have been sited on the eastern side of the C15 near the Village Hall. The planters make an attractive show even though some plants have been taken by passers-by. In spite of some reservations from the authorities concerning road safety two more planters are planned for the future.

- Potholes: Hertfordshire is in the process of being granted £140 million to resolve the pothole problem which is the result, not only of the very wet weather in the winter, but also poor road maintenance. The Chairman encouraged people to report any potholes on line at www.hertsdirect.org. Particularly badly affected roads in the parish are to be found at Green Street, Acremore Street, by Bridgefoot Farm and the top of Chapel Lane.
- Reflective Posts: these were installed in Chapel lane on April 9th 2014 to prevent cars pulling over onto the narrow verge and slipping into the ditch alongside.
- Two other areas which require attention are the parking area opposite the Nag's Head which fills with water after heavy rain and the Ford Field verges which are damaged by heavy lorries.
- Traffic lights: during the police operations at the Little Hadham traffic lights 65 out of the 80 people who were stopped for traffic infringements were local people. The police announce where and when they will be in attendance on Twitter
- Village handyman; the Chairman thanked Karin and Frank Green who were retiring, for their work cutting grass around the war memorial and Chapel Lane and emptying the bins. A new handyman who will work for six hour per month will shortly be appointed. The Chairman presented Karin and Frank with a small gift.
- Village Pump Area: Cllr Woodgate has volunteered to paint the pump and fencing and thanks were made to Dennis Taylor for looking after the ground around the seat dedicated to Barbara.

Conclusion: Mr Forgham finished by saying that he had counted well over a hundred people who help towards the day to day running and wellbeing of the of the village and its activities. He thanked them all for their contributions to village life. He also added that through his nature observations the Parish of Little Hadham has proved to be a very healthy environment.

9. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Parish Assembly.
He closed the meeting at 9.20 p.m.

Appendix: Clerk's Report

The Parish Precept for 2013/14 was £12,800 which was a reduction from £13,500 in previous years. This followed changes in the way Council Tax rebates were dealt with. In 2013/14 and 2014/15 the loss of income from the lower precept would be made up by a government grant. These changes mean that the money residents pay towards to Parish Council has not changed.

The precept for 2014/15 remains at £12,800. The government grant is likely to be temporary meaning a real decrease in the income of the Council in future years – especially after inflation is taken into account.

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 2014, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £11,674.32 in its Bank Accounts and petty cash. This surplus will allow the Council to make a number of outstanding repairs and improvements around the parish. If the Council agrees to continue developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish, this will incur considerable costs.

Our litter picker is Mr Adam Purvis – I'm sure you will want to greet Adam when you see him at work around the parish. East Herts Council funds our litter picker – £1,341.60 pa. Despite Adam's hard work, it is not possible for him 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.

For almost ten years, Mrs Karin Green, Karin Green Garden Services, has cut the grass, helped maintain the flowers around the Village Pump and at the war memorial and emptied the parish litter bins. Sadly she has decided to stand down. The Council thanks Karen for all her hard work in helping to keep the village so neat, tidy and attractive. The Council hopes to find a replacement in the near future.

Thanks, as usual, are due to the residents of 'Marshalls', opposite the War Memorial, who voluntarily supply the flowers at the War Memorial and generally help keep them in pristine condition.

Mr Bev Evans – Parish Clerk

Financial position for the year 2013 to 2014

Credit	To date	Notes
B/F From 2012/13	£9,647.00	
Precept	£12,800.00	Reduced from £13,500
Council Tax rebate grant	£708.57	Government grant to cover changes in Council tax rebates
Rent	£365.16	Rent from Westland Green and wayleaves for power cables
Interest	£0.08	
Litter picker	£1,341.60	EHC pays the litter picker's salary
New Homes Bonus	£2,911.00	EHC has shared the government's bonus for building new homes with the parish
Total credit	£27,773.41	

Debit

Pay	£6,724.52	To the Clerk, litter picker and Karen Green Garden Services
Mileage	£50.47	The Clerk tries to walk or cycle for most parish business trips
Telephone	£150.00	
Village street furniture	£484.29	Village signs and planter flowers
Post	£21.10	
Copying	£58.87	Mainly using the copier at the school
Office supplies	£18.00	Mainly paper and printer ink
P/News	£570.00	The Council is one of several organisations who fund the Parish News including maintaining the printer used to print it
Donations	£1,345.00	To the village school, graveyard upkeep, and several parish organisations
Subscriptions	£735.87	Mainly to HATPC for legal and other help and advice
Maintenance	£2,660.10	Mainly grass and hedge cutting for the playgrounds
Repairs	£2,045.67	Mainly refurbishing playground fences and gates
Rent	£256.47	Mainly Village Hall hire
Chairman	£100.00	For phone, post and travel expenses
Insurance	£608.30	To cover the play equipment as well as general Council risks
Audit	£129.99	The government appoints an external auditor
Training	£35.00	The Clerk attended a course on 'end of year' accounts
Misc	£105.44	Mainly refreshments for public meetings such as the Assembly
Total debit	£16,099.09	
Surplus to C/F to 2014/15	£11,674.32	