

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of an extra-ordinary meeting of the Little Hadham Parish Council Planning Committee (2015-2019 Session) held on Wednesday 6th January 2015 at 8:00 pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham.

Present:	Mrs E Lloyd-Williams	Chair
	Mr A Hoodless)
	Mr G Pearson)
	Mr G Tooke) Councillors
	Mrs M Wilkinson)
	Mr W Wright)

Mr B Evans – Clerk, and 84 members of the public.

7.1. Absent Cllr Bhatt [on business].

7.2. Democratic 10 minutes.

Mr Peter Temple, resident of Albury Road. Mr Temple said he was not against the bypass. However, he thought the bypass would have little effect on the volume of traffic using Albury Road which would likely increase over time. The many parked cars meant heavy lorries had to pass in single file. Visibility along the road was very difficult and vehicles often sped in the hope of catching the lights on green. Mr Temple asked that traffic calming measures be installed between the 30 MPH signs and the traffic lights. He also asked that a safe parking area for residents be created. Mr Temple said Albury Road would suffer an increase in traffic noise from the 3m high bypass and traffic would only increase as more houses were built in Bishop's Stortford and surrounding areas.

Mr John Jordan, resident of Standon Road. Mr Jordan said that he had sent a detailed submission asking for the planning application to be rejected or subjected to a public enquiry. He thought it was not a Little Hadham Bypass. HCC had decided on a single carriageway in 2005. However, he thought that traffic volumes required a new dual carriageway road from the M11 to the A10 for which the land existed. Mr Jordan thought a bypass for Standon should have been included in a single loop round both villages. He said that the original bypass Route 5, that most residents had agreed to, had been some distance from Albury Road homes. The latest planned route, though 400m from Hadham Hall, was far too close to Albury Road homes. Mr Jordan thought there was little point in the bypass if there was no access from the bypass for traffic, especially heavy lorries, travelling north towards the Pelhams. Mr Jordan said that he had been appalled that the previous Parish Council had ignored residents and agreed to the changed route.

Michael Attwell, resident of Green Street. Mr Attwell said he was looking forward to the bypass. There would be clear improvements to traffic flow and the flood risk would be greatly reduced. There would be benefits to the wider community including the local economy. Mr Attwell said his child would go to the village school which was next to the busy A120. The bypass would greatly improve safety and air quality. The Cradle End turning onto the A120 was now dangerous but would be greatly improved by a bypass. He thought the planned scheme not perfect – change never was. He would like new road from the M11 to the A10 but it would not happen in his lifetime. Mr Atwell said he would prefer a junction at Albury Road on the bypass. He would like to see more provision for cyclists at the new roundabouts. The scheme was not perfect but this was the best on offer and he supported it.

Mrs Liz Stockley, Head of Little Hadham School. Mrs Stockley said she had spent much of the past twenty five years of her career waiting at the traffic lights. Her

prime interest was in the safety of pupils, staff and parents. Entering the school from the A120 was dangerous and crossing the road was very dangerous – especially for young children. Mrs Stockley said she was concerned about the sustainability of the school. Prospective parents often asked about the traffic lights. Some parents refused to send their children to the school because they could not contemplate the long daily waits at the traffic lights. Mrs Stockley said the school needed more consistent access as so much time was wasted waiting for the traffic lights. Children were often late making a poor start to the day. It was difficult to get coaches into school through the lines of traffic. The school suffered from the noise of traffic and passing emergency vehicles. Mrs Stockley said that all parents and staff were concerned by the air pollution and dust from the busy road. Mrs Stockley said she supported the planning application for the bypass.

Mr Cole Curran, resident of Lloyd Taylor Close. Mr Curran was concerned about the effectiveness of the proposed changes to the Lloyd Taylor drain. He thought it would have to be buried some 3 or 4m below ground at the top of the hill. He said there was no description of the drain included in the plans. In times of heavy rainfall, Mr Curran said the water roared down the current ditch. He thought the diverted ditch would be liable to flood and he would like to see some water restriction measures to reduce the flow.

7.3. Planning applications considered by the Council.

7.3.1. Planning application submitted for the A120 Bypass (Little Hadham) and Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The Chair said there had been consultation on the Route in 2007 and most residents had wanted a bypass. However, most had preferred Route 5 that took the bypass furthest from Albury Road and many objected when the route was changed to Route 5b that was much closer to Albury Road. The Council had accepted the new route. After further consultation, the bypass design had been changed to allow access to footpaths 57 and 58 via an under path under the bypass. HCC had not, however, agreed to provide slip roads so that vehicles could travel north from the bypass without accessing the traffic lights.

Cllr Tooke read Cllr Pearson's remarks about flooding issues on the bypass:

71 homes and several businesses and community assets such as the Nags Head Pub, the Post Office, Doctors Surgery and the Village Hall have flooded, some several times, and are currently at risk of further flooding. Many more homes are currently at risk of secondary flooding from drainage ditches and gullies that back up due to being unable to empty into a full River Ash. Also secondary flooding from sewer surcharging due to drainage from household roof gutters and other drainage pipes illegally connected into the sewer system.

The flood in 2000 and in 2001 cost over half a million pounds to repair and also caused significant disruption to transport links through the A120 at Little Hadham and surrounding roads. A further flood occurred in 2013 costing a similar amount to repair. Householders are now faced with insurance premiums of over £2000 per year along with a £15000 excess to pay before a new claim can be made. Flood risk homes are very difficult to sell which makes it harder for new people to move to the village and very difficult for village people starting families to move on to bigger homes. Unsaleable homes are more likely to become short term rental lets to enable the owners to move on to properties that suit their family needs. Some homes did receive some funding from a Repair and Renew Grant towards items to make their homes more flood resilient, but these were only available to householders who could afford to pay for the improvements first then claim it back. Any homes on a low income were unable to access the grant as easily.

With three floods in Little Hadham over 13yrs, and the increasing number of severe flood events seen each year throughout the UK, it is clear that it is just a matter of

time before further flooding occurs. The cost/benefit analysis for structural flood prevention conducted by the Herts County Council and the Environment Agency has concluded that the only affordable sustainable way to help protect homes is to implement the Flood Alleviation Scheme that they will be responsible for maintaining. This will be part of the development for the proposed A120 by pass. The computer modelling shown in their planning application shows that 69 of the homes and the Pub, Village Hall etc. will be protected from flooding in the future for 1 in a 200 year severe rainfall events which is a higher protection level than that installed in places such as York . This is achieved by a restrictor being installed where the bypass crosses the River Ash that during heavy rainfall will cause the water to back up into fields that currently flood, and be retained until it can be released slowly and safely back into the River. In extreme events such as a 1 in a 1000 year, the water will overflow along a slipway so that it does not affect Albury, and the overflow will flood homes in Little Hadham as before.

This proposal also says that as the water is held back to the north of the A120, the River level south of the A120 will be lower thus allowing the water runoff from the fields that currently backs up in drainage channels to be able to discharge into the river. There will be an improvement to the Lloyd Taylor Drainage by diverting the water away from the houses it currently affects and draining it around The Smithy directly into the River Ash using newly constructed channels that the Environment Agency will maintain.

The Chair asked about the Lloyd Taylor drain. Cllr Pearson said the plans lacked detail. He had reservations about the scheme. He thought there should be a holding pond to keep back water at times of high rainfall. The Environment Agency had originally planned one but this had been withdrawn because of cost. Cllr Pearson said he feared the proposed scheme would overflow and cause flooding.

Cllr Wilkinson said the lower level of water in the Ash should allow the drainage ditch to flow more readily. There was some discussion about the benefits of dredging the river but the Chair said that this was a topic for the multiagency flood committee.

Cllr Wright thought the regular hold ups at the traffic lights were an embarrassment – they almost persuaded him not to move to the parish. Heavy traffic brought many knock on effects such as air pollution particularly at the school and vehicles jumping the traffic lights putting pedestrians at risk. The bypass was a marvellous opportunity to alleviate the risk of flooding at the Ashe and Ford. Cllr Wright thought it was important that steps be taken to shield noise from homes and install traffic calming measures to slow traffic through the parish. He thought the bypass scheme might not be ideal but funding was available now and the parish could be waiting for many years if this plan did not go forward.

Cllr Tooke said this was the only proposal on the table. There would be ever higher volumes of traffic – especially from Bishop’s Stortford North and the expanding airport. Added to this, climate change would increase the flood risk and the flood alleviation scheme was not available without the bypass. The community had agreed the planned route in the past. Cllr Tooke said the scheme had his full support.

Cllr Hoodless said he thought the benefits of the scheme outweighed the drawbacks and it had his full support.

Cllr Wilkinson said the scheme was not ideal – a new dual carriageway road was really needed. However, she thought the flood alleviation part of the scheme was essential.

The Chair said she had spoken to residents in the Bury Green, Cradle End and Green Street area. Most of those she spoke to were in support of the proposed scheme, some of those reluctantly in the absence of an A10 – M11 road. Rat running through the hamlets was seen as a real problem and this should be much reduced by a bypass.

It would be important to ensure that traffic calming measures go ahead so that all residents gain a benefit. She thought there was no completely satisfactory solution to the traffic problems but she felt that the majority of residents were in favour. The Chair thought it a pity that the bypass was only single track. Cllr Wilkinson said the road at each end was single track and a dual carriageway would be too expensive. From the floor, councillors were asked about slip roads from the bypass for traffic to and from the Pelhams. The Clerk said the reason for no slip roads on the bypass given by HCC was that a bypass should be just that. Junctions tended to make the bypass a village road and hence encourage housing. Cllr Pearson said a junction would be likely to increase accidents. Cllr Hoodless thought a slip road could allow access to and from the north only. It was agreed to add a request for slip roads to the Council response. The Chair said that traffic calming on Albury Road needed to be considered in order to discourage and slow traffic.

Cllr Wright said provision for cyclists should be made on the bypass roundabouts. The Chair said that, as all councillors accepted the scheme, she proposed the Council write to HCC giving its support to the planning application. All councillors agreed. The Chair read a draft letter that had been prepared. [Appendix 1]

From the floor a resident asked why the flood ponds had been removed from the Lloyd Taylor ditch. He thought flood alleviation was the main issue for the whole scheme. Costs must not compromise flood alleviation. The Clerk said he understood the land owner was not keen on the idea of the flood ponds.

- 7.3.2.** 2455/15 Albury Lime Kiln, Albury Road. Outline application for 5 dwellings with all matters reserved with the exception of vehicular access. Considered by Cllr Wilkinson, Cllr Bhatt and Cllr Wright. Cllr Wilkinson said the application was for five houses including one affordable. It used Rural Land beyond the Green Belt. Cllr Wright noted that the land had lawful use as a scrap metal yard. The Chair thought the development fitted in with existing housing although it would increase traffic on Albury Road. Cllr Wilkinson proposed that the Council object because of the use of Rural Land beyond the Green Belt. Agreed. [Appendix 2]

7.4. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd February 2016.

7.5. The Chair closed the meeting to the Public and the Press at 9:20 p.m.

Appendix 1 The Council response to the planning application for the bypass and flood alleviation scheme.

This application was considered by the Council at an extra-ordinary meeting on Wednesday 6th January 2016 attended by 84 local residents.

For many years the Council has supported the provision of a bypass to the parish. This planning application brings the bypass much closer to creation.

The Council is aware that the principle driving force for the bypass comes from those traveling through the parish who will save eight or nine minutes during peak times and about four minutes at other times when they do not have to queue at the A120 traffic lights.

Parish residents will see many benefits from a bypass including:

- The flood prevention measures associated with the bypass will help protect many homes at the Ashe and the Ford. Many of these homes have been flooded more than once in recent years. This is seen by many residents as the most important aspect of the scheme.
- Queueing times at the A120 traffic lights will be shorter for those from the side roads. This will reduce the number of vehicles jumping the lights and putting pedestrians at risk.

- People have been deterred from sending their children to the village school and from buying homes in the parish because of the prospect of spending so much time waiting at the traffic lights.
- Fewer people will try to avoid the traffic lights by following a 'rat run' through Cradle End, Bury Green and Westland Green. These roads are unsuitable for fast traffic and there is a constant danger of accidents.
- The reduced volume of traffic along the A120 will make turning into the village school easier and safer. Pedestrians will be able to cross the A120 without a long wait for a gap in the traffic.
- The reduced volume of traffic through the parish, especially heavy lorries, should improve the air quality around the A120. This would have a particularly beneficial effect on the village school and nearby homes.
- The reduction in vehicles stopping and starting at the A120 traffic lights at all times of the day and night will reduce noise levels for those living nearby.
- Drivers will not be tempted to exceed the speed limit in an attempt to pass the traffic lights before they change to red.

The bypass will not, however be without drawbacks for local residents including:

- The bypass will pass relatively close to homes on the west side of Albury Road and Hadham Hall. Residents will have an increase in noise and visual pollution.
- The removal of the traffic lights holdup will attract more vehicles to use the A120. The traffic volume through Standon will increase. The lack of the 'platooning' effect on traffic flow will make turning onto and off the A120 in Standon more difficult and dangerous. A bypass for both Little Hadham and Standon would be more sensible.
- The planned bypass is for a simple road with one lane in each direction. There are some who doubt that this will be sufficient for future traffic. A dual carriageway between the M11 and A10 is likely to be needed eventually.
- The removal of the traffic lights holdup will increase traffic travelling through the parish travelling south. Traffic on the road south of the traffic lights, towards Much Hadham, is forecast to more than double at peak times.
- Although traffic along Albury Road is forecast to be reduced by a bypass, vehicles travelling to and from the Pelhams will still have to use the road. This includes a significant number of heavy lorries using the recycling unit at Furneaux Pelham.
- The bypass will occupy what is now open countryside and will be clearly visible – particularly from Albury Road.
- The bypass will disrupt a number of well used footpaths.
- A number of established trees will have to be felled.

There have been many views on the bypass expressed by a number of residents both for and against the bypass and the Council would like to address some of the issues raised.

Should there be a bypass at all?

A bypass will inevitably spoil open countryside. It will remove trees, affect footpaths and damage wildlife. Road improvements increase levels of traffic increasing the levels of air and noise pollution for everyone. Building a bypass for Little Hadham will only move the congestion to Standon.

However, the Council believes that most of the residents are in favour of a bypass.

Which route?

During the consultation period, residents were offered a number of possible routes the bypass could take. Most people chose the route that took the road furthest from homes and this route was originally accepted by HCC. However, after further consideration, including consulting residents near the ends of the planned bypass, HCC decided to adopt a shorter route which was closer to the houses on Albury Road. This decision was made without consulting other residents – including the Council. This, understandably, enraged many residents who thought their views had been ignored.

After some reflection, the Council agreed to endorse the revised route as it would be lower down the hill to Standon and so less visible to surrounding areas and it would despoil less of the open countryside. The Council is disappointed that HCC did not plan its consultation more carefully by not offering residents a route that was later withdrawn and by not involving everyone in the parish, including the Council, when changes were made to the route.

Residents of Albury Road are concerned that their road will still be affected by heavy traffic – particularly by heavy vehicles accessing the recycling depot in Furnaux Pelham. Restricted views and many parked cars make travel along the road dangerous yet many vehicles drive recklessly fast in order to reach the traffic lights. Poor visibility means it is very dangerous for many residents to leave their driveways. Albury Road residents are very concerned that there should be a slip road off the bypass for vehicles travelling north so that they do not have to pass through the village via the traffic lights.

How will traffic through the parish be affected?

Traffic through the parish on the current A120 is forecast to be reduced by about two thirds at peak times. Most heavy vehicles will use the bypass. Traffic through Cradle End, Bury Green and Westland Green are forecast to be greatly reduced. However, traffic on the road south of the traffic lights and on the road from the A120 toward Albury End are forecast to significantly increase.

How will a bypass affect homes?

Those homes nearest the A120 will profit from a great reduction in noise and pollution – particularly as most of the heavy vehicles will be diverted.

Some homes in Albury Road will be closer to traffic on the bypass than they are to the traffic at the traffic lights. This will inevitably increase noise levels. Some homes at Hadham Hall will also be relatively close to the bypass. The noise will be moderated by some of the road being in a cutting and by a bund and vegetation on the elevated section.

How will the bypass affect flooding?

71 homes and several businesses and community assets such as the Nags Head Pub, the Post Office, Doctors Surgery and the Village Hall have flooded, some several times in recent years, and are currently at risk of further flooding. Many more homes are currently at risk of secondary flooding from drainage ditches and drains that back up due to being unable to empty into a full River Ash. Also secondary flooding from sewer surcharging due to drainage from household roof gutters and other drainage pipes illegally connected into the sewer system.

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now faced with insurance premiums of over £2000 per year along with a £15000 excess to pay before a new claim can be made. Flood risk homes are very difficult to sell which makes it harder for new people to move to the village and very difficult for village people starting families to move on to bigger homes. Unsaleable homes are more likely to become short term rental lets to enable the owners to move on to properties that suit their family needs. Some homes did receive some funding from a Repair and Renew Grant towards items to make their homes more flood resilient, but these were only available to householders who could afford to pay for the improvements first then claim it back. Any homes on a low income were unable to access the grant as easily.

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There are concerns that the Lloyd Taylor scheme might not be able to cope at times of high rainfall. Residents would like an attenuation pond placed on this water course to the west of the village so that excess flood water will temporarily flood fields rather than flood the road.

Comments

1. The Council asks that HCC look again at the junction of the bypass with the Albury Road so that traffic bound for the north of the village does not have to travel via the traffic lights. Traffic should not be able to travel south along Albury Road from the bypass.
2. The Council asks that HCC revise its plans for the Lloyd Taylor drainage scheme to include the previously designed attenuation pond to prevent excessive water entering the waterway in the village.
3. The Council asks that HCC keep it informed of any changes to the published plan, however trivial, so that the local community can be kept informed.
4. The Council asks that the planning consent include time limits on when noise reduction measures should be installed.
5. The Council asks that the planning consent include time limits on the installation of traffic calming measures in order to reduce and slow the number of vehicles passing through the village after the bypass has opened.

Conclusions

The Council understands that some residents have serious reservations about the bypass as described in this planning application. However, the Council believes that, although far from perfect, most residents are willing to accept the plans as laid out by the County Council.

The Council wishes to add its support to the planning application in the hope that building can start as soon as possible. The Council hope to continue to work closely with the bypass team to ensure community input into the ecology/replanting and phase 2 road planning (traffic measures).

Appendix 2 Re. Planning Application 3/15/2455/OUT Outline application for 5 dwellings with all matters reserved with the exception of vehicular access. Albury Lime Kiln, Albury Road, Little Hadham.

This planning application was discussed at a Council meeting on Wednesday 6th January 2016.

The Council wishes to object to this application on the grounds that it is located on rural land beyond the Green Belt.

Under the current District Plan, The Ashe, Little Hadham is classed as a Group 2 village. Under the draft replacement District Plan the village had been proposed as being moved to Group 1 but after some discussion the EHC District Plan Executive Panel has restored it to Group 2.

Group 2 allows for limited infill of new housing. However, the proposed site is on the edge of the village and includes rural land beyond the Green Belt for which there is an assumption of no development.