

Little Hadham Annual Parish Assembly

Thursday 21st April 2016 at 7:00 pm

Programme

7:00: Refreshments. A chance to chat to some of the speakers and browse the exhibits of local organisations

7:30 Meeting and discussion

Policing in Little Hadham: Inspector Chris Hunt, Sergeant Wallace and PC Nicky Hunt

Little Hadham Primary School: Mrs Liz Stockley – Head Teacher

Herts County Council: Cllr Graham McAndrew

Little Hadham Millennium Wood: Mr James Fallan

Little Hadham Charities: Mr Richard Beckett

Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Chris Bhatt

East Herts Council: Cllr Geoff Williamson

Little Hadham wildlife: Report from Mr Jonathan Forgham read by Cllr Tony Hoodless

Review of the year: Cllr Liz Lloyd-Williams, Chairman, Parish Council

8:50: Close

Little Hadham Parish Council

Minutes of the 120th meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday 21st April, 2016 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Little Hadham

Present: Cllr Mrs E Lloyd-Williams
Cllr Mr C. Bhatt
Cllr Mr T Hoodless
Cllr Mr G. Pearson

Mr B. Evans – Clerk and 58 members of the public

Elizabeth Lloyd-Williams, Chair of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the Parish Assembly and drew people's attention to the displays that had been brought along by local groups. These included the Police, Mothers and Toddlers, the Gardening Club and books from the Book Boxes that are housed in the old telephone kiosks at Bury Green and The Ford. She then introduced the following presentations:

Policing in Little Hadham – Inspector Chris Hunt and PCSO Amanda Higham

(Karen Broad a former local PCSO is now dealing with more northerly areas in Hertfordshire which are nearer to her new home in Norfolk. The local police constable is still Inspector Hunt's wife PC Nicky Hunt).

Inspector Hunt illustrated his talk about rural policing with slides taken from the local area. He has been a police constable, sergeant and inspector in the locally for many years and expects to remain until his retirement in five years' time. He has specialist knowledge of East Herts and is often called upon to show people around the area and explain what rural policing entails. He considers that rural policing is about communities that are hard to reach but trust each other. There are however changes as more wealthy people move into the villages, remain behind closed doors in large houses and do not partake in community life. To retain the community spirit is one of the challenges facing rural policing.

Policing in the countryside is not just fighting crime and Inspector Hunt gave some examples of other challenges:

- Lorries using satnavs getting stuck on roads that are too narrow resulting in traffic blockages.
- Cars getting caught on flooded roads sometimes resulting in the right-off of the vehicle.
- Huge herds of deer freely roaming the countryside causing road accidents.
- Petrol stations closing down and pubs being taken over by firms such as Tesco altering the character of the community.
- Development of Bishop's Stortford which will result in a new way of life for the incomers as well as changes for residents already there.
- London news on the media which often highlights crime. This causes fears which may well be unjustifiable in rural areas but result in security measures which can be very isolating.

Inspector Hunt then went on to outline a number of problems which are of concern to the police in the local area

- Four wheel drives, mopeds and quad bikes that speed through lanes and plough up fields. Hopefully a new law coming soon will help to solve this problem.

- Vehicles speeding through villages; difficult to deal with as there are not enough staff to organise speed traps in all the areas requiring them.
- Fly tipping which is a big problem and can be associated with organised crime as illustrated by an incident linked to a water filter plant in London. The firm hired people to dispose of their waste but was oblivious of the fact that it was being illegally tipped resulting in fines of thousands of pounds.
- Hare coursing on farmland: landowner threatened with arson when perpetrators challenged.
- Badger baiting: there has been a prosecution in the area. Dogs are sent down badger setts where they are attacked and badly injured. The injuries are treated by the dog owners because the dogs cannot be taken to the vets. This can lead to the animals being left in a terrible condition.
- Bats: these are a protected species so care must be taken to see that they are not destroyed.
- The Hunt: the main problem is where protesters arrive and clash with the Hunt. This happened when, although not officially hunting, the Puckeridge Hunt joined the Cambridge Hunt for a meet.
- Breeding of attack dogs: a man had bred over one hundred attack dogs to be shipped to Europe. He hired a lady to clean out the kennels, but she let out two dogs. The animals then mauled her so badly that when they arrived, the police thought she had been stabbed. There is a possibility that she may lose an arm through her injuries. The officers dealing with dogs found them to be uncontrollable and 80% had to be destroyed. Inspector Hunt said it was the worst job he had been involved in.
- Crime: local examples include antisocial behaviour by young people; theft of farm equipment and animals; letting loose stock onto roads; heritage crime such as damage to old buildings (Thundridge); stealing lead from church roofs; stealing and selling valuable art works (Perry Green); allowing dogs to worry, injure and kill stock (Much Hadham) and well organised robberies such as the theft of a cash machine (Stanstead Abbots).

Crime in the Little Hadham area is however very low with only one burglary in two years and only 44 crimes in the year 2015-16 compared with 50 in 2014-15. The most frequent crime involves the theft of valuable tools left in vehicles overnight.

Inspector Hunt concluded his presentation by assuring the audience that the problem of drivers jumping lights at the Little Hadham crossroads was still being monitored, now by unmarked police cars. He also encouraged people to join the volunteer scheme to check speeding through the villages using equipment provided by the police.

Little Hadham Primary School – Mrs Liz Stockley, Head Teacher and School Captains Sienna and Theo

Mrs Stockley devoted nearly all her presentation to bringing the Assembly up to date with the progress the school has made in becoming an official Forest School. At last year's meeting she told everyone that the scheme had only been running for three months. A start had been made using an area at the back of the school and the pupils had spent time making a dead hedge with sticks to ensure it was a safe environment.

The next stage was to have a fully trained member of staff. Last summer Mrs Nicklin took a Part 1, Level 3 Forest Leadership Course in Epping Forest, to qualify for the task. She needed to have her own project with a school group other than her Early Years' class and a bigger challenge than the school grounds. She chose Year 4 and the local Millennium Wood. The school already had

connections with the Grove Community Woodland (Millennium Wood) as pupils had helped with the planting of trees in April 2000.

The Forest School experience has already been extended to include Year 5 pupils and the School Captains Sienna and Theo accompanied the children recently to the Millennium Wood to see what was happening, so that they could report back to the Parish Assembly. They described to the audience how they hiked over the fields to the Wood and once there reflected on the Forest Rules to keep themselves safe. They each chose Forest names such as Squirrel and then built dens and explored the wood. The session was closed with hot chocolate and biscuits.

The experience so inspired the children that they encouraged their families to visit the Millennium Wood over the Easter Holidays which resulted in the building of some very impressive dens. All classes are now engaged in regular Forest sessions either at the school for the younger pupils or at the Wood where the older children can develop their bush-craft skills.

Mrs Nicklin, who is the driving force in this venture, has recently completed Part 2 of her training programme and has been joined by teaching assistants Mrs Askew and Mrs Lammin who have achieved Level 2 Forest Leadership.

When asked what the children get out of Forest Schools, Mrs Nicklin said that it was not just taking children outside the classroom for outdoor learning. Taken over a period of time it helped increase self-confidence and self-esteem; it was fun experiencing the natural environment and a new experience even for pupils who lived in a rural area.

Mrs Stockley ended her talk by mentioning the “Street Party” that had been held for the school that day, to celebrate the Queen’s 90th Birthday. She thanked the Parish Council for their donation towards the purchase of commemorative medals, which were handed to the children after the party.

Herts County Council – Cllr Graham McAndrew

Cllr McAndrew spoke briefly about the situation regarding the problem of potholes. He said that £250 million had been set aside by the government for the repair of the damaged roads of which £943,000 was designated for the mending of the county’s 177,000 potholes. He was hoping that the impending closure of the A120 for road maintenance would also cover the digging out of blocked gullies and pothole repair.

The progress of the planning application for the A120 by-pass has been affected by the discovery of the presence of bats close to the proposed route. Any amendment to the application will have then to go back to a public consultation.

The sale of the Millennium Wood was also mentioned and Cllr McAndrew said that he would give as much help as he could to the local group hoping to purchase the wood for the community.

Cllr McAndrew then handed over to Stewart Campbell from the County Council to talk about the provision of superfast broadband in the local area.

Mr Campbell outlined the progress made so far and the future plans for the project in conjunction with BT. He also pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of the BT programme compared with that put forward by Gigaclear.

The installation of superfast broadband by Open Reach is made up of several phases. The initial contract, Phase 1 is now concluded and ran successfully with some savings which will be passed onto the next phase. In Phase 1 the aim was to get as many premises as possible access to fibre-optic broadband. This meant concentrating only on urban areas. 90% of the county now has broadband speeds of at least 2Mbps which is fast enough to watch BBC iPlayer. Unfortunately Little Hadham as a rural area was not included at this stage.

Phase 2 of the project began in April this year and will continue until 2019. Work at the Buntingford and Puckeridge exchanges will enable superfast broadband to serve more rural areas

and this includes Little Hadham. Take up in this phase is so high that BT is profiting and so money will be passed onto the county.

The remaining 2% of the county will be included in Phase 3 but there will still be up to 100 premises in the local area which will not be covered adequately because they are more than 1 km from the green cabinets. There is research into alternatives to the use of copper wire over these longer distances. The cost of using fibre to every house works out at between one and two thousand pounds which is too expensive.

Mr Campbell then described the advantages that the commercial firm Gigaclear offered. It was able to guarantee a faster delivery of up to 24 Mps and as much as 50Mps which might be welcomed by rural firms involved in a lot of optical work. Each property would be served by fibre to the property. Although it would mean digging up the road the county would be co-operative about this. The main disadvantages would be the higher monthly charges and as Justine Parkinson (Project Manager) pointed out during question time, one would be tied to the Gigaclear contract. This would not happen with BT as you do not have to be a BT customer.

Liz Lloyd-Williams added that broadband would be on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

Little Hadham Millennium Wood – Mr James Fallan

The land on which the Millennium Wood is sited has recently been put up for sale much to the dismay of Little Hadham residents. Mr Fallan has set up the “Save Millennium Wood Group” in order to raise money to buy the wood for the continued use of the community.

Mr Fallan was going to put forward a case for saving the Wood in his opening remarks, but felt that Mrs Stockley and Sienna and Theo had made a very good job of giving reasons in their presentation for keeping the Wood. He has set up a campaign which has been launched on Facebook and Twitter; also there has been an article in the Hertfordshire Mercury for April 14th 2016. It is hoped that the wood can be placed in a trust and owned by Little Hadham residents rather than in private hands.

Originally, Glaxo the landowners had allowed the land to be planted as a community wood. Mr Fallan didn't think that at the time anyone, including Parish Council Chair Barbara Martin and Glaxo's Professor Richard Southwood envisaged that the land would be put up for sale. Glaxo however vacated their company site and it was sold to Romehold, a property development company. This company continued to allow the woodland to be open to the public.

The wood itself is only sixteen years old and needs at least a hundred years to mature. The two thousand trees and shrubs that make up the Wood require a lot of managing and will need willing volunteers to look them.

The parish does not have many public spaces so needs this community wood. This year alone it has hosted dog walkers, ramblers, bird watchers, school groups, an Easter Sunday Egg Hunt for fifty children and their parents and a moth night. In the summer it will be used for barbeques and a teddy bears' picnic.

However recently, although supporting the idea of a community wood Mr Martin Roat of Romehold has decided to sell the land. Sworders have valued the 5.3 acre site at £10,000 per acre and there is already an offer of £40,000. The “Save the Millennium Wood” campaign must act very quickly if it is to raise enough money to make its own offer.

An application has been made to have the wood listed as an asset of community value. This allows the group to delay the sale while a community bid is put together to buy the wood. Grants can be applied for, including Lottery money and a trust can be set up but this all takes time. The Parish Council and the local school have said they will make donations. A system of pledges is in

operation and forms are available at the Assembly. Romehold have said that they are prepared to accept a deposit by June 8th this year.

It is hoped that as many people as possible will contribute so making it a real community project. Any buyer will be told that it is taking an amenity away from the parish.

Little Hadham Charities – Mr Richard Beckett

Officially known by the Charities Commission as the Charity of William Chapman, the Little Hadham Charity was set up with assets from a bequest made in the will of John Hammond, who died in 1720. He left £200 in South Sea Annuities with instructions that they should be sold and the money used to purchase land. The rental income from this land was to be distributed to the poor not in receipt of alms from the parish.

Today's Little Hadham Charity is the result of the amalgamation of several local charities and is administered by three local trustees: Richard Beckett, Eileen Booth and Colin Brookbanks. All the money is now invested in a portfolio of shares valued at just over £75,000, a decrease in value from last year when they were worth £78,000.

Each year just before Christmas the charity gives out money to some of the older residents of Little Hadham, Bury Green, Cradle End and Westland Green. Advice is taken from the stock brokers over the suitable amount to draw down annually, without reducing the capital value.

Last Christmas £60 each was given to twenty four people in the parish. This was the same amount and number as in 2014, but some of the individuals have changed as one had sadly died and two had moved away.

Mr Beckett also took the opportunity on behalf of the trustees to express deep appreciation of the work of Robert Collins, who died this April. Several years ago he had carried out the restoration of The Hammond family tomb located in St Cecilia's church yard. The tomb had been in a very poor state and repairs were made to a high standard.

Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Chris Bhatt standing in for Cllr Will Wright

The presentation was to be given by Cllr Wright, but he was unwell so Cllr Bhatt stepped in to give a résumé.

The first Neighbourhood Plan was devised in 2006. In 2016 the council were asked to put together another plan which would dovetail into the District Plan that was being produced by the District Council. The Parish Council thought that a Neighbourhood Plan was worth considering and has been thinking about it over the past eight months. The Plan should be created by and for the parish; the PC would help but it was to be a Plan for the community and parishioners would need to contribute. Cllr Wright would be organising this; it would involve meeting for a few hours each month. Eight volunteers have already put their names forward but more would be welcomed. The Neighbourhood Plan will be able to influence things that enhance the parish such as the style and location of housing but not the numbers; pathways, verges and roadways.

The Plan would be drawn up by a team under the guidance of a consultant. The cost of the Plan would be met by available grants.

Contact has also been made with Standon, Albury and Much Hadham, who have already got their own plans under way with a consultant taking them through their application process.

East Herts Council – Cllr Geoff Williamson

Cllr Williamson opened his talk by introducing himself. He is the ward representative for the East Herts Council since last year and has been a council member for five years. He is now on the Council Executive with responsibility for finance. He could be called "The Chancellor of the

Exchequer for EHC". He has lived in Little Hadham for eleven years and was on the Parish Council for eight years. He ran the monthly Farmers' Market with his wife Jan for five years until autumn 2015.

His presentation was about The District Plan and how it was progressing. EHC has been involved in the Plan for the past five years. It is a policy framework under which all planning applications and all developments are considered – whether granted or refused. It also covers policies about planning and developments. Decisions in the District Plan as to where 15,000 new homes will have to be located in the area between now and 2031 are now almost complete. Most of the development will be in the urban areas such as east of Welwyn Garden City and Harlow and Gilston. Buntingford is also marked for development. The rural areas will have an allocation of housing as well. This was considered about two years ago and there was a village consultation headed by Mike Carver about housing quotas in this village.

Little Hadham was rated as one of the villages with the most capability of taking new development and was placed in Group 1. This meant a 10% increase in housing. This was to take place over fifteen years and worked out as twenty four new homes across Hadham Ford and The Ash. Since then a more detached study called the "Village Hierarchy" has come into operation. Here a number of criteria were looked at and allocated points for sustainability. These included access to shops and community facilities such as village halls, pubs, doctor's surgeries and public transport links. To be included in Group 1 scores had to be over 50 points. Hadham Ford and The Ash only scored 33 and 26 which resulted in Little Hadham being moved to Group 2. This group has no housing quota and only limited infilling is allowed, very much the situation set out in 2007.

It is now thought that the Group structure is too rigid and has been discarded. Each village will now be looked at on its own merits and this is up for discussion at the next meeting of the East Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils. Cllr Williamson thought that decisions about housing in Little Hadham were unlikely to change.

Cllr Bhatt suggested that because the scoring method did not give the District Council the answers it wanted, that was why they were rethinking the whole system. Cllr Williamson thought that the new scheme was trying to remove the rather arbitrary measure by which a Group 1 village could be separated from a Group 2 village by only a few points and yet amenities were very similar. He added that only six villages had a Group 1 score which would mean all development would go into them leaving the other forty four untouched.

Cllr Williamson concluded his talk by answering two questions. The first about the possibility of building along the A120 corridor, which he said had been considered and thought to be too expensive; the second about the status of the building of a dwelling on private land. Cllr Williamson said up to five dwellings can be built and classed as infilling, not as a major development.

The District Plan has to go before a planning inspector and it is hope will be adopted in the New Year 2017.

Little Hadham Wildlife- a report from Jonathan Forgham

Mr Forgham was away photographing birds in Portugal so the audience was taken through the presentation by Cllr Tony Hoodless. The slide show comprised of excellent photographs of natural history subjects and observations taken by Mr Forgham around the parish. The pictures included a coal tit (Bury Green), a greylag goose (Hadham Hall), a fieldfare (Ash Valley Golf Course) and a dunnock (Chapel Lane), a purple hairstreak butterfly (Westland Green) also a moth, *Dichrorampha sequana* (netted at Ash Valley golf Course) which was previously extinct in Hertfordshire

A Running Total of Species Recorded
Bird 106 species (no new species since 2014)
Butterflies 26 species
Moths 577 species
Dragon and damselflies 15 species
Plants 103 species
Mammals 19 species
Other insects 102 species
Grand total 948 species

There are still further species to be recorded

Review of the Year- Cllr Liz Lloyd-Williams, Chair of the Parish Council

Since this time last year there have been quite a few changes. One obvious difference is me standing here giving the Chair's review. Following Jonathan Forgham's decision to step down I took the chair in June last year. Cllrs Woodgate and Williamson also stepped down and we appointed 3 new Cllrs. It's great to have Gavin, Will and Tony on board, all of who have brought new skills and new enthusiasm to the council. We also introduced new areas of responsibility to try refocusing the workload which has worked well at giving us each a Parish wide perspective. I'm going to use these areas of responsibility to give an overview of this year's activities

Highways:

Bypass –

The bypass has been a focus for well over a year now and following its planning submission in December we called an Extra Ordinary Meeting. The meeting was extremely well attended with over 80 members of the public, five of whom chose to speak in the public session to express their views for and against. Although reservations were expressed, with some strong opposition, overall comments for the scheme were favourable and councillors unanimously voted in support of the scheme.

The scheme offers flood alleviation and benefits to road safety. There were some concerns over the lack of access to the Albury Road, as well as points of access onto the existing A120.

As we have heard earlier, the bypass team have asked the planning authority to delay consideration of the application following feedback about the protected species. We will continue to update you with any progress as we are made aware of it.

Potholes

Looking over the minutes I can see that while there are ongoing frustrations, we have had some successes. For example, Acremore Street finally saw the sinking drain repaired. Please do keep taking photos and reporting all road issues by phone or internet to East Herts. We will continue to liaise with county councillors to pursue bigger issues.

Speeding and rat running

Thank you to the police, who have continued to support us with this issue, and conduct speed checks when possible. I have been exploring the possibility of trying to get a group of volunteers to join a road safe scheme to prevent, monitor and reduce this. The problem continues to be in the layout of the parish leaving very few areas where we can set up speed traps. We will continue to look at ways we can tackle this problem.

Increasingly we seem to be seeing heavier traffic coming through the villages, and this winter two lorries managed to strand themselves on Bury Green's grass, causing significant damage to the green. Thank you to Carmela Piccolo whose hard work resulted in the first damage being repaired by the company responsible. Working groups will be arranged over the summer months to clear up the remaining damage and highways have been notified of the damage to signage.

This year the Westland Green byway saw new bollards erected to prevent the ongoing problem of damage to the green and disturbing the peace by vehicles off-roading. This event was marked by an official opening ceremony. Thanks go to PCSO Karen Broad for her continued commitment to solving this issue.

Bollards also went up in Chapel Lane and outside the MOT garage (on A120) to prevent continued parking problems at these sites.

Environmental Affairs

Footpaths – Building work by the bridle way between Church End Farm and Hadham Hall has left the path difficult to walk on. This issue is with the Planning Enforcement who are working with the landowner to reinstate the route as soon as possible. Other footpaths are in general well maintained, if not somewhat muddy at this time of year. Farmers will again be out delineating the routes, especially on fields, during the growing season.

The allotments have had an uneventful year so far, and the willow trees bordering the river at this location have all now been coppiced (with the exception of the last which has had a trim).

Fly tipping continues to be an issue, particularly on Millfield Lane. Please do report any fly tipping you see to the county council. We are lucky that the Parish on the whole is generally fairly litter free thanks to the work of our litter picker Ben Petch and also help from those of you who pick up all litter you see.

Community

Playing fields

Following an inspection we organised repair work across both of the villages play parks. This work is now largely completed and people entering the Village Hall park can benefit from a new smoother access into the play area, clear signage and well maintained equipment. Unfortunately the parks do seem to be the target of vandalism. We and the police are aware of the issue and are working to solve it. Please report anything untoward you see.

Defibrillator

The Parish Defibrillator was put up outside the Village Hall last June, and we ran a training in September on its use. While the equipment has not been used it is a great resource to have in the village. The more people who are aware that it is here and are prepared to use it, the greater chance there is that it may save a life. It is in a locked cabinet and when a 999 call is placed the access code will be given to the caller.

Millennium Wood

You've heard tonight about the plight to save the Millennium Wood in Bury Green. Much time, effort and money have been put in by the community to develop this area into the thriving woodland it is today. The Parish Council is in full support of the Millennium Wood Group and has agreed to pledge a sum to help secure the wood for the community. It will be great to see the parish come together to buy it for the community now and for the future.

Christmas Meal

Cllr Chris Bhatt successfully applied last year for funding to hold a Christmas meal for the senior citizens of the Parish. Particular thanks go to Chris' wife Gill who was in charge of catering for the event, which was well attended. It was a fun, festive afternoon and, according to all feedback I've received, enjoyed by all.

Mobile library

It was disappointing that at the end of last year, despite a petition signed by over 600 Hertfordshire residents, the county's mobile libraries were discontinued. This was owing to funding restraints. Some of our residents will be eligible for the extended Home Library Service in lieu of this service; others will now need to travel to the town library.

Although there are no longer mobile library vans, we are lucky to have very well cared for thriving Community Book Swap scheme running out of the two old telephone phone boxes. This is thanks to Wendy Woodgate. The Library Service, as part of the decommissioning of mobile libraries has donated new books to replenish the phone boxes.

Consultations and Public Relations

We now have new notice boards both at the Village Hall, and in Cradle End. However I think that the most significant step we have taken in the way we communicate with the community is our further use of the Internet. Our Parish Clerk was given the task of setting up our own Facebook page, for us to use as a virtual notice board. We hope to reach a wider audience this way. Also having secured a grant for £600, the Clerk is in the process of setting up a far more user friendly website. This will not only serve our legal requirement to offer access to our minutes, but also act as a portal for delivering information.

We are hoping that a member of the community will volunteer to help us manage this site. The real key to successful websites is the ability to keep the content up to date and relevant. If you are interested in helping please let me, or one of my colleagues, know.

Flooding / Flood Planning

At a multi-agency meeting held at the end of last year, it was confirmed that the new sewage pumps had been installed. The new pumps still have the same capacity but should be better able to cope with drainage in the area. The group agreed to reconvene as needed.

While it appears that we have been lucky over the past year with no major incidents, flooding remains a major concern within the village. Since New Year's Day there have been several occasions when the road between the Village Hall and Ford End has flooded. Significant work has been carried out in Green Street to clear gullies and prevent flooding but it appears that the culverts need clearing again. Runoff on the A120 is also an ongoing problem owing to blocked drains.

Security:

Karen Broad, our PCSO for many years has, as you heard earlier, be reassigned to the Buntingford area. Karen has expressed her regret on leaving the Parish in which she has felt supported and valued. We in turn echo this sentiment and are saddened to see Karen leave. However, we will look forward to working with our two new PCSOs, who will cover Little Hadham and Sawbridgeworth. Overall crime in the Parish remains low, although recently there have been reports of residents' private mail boxes being raided. Letters containing bank details have been taken. The information is then used to steal money from accounts. Please ensure any external boxes are locked.

Parish Council

We agreed in our last meeting that all parish records, dating as far back as 1894 will be deposited with the Herts County Archives. If you would like to view them before they leave the parish please contact our Clerk, Bev Evans who can arrange this. The documents will be safely stored at Hertford in a fireproof, temperature and humidity controlled environment. They can still be accessed in the archives during opening hours.

Finally it has come to my attention that Eileen Booth has been working in the Little Hadham Post office for over 20 years. I'm sure you'd like to join me in thanking Eileen for her ongoing work with allows one of the few services we have in the village to remain open.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:55pm

Little Hadham Parish Council

Parish Clerk's Report – 2015/16

The Parish Precept for 2015/16 was £12,800 which has been unchanged since 2013/14.

The precept for 2016/17 has increased to £13,043. The Council has received £4,177.00 as its share of the government New Homes Bonus.

A detailed breakdown of the accounts is shown over the page and the Council's books will be available for inspection later this year. Council minutes, agendas and audit documents [when available later this month] are available on the 'TheHadhams.com' website. The Council is creating a new website and is looking for a volunteer editor. The editor would be concerned with the content of the site and need have no knowledge of the technicalities of creating a website.

At the close of business on 5th April 2016, the end of our financial year, the Parish Council had £12,873.42 in its Bank Account and petty cash. This surplus will allow the Council to make a number of outstanding repairs and improvements around the parish. The Council has agreed to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish and this will incur considerable costs. The Council has agreed in principle to make a donation towards buying the Millennium Wood for the community should the campaign prove successful.

Our litter picker is Mr Ben Petch – I'm sure you will want to greet Ben when you see him at work around the parish. East Herts Council funds our litter picker – £1,389.44 pa. Despite Ben'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.

Our handyman is Mr Joel Hammond who maintains the areas around the war memorial, the village pump and the allotments as well as emptying the litter bins and carrying out a number of small maintenance jobs round the parish.

Thanks, as usual, are due to the residents of 'Marshalls', opposite the War Memorial, who voluntarily supply the flowers at the War Memorial.

Mr Bev Evans – Parish Clerk

Continued

Financial position for the year 2015 to 2016

Credit		Notes
B/F from 2014/15	£13,977.47	
Precept	£12,800.00	This is collected from residents as part of the Council Tax.
Rent	£478.29	Rent from Westland Green and wayleaves for power cables
Interest	£0.62	
Banking	£12.50	Bank charge refund.
New Homes Bonus	£4,599.00	EHC has shared the government's bonus for building new homes with the parish.
Sales	£2.16	
Easement	£100.00	
Grant	£1,100.00	Grant for the Community Christmas Party and a grant from the Transparency Fund for setting up a new website.
Litter picker	£1,389.44	EHC pays the litter picker's salary.
Total credit	£34,459.48	

Debit		
Salaries	£7,012.18	To the Clerk, litter picker and Handyman.
Mileage	£78.71	The Clerk tries to walk or cycle for most parish business trips.
Playgrounds	£4,880.39	Grass and hedge cutting and some significant repairs.
New noticeboards	£2,070.49	For the Village Hall and Cradle End.
Telephone	£150.00	
Post	£28.58	
Copying	£81.70	Mainly using the copier at the school
Office supplies	£52.00	Mainly paper and printer ink
P/News	£1,015.00	The Council is one of several organisations who fund the Parish News. This includes the cost of a new printer.
Donations	£1,330.00	To the village school, graveyard upkeep, the Brownies, Karate Club, Mothers and Toddlers, Herts Air Ambulance and Royal British Legion.
Subscriptions	£743.10	Mainly to HATPC for legal and other help and advice.
Maintenance	£236.00	Parish share of the cost of the Village Hall and litter bin rubbish collection.
Repairs	£280.00	New litter bin for the A120 bush shelter.
Rent	£215.58	Mainly Village Hall hire.
Chairman	£90.00	For phone, post and travel expenses
Insurance	£591.48	To cover the play equipment as well as general Council risks
Bury & Westland Greens	£540.00	A contribution to the cost of cutting the grass at Bury Green
Audit	£120.00	The government appoints an external auditor
Banking	£12.50	Cheque lost in the post.
Allotments	£940.00	New picnic area.
Training	£430.00	The Clerk and councillors have attended a number of training courses.
Defibrillator	£135.00	The defibrillator is installed at the Village Hall.
Neighbourhood Plan	£25.00	The Council has agreed to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.
Christmas Dinner	£494.11	Paid for by a grant from EHC.
Misc	£34.24	Mainly refreshments for public meetings such as the Assembly.
Total debit	£21,586.06	
Surplus to C/F to 2016/17	£12,873.42	