



**Minutes of the High Wych Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 20th March 2024
8pm in Allen's Green Village Hall**

Cllr Tom Payne (TP)* Chairman

Cllr Carrie Payne (CP)*

Cllr John Andreotti (JA)*

Cllr David Smith (DS)*

Cllr Keith Jordan (KJ)*

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson*

* Denotes present

Present: 5 members of the public, Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.05pm.

ACTION

24.015 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None – all present
2. Others: Cllr Ian Devonshire

24.016 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. Interests declared: None
2. Dispensation requests: None received

24.017 Approval of Minutes

1. **RESOLVED: to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 17thJanuary 2024 as drafted.** The Chairman signed the Minutes

Clerk

The meeting was suspended at 8.15pm for public comments

George Wadham spoke on behalf of the planning application for a farm vehicle access into a filed off Blounts Lane (3/24/0291/FUL). The Parish Council considered the application under agenda item 24.022.1 below. The northern boundary of the Registered Village Green is unclear from conflicting maps. A parishioner had written to object to the proposal on the grounds that the present access is adequate.

Separately, it was noted that there is a dead silver birch at the other end of the Village Green that should be removed.

The meeting was restored to order at 8.25pm

24.018 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman had no announcements.

24.019 Council vacancy co-option

No applications received to fill the vacancy.

Clerk

24.020 East Herts Rural Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

No report was received.

Clerk/TP

24.021 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster's written report is included in these Minutes as Appendix B.

In particular, mention was made of widespread flooding due to recent high rainfall. Water run-off on to roads is causing problems. The responsibility is usually with the adjacent land owner. There have been issues with the water and gas utilities companies. There have been complaints about the poor condition of the road surface in several locations, the need to improve the condition of speed bumps, and patching at the zebra crossing.

District Cllr Ian Devonshire did not submit a report.

24.022 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/24/0292/HH	Vine Cottage: Demolish attached garage; erect 2 x single storey extensions. RESOLVED: No objections	Clerk
3/24/0291/FUL	Field off Blounts Lane: Create access for farm machinery. The proposal was an access to the north of the Registered Village Green. However, the northern boundary of the registered Village Green is unclear from contradictory plans and maps. It was therefore agreed to ask EHC Planning for a deadline extension while Cllr Eric Buckmaster checked with HCC's Gavin Harbour-Cooper to try and get a definitive answer. The issue arises because of legislation by which vehicles are not permitted to drive over a registered village green and the Parish Council cannot approve of something that would be in breach of the law.	

Clerk

Clerk

2. **Decision Notices.** As detailed in Appendix A below – for information only

3. **Other planning matters,** including items received too late for the agenda: None

24.023 Finance

1. **Report of the Council's Accounts 1st January to 29th February 2024**

Financial summary to 29th February

Opening cashbook balance 1st January	21,966.57
Plus income to 29 th February	90.00
Minus expenditure to 29 th February	<u>3,344.52</u>
Balance available to Council at 29th February (cashbook balance)	18,712.05
Plus unpresented payments	<u>0.00</u>
Reconciled Bank statement/cashbook balance 29th February	18,712.05

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Statement to 29th February be approved.

Clerk

2. **Accounts Reconciliation at 29th February 2024**

Cashbook balance 29th February £18,712.05

Bank balance 29th February £18,712.05

RESOLVED: To agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. **Performance against 2023/24 budget as at 14th March 2024**

	Budget	Actual to 14th March
Income	94,430	18,979
Section 106	49,950	0.00
PWLB Loan	<u>25,000</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income balance without S106 or PWLB	19,480	18,979

£550 HTC insurance refund has yet to be received.

	Budget	Actual to 14th March
Expenditure	98,862	15,497
Play Area redevelopment	75,000	0.00
PWLB Loan servicing	<u>3,000</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Income balance without S106 or PWLB	20,862	15,497

Opening bank balance 1 April 2023	15,649
Forecast closing bank balance 31 March 2024	17,861

RESOLVED: To agree the performance against budget as presented.

4. **HWMH: Reimbursement for car park light electricity**

Cllr Dave Smith said that due to spiralling electricity costs, HWMH would be invoicing the Parish Council for the electricity used to supply the car park light. The light is on a separate spur with its own meter and a reimbursement invoice would be raised accordingly. It was agreed to make the payments quarterly once the February and March payments have been made.

RESOLVED: To reimburse HWMH for the car park light electricity and to pay it on receipt of a quarterly invoice from April 2024 usage.

DS/Clerk

5. Payments for approval All expenditure to be made under The General Power of Competence

		Value	VAT incl
Color-Board	Litterpicking and poo bins Feb	120.00	20.00
HMRC	PAYE February (paid March)	120.00	
Everflow Water	Water (account in credit)	0.00	
HWMH	Electricity: car park light	37.19	
Clerk	Expenses Feb-March	21.80	
Clerk	Salary March	480.12	
HMRC	PAYE March (pay April)	120.00	
VAT included To be reclaimed under VAT Act 1994 (1), (3)			20.00

RESOLVED: to approve all payments as per the Clerk's report.

Clerk

6. Bank mandate additional signatory: Mandate form signed

Clerk

7. Replacement of Parish Council laptop

The Council considered a quote for buying a new laptop and setting it up. The Clerk was asked to get a breakdown of the set up cost.

Clerk

8. Pensions Regulator

The re-enrolment date of 6th August was noted. The Clerk to arrange.

Clerk

9. AGAR 2023/24: Internal Auditor

RESOLVED: That Steve Vine of Accountancy Book-keeping Services be appointed as internal auditor for the 2023/24 AGAR.

Clerk

24.024 1. Highways

1. Overgrown hedges, MOG/Bakers Lane update: The Chairman said he had spoken to the MOG manager and will send an email to follow up.
2. Potholes in High Wych Lane: Complaints about the potholes and generally bad state of the Lane and other roads were noted and will be followed up by Cllr Eric Buckmaster.
3. Other issues: None raised.

TP

2. Footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

1. Modification Order for footpath near Broadfields: Ongoing with Cllr Tom Payne:
2. Footpath Broadfields to High Wych Lane: Ownership has still not been clarified by Clarion Housing. Cllr Dave Smith agreed to give the Chairman another name to follow up. Also agreed to ask Cllr Eric Buckmaster for the email address of the Regional Director.
3. Other issues: None raised.

TP

DS/TP
TP

3. Other Parish Matters

1. High Wych Memorial Hall and car park

The new fencing has been erected and looks very good!

1. Other issues: None raised

2. Bus shelter litter bin

The Chairman agreed to attempt to fit the bin.

TP

24.025 1. Playing Fields and buildings

1. Harlow Theatre Company: pavilion update

1. Ongoing repairs are in hand. Parking is an issue and HTC have been advised they cannot park or lay hard standing by the pavilion.

JA

	<p>2. Outside tap: Yet to be done. It was agreed that for a cost of £150 the installation can be arranged. Cllr John Andreotti to organise.</p> <p>2. Play area</p> <p>1. RESOLVED: To split the refurbishment into two phases. Phase 1: Secure the S106 funding of £49,950 from EHC and order that value of play equipment. Phase 2: Consider PWLB loan or grant (eg Manchester Airport Group) for the £25k balance.</p> <p>2. Removal of dangerous bench: Noted that this has been completed.</p> <p>2. Allotments report</p> <p>1. All plots are now taken and there are two on the waiting list.</p> <p>2. It was agreed to consider increasing the rent. To be discussed at the May meeting.</p> <p>3. It was noted that the water bill is in credit.</p>	JA	Clerk/KJ
24.026	Correspondence: The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:	CP	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parishioners: Bad state of High Wych Lane and untrimmed hedges Parishioner and agent: re planning application 3/24/0291/FUL Pensions Regulator: Re re-enrolment duties 	Clerk	
24.027	Late items and items for future agendas		
	<p>1. Late items received. None</p> <p>2. Items for future agendas: None requested.</p>		
24.028	Date and venue of next meetings: Wednesday May 15th in High Wych Memorial Hall		Clerk
	<p>1. 7.15pm: Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate*. Followed immediately by</p> <p>2. 7.30pm approx.: Annual Parish Council Meeting. Followed immediately by</p> <p>3. 8pm approx.: May Ordinary Parish Council Meeting</p>		
	<i>*Note: The Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate is NOT a Council meeting</i>		
	It was agreed that the Chairman would contact locals for input into the Parish Electorate Meeting, including possibly, MOG, village shop, police and any other local group.		
	There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.09pm.		
	Signed.....		

APPENDIX A

24.022.2 PLANNING DECISION NOTICES for information only as at 14th March

3/23/2356/HH	1 Noons Cottages, Beanfield Rd.: Single storey front extension.	GRANTED
3/24/0088/FUL	Land at Crumps Farm: Change of use. RETROSPECTIVE	REFUSED
3/23/2473/FUL	1&2 Hoskins Cottages: Rear extension	REFUSED

APPENDIX B

Eric Buckmaster report for February 2024

Annual meeting of Hertfordshire Parish, Town and Community Councils and County Councillors

This meeting will be held virtually on MS Teams on Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 5.30 – 7pm and will be recorded.

Invitation from Cllr. Stephen Boulton, Hertfordshire County Council Executive Member Sustainable Economic Growth and Cllr. Bill Pryce, Chairman Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils to Hertfordshire Parish, Town and Community Councils.

All County Councillors and representatives from each Parish, Town, and Community Council are invited to attend the annual meeting of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (HAPTC).

This relaunched annual meeting is one element of a series of projects that HCC and HAPTC are progressing to strengthen the relationship between the two sectors of local government recognising more can be achieved working together in delivering the best possible services to residents. You are invited to register for the meeting to receive the joining link [Registration link for the Annual meeting of Hertfordshire Parish, Town and Community Councils and County Councillors](#)

Clrs ask about minerals plan as part of budget scrutiny

As reported by [Welwyn Hatfield Times](#), council officers *are* doing "background work" on potential quarry sites – despite having temporarily paused the development of their minerals and waste plan, it has emerged. The county council has a statutory duty to ensure sites are available for the extraction of minerals, such as sand and gravel. The latest draft of the council's waste and minerals plan includes three sites earmarked for the future extraction of sand and gravel. But when councillors [turned down an application for a quarry at Hatfield Aerodrome](#) – one of the three identified sites – work on the draft plan was paused, while the council waits to see if that decision will be appealed.

Sustainable Hertfordshire Updates

Hertfordshire named one of England's top counties for recycling

As reported by [Essex Live](#), official statistics released by the Westminster government show Hertfordshire is home to some of the nation's best recyclers. Hertfordshire County Council is the region's best performing disposal authority, with 51.2 per cent of the household waste it gets rid of going for reuse, recycling or composting.

Three Rivers District Council sent 61.5 per cent of the waste it collects at the kerbside for reuse, recycling or composting across 2022/23 - the second-highest recycling rate in England. It is one of five Hertfordshire boroughs and districts that directed more than half of its household waste into the circular economy.

Covered by Local Democracy reporter Will Durrant, with a quote by Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for The Environment.

Our Woodland Creation Officers have been in the spotlight recently, featuring in a [county council video at Hornbeam Wood Hedgehog Sanctuary](#), as well as being interviewed on the [Environment Matters podcast about their roles](#). The Woodland Creation Officers provide free advice to Hertfordshire residents on tree planting projects of any size. [Share information about the Woodland Creation Officers with anyone in your communities who needs support with a tree or hedgerow planting project](#).

Walkern Primary School win 'Eco-Warriors' competition

Year Six students from Walkern Primary School impressed a judging panel made up of Councillors Caroline Clapper, Mark Mills-Bishop and Eric Buckmaster with their entry to the inaugural 'Eco-Warriors' schools' competition, delivered in partnership with consultants Artelia. Their entry, which focused on enhanced energy efficiency, improved biodiversity, and use of recycled materials, earned them the win and £2,000 to help implement their ideas in their school. [The runners-up, Prae Wood Primary School and Rivers ESC also hugely impressed the judges, and each received £500 to further bolster their sustainability efforts.](#)

Success for first ever Clean Air Night summit

The Clean Air Night summit took place on Wednesday 24 January, as the culmination of a [countrywide communications campaign](#) around the dangers of domestic solid fuel burning. The key environmental takeaways from the summit include burning wood creates more CO2 per unit of heat than oil or gas, and the CO2 produced cannot be recaptured by planting trees in time to meet 2050 climate change targets. In addition, the health impact of a wood burning household has been estimated to cost health systems around £800 a year, with the 1000 new appliances installed in Hertfordshire in 2023 costing our health systems up to £800,000 a year going forwards. Over 40 organisations attended the event, with 62 local authorities taking part in the campaign, which we hope will continue to grow each year.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy starts to take shape

This month will see the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) start to take flight as the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership will run its first of many engagement workshops for

private landowners and land managers. The event will give attendees an opportunity to hear more about how they can get involved in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and start to shape the nature recovery priorities for Hertfordshire. [Find out more about the LNRS.](#)

Sustainable Hertfordshire survey

We recently launched a survey for residents, young people and those working in Hertfordshire to help us better understand their attitude and knowledge around sustainability and climate change issues, as well as their thoughts on the council's sustainability programme. We will use the results of this survey to help better communicate and engage with our residents on sustainability related issues. [Please share the survey with your residents through your own communications channels.](#)

Retrofit survey for homeowners and landlords

The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership is looking to develop services to help retrofit homes to make them more energy efficient. They have created a survey for homeowners and landlords to help them understand what energy efficiency products might be most in demand in Hertfordshire. The survey was live until Sunday 11 February.

Hertfordshire County Council welcomes 19 new firefighters

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has welcomed 19 new recruits to the service, joining a team of dedicated firefighters who work across the county to help keep residents safe.

The recruits recently passed out from their 16-week basic training at the Joint Emergency Services Training Centre in Stevenage, watched by proud family and friends.

The recruits are now officially 'firefighters in development' as they continue their training on stations around the county as they work towards becoming fully qualified.

Hertfordshire's newest SEND school opens in Stevenage

Hertfordshire's newest special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school opened its doors to more than 180 students on Tuesday 9 January, as the new term began at the Valley School in Stevenage.

The new school, custom-designed to better meet the needs of its students with learning disabilities, has been built on the site of the former school. The old school, originally built as a mainstream school, was at the end of its serviceable life, with maintenance costs increasing. The Valley School students had the unique experience of being able to watch their new school being built before their eyes during its 16-month build.

In addition to being built according to the latest guidelines from the Department for Education, the new special school reflects Hertfordshire County Council's wider commitment to sustainable, responsible growth in Hertfordshire.

The Valley school is the first net zero carbon in operation (NZCiO) new build school project for Hertfordshire County Council and the biodiverse green roofs help the site achieve the council's ambition of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain for new projects. Additionally, the school generates more than half (57%) of its own electricity onsite from solar panels installed on the roof.

David adds: "The environmental efficiency will also mean that we're able to direct more funding into the education of the children, which will really benefit them. This is giving the students, teachers and support staff the best of the best, which we know will be utilised to its maximum potential."

Additionally, timber offcuts from the works have been used by the Design Technology department for the young people to build bird boxes, along with bug hotels, which have been installed onsite to help enhance local biodiversity.

The new development is part of [Hertfordshire County Council's £91m capital investment in the county's special school provision](#), which is delivering 1000 additional special school places in Hertfordshire by 2026.

For information to help support a child with special educational needs, visit [the local offer](#).

Unique children's residential home supports young people with complex mental health needs

Hertfordshire's new residential children's mental health facility is creating a trailblazing model of integrated care to support children and young people in the local authority's care who are experiencing, or recovering from, mental health crisis.

Cherry Tree Cottage, in North Hertfordshire, is an Ofsted-registered children's residential home run in partnership by Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire Partnership

University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT).

This unique joint-funded, dual-staffed service provides a safe, secure, homely environment where young people (aged 12-17) experiencing or recovering from a mental health crisis can stabilise, receive treatment and access the health and social care support they need.

Young people requiring this intensive level of integrated social care and mental health support are experiencing significant social, emotional and mental health needs. They are either stepping down from more intensive tier 4 hospital provision or may require hospital admission without the specialist multi-disciplinary support Cherry Tree Cottage provides.

This new facility will help to reduce instances where young people experiencing such crisis seek help at A&E, require tier 4 admission and are subject to detention under the mental health act (s136). This innovative approach to delivering integrated health and social care is also helping prevent additional trauma caused by delayed discharge from an acute unit, and reduces the need for high-cost placements, out of the local area which can be damaging to young people.

Placements for children in the care of local authorities with complex mental health needs are costly (up to £17,500 a week). Children in care also often spend additional time in acute mental health unit beds when they are medically fit for discharge because their new additional needs may require a new placement or other specialist provision that is not available.

Outcomes for children are negatively affected by being in distant accommodation far from their families and communities; this breaks local connections and leads to unnecessary transitions in access to CAMHS, education and other health and local services.

Many young people requiring complex mental health interventions also have significant social care and/or educational needs; these are best met through robust collaboration between agencies. Over the past few years, Hertfordshire County Council has been working closely with HPFT to improve the health and social care support for children in our care with significant mental health and care needs.

Young people accessing support at Cherry Tree Cottage participate in an intensive 12-week programme incorporating wellbeing, health, and social care support. This multi-disciplinary care brings together the skills and experience of both health and social care sectors to support young people to make a transition back into their usual residence without experiencing a repeat breakdown.

Hertfordshire County Council welcomes government Disability Action Plan

Hertfordshire County Council has welcomed the publication of the government's Disability Action Plan, which aims to make the UK the most accessible place in the world

[New Disability Action Plan to make UK most accessible place in the world - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-action-plan)

Tony Kingsbury, Executive Member for Adult Social Care at Hertfordshire County Council, said: "We welcome the publication of the Disability Action Plan and fully support the ethos behind it, aiming to improve the everyday lives of those living with disabilities and laying the foundations for long term change is something we are passionate about in Hertfordshire. This year, we'll be spending nearly half a billion pounds helping adults who need our care and support to live life well and as independently as possible in Hertfordshire. The Purple All Stars performing group is an excellent example of a service we provide that supports our ambition to connect the lives of those with a learning or physical disability to their local community. This, we hope, will give them the opportunity to live real and fulfilling lives. We're committed to providing the right care and support for those who need it, while delivering value for money, promoting independence and preventing care needs increasing. "

Good' Ofsted rating retained for Hertfordshire's leading adult learning provider

Hertfordshire County Council's provider of adult learning and employment support, Step2Skills, has retained its overall rating of 'Good' when inspected by Ofsted during November 2023. In addition, an inspection was carried out in October 2023 by the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) who judged the service as a "Provider of Excellence". One area that was highlighted as 'outstanding' in Ofsted's inspection was the apprenticeship scheme provided by the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Hertfordshire County Council's Step2Skills service, which receives funding from the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions, works with around 5,000 people every year who face barriers to education and employment - such as low skills, learning

difficulties or disabilities and mental health conditions.

Inspectors from Ofsted noted that Step2Skills' staff 'provide good support for adults to prepare for interviews and apply for jobs' whilst the BASE inspectors found that the Step2Skills supported employment team are a 'circle for support from the start' with the 'participant at the centre of the process' and that the service is 'delivering outstanding results'.

In relation to the apprenticeship scheme, comments from the report highlighted that 'adults and apprentices achieve their personal goals and qualifications because teachers support them well in building their skills and knowledge over time.' Inspectors also found that the scheme offers 'well designed course that meet the needs of the community.'

Hertfordshire County Council Unveils Plans for A10 Cheshunt Improvements

Hertfordshire County Council, in collaboration with Broxbourne Borough Council, is asking residents and users of the A10 about proposals to improve several junctions in Cheshunt.

The A10 serves as a vital north-south corridor through Hertfordshire, connecting the area with the M25 and London. The proposals, developed in line with Broxbourne's Local Plan, target three key junctions, including Lieutenant Ellis Way/Winston Churchill Way roundabout, College Road, and Church Lane.

The improvements create better north-south connections, whilst also providing safer east-west links for people walking and cycling as well as making it more reliable for vehicles. The overarching goals are to enhance journey time reliability, improve walking and cycling routes, and provide more travel options for the local community. Delivery of the proposals remains subject to confirmation of funding.

COUNCILLOR ACTIONS ARISING

Cllr David Smith*

- HWMH liaison
- Set up Cllr Jacqueline Jackson council email address

Cllr Tom Payne*

- Contact MOG re overgrown hedge
- Liaise with Sam Clark on Modification order for footpath and adoption of FP from Broadfields to High Wych being adopted by HCC
- Footpath from Broadfields to High Wych Lane: contact Clarion Futures Charity
- New play equipment Working Group
- Allotments (with Cllr Carrie Payne)
- Contact police to get regular crime report
- Gilston development

Cllr John Andreotti*

- New play equipment Working Group
- Oversee fitting of tap to rear of pavilion
- HTC liaison

Cllr Keith Jordan*

- New Play Equipment Working Group

Cllr Carrie Payne*

- Monitor Highways issues, including parking
- Allotments (with Cllr Tom Payne)
- New Play Equipment Working Group

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson*

- New Play Equipment Working Group

*Cllrs Tom Payne, John Andreotti, Keith Jordan, Carrie Payne, Dave Smith, Jacqueline Jackson under delegated powers granted to the Clerk: Taking forward the new play area proposals.

Clerk

- Set up agreed bank payments
- Planning comments
- Ask Alex Geller to explain set up cost for new laptop