

HAMBLEDON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 2016 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

held on Thursday 14 April in the Village Hall

Present: John Anderson (chairman of the Parish Council, in the chair); Parish Councillors Mary Grove, Mike Parry, Paul Pattison, Stewart Payne and Philip Underwood; Parish Clerk Jane Woolley; Waverley Borough Councillors Anna James and Nicholas Holder; and over 60 villagers

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Karen Jones and from Stuart and Ursula Cook, Julie Llewelyn, Catherine McBride and Paul Stone.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

These were circulated, taken as read and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

2 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising that were not covered by other items on the agenda.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Planning.

The Parish Council had commented on 18 planning applications submitted in 2015 together with six applications for Certificates of Lawfulness for permitted development. All were for changes to existing properties, ranging from minor alterations to major extensions and even one complete rebuild.

English Rural had continued its work on plans for **Orchard Farm**. Owners of adjacent properties had been kept informed, as had the Parish Council which had held several meetings with a representative group of Hambledon Park residents and with other concerned individuals. A revised layout of the development, including improved proposals for drainage, had been recently been presented to the village and a planning application was expected early in May. Thereafter an open meeting would be held to enable the Parish Council to take account of villagers' views when it commented on the application on behalf of Hambledon as a whole. English Rural had also offered to gift part of the Orchard Farm site to the village to use as a community open space. A planning condition would propose its transfer to the Parish Council, probably a year after the properties were occupied, together with a commuted sum to cover management and maintenance costs. The Parish Council would then establish a Trust, representative of the whole village, to determine the use of the open space.

An application to build 1,800 houses (which could rise to 3,400) on the Dunsfold aerodrome site, now rebranded as **Dunsfold Park**, had been contested by all Parishes in the area. As well as submitting its own objections, the Parish Council had contributed to a study to ensure that the traffic impacts were properly assessed; and had been a joint signatory to a letter to the Secretary of State requesting that the application be called as it flew in the face of all previous decisions that the site was unsustainable for a new settlement.

Finance. For the first time in seven years the Parish Council had had to make a small increase in the precept. As central government continued to reduce its grants to local government Waverley was having to make corresponding cuts in its grants to Parish Councils; so further precept increases could follow.

Infrastructure. Surrey Highways was also suffering from reduced central government funding, making it increasingly difficult to keep Hambledon's deteriorating roads in any state of repair. Victoria Young was doing her best to help with grants from her Councillor's personal allocation fund. The outcome of an application for funds under SCC's localism initiative to enable Colin Rapley to continue his maintenance work throughout the village was awaited.

Police. A third casualty of funding cuts had been the police. Dave Boxall, Hambledon's Community Police Support Office, was no longer able to attend Parish Council meetings or Parish Assemblies and everyone was missing the personal contact.

Transport. The future of the 503 service had been thrown into the balance by SCC's proposal to make further cuts to rural buses. On behalf of the Parish Council Stewart Payne had again pressed for its retention as a vital means of transport for Hambledon's more vulnerable residents, mostly elderly, living alone and without cars. His suggestion that the 503 be combined with the service that connected Milford Hospital and Godalming had not been ruled out by Surrey but the outcome would not be known until the end of May.

Superfast broadband. Nearly half of the households on the 01428 exchange were still unable to access superfast broadband. These properties had been identified in a Parish Council survey, the results of which had been sent to BT. Getting them connected was likely to be technically challenging and very costly but the Parish Council would nevertheless keep up the pressure on their behalf. The Hydestile self-funded initiative to provide superfast to those who were on the 01483 exchange was almost complete and by the end of April everyone in the area who so wished should have been able to up-grade.

Defibrillators. Following the purchase by the Church of an AED, the Parish Council had received a grant from the Hambledon Community Fund to buy a second machine which was now in the Village Shop. Two training programmes meant that a number of villagers were now experts in the use of AEDs.

Village groups and organisations. Their activities were many and various: between them they offered something for just about everyone, which was what made Hambledon so special. A very big thank you was due to all of them.

People. Everyone was asked to remember four villagers who had died recently and the Chairman expressed condolences to their families. George Walker, Raymond Smith, Ray Williams and Tony Parker had all lived in Hambledon for many years and, in their different ways, had made their mark on the village. They were greatly missed.

Clean for the Queen. Everyone was asked to help with the village clean-up on 16 April, to ensure that Hambledon was looking its best on 21 April, the day of the Queen's 90th birthday. To commemorate the occasion the Parish Council had commissioned a seat, to be sited on the grass between the Village Shop and the Village Pond and unveiled on 18 June, immediately before the opening of the village fete.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked his fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their hard work throughout the past year. He also expressed his appreciation of the contributions made by so many villagers.

4. FINANCE

The audited accounts for 2014-15 were circulated to all present. There were no comments.

5. REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

John Tidmarsh thanked Cynthia Miller and Ion Campbell, both of whom had recently resigned from the **Village Hall** Committee after 26 and 20 years' service respectively. The Hall had had a good year, resulting in a small profit.

For the **Football Club** Matt Kiley reported that the First Team was now in its highest-ever place in its league, having finished 5th; the Reserves had won the Sport Godalming Team of the Year and were about to play in two cup finals; and both the A Team and the Vets were in line for promotion within their respective leagues. With over 100 players, the Dons were now a bigger Club than those in most of the adjacent, and larger, villages.

Arthur Blackman spoke on behalf of the **Cricket Club** which had also had a good year, with the 1st XI having won its league's Team Sportsmen's Award. All four Junior sides had done particularly well, winning most of their matches and with the under 11-s and the under 13-s coming top of their respective leagues.

There was spontaneous applause when Tim Parker reported that Gill Darbyshire had just been appointed as **Hambledon Village Shop's** new Manager. Volunteers were now up to 50; the shop had turned a small profit in February; and it looked as though it would do the same again in March.

Andy Falk spoke about the **Almshouses**, whose refurbishment had been completed. David and Mary Smith were the new tenants of No. 1.

David Jenkins emphasised the importance of **St Peter's Church** building on the past as it looked to the future. The introduction of Messy Church and a resultant increase in attendance by children and adults alike demonstrated the success of the church in a village community. Regular contact continued with the Nursery School and St Dominic's; the Church Room acoustics had been up-graded; and work was starting on vestry improvements. The **Hambledon Community Fund** now stood at just under £159,000 and had so far made grants totalling £10,000, most recently to the Cricket Club (essential maintenance), the Almshouses (refurbishment) and the Parish Council (purchase of an AED).

John Hindley reported that readership figures for the **Parish Magazine** were being maintained despite competition from other media. Jane Woolley had succeeded Philip Ryland as co-editor; advertising revenue was on the increase thanks to Derek Miller; and a well-oiled distribution team continued to operate under Pat Williams. He thanked them all, together with the regular columnists and contributors.

Julie Steele spoke about the **Heritage Society** which continued to maintain the village albums covering over a hundred years of Hambledon's history. The Society had hosted two meetings during the year: Jack Salway had given a lecture on Sir William Bragg to commemorate the centenary of the award of the Nobel Prize for Physics to him and his son and Stephen Dean had talked about his work to restore the heathland on parts of Hambledon and Busses Commons.

Mary Burrows reported on behalf of the **Hambledon Village Trust** which, as landlord of both the Village Shop and Pendle Cottage, was responsible for their exterior maintenance. The Trust had also been involved with the recent shop refurbishment. It retained responsibility for the **Village Website**, now running on new software which made it easier to use; and the site was insured for cyber and data liability.

Norman Gravestock reported that **Oakhurst Cottage** had been transformed by the recent structural repairs. The number of guides had increased and its future now seemed assured. Visitor numbers in 2015 had topped 2,000.

The **Ramblers** continued to flourish with a monthly programme for its long and short walk groups who were now complemented by the Strollers. Derek Miller stressed that the long walkers, ranging from the young (ie not yet 70) to several octogenarians, were still up for

around seven miles. Each autumn the group as a whole joined forces with other local organisations for a visit to France.

Cynthia Miller said that the **WAGs** were now meeting monthly at Meadow Cottage for tea and lots of chat, which rendered an outside speaker redundant.

On the educational front David Evans spoke about the **Nursery School** and its good fortune in having such a superb head and supporting group of staff; and he singled out Rosemary Kiley for special mention on her completion of 25 years as a teacher. Over 75 children had passed through the school in the past year, with a high proportion coming from Hambledon and adjacent villages. The school continued to make an annual surplus, sufficient to fund essential capital projects of which the latest was replacement of the windows. Monica Fisher spoke on behalf of **St Dominic's** whose pupil numbers were now nearly always up to the maximum level of 100. The school had been rated outstanding in its last Ofsted Care inspection; it retained its autism accreditation; and a positive result was expected from a recent safeguarding inspection. Finally, Anthea Edwards said that up to 17 children normally attending each weekly session of **Hambletots**. Additional income for the purchase of toys was being generated by allowing them to be used at children's parties held in the Village Hall and a one-off gift was helping with the cost of the much-needed heating.

6. THE NEW PARISH PLAN AND VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

There being no questions from the floor, Stewart Payne outlined the purpose of the new Parish Plan. Its predecessor had proved extremely successful in highlighting and delivering objectives: what was needed now?

Arthur Blackman referred to the waterlogged state of the Cricket Green and the need for the installation of a new drainage system.

Anthea Edwards' plea for a children's playground received a lot of support and everyone's preferred location for it was outside the village shop. This was already a community focus point and the addition of a playground would be beneficial both to the shop and its café trade, as well as providing fun for the children. Nothing elaborate was required: the natural features of the site itself, with the addition of a few logs and ropes, would be perfectly adequate.

David Evans raised the question of over-parking at Witley and Milford stations which would inevitably be exacerbated by the new development adjacent to Milford Hospital, let alone if Dunsfold Park were to happen. It was agreed that the overall traffic and transport implications of Dunsfold Park should be strong components of the new Hambledon Parish Plan. Also, in relation to transport, the new Plan should reflect the importance of retaining a commercial bus service that was accessible to holders of bus passes.

Gill Darbyshire pointed out that increased café trade at the Village Shop was putting pressure on its one and only toilet, which certainly would not be able to cope in the event of a playground being established. A toilet block was needed and another useful external addition to the shop would be a bicycle rack.

Mic Coleman pointed out that an increasing number of cyclists were now using Hambledon's lanes and facing an increasing number of hazards as roadside edges broke down and potholes emerged. This too should be addressed by the new Plan.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions to an enthusiastic and enjoyable debate. There being no further business, he then brought the meeting formally to a close.