

# **HAMBLEDON PARISH COUNCIL**

## MINUTES OF THE 2014 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

held on Thursday 10 April in the Village Hall

Present: John Anderson (chairman of the Parish Council, in the chair); Parish Councillors Mike Parry, Paul Pattison, Stewart Payne, Peter Spall and Philip Underwood; Parish Clerk Jane Woolley; Surrey County Councillor Mrs Victoria Young; Waverley Borough Councillors Elizabeth Cable and Adam Taylor-Smith; CPSO Dave Boxall; and over 60 villagers

Apologies for absence were received from Karen Jones

### 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

Highlights of the report (reproduced in the May issue of the Parish Magazine and on the village website) were as follows:

Highways. Funding obtained from SCC's highways localism initiative had enabled the Parish Council to commission Colin Rapley to clear drains and ditches, mainly along the Hambledon Road. Outside help had been needed to jet out some of the blocked pipes and culverts and Victoria Young had provided some of the funding for this from her Councillor's personal allowance.

Public utilities. A report was awaited from Thames Water following discussions about burst water mains in Rock Hill and Lane End. Scottish and Southern Energy had provided an immediate response to requests for technical information and listened to concerns about the all-too-frequent power cuts: their more detailed response would follow later in the evening.

Village success stories had included the raising of sufficient funds in two years for the refurbishment of one of the Almshouses. Grants had been obtained for the Village Shop to purchase a new freezer and to up-grade the drainage system (yet more thanks to Victoria Young). The Heritage Society had designed and commissioned and was about to install a viewpoint on Hambledon Common. Hambledon Nursery School had built a new outdoor classroom. The Football Club had completed its new pavilion. The Hambledon Community Fund had already exceeded its initial target of £100,000 and had disbursed over £10,000 in grants.

Planning. Waverley had had to withdraw its Core Strategy, which formed the centrepiece of the new Waverley Local Development Plan and a replacement would not be issued until 2015. The Parish Council had commented on the proposals for a major housing development at Upper Tuesley Farm but its suggestions for an increased developer contribution, a proper peak-hour shuttle bus service and a decent path from the site to the Portsmouth Road had met with very limited success. Of the 30 planning applications for Hambledon three had been for

Certificates of Lawfulness, 19 had granted full planning permission or allowed non-material amendments, three had been for tree-felling and five had been refused.

Finance. Once again the Parish Council had budgeted for no increase in expenditure and had managed to balance the books by using some of its reserves to fund the balance of the cost of jetting out the drains. In future, it would probably be necessary to take on more responsibility for local works to infrastructure and the policy might have to be reconsidered.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked the Clerk for her good work and the many groups in Hambledon for remaining vibrant and involving so many people in the village.

#### 4. FINANCE

The audited accounts for 2012-13 were circulated to all present. There were no comments.

#### 5. REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

Monica Fisher reported on behalf of **St Dominic's School** which was now part of the Radius Trust. A good Ofsted report, coupled with accreditation by the National Autistic Society, had upped the school's profile and 72 pupils would be attending next term. The **police** report, by PCSO Dave Boxall, showed that the crime rate in Hambledon had reduced by half, with only seven crimes reported during the past 12 months. For **Oakhurst Cottage** Sarah Woodcock, the National Trust's regional curator, outlined her research into the history of the cottage and requested any information which villagers might be able to provide. Norman Gravestock reported yet another delay in starting the much-needed building works – this time on account of the bats that have taken up residence – and the loss of the Gertrude Jekyll artefacts that had been an important component of Oakhurst ever since it opened but which had had to be returned to Guildford Museum.

Andrew Falk spoke about the refurbishment of **Almshouses** no. 2 which was on time and substantially within budget. Work was almost complete, the vacancy was about to be advertised and a formal opening would be held early in the summer. Jo Jazeel, the newly-appointed manager, spoke on behalf of the **village shop** and thanked everyone for having welcomed her so warmly. Immediate plans included streamlining and introducing some new brands and products, with the emphasis on local and organic.

The **Community Fund** had had an outstanding year with Hamblerock, the Butterfly Supper and the Night at the Opera, all organised by villagers. These events, plus some very generous individual donations and the government's matched funding scheme, meant that the fund now stood at over £118lk. During the year six beneficiaries had received grants totalling £5,515.

Arthur Blackman reported mixed fortunes for the **Cricket Club**: the senior IX had had its worst-ever season but the friendly had won eight of its 11 matches and over 90 colts, who now had to be referred to as "juniors", had registered. The **Football Club's** main achievement had been completion of the pavilion, which would be formally opened in July on completion of the car park. As Mick Coleman pointed out, more facilities mean more players – there had been a 50 per cent increase in the number of playing members and all the teams were doing well in their respective divisions.

Julie Steele spoke about the **Heritage Society's** recent and very successful AGM. The next task would be the installation of the view map on the top of Hambledon Common. The heritage albums continued to be added to and an increasing number of enquiries were now being dealt with via the village web site.

John Tidmarsh reported that the **Village Hall** had a new floor and that hirers were now having to pay their own central heating costs. A wide range of events continued to take place at **St Peter's Church**, although The Merrier Harriers had had to substitute as a venue during the Christmas Day power cuts; and Catherine McBride was pleased to report an increase in

participating numbers. However, recent research suggested that, without nurturing, these could have diminished substantially or even vanished in 40 years' time, when it was expected that there would only be 2,000 churchgoers in the whole of Surrey.

Mary Burrows reported that the **Hambleton Village Trust** continued to look after the village web site and the Village Shop, which it owned together with Pendle Cottage. Following a maintenance review, substantial work had been carried out on both properties earlier in the year. Traffic remained stable on the **website**, with several contributors keeping it up-to-date. With a view to increasing their numbers, Paul Osborne was happy to offer one-to-one training, to supplement the on-line training that was already available. The website was also supporting the campaign to bring superfast broadband to the north of the village.

The average age of the **Hambleton Ramblers** continued to increase but some newer, and younger, members had joined and there was still plenty of support for the long and the short walks. Age was also becoming a factor for the **WAGs** and volunteers were being sought to take over from Jan Kilsby and Julie Atkin who, after seven years at the helm, would be giving up at the end of 2014. There had, however, been no reduction in activities during the past year. Visits to Elstead Mill and Loseley had alternated with hospitality and tea at various members' houses; Halloween, Christmas and New Year celebrations had been held in the Village Hall; and there had been two talks, by Philip Underwood on his travels through the year and by Stephanie Monk on the work of the registry office.

Nichola Collett reported that 71 children were currently attending **Hambleton Nursery School**, including a higher-than-usual complement from the village, and villagers were also to be found among the 20 members of staff. The creative development project being undertaken in conjunction with three other schools was serving as a hub for sharing ideas across the county and strong links continued with St. Peter's Church. The School, its Trustees and its staff were also concerned to maximise the support they might be able to give to children in Hambleton. **Hambletons** continued to flourish for the very young. Anthea Edward was pleased to report that numbers were up and that the toy collection could now be hired for children's parties held in the Village Hall, with a resultant improvement in Hambleton's cash flow.

Finally, the **Parish Magazine**, jointly edited by John Hindley and Philip Ryland who as this year's spokesman was glad to say that finances remained stable, largely thanks to the income which Tony Parker generated from advertisements. The print run was 280 copies a month, the bulk of which were sold within the village; and Philip especially thanked Pat Williams and her term of distributors.

## 6. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Ursula Cook asked whether a small fenced-in playground could be provided outside the Village Shop. The Chairman said that the Parish Council would investigate. George Pitt reminded the meeting that the Hambleton Pedlars were about to embark on a new season of local bike rides. Christine Baker asked whether the Parish Council had made representations to Thames Water about loss of water on Christmas Eve and it was confirmed that they had. Finally, in response for an up-date about the resurfacing of the Hambleton Road, it was reported that the team was not expected back until the end of May due to continued saturation of the road's sub-strata.

## 7. PRESENTATION BY SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ENERGY

The five-man team was headed by Paul Gallagher, Operations Manager for the Aldershot District. He was accompanied by one of his deputies, Paul Towsey; two members of the tree-cutting team, James Flood and Russell Turner; and Matt Yates, a project manager from the Network Services team. The past few months had seen substantial changes in SSE's staff

structure, to the extent that Paul Gallagher had only been in post for two weeks and Paul Towsey for one; so they apologised in advance if they were not as up to speed as might otherwise have been the case. Not surprisingly they emphasised that the Christmas and February storms had been exceptional – but that that was no excuse for what everyone agreed had been failures of communications with customers. Improvements in communications were therefore being given high priority with substantial increases in the numbers of staff working in this field. As regards improvements to the network, a programme was being developed whereby funds would be diverted to refurbishing circuits that had been worst affected by the storms, including the areas from which Hambledon received its power (Godalming, Haslemere, Milford). The Parish Council would be kept informed of progress and at the appropriate time both Paul Gallagher and Paul Towsey would be happy to come and talk to a further meeting.

Another area where SSE staff numbers were being increased was within the tree-cutting department. Overhead cables form 50 per cent of those serving the Hambledon area and it was made clear that SSE itself had no plans to put any of these underground. However, a four-year plan for dealing with trees in the worst affected areas (again, including Hambledon) was being developed and cutting back would start in October. From now on SSE would be liaising with the Parish Council in seeking to identify individual trees that might be likely to cause trouble and, where necessary, in persuading landowners of the importance of granting SSE access to their land and their trees in the interests of the wider community.

The presentations resulted in numerous questions, not all of which could be answered either because programmes were still at the development stage or because the questions fell outside the remit of any of the speakers. There were, however constant assurances that, in the latter case, the questions would be put to people higher up the chain in SSE and the answers fed back.

#### 8. VILLAGE CLEAN-UP AND BARBEQUE

The Chairman invited everyone to take part in the village clean-up and barbeque on 12 April.

**There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 22.00**