

HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Hawkley Annual Parish Meeting

Held at the Village Hall on WEDNESDAY 5th APRIL AT 7PM

Minutes

Attending: Parish Cllr Humphrey, District Councillor Louisson, County Councillor Oppenheimer and 6 residents (including 3 Cllrs). Also present K Horton (Clerk) and M Cledwyn (external speaker).

1. Open meeting

- a. Welcome. Meeting opened by Cllr J Humphrey (Vice Chair of the Parish Council) who chaired in the absence of Cllr Caukill.
- b. Apologies for absence. Received from four residents (inc 3 Parish Cllrs).
- c. Acceptance of Minutes from last APM (13th April 2022). Shared on the website with no queries raised and so duly signed as a record of the meeting.

2. External Speaker. Megan Cledwyn, Community Engagement Ranger for Hampshire Countryside Service

- Interface between Parish Council and residents and Govt who maintains Countryside Service. Would like to hear from residents with ideas or projects on improving access across the network of footpaths.
- Trying to build volunteer base for the two different types of activities they coordinate - path warden role (ears and eyes on the ground) and volunteer task days that are run – 3,000 miles of footpaths that need attention
- South East (Petersfield sphere) is Megan's area. Last week clearing a footpath in Greatham and next week in Old Alresford on restricted byways. Also working on gate installation project.
- Any questions.

Q. Reports were lodged historically about stiles in a state of bad repair and no action appeared to be taken to mend or replace these. Who is responsible for taking action?

A. Stiles not friends to anyone but farmers who like them as they reduce the risk of livestock roaming. Landowners need to be open to the replacements being made. Sometimes Countryside Service take matters into own hands but this is more vegetation being overgrown and the group cannot just replace broken items.

A. On the point of the stiles, there are a number of parishes who are responsible for footpaths. Kissing gates have been replacing stiles in Ropley. Most years Cllr Louisson gives part of councillor grant to replace stiles and get volunteers to install.

A. Some stiles have HCC logo on so they might have been replaced historically but now if wobbly stile reported the group would then follow up with landowner – it is their responsibility to replace/maintain.

Q. Could parish council support your work eg identify two days for local work and have the Countryside Service work with them? Cheesecombe Way was an example in case. Landowner changed and route was not maintained.

A. Yes, that is possible and Countryside Services would be happy to be contacted by HPC if such plans went ahead

Q. Do you have issue with BOATS being cleared by motor users with chainsaws? This weekend, second time that have heard the vandalism being carried out

A. Will take on feedback that this is an issue in the parish. Cllr Oppenheimer is also providing an update in his report.

3. Chair's Annual Report. Attached as Appendix One. Cllr Humphrey also noted thanks to Cllr Caukill for all the time he gives to the Parish Council.

Q. Would like to query the strategic planning of Abri; why are they not maintaining and creating a reserve so that properties can be refurbished?

Q. Abri has evolved into a property company. In days of yore, village housing was built for the village and the village council had a strong say in who was placed. In this village we could combine together and buy out such properties and create something akin to almshouses so we get these properties back for the village. 3 of the 4 bungalows were not give to local residents. Put it to the Council that they reflect on this and come up with a plan.

A. Frustrating that same issue seems to arise again and again. Abri does appear to be run with a focus on the bottom line and against the spirit of affordable housing for locals. Cllr Louisson acknowledged that the situation is not unique to Hawkley and advised he is working with EHDC to focus on social housing. Right to Buy legislation can not be tampered with. EHDC are thinking of getting back into owning property in some format but it is not a simple task. Considerations include working to develop housing from scratch and buying property that comes available.

4. District Councillor Charles Louisson's Annual Report.

- Waste collection service has not had finest year. Separation from Havant has caused part of problem and the poaching of the HGV drivers – scarce markets and increase in salaries. Now dealing with shortage of parts for vehicles that sees vehicles off the road for significant periods of time. Contract with Norse has been KPIs and service level agreements. Looking forward to performance improving
- Spring Clean scheme has been launched and believes residents are seeing the impact of this
- Local Plan rumbles on. Some overlap even though in National Park. Just under 30% of East Hants pop lives in National Park and burden for housing allocation falls on space outside of park. Concerns about this have been raised to government and starting to get relief; there is recognition that formula can not be followed in East Hants.
- Housing formula based on affordability ratio. Inside park 17% and outside 13%. Less affordable your housing is the more you have to build. New affordability numbers have dropped substantially. Housing nos likely to be reduced as a result of this
- Enforcement is being funded for crackdown on unapproved development
- Budget. 6% average increase for staff at EHDC was applied but managed to hold increase to 2%. Grant from Gvnt went up substantially. Enhanced support for Council Tax and also extended scheme to pay in instalments.
- Big contribution to welfare programme and have £350,000 to various schemes. Ringfenced £1,000,000 to carry on schemes for 4 years.
- Speeding. Working with police to approve scheme which will fund cameras (20 sets) with number plate recognition who will send speed van based on map of offenders. Fines will follow

Q. Speeding in relation to global climate concern. Reduce need on fossil fuels and reducing speed on motorways and trunkroads. Travelling at 80mph using more resources. Enforce speed here and see a positive impact contribution to global warming. The District and Parish Council should make people aware of this.

A. If reduce mph then time increases and this impacts on economy. Longer journeys are the majority on those types of road. PCAN meeting locally but thrashing out what to lobby on a national level.

A. Re-educating is important but believe this matter is beyond the remit of the PC. Recognise it is a global issue.

5. County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer's Annual Report. Attached as Appendix Two

Q. Speed limits. Are we able to apply for a 20mph limit for free?

A. You could apply for it and Hawkley would be strong candidates but there would be an associated cost. Speed survey to assess whether near enough 20mph otherwise will be asked to introduce speed calming initiatives. June is when policy is announced and follow with discussion at parish council.

A. Review in 2018 matter was considered in depth and village signs were put up. White lines also applied. Parish Council will look at this.

Q. Do you fund maintenance for the tree planting initiative once planted?

A. Dry summer last year was not good. Tree warden concept to keep an eye on them. Learn lessons from last summer. Possible planting site in Hawkley is extension of churchyard.

6. Open Forum

Resident - I, and other volunteers, are happy to clear and pick up roadside litter, but the problem is where to take it as the Council waste tip will not accept it without charging. Recently, we picked up several bags worth of litter plus 2 or 3 old tyres and ended up leaving much of it in a layby on the main road – and then reported it to the Council as fly tipping with accompanying photographs. This is really not satisfactory at all and the Council must allow us to take roadside waste to the tip without charge.

A. Cllr Louisson has replied that as part of the Spring Clean, a press release confirmed that local groups would have their collections picked up. Issue flagged that EHDC will only work with certain types of organisations ie a responsible body. Cllr Louisson will follow up on this.

Q. Will the collections for local groups be an ongoing arrangement?

A. TBC.

Q. Is it possible to give the organisers a permit that allows them to take collections to the Refuse Centre without cost?

A. Cllr Oppenheimer will ask.

Resident – Bungalows and parking. Reiterated concerns about parking on Vicarage Lane outside the bungalows. Also raised the fact that No 2 are waiting for their kerb to be dropped.

Resident – Ash die back is severe in the hangars with a lot of timber on the side of the road for users. A resident was concussed last year with a piece of wood being clipped by a vehicle.

A. Send photos to HCC website and log issues for road safety.

Resident – road signs that have been left on the verges and hedgerows for months. What can be done about these?

A. Confirm whether utility company or HCC to assess who should collect it.

Resident- Can you please let Council Members know that the church bells – for which they had provided a generous grant towards the substantial costs of the refurbishment project - are now scheduled to be returned to Hawkley on 21 April and will be rehung and tested over the following two weeks. We are therefore hopeful, if all goes smoothly, that it will be possible for a celebratory peal to be rung on the new installation for the King's Coronation in early May. I will write to the Chairman separately about the special service which we are planning to hold on 23 April at which the bells will be blessed on the ground before disappearing back up the tower.

Resident – Cllr Brighton thanked his fellow Cllrs for their hard work and support over the past years. In turn Cllr Brighton was thanked for all his help and service.

7. Meeting closed 8:32pm

Appendix One: **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2023. HPC Chair's Annual Report**

- The Parish extends from near Bradshott on the other side of the Selbourne Road, down to Snailing Lane and through to Empshott, Hawkley and then down to Oakshott and includes a little over 200 dwellings and nearly 400 electors.
- This Annual Parish Meeting is a standing meeting which provides an opportunity for your councillors, Parish District and County alike, to report on their activities over the last year. It also a forum for any elector to raise matters for the Council's attention which we will answer if we can or take it away under advisement.
- Turning now to HPC, much of our business is routine and recurs each year including planning matters, maintenance issues and small grants and/or donations towards specific causes. But we are also dealing with a number of less routine matters which I will cover first.

Children' Play Area

- The Play Area replacement is approaching completion and should be open by this summer. The Play Area is owned by Hawkley Parish Hall which has managed the design and construction.
- Inevitably, the project costs escalated as a result of inflation and scope changes. The final cost is likely to be about £56,000. There proved to be no grants available from the many donors that were approached, (our small, rural community playground didn't tick enough boxes). However, the project has successfully been financed through a combination of grants and donations from Hawkley Parish Hall Trust, Hawkley Sports Club, Hawkley Parish Council, District and County Councillors' devolved grants (for which many thanks to Charles and Russell), and proceeds from Hawkley PCC's Music Evening. What was really heartening was the combined donations by members our community which together amounted to £27,200 including Gift Aid.
- It's great to see the community coming together to fund an important community resource for the next generation.

Upper Green Phone box

- The PC should soon be proud owners of a second telephone box, having now completed the paperwork necessary to take it over from BT. Cllr David Large is to lead the refurbishment over the summer.

Upper Green Bench

- When the tree was replaced in February 2019, it had been assumed that the bench could be dismantled and reassembled around the new tree. The bench proved to be a one-piece construction in situ which made reinstallation a challenge. So many thanks to Sinclair, Dom, Juke and Mick from Lower Green Farm for their work on refurbishing the bench, using the Farm's "Cherry Picker" to re-site the bench over the top of the tree, and to Dom for constructing the protective surrounding base.

Ponds

- Following feedback from parish residents, a project team (led by Cllr Buckle) is taking professional advice on the best ways to maintain and improve the ponds across the parish. Thanks to Cllr Louission for a grant towards this work which will start in earnest this summer.

Traffic

- Traffic safety is a recurring issue. HCC prioritise expenditure based upon potential for casualty reduction based upon reported incidents. If you have an accident in the Parish, these statistics will not be updated unless you report it. These statistics govern priorities and spending so it's in everyone's interest for you to report any accidents.

- The Upper Green fingerpost was refurbished Summer 2022; there is one other fingerpost sign outstanding which we will deal with when our resources allow.

Social Housing

- The pressure from Government on councils to increase the stock of social housing is reflected in the recent revisions of Local Plans and surveys of Parishes and requests for land availability reviews. We have sought to engage with SDNP in that process.
- There are 12 social housing units in the parish – 10 rental and 2 shared ownership. These are owned and maintained by Abri; the selection of tenants is handled by EHDC Housing Services. A number of people with connections to the parish have found it difficult to get access to these properties; we are working with EHDC to better understand why. The way in which these tenancies are allocated has led us to explore the idea of a small new development of social housing where the community has greater influence over the selection of tenants. This is at a VERY early stage and will not be pursued without wide consultation among residents.
- We have learned that Abri's approach to refurbishment on a change in tenancy involves an NPV decision process comparing costs against some measure of future income. Unless the NPV is substantially positive, Abri's default position is to dispose of the property on the open market. 7 of these social rented housing properties are quite old and refurbishment will be expensive particularly after a long tenancy. Accordingly, if Abri were to apply its normal NPV criteria to these decisions the stock of social housing in the parish quickly will be sold off. We know they considered this approach when one of the Jolly Robins cottages became vacant last summer and earlier this year they listed No 4 Homefield Cottages for sale by auction in February.
- As regards, No 4 Homefield Cottages, with help from EHDC Housing Team and Councillor Louisson, HPC was able to bring pressure on Abri to reverse their decision to sell (although we do not know which of our arguments, if any, prompted that change of heart.) The property is now being re-let.
- HPC will remain in contact with EHDC on the matter of social housing with the intent of safeguarding the stock the parish does have.

Planning

- There were far fewer planning applications this year – 9 - compared with an historical average of perhaps 20 in a Parish with only just over 200 dwellings! Your Planning Committee visited considered and commented on each of them. An objection was lodged against 1 of them.
- Last year we renewed our objection a mobile home that has been installed in a field south of Spring House in Empshott. EHDC took enforcement action to have the home removed; the occupant appealed against the order the determination of which is still pending.
- The time given to considering these applications should not be underestimated and we are also lucky to have a Planning Committee, chaired by Geoff Brighton, who give the time to consider each application.

Maintenance of Greens, Roads, verges and footpaths

We oversee the maintenance of the greens, ponds, and byways around the Parish. We routinely ensure that the parish roads, verges, ditches, ponds and drains are kept clear and tidy.

- Verges: While HCC will trim dangerous 'sightlines' on request, it has substantially reduced the maintenance of the verges more generally to a single annual cut as a result of budget pressure. This year we have been advised the cut will be between May and June and as such we may need to repeat our action of engaging a contractor in November to ensure the verges are clear through winter.
- Cutting of the Greens: Thanks to Dominic Palmer, Barry Philips Roger Barber and others for keeping them in shape.

- Recent bad weather highlighted the need for vigilance in keeping ditches and gullies clear to avoid flooding. It is the landowner's responsibility to keep clear the ditches that run along their curtilage and we are grateful to those residents who have ensured that these have been kept clear and free flowing. *[We have reminded some residents of these responsibilities.]*
- When work is needed, we encourage HCC to act or, if they cannot prioritise it, we try to deal with it ourselves. We currently participate in the Lengthsman Scheme funded by HCC in which gives us one man-day's labour each quarter to do minor maintenance tasks. HCC have extended the funding for this scheme for another year but in future HPC will have to fund this activity.

Footpaths

- Hangers Way and other byways are popular with both residents and visitors alike. We monitor their condition and HPC has engaged with other parishes and SDNPA to flag joint concerns such as the BOATS.

Donations and Grants

- The PC has the capacity to make small grants and donations to groups and activities with a local impact. This year we supported East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, Homestart Butser and the Rosemary Foundation. We also contributed to the costs of the Jubilee Celebrations in Hawkley and in Empshott. We were also, exceptionally, able to make a grant to the Parish Hall Trust of £7,760 towards the new Play Area, £5,000 from our reserves and the balance from CIL monies received.

Finances and Admin

- All of this has been achieved on our very low annual precept of £15,000 (collected through your Council Taxes). For 2023/24, it was agreed that the precept be increased to £16,000 in order to ensure the council have resources to cover some improvements to infrastructure and maintenance plus potential election costs. This decision was not taken lightly and supporting documents are available on the parish website.

Conclusion

- So that's the year that was 2022/23. None of this would have been achieved without our committed team of councillors whose contributions are unremunerated and often unremarked and even un-thanked. I include here our County and District Councillors, Russell and Charles, who have each made time for Hawkley - a small parish their respective portfolios - and given help and guidance where they can.
- As you know the council is to be re-elected next month and Geoff Brighton and Simon Dixon have decided not to offer themselves for re-election. I should like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their contributions over the years: Geoff has led our planning activities for several years and has taken responsibility for footpaths too, while Simon has managed our involvement in the play area and instigated the successful fund raising for its redevelopment – they both will be sadly missed.

Finally – a reminder that you will need a photo ID in order to vote in person on 4 May.

David Caukill

Chair: Hawkley Parish Council

Appendix Two: ANNUAL HCC REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER

Introduction

This annual report has been prepared for Annual Parish Meetings taking place between March and May 2023. As usual I will try to attend as many of the APMs as I possibly can!

A memorable year for Hampshire:

- The historic and emotional events of the last 12 months will live long in the memory. It has been an eventful municipal year with the monarchy at the heart of it:
 - The County Council celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee across its services during the summer of 2022. The lighting of a beacon at QE Country Park was a very well attended event, along with events at other country parks and libraries. I also attended a moving Jubilee Citizenship ceremony held in the Great Hall in Winchester, directly underneath the Round Table. All Parishes held their own Platinum Jubilee events which were joyous community occasions.
 - The sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in September 2022 came as an enormous blow and all of Hampshire was greatly affected. Hampshire was always close to the Queen's heart. Hampshire was the place where the Queen spent her honeymoon and the County to which she came often to visit Her Armed Forces. The County Council helped residents to pay their respects to the late Monarch by providing public books of condolence at the Great Hall.
 - HCC was then responsible for the co-ordination of the proclamation of King Charles III outside Winchester's Great Hall, as well as live-streaming the event to allow people to watch online.
 - As the municipal year ends in May this year, HCC will put on a number of suitable events across the County to enable people to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles on 6 May 2023.
- The ongoing war in Ukraine has been unsettling over the last year. I am proud that Hampshire has played an important role in supporting Ukrainians fleeing from the conflict. We have taken in the third highest number of refugees of all the English counties, not a bad record. This is predominantly thanks to the generosity of the Homes for Ukraine hosts, to whom we are all very grateful. HCC is providing extra support to Hampshire residents hosting Ukrainian guests as part of the Government's Scheme, with an additional £200 per month beyond the funding already provided by the Government.
- HCC has also worked hard to help our Ukrainian guests to integrate. We launched a Ukraine Connects initiative at all our libraries and we have helped to develop language classes and skills support.
- The severe weather has had an impact over the last year. We have seen a massive increase in flooding incidents across Petersfield Hangers, and a number of sewage overflows which are very distressing. The rain and freezing temperatures have also taken their toll on road surfaces. I think Hampshire Highways have done a great job in the circumstances.
- The severe weather is likely to be a feature of our climate over the coming years. We have to learn to live with it. It is a reminder of the negative impacts of climate change, and we need to redouble our decarbonisation efforts. It is great to see community energy schemes springing up across the Petersfield Hangers division.

The last 12 months for me:

- Back in May 2022 I was delighted to be appointed to the Countryside and Regulatory Services portfolio within the HCC Cabinet. I am responsible for five country parks, five National Nature Reserves, two farms and 81 countryside sites. I am also responsible for Trading Standards, Ceremonies and Registration, Hampshire Records Office and Hampshire Scientific Service. So there is plenty to keep me busy.
- One of my passions is tree planting and I am delighted to be championing the Hampshire Forest Partnership. We have an ambitious target to plant one million trees by 2050, and we have made great strides over the last year. Ongoing support from Parishes is critical to ensure we keep up momentum.
- Apart from boosting nature, storing carbon, preventing flooding, and improving natural beauty, tree-planting can also bring communities together. Young and old alike can get stuck in and then enjoy watching the trees grow with a real sense of pride. Our project officer at HCC would be pleased to hear

from any Parish Council that would like to develop a tree-planting programme in their Parish. You can contact her at treeplanting@hants.gov.uk

- In my HCC Countryside role, I have been proactive on the BOATs front (Byways Open to All Traffic). I am determined to restore the safety and tranquillity of our green lanes. At HCC we are developing an innovative new policy framework which will be published for scrutiny later this year. New gates, secure noticeboards and technology will be deployed under the new approach.
- I am pleased to say that collaboration with the SDNPA on the BOATs issue is gathering pace now. We are anticipating being able to get some funding from their CIL pot and establishing joint working mechanisms amongst the Ranger teams. I met the SDNPA Chair Vanessa Rowlands last week and we were very much on the same page in our desire to keep up the momentum and make a difference. We are awaiting certain Government policy announcements on this issue, which I hope will also give us more tools to protect the byways which are so important in terms of maintaining access to the countryside for everyone.

Funds available for projects

May I take this opportunity to remind everyone that HCC has two funding streams available for Parish Councils. I would encourage Parishes to take advantage of these funds whilst they still exist by making applications in the coming year.

- The Rural Community Fund supports Parish Councils, groups and organisations in rural Hampshire and small market towns. The fund can provide contributions of up to £5,000, with at least 50% match funding required. The grant fund provides support under the following four areas:
 1. Climate Change Resilience (including Flood Alleviation);
 2. Countryside (we want to help rural communities improve their local natural environment, enhance biodiversity or increase access to the countryside);
 3. Rural Economy and Business (we want to help Rural Businesses and Community Enterprises grow, increase their productivity, and ultimately improve the services that are offered to communities);
 4. Other – we are keen to support any other projects or initiatives that will help build community resilience and/or encourage self-help in rural areas.
- The Parish and Town Council Investment Fund can provide up to £30k investment. The funding can support schemes which:
 - Respond to local needs and which can demonstrate an easing of pressure to County Council Services.
 - We have a particular focus on improvements to Community Buildings to address carbon reduction and climate change resilience. E.g. Solar panels and insulation for village halls.

HCC Performance Highlights

- I know that the financial crisis affecting local government is well understood by all Parish and Town Councillors. The increased cost of care and the increase in the number of elderly adults needing care has put pressure on budgets. In Hampshire we are lucky to have a County Council that is in a relatively strong position. We have a great team of officers who deliver for residents – day in, day out. We have substantial reserves which enable us to invest. And we continue to be able to prioritise young people by focusing on schools and skills.
- There is a lot of other good stuff which goes on behind the scenes, some of which does not make it into press notices. I thought it would be worthwhile to take the opportunity to list some highlights from the last year at HCC which you may not have heard about:
 - Hampshire Futures, which provides career guidance and support to young people, being awarded the Matrix Quality Standard for a third time. The service's delivery of information, advice and guidance was described as 'exemplary,' and the service's objectivity, impartiality, client focus and aspirational nature was also praised.

- The County Council investing in projects to help people dependent on alcohol and drugs, by increasing the capacity of the Criminal Justice and Substance Misuse Teams, commissioning a new specialist Alcohol Team for community-based treatment, and continuing its support for the harm reduction team.
- 100 library staff, across 10 Hampshire libraries, receiving 'Safe at Home' training to enable them to provide guidance and conduct sensitive conversations with victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Library stock and IT resources in libraries were also updated to support victims of domestic abuse and direct them to other resources available to assist them. The project was nominated for a Police and Crime Commissioners Victim Services Award.
- The County Council launching its 'Keep Warm Keep Well' scheme to protect vulnerable people who are struggling with their day-to-day bills. The support available includes guidance on claiming free school meals and getting advice on managing finances, and links to warm spaces in Hampshire open to residents who may struggle to pay heating bills over the winter.
- All five of the County Council's Country Parks being re-awarded Green Flag status for 2022, plus a new Green Flag being awarded to Wellesley Woodland.
- Completion of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, delivering solar energy collection, building insulation, and boiler conversions at hundreds of schools, care homes, libraries, outdoor centres, and other publicly owned buildings across Hampshire.
- Shortlisting of Micheldever's highways materials recycling and reprocessing facility for Carbon Project of the Year in the 2022 Construction News Awards. It was praised for its approach to reducing the carbon cost of highways construction and maintenance.

I hope this gives a flavour of the progress that we are continually making at HCC, despite the financial challenges. Grants awarded by me during the municipal year 2022-23. I always include a grants summary in my annual report. Please find overleaf a table showing all grant awards by me over the last year. I always do my best to achieve a geographical spread. I really appreciate it when Parish Councils put good projects to me, please keep it up!

I look forward to working with you all as your County Councillor over the 12 months ahead.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER, County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers