

**Minutes of the Annual Stoke Hammond Parish Meeting held on
Tuesday 7th May 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllr Newing (Chair), Cllr Noble, Cllr Champion, Cllr Venn, Cllr Ajaz, Cllr Julier, Kelly Harris, Clerk & RFO & 8 members of the public (MoP)

1. To receive apologies for absence

No apologies received.

2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2023

The draft minutes were agreed and approved and signed as a true record by the Chair.

3. To receive reports and matters arising:

Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council covering the activities of the Parish Council

Unlike last year this has been a year of stability within the Parish Council. Kelly has had a full year in post and the 7 Councillors have remained unchanged which is something of a recent record. Despite monthly invites to Councillors Jordan and Macpherson, neither chose to come, however we did get all 3 Councillors support over the Brook Farm Phase 3 objection and Councillor Jordan made a written submission to the Planning sub-Committee who in the end turned down the application, which is positive.

Our key objectives outlined last year remain unchanged.

**1. Maintain prompt and effective responses to Parishioners concerns.
And the maintenance of local infrastructure/services.**

We have been able to address most issues promptly. Clearly this is in no small part due to our Parish Clerk, Kelly Harris, who should be congratulated on her efficiency and ability to respond to all requests in a fast and effective manner.

Some issues have remained sticky to resolve, largely because we are dependent on Bucks Council services to deliver solutions. These include Potholes, a nationwide problem, the cars parked on grass verges opposite Tommy's, the state of our drains and the state of the Lay By.

The latter was the subject of a site meeting with Highways, Anglian Water, and the Canal Trust last week - we wait to see if we can get any progress. The others we will continue to bring pressure to bear on Bucks.

There has been some disruption due to the Fenny development which is now almost finished. Councillor Venn has maintained a strong working relationship with the contractors - this is a good blueprint for future developments.

Three positives from this development - a new bus stop on the Fenny Road, not to everyone's tastes but I have been pleased to see in use. The new pathway from the zebra crossing to the new estate and finally the repair to the infamous wooden bridge on the pathway behind the church to Newton Leys.

We have been keen to invest money in Newton Leys, but we had no ownership and therefore no right to do this.

This year we have agreed to adopt the grass areas, either directly or in principle, which hopefully means that residents in future will only pay a precept and not a management fee. Plus, we have agreed to pay for the installation of benches, picnic benches, dog bins, grit bins and table tennis tables.

Councillors Champion and Ajaz are also to be congratulated on the installation of 200 new trees around the estate..... as well as the Newton Leys Christmas Tree and lights!!

I think this is largely an area of success for the Council supported by the fact that once again we have had no serious complaints to manage during the 12 months just passed.

2. Development and introduction of a Neighbourhood Plan

Reminder of the benefits!! - Policies design code and site allocation

Progress on the plan was delayed following the exhibition in March 2023 because the Government Grant process was delayed until an announcement in September. I'm pleased to say we were able to avail ourselves of the maximum grant available so that all the work leading up to the initial submission to Bucks Council is covered.

The consultation period with statutory consultees, the landowners /developers and the local community was completed on the 11th April. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the Steering Group along with our planning consultants have now reviewed all comments. An updated plan taking on board this feedback will be published on the Website shortly once the Steering Group has given it its final blessing. It will then be passed to the Parish Council for sign off at the June PC meeting. With this final sign off the plan can be submitted formally to Bucks Council.

The Process after this

1. Bucks will review the document.
2. Bucks will then issue the new document for another the Regulation 16 6-week consultation period. Everyone who has commented during the recent consultation plus statutory Consultees will be notified directly. **At this stage feedback will go back directly to Bucks Council.**
3. Once Bucks are satisfied the document is acceptable and aligns with National Policy and the Local Plan, a Planning Inspector will be given the task of evaluating the plan.
4. Assuming the plan passes inspection, it will be submitted locally to parishioners in a referendum. If 50% support the plan it will become part of the Local Plan Policy specifically for developments within the Stoke Hammond Parish area.

3. Building a sense of Community across the entire Parish, and to look at how S106 money might be best spent to support this.

We have continued to provide grants to local groups, and I'm pleased that the sports club, Scouts, Community Association and the Gardening club have all benefited during the past 12 months.

Councillor Champion has continued to lead on the S106 project with discussions ongoing with all the key groups in the village on how they would like to see the money spent. He remains conscious that every time we have consulted widely the feedback has supported the creation of additional sports and recreation facilities, both buildings and pitches, as well as improving green space and biodiversity. Next year is likely to see significant progress on this project.

4. To address the ongoing concerns with Traffic within the Parish particularly speeding.

On this topic I am finally pleased to report progress.

The Solar Panel Speed signs were installed and are working on the entrances to the village. Councillor Noble carried out a survey and the output was used to provide a significant input to the Neighbourhood Plan. He has also set up the speed watch team and you may well have seen these hardy souls in action during the recent terrible weather.

It is a fact that the two issues that concern parishioners the most are the parking outside the Dolphin, which as we know is a roaring success, and speeding in and around the entrance to Newton Leys and at the staggered junction between Newton Road and Drayton Road.

With the former two schools of thought exist, that the parking slows traffic by creating a chicane. The alternative perspective is that the parking causes problems to traffic joining from side roads. The Council will continue to monitor this issue.

As for Newton Leys I think its accepted that some changes to the road layout is needed and again the Council will do its best to encourage change.

Reports from Community Organisations

Stoke Hammond Community Association – Cllr Greg Noble

Unlike the previous two years where we have undertaken some major improvement works at the Community Centre this last year has been fairly quiet in that department. You may recall that in 2022 we had the entrance road to the Centre completely resurfaced with a new dedicated disabled parking bay created. Whilst early in 2023 the playground area to the front of the centre was re-laid out as a car parking area, which included its resurfacing, bay lines marked out and a new gated entrance way created. These projects funded by grants obtained from the local Winslow and Villages Community Board and likewise financial support from our Parish Council. It has been good to see the new car parking area in use by hirers of the centre and how it has reduced vehicle parking numbers on Bragenham Side. Likewise, we have if not in use for a hire also opened up the car park when there have been other major events occurring in the vicinity, for example the recent Easter Event.

As in previous years and in an effort to help support our more senior residents we hosted our usual Afternoon Tea event in July and our 3 course Christmas Dinner in December, the latter having a record attendance, which necessitated us at the last minute to hastily lay out a further table to seat those guests who hadn't actually told us they were coming, but all were accommodated. These events are totally free to attend funded by the Community Association but with also most grateful financial support from our Parish Council. I should also at this point thank all the volunteers that come along to help out at these events and for Les our local mobile hairdresser for his vocal entertainment.

The Parish Council also came to our assistance for the Coronation Picnic Party which we laid on last May to celebrate King Charles's Coronation. The party was very much aimed at the younger generation, and the Parish Council covered the cost of us hiring a professional children's entertainer.

The centre continues to have a pre-school as their main user and indeed primary income source, but we also have other regular hirers such as a Pilates Group, the village church for many events including their monthly and very popular community breakfast plus the local cubs/scouts group and just last week Joyful Tots returned on school term Friday mornings, and for most weekends there are a mix of private hires for parties and family celebrations.

After some couple of years of seeking to fulfil the vacant treasurer's position, covered on what was supposed to be a short term temporary basis by myself, we were most pleased to welcome Carol Bradley onto the management committee team to undertake this role. Talking of the management committee I would like to publicly thank Tracie, Ann, Fran, Sue and of course newcomer Carol for all their hard work and dedication, without which the Centre would simply not be able to operate. I should also thank Jackie our very efficient cleaner and Caroline our caretaker who opens and closes for our private hires.

Going forward the dates are already in the diary for this year's Afternoon Tea and sorry to mention it so early, the Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner, plus we do have our thinking caps on for other possible events.

Gardening Club – Eileen Curry

After a couple of years of limited activity following Covid the Club had to get sorted again. 2023 was an eventful year with a very successful AGM/Social evening in March, Afternoon Tea and Plant Swap in May, a trip to Wisley in July and a Fish and Chip Supper with a very interesting Speaker - Chris Day from Buckingham Nurseries - in November.

The programme for 2024 is now underway - the AGM in March was extremely well attended with everyone who came renewing their membership and those who were unable to come contacting our Membership Secretary to join. We now have 75 members with possibly more to come. The Afternoon Tea and Plant Swap is booked for Saturday 1st June where homemade cakes, tea etc. are to be enjoyed together with a 'help yourself' area for free plants which are surplus rot members' requirements. We are aiming to fill the village with cosmos yet again!!

A trip is being arranged for early July and other events are being discussed by the Committee and hopefully arranged.

As we all know, everything has increased in price particularly, in our case, coach hire, entrance fees, speakers etc. However, we intend to subsidise cost to members as much as we can and I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for their support and generous donation to the Club which will help us to keep everything as affordable as possible for our members. Thank you.

High Ash Scouts Group Report – Anthony McGee

Group Growth

Given successful recruitment & retention at Cub level, the group is at its most vibrant for some time. Cubs go from strength to strength, and we are at capacity, with 20 Cubs & close to a 50/50 boy-girl split. Whilst we have 12 Scouts, a third of these will leave after the Summer and recruiting directly into this age group remains a challenge, but we continue to promote this in various community groups.

Community Impact

As a Group (& representing the ethos of the Scout Association), we are keen to ensure that our Cubs & Scouts develop numerous skills which will help influence their adult lives. A key part of the programme, put together by our Leaders, is to support our local community and be great role models when doing so. This year Cubs and Scouts have supported our community through litter picks, running activities at the Church Fete, donating to the food bank, visiting the Lindens care home & joining other Scouts at MK St George's Day parade.

Group Programme

Thanks to our Leaders, the Group has enjoyed a great range of activities over the last year, including:

- Our Winter camp, with an amazing Christmas lunch, night zip-wiring, zero-G swing, laser tag & archery (with thanks to the Parish Council for a very welcome contribution towards activities)
- The District Scout Quiz
- A Milton Keynes Cubs sleepover at Gullivers Land
- The Group's first camp under canvas in 4 years & 3 more camps planned this year
- Hikes, map reading, baking, first aid, sports, crafts and lots of badge work

Financial Stability

The legacy impact of Covid created some financial challenges for the Group. However, fundraising success from Bonfire night & Easter bingo, a restructuring of payment processes, plus hard work by David Pollington on Gift Aid have helped to provide some stability. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Parish Council to support additional activities at our Winter camp, which were a big highlight of the weekend. Very recently, we also secured a grant from the Winslow & Villages Community Board to help fund new tents, due our group expansion.

Challenges

We have taken the view that our Beaver colony is unlikely to restart, given a lack of volunteers, and will be making steps to review our hall hire plans. Our Leader & volunteer base is relatively small. Without new Leaders / support coming in there will always be a risk to Group longevity. Whilst Scouting UK are revising how all groups are structured, to help make volunteering easier, there is a limited amount of benefit to a group of our scale. We do continue to request support from parents & carers. Youth volunteering, especially via Duke of Edinburgh, remains an opportunity we're keen to speak to people about.

In summary, we're laying some great foundations, but there is more to do to ensure we secure a bright future.

Ladies that lunch – Hazel Turner

Ladies that Lunch meets every second Tuesday in the Sports Club from 12.30 until 1.45pm. Between sixteen and twenty ladies attend. In the past year The Lindens Entertainments Manager brought a party to have lunch with us. The food is all donated by Jenny Ross and myself. Up until April this year the charge per person was £2. The cost now is £3. This paid for the rent of the

Pavilion and the cost of electricity to heat the soup, teas and coffee after the soup and rolls. Any additional money was used to pay for in part the Christmas Lunch at The Dolphin.

I am extremely grateful to all who come to the Sports Club for permitting us to use the facility, to David Garner for providing the keys very early on the morning of the lunch, to Diane Webber for making gluten free soup, and to all the ladies that help wash and dry up afterwards.

Finally on a sad note we lost two ladies that came faithfully, Denise Smith and Valerie Goddard, their deaths were a shock to us all and we miss them.

St. Luke's Church - Hazel Turner

We are most grateful to Mr Terry Turner for another year of mowing the grass in the Churchyard and also, to Mr Peter Tooth who does the grass trimming around the graves. An ongoing task is for Ian, our Mole catcher, who humanely deals with the many molehills across the churchyard in order that they do as little damage as possible to the stability of heavy gravestone. We also thank Mr Jordan Ratnage who pruned the avenue of trees lining the main Church Path, and which, if left to grow too big, would affect the neighbour's house guttering.

Following quotes from contractors for costings to resurface the Church path, we selected a contractor, the quality of whose work was impressive in areas around the village Community Centre.

Clearing of the Church guttering took place and inspection of the lightning conductor and fire extinguishers were also done. The quinquennial report undertaken in identified work which needed to be done involving the church roof. This required moss removal, replacement of two slates, some lead repairs, all to the church roof, and pointing being remade over the flashings. Also mortar repairs to the east wall was needed.

Lastly, during a Baptism in November 2023 the organ failed to start and some smoke and a noxious smell was emitted from the adjacent blower pump. This required a new pump and this time it included a shut off valve. Repairs were completed before the Carol service.

Thanks are also due to the cleaners, spring cleaners, flower arrangers and those on the flower rota. Thanks also to Mrs. Hazel Turner for organising the rotas.

Church statistical details for the year 2023, from 1st January until the 31st of December.

Average attendances over the year at usual services was 15 (14.5) over the year 2023.

Attendance at special services:

Easter	31 +4 children
Pentecost	8 *Note: Bank Holiday weekend
Harvest	26
Remembrance	33
Christingle	26 +13 children
Carol Service	40
Crib service	27 +8 children
Midnight Christmas Mass	22
Baptisms x 2	30 adults +5 Children/17 Adults +7 children attended
Funerals x 2	98 adults/35 adults
Weddings	None took place.

The fundraising committee arranged many events over the year. In addition to monthly Community Breakfasts, these included Plant Sale - April, Afternoon tea at Tyrells Manor – May, the ever popular Open Gardens weekend – June, Church Fete – July, Barn Dance and Pig roast - August, Harvest Lunch – September, the Christmas Fayre at the end of November and the Christmas Hamper raffle was drawn in December.

The church would like to thank the village for all its support and particularly the Parish Council for contributions towards the maintenance of the footpath through the churchyard.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution, and declared the meeting closed at 19.35.

Chair:

Date: