

**Minutes of the Annual Stoke Hammond Parish Meeting held on
Tuesday 2nd May 2023 at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllr Newing (Chair), Cllr Noble, Cllr Venn, Cllr Julier, Kelly Harris, Clerk & RFO & 12 members of the public (MoP)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Sharkey, Anthony McGee from High Ash Scouts Group

2. To receive reports and matters arising:

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

It's been a year of change so far as people are concerned with a change in the Parish Clerk and a turnover of Parish Councillors.

We said goodbye to Jo Simonds who had served the Parish well for several years but recruited Kelly Harris who has taken to the role like a duck to water. We are very grateful for having two such competent people in this important role.

We were sorry to see Alan Humphreys , Dean Mcann and Steve McNally leave the role of Councillor. Once again, we are grateful for their service. Steve in particular had been important as our first representative from Newton Leys and held the role of Deputy Chair up until the date of his leaving. I'm very pleased we have a full complement of councillors again having welcomed Mubassir Ajaz and Steve Julier during 2023.

Regrettably we also parted company with the Unitary Councillor who had been nominated to represent the Council at our Parish Meetings. The council were unanimous that the relationship was not working and was hindering us in progressing Council matters. We requested one of the other two councillors attend our meetings unfortunately without a positive response to date.

Our key objectives outlined last year remain unchanged.

1. Firstly, to maintain prompt and effective responses to Parishioners concerns. And the maintenance of local infrastructure/services.

With the aid of Parishioner input on a weekly/monthly basis, frequently from the hardy souls that attend our monthly meetings we have been able to address most issues promptly. I know my fellow councilors will agree that 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. We have seen a new bin outside the village shop, drainsucker in the village, Lansbury Road verge trimmed, new planters either end of the village, posts repaired, overhanging trees cut back, broken lamppost repaired and the trees on the green crown lifted just examples of what has been achieved. We also adopted the street lights in Brook Farm Close.

One major area of concern all year has been the impact of the Fenney development which is now well underway. We have established a good working relationship with the Contractors, Councilor Venn. They have responded promptly to our concerns, and we have a promise of them repairing the bridge on the Right of Way behind the church which has been a thorny problem plus other community support.

They will also be replacing the Northbound bus stop on the Fenney Road which was successfully negotiated with nearby houseowners and which we hope will provide a blueprint for Bus Stop replacement across the Village.

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

2. In the light of the coming development of the Bucks Local Plan, to introduce further protection that might be afforded by developing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The year has seen this initiative progress. A steering group of 13 people with over 50% outside the Parish Council have been working on this all year. An external Housing Needs Assessment has been completed and an initial draft of the plan including Parish specific policies was shared with parishioners at an Exhibition in March. This was well attended, and the overall feedback was positive. The Exhibition also looked at the final output from our 'Call for Sites' exercise and Parishioners were asked to prioritise their preferences for sites to be included in our plan to satisfy any new requests we may have to satisfy in the Bucks plan to 2040. The steering group are currently reviewing this information and the external strategic environmental assessment to decide on any inclusions in the plan to be fully consulted on in the summer/Autumn.

3. To support and implement activities that would add to and build a sense of Community across the entire Parish, and to look at how S106 money might be best spent to support this.

The key success story in the past year was an ambitious 4 day programme to celebrate the Queens Jubilee. This was universally acclaimed a success with all events well attended and a great example how all the key elements of our parish can come together to create a real sense of community. Lasting memories exist in the form of the new tree on the green and the two benches, one by the sports club and the other at Newton Leys.

We have also provided grants to support the sports club, the scouts, the gardening club, the community association and the Coronation activities.

Craig Champion has led on the S106 project with discussions taking place with all the key groups in the village with a view to understanding their individual strategies and specifically how they would like to see the money spent. Key feedbacks from the SHY Football Club was they needed more pitches and would like to have a clubhouse within Stoke Hammond whilst the Sports Club are creating plans for the Sports Club building. In addition, the 3 key uses highlighted in two surveys within the village were balloted at the March Exhibition. Over 50% of people reaffirmed the 2018 result that the preferred solution is a new Sports/Village Hall. This helps set future objectives going forward.

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

As last year we must report that progress on this has been slower than we would have liked and is a key area that was affected by our unitary relationship.

The good news is that progress has been made in the last two months. The Solar Panel Speed signs have been authorised by the Parish council and an order placed. We hope to have them installed by June/July.

Greg has set up and trained the speed watch team who are now fully equipped to commence activities.

Finally, I have to complement Craig Champion who has championed the Newton Leys residents all year. This very importantly includes gaining support from the Parish Council to the resident's objective in replacing the Management Company in Newton Leys South. This should eventually reduce the residents from having to pay management fees and Council precepts. The Parish Council has agreed in principle to adopting the Green areas once this process has completed. Newton Leys will also hopefully have their own Christmas Tree next year to match the one in the village that was very well received last Christmas.

Our focus moving forward will be to continually progress all four of these key objectives whilst doing our best to make decisions that are cost effective for the Parish. To that end we will be looking in detail at all requests to adopt further areas whilst trialling the use of the Community Payback Scheme.

Reports from Community Organisations

High Ash Scouts Group Report – Anthony McGee

High Ash Scout Group continues to build momentum, having come back, post Covid, with depleted numbers.

Our numbers are looking healthy in Cubs, where we started the year with 9 Cubs, but expect to be at capacity (of around 18) by the end of this month.

Scouts, however, is proving more difficult to attract new members into. Milton Keynes Scouts have closed their waiting lists, due to significant over-subscription and we're trying to find ways to attract people to travel a little farther to our Group. Scouts start from 10 & 1/2 years. Please spread the word!

With growth in the Group, we continue to rely on our fantastic volunteer Leaders. We will be hoping to shortly add an additional Cub Leader and are also reaching out to secondary schools with opportunities for youth leaders, aged 14+, which may help with their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Our Beaver colony remains dormant, but with adult volunteers, we could re-start this. Beavers age is 6-8 and we'd welcome speaking with interested volunteers.

The Group has enjoyed a great range of activities over the last year, including:

- Our Winter camp, with an amazing Christmas lunch, archery, crate stacking and night zip-wiring (with thanks to the Parish Council for a very welcome contribution towards activities)
- The District Scout Quiz
- A Milton Keynes Cubs sleepover at Gullivers
- A visit to the Blue light hub
- Hikes, map reading, baking, first aid, sports, crafts and lots of badge work

Going forward, we plan to hold a camp in the Summer, visit the Lindens care home and enjoy more outdoor activities, as (hopefully) the weather improves.

We will be undertaking an audit of our camping equipment and any future opportunities for funding or grants will be greatly welcomed, especially as we hope to continue growing the Group.

Gardening Club – Eileen Curry

The Club has now fully recovered from the activity of the covid years and although some venues were still not completely back to normal, we managed to enjoy several social activities plus two trips - one to Cogges Manor in Oxfordshire and the other to Kelmarsh House and gardens in Northampton. In addition to the garden visits, we had our usual get-together in May, a fish and chip supper and quiz and held our most recent AGM/social evening which included an excellent

speaker. Members old and new were invited to join at this event and we were delighted with the response.

We now have approximately 80 members most of whom are from Stoke Hammond, including many from the new developments and a few from neighbouring villages who have been members for many years. Our policy now is that we only accept new membership from Stoke Hammond/Newton Leys residents.

Our next event will be our afternoon tea and plant swap next month, followed by our first trip of the year to Wisley and the volunteer committee are busy arranging other trips and events throughout the year.

Our aim remains to arrange fun times with, of course, a gardening theme. As everyone will expect the costs of the coaches etc. have increased substantially but we are still concentrating on keeping costs down as much as we possibly can so that nobody is excluded.

We are always encouraged by the support and enthusiasm of our members and look forward to some memorable happenings in 2023.

Ladies that lunch – Hazel Turner

The group was started when the WI closed and it is open to all ladies. The age range of those who attend is mostly the retired, but we welcome all ages and the group is well attended.

St. Luke's Church - Hazel Turner & Cllr Venn

Cllr Venn confirmed that Hills builders have offered 30 hours of work and he will liaise with the team about helping to repair the walls and roof of the church. The main tarmac path leading up to the church is the biggest concern and they have been quoted £14,000 to repair it. Hills have agreed to repair the bridge behind the church.

David Webber has passed his thanks on to everyone who supported the recent plant show.

Sports Club – Mel D'Agostino and Julia Walker

The sports club host the ongoing weekly coffee mornings and monthly ladies that lunch. They also hosted the gardening club AGM and Christmas evenings. They have hosted the Stoke Hammond Youth Football club easter egg hunt, quizzes, and presentations.

Bingo and fish and chip nights and crowdioki have been held.

Allica Bank sponsors the Sports Club.

They have held summer rounders, jubilee celebrations, birthday parties and sadly, a couple of wakes. The club has contributed towards a memorial table.

The Queen's funeral was screened, and free bacon rolls and tea/coffee were provided.

There have been memorial cricket games played, bandioki nights, bonfire night, Christmas day drinks and a New Years party.

The club has invested in a disabled toilet, roof and fascia repairs, water tanks and associated plumbing, new bar fridges, ride on mower and new ride on roller.

Hopefully this year the club can see investment on the inside, for example soft furnishings for comfort and acoustics.

The club are hoping to host kids cricket and they now have a ladies football team who have so far played one game, along with a men's vets team.

Stoke Hammond Village Show – Cllr Greg Noble

The 2022 Village Show was probably the best and most well attended since resurrecting the Village Show back in 2014. We also had a great number of scarecrows appearing across the village in the lead up to the show. There was however both Good and Bad news surrounding the Village Show and its management Committee.

Early in 2022, Great Brickhill approached the show committee about hiring our large marquee for part of their Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, which we were happy to do, however halfway through the Platinum weekend, we were contacted by Great Brickhill to be advised that an unexpected sudden gust of wind had lifted our marquee from the ground, and this plus the hefty plunge back to earth had damaged and bent some of the marquee poles and brackets. Thankfully, no one was seriously hurt or injured, but upon subsequent examination it was found the damage caused was far more extensive than first thought and to such an extent that it was felt that the spares replacement cost was almost equivalent to that of buying a completely new marquee. Thus, the decision was made to purchase a new marquee, the majority of the cost being covered by Great Brickhill Parish Council. However, due to the length of time it had taken to establish who was paying for what, and whether we were going the route of a new marquee, we had no option but to hire a marquee for last year's Village Show. This however, did have some major advantages, as the hire fee included both the erection and dismantling of the marquee, which massively reduced the workload and pressure on the show committee and our volunteers. Because of this, it was subsequently decided to sell the brand-new marquee, the revenue from which would cover the hire of a marquee for the next two or three shows.

We must thank all those who have helped out with the Village Show, not just last year, but for all of the previous years as well, for without these volunteers giving up their free time the show would just not happen. A thank you must also go to the Parish Council for allowing us to use the green space to the rear of the Community Centre and the adjacent field for car parking, plus of course their kind financial contributions.

Unfortunately, as some of you will have heard, there will be no Village Show this year, a major reason behind this being the fact that two of our founding Committee members namely Chris and Donna Page made the difficult decision that the 2022 show was to be their last and have stepped down from the Committee. Which left just two Committee members namely Ann Payne and myself, and although we are well versed in what it takes to put on and run the show, it is just too much for just two members alone. We did seek volunteers to join the committee and ran a full-page advert in the December/January 23 edition of the SH & NLS News to which sadly we did not receive a single response. With stall holders and others wanting to know if the show was going ahead, Ann and I made the sad decision to cancel this year's show. Recently, some people have come forward to help out and join the committee but it was all just a little too late to save this year's show, but hopefully it does mean that it will return bigger and better in 2024. There is however talk, that we might still run the Scarecrow Competition again this year.

Stoke Hammond Community Association – Cllr Greg Noble

This last year has been very positive for the Stoke Hammond Community Centre, and we were certainly most pleased for the Buttons Preschool the main user of our centre on being awarded an 'Outstanding' report from OFSTED. But of course, Buttons are not only the regular hirers/users of the Centre, as we have the likes of Pilates, The Scouts, Joyful Tots, St Luke's Church and the Parish Council also being on that list. We have also enjoyed a healthy number of hires from both residents of Stoke Hammond and the surrounding areas. Sadly, Emma the Pizza lady from Wingrave could not attract sufficient takers for her monthly Pizza nights, and has for now decided to call it a day, albeit she will be returning this Saturday to run the BBQ for our Coronation Picnic Party event, to which I hope many of you will be able to attend for what will hopefully be a very enjoyable occasion.

Over the last year we once again were able to put on our very popular Afternoon Tea and Christmas Lunch events aimed at shall we say our more senior residents, and we must thank the Parish Council for their kind financial contributions towards the cost of putting on these special occasions. We are of course also the venue for the Village Show, and it is rather sad that there will be no show this year.

Like all organisations, we have faced increased costs, not just on energy but on day-to-day consumables, so the Gigaclear Community Scheme which provides the centre with free fibre broadband is most welcome. We also changed from Cawleys to Biffa for our waste removal service, and not only have we found the Biffa service to be far more reliable, but also at a lower cost. So, some of these savings have been put to good use in that we purchased our own heart defibrillator, there if needed for life saving purposes, but hopefully that situation will never occur. The other obvious and most visible change to the centre is the resurfaced tarmac area to the front which was the old school playground, and was in such a terrible state it was basically unsafe to use.

It now serves as both a playground but also as a car park for centre hires, or additional parking for specific village events. Whilst part funded by ourselves, we were only able to undertake this project because of a kind contribution by the Parish Council and 50% grant from the Winslow and Villages Community Board, and whilst we are of course most grateful to the Community Board for their grant, they did not make things easy. From first advising just before Christmas last year that we had been successful in being awarded the grant, all communication just stopped and despite us sending numerous emails and leaving many phone messages, the Board went into a totally 'silent' mode and then 'out of the blue' sent an email reconfirming the award only for this to be redacted two hours later. Thankfully, the board saw sense but only after some members of the Parish Council and I attended one of the board's meetings and effectively 'outed' them in public. As I say we are very thankful for the grant, but not sure this is the way a Community Board should go about their business.

Looking forward to this remaining year, we already have quite a full calendar for centre hires and as funds allow, intend to carry out further improvements at the centre. In closing I must make mention and thanks to my colleagues on the management committee, namely and in no particular order, Tracie Bailey, Susan Rickson, Ann Payne and Fran Sharkey.