

Hawkley Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL 2024 AT 7PM

Minutes

Attending: Parish Cllr Caukill (Chair), District Councillor Louisson, County Councillor Oppenheimer and 9 residents (including 5 Cllrs). Also present K Horton (Clerk).

1) Open meeting

- a) **Welcome.** Cllr Caukill opened the meeting and confirmed the purpose of the meeting and asked residents to raise matters of interest
- b) **Apologies for absence.** Cllr Humphrey and Cllr Large. Two residents also sent apologies
- c) **Acceptance of Minutes from last APM (5th April 2023).** No comments and signed as accurate record

2) Chair's Annual Report (attached Appendix One)

A review of 2023/24 day to day work, projects and challenges outlined. No questions raised from attendees

3) District Councillor Charles Louisson's Annual Report

- Waste collection
 - 12 months ago EHDC was struggling with waste collection and there have been huge strides to improve the service
 - 2026 Gvnt wants all Councils to start food collections. Many District and Borough Councils are not set up to process food waste and don't have the necessary infrastructure.
 - Push for electric vehicles not a great fit for EH as they don't have the range and weigh a lot more – would be hard to send around rural districts.
- Planning.
 - Performance has not been stellar over last few months. Planners are in short supply nationally and there is a shortage of qualified staff.
 - Out of date Local Plan and speculative applications take longer to consider but the number of household applications are generally down. Reduced fee income is flip side and this does have an impact on the Planning Dept.
 - Working to negotiate rates with SDNPA as losing money on each application that is being processed for them.
 - Consultation on Local Plan has been completed and currently 8,500 comments being considered. Target from Gvt for 3,500 houses and need to go somewhere.
 - Digitalising all of historic planning applications
- Move to new office in Bedford Rd complete.
- Budget. Council Tax went up by 3.5% against backdrop of inflation. Cautious approach on plans for money to build reserve.

Q. Isle of Wight collect food waste without issue. Why is this not the case for EHDC?

A. About 10% of councils do it currently. Targets are the challenge and practicality of getting required infrastructure.

Q. Planning. Shortage of planners but slowing approval slows down economy. Can you use private sector companies?

A. We do engage on short term contracts. Challenge is to establish permanent group within the Council's financial constraints.

4) County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer's Annual Report (attached Appendix Two)

- BOATS. Feeling very positive. New Officer in charge and in agreement that rules need to change. Some progress with winter closure programme and it has been extended in March due to wet weather. Gates and noticeboards being rolled out. Big change that will happen in summer is a review of the Byways Operating Procedure – going to have powers to close BOATS with a process to follow to move from temporary to perm closures.
- Highways. Speeding is massive problem across Hampshire. In rural roads, it is difficult. Best measure is traffic calming measures – signage, pinch points, cobbles etc. Hawkley entrance signs make a difference and village would make a good candidate for 20mph.
- £7.5 million clearing gullies and drains. Not been able to keep up with flooding and pot holes. Struggling to recruit in Highways and this has put pressure on remaining members and they will catch up. Probably another 2/3 weeks.
- In 2024/25 £13m will be received from cancellation of HS2 and will be used in Highways.
- Local Government Mechanisms – as of April the M3LEP and Solent LEP have gone. Hampshire CC has taken on regeneration function. A new board will be set up Prosperity Partnership Board – will decide funding for regeneration. Could fund tourism activities.
- Gap in budget and will be bigger next year. Real challenge to keep services up to decent level. Devolution Deal would be allow more powers and funding
- Nature Recovery Strategy. Will work closely with charities, local communities and SDNP. Lots of trees already planted (24,000) an support 30 county farms to use regenerative methods. Consulting in the summer that residents should engage with.

Q. Potholes on Pockocks Lane. All been fixed

Q. In the Hollow before the turning for Oakshott. Part of the road is crumbling away and it has been reported 3 times over 18 months. Photos shared.

A. Cllr Oppenheimer asked for details and photos to be shared with him

Q. How will we know about Nature Recovery Strategy consultation

A. There will be press release.

Q. SEN increases. What impact on HCC financially?

A. Believe increase in awareness and diagnosis has impact, also impact of pandemic but not only reasons and there has been a clear increase. Three cost impacts - Education and HealthCare plan, right classroom facilities which involves investment in schools. Home to School Transport is not means tested. Bill has gone up from £13m to £60m and projected to go up to £85m next year.

5) Parish communication

- a) Review of work completed on new parish website and request for feedback and contributions**
- b) Feedback on how the Parish Council communicates with residents and whether any changes are necessary**

Clerk explained process of designing new parish website:

- Why did the website need to be changed. Thanks noted to N Davis who has managed the website for several years. Retirement was the main trigger for making a change
- What are the IT requirements. Domain name has been secured and hosting company has provided a competitive rate
- Consultation with community groups. All local groups have been asked for feedback and have influenced the information included on their individual pages
- Objectives for the new site. Mix of written formats and images. Clear and easy to access. Also not to many elements requiring regular updating

Discussion with attendees on the website and the PC's use of the email mailing list. Agreement that the new website is fit for purpose and that it be used for general community information while the PC emails relate to time critical and/or official informaton.

6) Open Forum

No questions raised

7) Meeting closed 8:18pm

Appendix One

HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL. CHAIR'S REPORT 2024

- 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. It comprises a little over 200 dwellings and about 400 residents are on the electoral roll.

New Council

- Following the local elections in May 2023, Hawkley PC had two new Councillors join following Geoff Brighton and Simon Dixon stepping down. Georgie Stewart and Iona Wallace have been engaged from the off and are a welcome addition. That said, we would welcome others who may be interested in getting involved to put their hands up. Although the next elections may be three years away– vacancies can arise from time to time and so it is good to have people in reserve. We would be particularly interested in hearing from any interested residents of Empshott, Snailing/Uplands Lane and Oakshott .

Planning

- During 2023/24 we have reviewed 12 Planning applications relating to the parish. This is an increase of 25% on the previous year but far fewer than in earlier years in which 20-25 applications was not uncommon. Including site visits and discussion, the time given to considering these applications should not be underestimated. I thank the members of the Planning Advisory Committee

Maintenance of Roads, verges and footpaths

- We routinely ensure that the parish roads, signage, salt bins, verges, ditches and drains are kept clear and tidy using either the parish's lengthsman team or escalating concerns to the appropriate team at HCC. Pleased to confirm that funding for the lengthsman service has again been provided for 2024-25 by HCC – this finances about 35 man hours per annum.
- The wet weather made the need for clear ditches and gullies extremely important. We wrote to all residents to remind them of their responsibilities and we are grateful for the actions taken in response.
- We also keep an eye on the verges around the Parish. Strictly, maintenance of hedges and verges is the responsibility of the relevant landowner but there are limitations on what can be accomplished. HCC is responsible for the metre or so from the road edge and while they will strim dangerous 'sightlines' on request, budget pressure has reduced their maintenance of the verges more generally to a single cut.

We do put funds aside to tidy up the verges in the autumn but last winter, a combination of landowners' diligence and the lengthsman's efforts rendered that expenditure unnecessary.

- Footpath warden. Hangars Way and other byways are popular with residents and visitors and HPC has engaged with other parishes and SDNPA to flag joint concerns such as the BOATS. Indeed HCC have a new initiative in hand in this regard.

Projects:

- The **Children's Play area** was finally completed last summer. It was great to see the community coming together to fund and implement the replacement.
- The final parish **fingerpost sign** is being returned to former glory as we speak and will shortly be reinstated bringing the refurbishment project to a close after probably five years. Great to see the signs reinforcing the character to the parish.
- **Phone box on Upper Green** – a combination of ill health and bad weather conspired to prevent commencement of refurbishment. As a practical matter the project has now been deferred until September. We are now short of volunteers to get involved – the project will be dealt with in stages, probably over a 6 month timeframe. Anyone interested in helping should contact the Clerk
- **Ponds**. Following professional advice received on the improvement and maintenance of the parish ponds, Cllr Buckle has given a great deal of time to lead the project and bring about the necessary changes. Progress has been slower than we would have liked, hindered by regulatory and meteorological issues, but much progress has been made nonetheless. Many thanks to Liz and to residents for engaging so enthusiastically in this project and to the local businesses for their competitive rates - work has progressed well and the changes are already visible. Thanks also to SDNP and Cllr Louisson for their grants which will allow the PC to accomplish rather more, and quicker than originally anticipated.
- **Website**. With the retirement of Nick Davis, our webmaster, the Clerk to the PC has led a project team of interested users and has developed a new site for the Parish. We will be showing this off later in the meeting.
- **Trees** HCC's Forest Partnership has received a grant from the Tree Council which has allowed them to make available over 1200 new Elm tree saplings which are resistant to Dutch elm disease. We have been fortunate to secure two of these which are now planted: one at Lower Green and one at Snailing Lane. We hope to plant more in the future.

Traffic and speeding

- There continue to be concerns about traffic volumes and speeds in various parts of the parish. Probably the most concerning has been **Stairs Hill** where there have been a number of RTAs, although as far as I know no significant injuries. We have engaged with Hampshire Highways and sought a speed camera or other enforcement actions, but options are limited by the topography of the area. Highways have recently improved the signage on the approach, particularly from Selbourne – time will tell if it has a lasting impact. The rolling closure of the B3004 by SSEN has exacerbated traffic volumes on Stairs Hill and our Clerk has lobbied for the 'not suitable for diverted traffic' and for enforcement action re HGVs.
- Particularly in the context of Stairs Hill, we have explored an EHDC led initiative to provide a limited number of speed cameras which flash up vehicle speeds and record registration numbers. These are essentially automated "Community Speed Watch" traps but they are of little utility for us again because of the topography and particularly because the police are reluctant to support them with enforcement action. The best solution would be a proper Speed Camera but no-one has budget to provide these (cost circa £40,000 each) other than the Police and Crime Commissioner who has many competing budget priorities.
- HCC have also published proposals to allow communities to fund 20mph speed limits in selected areas. Although more commonly suited to urban areas, they do contemplate application in some rural situations. We plan to examine these in more detail but our initial assessment is that it is beyond our financial means – and also the police have expressly said that they don't think 20mph limits have much/any effect and particularly that they will not divert police resources to enforcement activities (aka speed traps) in these 20mph areas.

- A couple of residents have complained of aggressive driving locally – and by repeat offenders. We are doing what we can to identify those concerned but cannot do much without the relevant registration numbers.

Donations and Grants

- We have the capacity to make small grants and donations to activities with a local impact. Again, this year we supported Rosemary Foundation, East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Homestart Butser and HIOW Air Ambulance
- The Parish Council also contributed financially to the Village Magazine when printing costs became onerous.

Finances

- All of this has been achieved on our low annual precept of £16,000 (collected through your Council Taxes). For 2024/25 it was agreed that the precept should be increased to £17,000 – about £90 per household on average.

Final thanks

- So that's the year that was 2023 - 24. None of this would have been achieved without our committed team of councillors whose contributions and efforts often go unremarked and even un-thanked. So, I specifically thank Iona Wallace, Georgie Stewart, Susan Sinclair, David Large, Liz Buckle, Jo Humphrey and Charlie Butcher for their considerable contribution and their commitment to serving our community.
- Also thank our County and District Councillors, Russell and Charles, who have each made time for Hawkley and given help and guidance where they can.
- Reminder that elections are on 2nd May and Photo ID is required

D Caukill.

Chair: Hawkley Parish Council