

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, GREAT HASELEY ON
10 APRIL 2017 AT 7.30 PM**

Present

D Simcox, Chairman of the Parish Council
Five members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk
Two members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone and the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11 April 2016 were approved and signed.

Chairman of the Parish Council's report

Frequently when I come to write these notes I have difficulty in finding new ways of saying much the same thing but not this year as a great deal has been happening.

Probably the most significant thing has been the granting of planning permission for four units of affordable housing. This has taken over 10 years to achieve and I hope that at least some of those who responded to the surveys will be able to make these their home so that we don't end up with families from further afield.

The district council's draft new local plan has kept us occupied for much of the year. In order to find sufficient land for the alleged housing need, they proposed a number of so-called strategic sites. Great & Little Haseley are in the unfortunate position of being sandwiched between two of these with the prospect of 3,000 new houses in the case of Chalgrove Airfield and upwards of 15,000 for Harrington – the old Stone Bassett. The current consultation remains firmly in favour of Chalgrove but the Parish Council believes that both of these sites will have a significant detrimental effect on Great and Little Haseley and we continue to fight for development where the infrastructure is already in place and where many of the jobs that these houses are for is located.

Our own version of Crowd Funding generated sufficient funds for the purchase of two Automatic External Defibrillators with one installed at the pavilion on the Recreation Ground and the other one here at the Village Hall although the Parish Council would have preferred it to be located at the Pub but this was rejected by the Pub Company.

The 20 year lease on the Cross Field came to an end this year and we were able to fulfil the wishes of the late Ivy Cross by purchasing it for one pound, although the legal fees were rather more. We are now planning the replacement of some of the life expired play equipment with the very welcome financial help from the Pumpkin Show.

The County Council withdrew all bus subsidies in July last year and our bus service to Oxford limped on as a commercial operation until December when the company running it said it was not financially viable and it stopped leaving the villages with no public transport. It is sorely missed by those who relied on it. The Parish Council, in conjunction with most of the other Council's along the route, collectively looked at various alternatives but we came to the conclusion that there was insufficient demand to begin to justify the level of expenditure that would be entailed. A request to ASDA has met with the same response.

The Clerk organised a very successful village clean up and the 40 or so who helped, filled a four cubic yard skip. I hope that our efforts are seen to be worthwhile.

The Village phone box is under threat of removal as it is so little used – no calls made in over a year. We are challenging this as it opposite the location of one of the defibrillators and mobile reception is not brilliant in the village.

Following our agreement to cooperate with the neighbouring farmers in their attempts to control rabbits around the playing field we came in for some very public scrutiny with an article appearing in both the Oxford Mail and Oxford Times. The article was very even handed about a potentially difficult issue. Yes, it is sad that the overgrown hedge was cut back quite so drastically but it will grow back.

The Parish Council has responded to a consultation on the replacement of five district councils and the county council with a single unitary authority. It is the Council's view that the benefits of this move are far outweighed by the difficulties and the possible cost savings are, at best, marginal.

The Council has dealt with 23 planning applications this year, back up from a low of just 14 last year. One of these was for the redevelopment of the School site. Regrettably, the design of both the alteration to the existing buildings and for the new house are not in keeping with the rest of the village but I was unable to persuade the planning committee of this – it was close with just one vote in it.

Sadly we lost Terry Coles during the year, one time Councillor. He will be missed both for his professional advice and for weighing pumpkins.

As I said quite a lot has been happening. It just remains to thank my fellow Councillors, our double hatted district and county councillor – Stephen Harrod and, most importantly, the Clerk for keeping us on the straight and narrow.

Responsible Finance Officer's Report

During the year ended 31.3.17 the Parish Council generated slightly less income on advertising in The Haseleys. It did however have two grants, one from SODC towards two defibrillators and the second from the Pumpkin Fund to replace and update the children's play equipment on the Cross Field. On the expenditure side, it overspent on budget mainly due to the defibrillators and the legal fees and equipment on the Cross Field. Part payment of the play equipment has been in this financial year and the remainder would be in 2017/8. The Parish Council had been advised by the external auditors that the reserves should be reduced and this was another reason for some extra expenditure.

The Council received a satisfactory audit from the government appointed external auditors BDO Stoy for 2015-16 accounts. Thanks once again go to Peter Cawdron who acted as the 'Council' internal auditor. I would also like to thank D Biel for his efforts checking the accounts.

A number of charitable donations were made as permitted under Local Government rules and the Parish Council has continued to support the Playing Fields and the Village Hall.

The annual audit will take place over the next couple of months and it is hoped that there should be no problem with this.

District and County Councillor's report

As the Councillor was not present, no report was given although the normal newsletters had been sent to the Parish Council.

Reports from organizations in the parish

Village Hall – P Woodrow gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the Village Hall together with a set of accounts. It showed that they made a very small profit over the year. He said that any profit is being saved to have the main street entrance updated and made with disability access which would cost in the region of £10,000. They hoped to get a grant to help towards this plus the outstanding money due from the Parish Council. He asked if the Parish Council would pay

for the new coin meters that were needed to accommodate the £1 coins. The clerk said that she had heard from a couple of people who would have hired the hall that it was easier to go somewhere else because of putting the money in the meters. P Woodrow said he would discuss this with the Committee when they met later in the week. A pamper evening and Halloween party are planned for this year.

Haseley Archive Group – During the year, the group has put on an exhibition at the Horticultural Society Show and also held a Down Memory Lane event in March. However the main focus has been the Parish Chest which was found recently and has now been loaned to the group by the Parish Council. The contents have been catalogued and it would appear that there is now a complete set of Minute Books for the Parish Council since it first started in 1894. As result of receiving the Chest we have also taken back from the County Records Office the two Minute Books that they held on our behalf.

One big problem for the group is that we do not have a permanent home and we are acquiring more and more pieces of information on the local history of the Haseleys and have nowhere to keep them. We are very envious of the Gt Milton History Society who have a very nice room as part of the village pub and they can open the room to the general public on the regular basis to show them what they are working on. We are also desperately short of people interested in what we are doing and if we had a permanent base, I think this would encourage others to come along to meetings.

J Simcox has now taken over as the point of contact for the group as Kay Sentance who was the person behind forming the group has now left the village. We would all like to thank her very much for her efforts over the years and hope that she will keep in contact for when we lose our way!

Affordable housing

As reported in the Chairman's report has is now finally happening after about 10 years.

Public discussion

There was no public discussion.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

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