

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, GREAT HASELEY ON  
11 APRIL 2016 AT 7.30 PM**

Present

D Simcox, Chairman of the Parish Council  
Six members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk  
Three members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone and the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 May 2015 were approved and signed.

Chairman of the Parish Council's report

This annual parish meeting has been called by the Parish Council but it is not a Parish Council Meeting and in some places it is organised independently.

Following the election last May we said good bye to Terry Coles and Nick Nixey and welcomed Heath Harvey and Amanda Sheppard in their place. Nick has agreed to continue to represent the Parish at Thames Valley Police's Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) meetings.

The Affordable Housing saga rumbles on. With new personnel came the realisation that our Housing Needs survey was more than five years old and as a result was no longer considered to be relevant. A new survey was commissioned and the results indicated a much larger requirement for Affordable Housing than its predecessor. After looking at the figures, South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA) decided in consultation with the planning authority that it would continue with the previous plan of four properties. All an apparent waste of time but I suppose another box ticked!

There have been a number of incidents of rubbish dumping in the Parish but OCC's response has been very good and these have been cleared away with great efficiency. The parish Council organised a litter pick under the national umbrella of 'Clean for the Queen'.

The Parish Council has commissioned a safety report on the condition of trees on our land and upon its receipt has put the necessary work out to tender. OCC is attempting to get Parish Councils, either individually or in groups to undertake the delivery of some of its highway operations such as cutting of verges. We have decided that the additional responsibility this would place on the Clerk and the uncertainty about any accompanying funding means that we are not taking up the offer. Remember, if there are potholes that need fixing or other highway matters of concern, please report them direct to OCC, preferably via the Fix My Street website. When the Diocese of Oxford decided to put the School site up for sale, the Parish Council had to find a new home for the remains of the one tonne of road salt stored there. As a result, two salt bins have been purchased and the salt transferred to them. In April, we heard that that the site has been sold and we await developments with interest.

We were all much saddened by the death in November of David Pickett. He was a Parish Councillor for many years and raised countless thousands for the village through the annual Pumpkin Show. He was often the first to welcome new arrivals to Haseley. He will be much missed. The annual Pumpkin Show, David's last, was a great success once again and thanks are due to all involved. It is good to hear that his wife and daughter are ensuring that the Pumpkin Show will continue. His death has necessitated a major shakeup in the management of the Playing Fields which he seemed to organise single handedly.

The number of planning applications has almost halved this year, down from 26 last year to just 14. None of these went to committee. We still await the location of SODC's replacement offices. I hope that the permanent replacement will be back at Crowmarsh, at the adjacent Hydrology site and

the Parish Council have written to SODC expressing this view. We were more than a little shocked by a bill of a little over £1,000 for our Parish Council election and wrote expressing our concerns that this level of charge, no matter how valid and lawful, is in effect a tax on democracy and will act as a disincentive to hold elections, particularly in small parishes. We received a less than satisfactory response from SODC.

We have agreed to provide one or possibly two defibrillators in the village. The number depends upon the outcome of a grant application currently under consideration by SODC.

At the start of the year, changes in the management of the Dial-a-Ride bus service for those with mobility difficulties, with OCC taking over from the district councils meant that Great Haseley was included in the scheme for the first time. This has proved short lived because OCC withdrew the scheme at the end of March. There is a local scheme for getting to the doctor and hospital see *The Haseleys* for contact details. OCC are about to withdraw their subsidies to all bus services in the County. After a period of uncertainty, it has emerged that the 103 service will continue albeit on a modified timetable.

We have agreed to increase our support for the Village Hall. The Hall now has a very smart new kitchen and back door. Openreach finally were able to complete their works to get high speed broadband into Great Haseley when the cabinet went live in July. It is disappointing to note that the speeds obtainable in Great Haseley even close to the cabinet are not as high as anticipated and drop off significantly as you get further away.

The efforts of the Clerk in her role as Responsible Financial Officer and Peter Cawdron, our internal auditor, mean that we received a clean bill of health from the Auditors; my thanks go to both of them. The changes to the rules for small Councils seem to be unnecessarily convoluted but mean that we need to register to have an external auditor and still make annual returns but will not require the use of an external auditor most years. To comply with the Transparency Code that is part of these changes, the Parish Council has a new web site to publish documents so that it can meet the Code. These include agendas, meeting minutes, assets and financial documents. The uncertainties over the bus service and the possible need to financially support it meant that precept was kept the same for next year.

We welcomed Simon Cronk as our new Rector and I was invited to be one of those to formally welcome him as part of his investiture service at Great Milton's church.

The village once again had a very splendid illuminated Christmas tree and thanks are due to all those who helped with its collection, erection, decoration, electrical supply, removal and disposal.

The Haseleys continue to look excellent and the advertising revenue is holding up well and a big thank you to all those who are involved, including the editor, the delivery team and the webmaster.

We now seem to have two competing visions for local government in the future. One from Oxfordshire County Council and the other from a group of District Councils including one from Gloucestershire and one from Northamptonshire. Personally, I have my doubts as to which will be the best solution for us if indeed either are. We await the inevitable consultation.

It just remains for me to thank all the Parish Councillors for their work and support during the year and to Stephen Harrod who is both our District Councillor and County Councillor. Last but by no means least; I would like to thank the Clerk who manages to keep the Council on the straight and narrow.

H Harvey thanked the Chairman on behalf of his fellow Councillors for his work throughout the year.

### Responsible Finance Officer's Report

During the year ended 31.3.16 the Parish Council generated slightly more income due mainly to advertising in The Haseleys and a donation from the filming at Standhill. On the expenditure side, it overspent on budget mainly due to St Peter's Church grass cutting (no invoice for 2 years) and donations to the Village Hall.

The Council received a satisfactory audit from the government appointed external auditors BDO Stoy Hayward for 2014-15 accounts although they felt that the monies in reserves should be reduced. Thanks go to Peter Cawdron who again acted as the 'Council' internal auditor.

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. It had been hoped to purchase a defibrillator during the year to reduce the reserves but as it has been decided to purchase two and therefore apply for a grant from South Oxfordshire District Council, this expenditure will be in the year 2016-17.

D Hamblin was thanked for her help checking the accounts in order to comply with the new regulations. As she will be leaving the village shortly, I will be looking for a replacement, preferably someone who is not on the Parish Council.

### 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 and S Morgan gave a comprehensive report on the activities of the Village Hall and the full report is appended.

**Haseley Archive Group** – J Andrews reported on behalf of the Archive Group of their activities over the year which included two exhibitions and an ongoing large project trying to get a brief history of all the houses, old and new, in Great and Little Haseley. There had also been a recent Down Memory Lane event that had been well attended which was designed to try to get oral history from residents. He went on to thank the Parish Council for their grant for shelving in the Archive Store which was now much improved. He also thanked all those people who had donated and loaned photos, documents etc to the Archive group which are in the process of being catalogued.

**Cricket Club** – C Groves reported that they now had 10 fixtures for this year from 1 May through to early September. There is a list of 30 members who were interested in playing and they hoped to have a successful year.

**Great Haseley Sports Club** - The Great Haseley sports club has approximately 100 members. We run coaching on a Sunday March till September with an experienced coach who has been with us for over 10yrs. There are currently 23 children signed up for coaching ranging between 4-14 years.

The club has successfully fund raised over recent years in order to undergo essential repairs to the courts. We are happy to announce we are half way through some major repairs and once the weather is warmer the final surface repair and painting should leave the courts looking almost brand new. We always welcome new members please contact Mel Hacking [01844 279338](tel:01844279338) for more information.

Affordable housing

The latest news on this is that SoHa wish to attend the next Parish Council meeting in order to show plans to the Parish Council. Once the clerk has received official confirmation of this, notices etc will be displayed to ensure that as many residents as possible can attend the meeting.

Public discussion

There was no public discussion.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

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