

# HORMEAD PARISH COUNCIL

## **Minutes of The Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 05 May 2011 at 8 pm**

Present: Councillor. John Haselden (Chairman)  
Clerk: Caroline Jones (Parish Clerk)

Parishioners: Geoff Abbey, Charlotte Benson, Robert Denham, Reg Fallace, Neil Gardner, David Ginn (from 8.15pm), Simon Hossack, John Kilby, Rev Carol Kimberley, Hamon Medicot, County Councillor Jane Pitman, Brian Stone

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr King

2. **MINUTES OF APM HELD ON 13 MAY 2010**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 May 2010 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

3. **PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2009-10**

As Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2010-11 John Haselden welcomed parishioners and explained the agenda was short tonight – it was a review of the year;

### **Hormead Parish Council Chairman's report 2010-11**

***Disclaimer: This report represents my own views and does not necessarily represent those of the Parish Council***

In short, it has been a challenging year. Many themes are the same as previous years and I'm happy to report that there has been some limited progress this year.

We come to the end of our tenure as Parish Councillors after 4 years in post, so firstly I must thank all councillors over that period, for the commitment they've shown and the time they have given up. Furthermore, I'd like to express my thanks and admiration for our Clerk, Mrs Caroline Jones, who in the first year of her employment has been sorely tested and pushed to the limit by the machinations of the PC – not least by the manner of her appointment!

Once again, HPC held regular council meetings throughout the year which were generally well attended although there was the occasional non-quorate planning meeting. Looking back at previous years' reports, I say it every year, but we have precious few, yet immensely important assets that as a community we need to support.

**Financial matters** - The accounts have now been made available for councillors subsequent to the audit carried out earlier this week. Whilst the Parish Precept did

increase in April 2010 to £15000, it has remained the same for the current financial year.

In a nutshell - we started the last financial year with around £10K, received income of £22.7K, and spent £26.4K. Our end of year balance was therefore reduced to ~£6K.

Approximately 42% (£10.9K) of our expenditure was on the Meads but there were significant one-off costs as we undertook a program of major restorative and repair work including plumbing, electrics, decoration, tree-felling and riverbank re-modelling. We anticipate that the cost of running the Meads over the coming year will therefore be much less without these one off charges. A larger proportion of the Meads costs will therefore be offset by fees recouped from user groups – income from this source was £4.7K in 2010/11 and will be nearer £6K in 2011/2012.

Other significant costs to the community/council include general expenditure of ~£5.5K, salaries of £5K and litter picking charges of £3.3K. So the estimated levels of spend for the coming year will approximate the anticipated income, which leaves HPC in a sound financial position with a contingency, yet still scope to pursue longer term projects.

**Planning matters** – There has been little to comment on over the course of the year although there were some rumblings on the subject of the village hall plan resubmission. On this topic I pass no official comment as that is the PC ‘approved’ position.

From a personal perspective, I do not want to see the current village hall fall into disrepair and fully support its re-build. I accept the plans for the house are not ideal but pragmatically this would seem to be currently the only way in which such a project might be funded.

I urge the incumbent PC to work with (not against) the VHC to continue to explore other options even whilst the current scheme progresses. I still believe that a modified version of the Warner/George plan to the side of the Meads, but with far fewer properties may offer a viable alternative.

The planning issues surrounding the Hares parking area has not arisen during the year although it was recently mentioned in the newsletter which amuses me in light of my comments last year, and more recently the newsletter item about taking cars off the road.

**Highways & Footpaths** – After a vicious winter, the state of the roads once again was on most people’s minds but following the very acceptable re-surfacing of the Beehive junction, my faith has been restored a little. However, there remain many other patches that need mending and can do no more as a Parish Council than re-emphasise the importance of logging these faults on the Highways/Council website.

We await resolution/development on a couple of issues regarding rights of way in the community namely – reinstatement of a route across Mr Johnson’s land and that the relevant County/District Council Officer has now been involved; and a modification order for routing of public bridleway/footpaths 33, 34 and 35 in the vicinity of Worsted Lane.

Swan Lane has had some considerable work undertaken including re-surfacing, treework and drainage to help resolve the flooding issues. Almost unanimously this work has met with widespread approval.

The local police force did attend a couple of meetings throughout the year and have reaffirmed their intention to carry out speed checks on a regular basis.

### **Community matters**

**Playspace** - The PC applied for and obtained a grant to install a new/replacement piece of play equipment. This grant was made available subject to matched funding from the PC and a commitment to carry out repairs on the existing playground equipment. This is due to be implemented in the next few weeks as soon as the incumbent PC approves the requisite spend.

An additional note here is that there is still a claim outstanding against the PC, by a Stevenage parent whose child (unattended) was allegedly hit in the face accidentally by the self-closing sprung gate. The PC's insurers (Allianz) are dealing with the matter and we await an outcome.

**School** - The PC approved partial funding towards the school's construction of a wild-life area within the grounds. Cllr King informed us that the Governors were successful in raising a substantial amount of money from grants, towards the much-needed replacement heating system. Furthermore, a recent Royal Wedding Day fund-raising event at the Three Tuns raised a considerable sum for the school.

**Meads** – This area continues to look fabulous and many thanks must go to our groundsman Neil Gardener who keeps everything under tight control. It is a credit to him that the wicket and pitches he prepares has caught the eye of other cricket clubs, hence our ability to offer our facilities to Sawbridgeworth and Ware CCs when appropriate. The upside to this is that a very large part of our outlay on keeping the Meads up and running and in such good shape, is now provided by user group income.

At last we have signed off on a legal agreement (licence) with the Hare St & Hormeads cricket club. This puts all future negotiations and conditions on a firmer footing and it is encouraging that the club continues to prosper inasmuch as they haven't gone the same way as many other local sides. They currently have around 15 regulars to call upon but would welcome more local talent. Their fixture list seems pretty much the same as it was when I played 15 years or so ago for them and the major fixture of the season remains – the Geoff Cranville XI August Bank Holiday game. I understand that after nearly 40 years, the fixture this year is probably the last one. I'm not sure Hare St & Hormeads have ever won a game!

The Hares continue to progress although in recent years they have had to marginally reduce the numbers of teams as coaches and players move on, so it seems they have reached equilibrium. Looking back over our 4-year tenure the success of the Hares has been remarkable and something that as a community we can be justly proud of having supported, despite some vocal opposition to the extent of their expansion.

The Hares now run 20 teams across all age groups and includes a Ladies and 3 age group girls' teams. They now have nearly 250 registered players of which approximately 10% come from within our parish. During our tenure they have won 3 leagues, had 6 cup finalists (including U11 girls this weekend), had 15 players scouted by professional clubs, provided an international (Welsh Ladies), achieved Charter Standard twice within 3 years and received local and national accolades from the FA. The soccer schools that have run over that period have been attended by 1200 children, with the Easter 2011 school being attended by 250 kids. They have links to and support an orphanage in Gambia through provision of old kit and boots.

On other Meads matters, we recently applied for Jubilee Field Status, which is nothing more than conferring upon us the ability to append the name of the Meads as the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Fields. This in itself is of no intrinsic value other than it may facilitate further negotiations or open the way to grant funding in the future.

The dog bin has now been purchased and is ready for installation at a location as yet to be determined but hopefully in a position where it will be obvious and appropriately used.

**Other matters** – As always many thanks must go to Steve Ruff who continues to amaze with his choice of footwear whatever the weather, yet still keeping our community ostensibly free of litter and detritus.

With the clerks prompting, HPC has contributed regular articles to the Newsletter detailing all our planning applications and decisions and other snippets of relevant news. I have often heard people be very appreciative of being kept informed of PC discussions and issues, whatever the angst.

**Looking to the future** – As we reach the end of our 4-year stint, there are things that remain incomplete – some of which I would like to see come to fruition:

- Complete the landscaping of the Meads embankment and car parking area – there was a plan of work and suggestions put together earlier this year but no further progress
- Once and for all clarify the situation with highways re the village signs and what is affordable and doable without all the bureaucracy involved
- Sign off and approve the Hares licence for the Meads
- Resolution on a PC position around the Village Hall

As with all things in business and perhaps even more so in PC life, these all need champions to carry them through.

**In conclusion** – I reiterate I have no axe to grind and some of you may know how I truly feel, but now is not the time to dwell on 'how' things have gone, merely to report what has happened during the year of the Parish Council, whilst providing my own personal reflections.

I do wish the incumbent PC all the best and hope that they can behave in a courteous, non-aggressive manner to one another, put aside personal agendas and pedantry, and represent the community appropriately.

**Once again I would like to thank all fellow councillors and particularly our clerk, Mrs Caroline Jones.**

**4. FINANCIAL REPORT**

The report had previously been received and now approved by the Council. The internal audit was currently underway.

**5. OPEN FORUM**

John Haselden stands down after fourteen years of involvement with the Hares and the village. He welcomed questions from the members of the public;

Hamon Medicott asked how he obtained minutes from previous meetings; Cllr Benson informed him that they were all available on our website [www.hormead.org.uk](http://www.hormead.org.uk) together with all the information regarding meetings etc. He also asked about voting and new councillor information, this is also located on the website. Cllr Haselden also informed those present at the meeting that regular updates to the Newsletter would keep everyone up-to-date so please keep reading it.

Reg Fallace spoke of his concerns about speeding, the number of movements and the amount of unsheeted lorries travelling to Anstey Quarry. Cllr Haselden addressed speeding by explaining that further speed checks would be carried out in the village. Cllr Benson agreed that there were a large amount of unsheeted lorries to Anstey Quarry but movements were within the stipulated number. However there were a number of early movements that should be monitored. Cllr Denham suggested information be provided in the newsletter for parishioners to write to the Quarry Manager. This will be added to the Parish Council's next meeting agenda to discuss.

Reg Fallace also asked when news would be available on the village hall appeal. The Clerk confirmed that the Inspectorate had informed her today that no news would be available until 22<sup>nd</sup> August. A site visit still needed to be arranged.

Cllr Haselden thanked the council, the clerk and the parishioners for attending the meeting and the meeting was closed at 8.30pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_