

HASLINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Parish Meeting May 2019

Council Members - During the course of the past twelve months, we have co-opted six parish councillors, Helen Brown, Simon Duke, Andrew Gillies, Ben Mavely, Diana Offord and David Revell. This gives us the full complement of eleven parish councillors.

Council Staff - At the time of writing, the Council employs three staff, all part-time, including Clerk to the Council, and two Maintenance staff. It should be borne in mind, however, that the total basic hours worked by the three staff equates to less than one full-time staff member of staff. Vicky Crowden took over as Clerk to the Council/Proper Officer with effect from 1st June 2018.

Council Facilities - The Council owns, or is responsible for The Village Hall; Recreation Ground; Playground; Skatepark; Wellhouse Meadow; Tennis Club courts (managed by the club); an Allotment and a small part of the quarry.

Village Hall - Work will shortly begin on extending the Village Hall, to increase storage, increase the size of the kitchen and create a meeting room on the first floor. The Architect's plans are displayed at the back of the room and a copy is also available to view on the Village Hall noticeboard.

The loan for the last extension is now complete, the last payment having been made this month. The original loan was for £110,000 taken out in May 1994, and we have repaid £10,570 per annum for the last 25 years, a total repayment of £264,250, £154,250 interest.

Recreation Ground - Work has been undertaken to improve the quality of the playing fields. Apart from a play area, the recreation ground is regularly used by the Cricket club, football teams and the fitness club.

Playground - The playground is a popular venue and is regularly checked to ensure that it is a safe place for the children to play in. The flooring is in need of some repair and plans are to do this during 2019/2020.

Skatepark - The skatepark has reached the end of its financially viable life and plans are being considered to replace all the original structures. Regrettably it has to be closed on a fairly regular basis as the signs of its age become apparent and work needs to be done. Fewer companies are prepared to repair old and wooden structures. £10,000 was put in the budget from the Parish Council's funds to start the fundraising campaign.

Wellhouse Meadow - Wellhouse Meadow continues to be managed by the Environmental Group and our contractor Buchans.

Environment - A considerable amount of work has been done, to cut back overgrown hedges and trees, work that has been neglected for many years. We

now have on ongoing plan to maintain these. The Environmental Group continues to meet on a regular basis, both tidying and cleaning.

Traffic Calming - The Barton Road scheme has now been fully implemented and is proving a success, as is the movable vehicle activated sign.

Finance - At the time of writing, the Council's accounts for 2018/19 are yet to be finalised. The figures to hand suggest a substantial budget surplus, but the Council has agreed that this surplus should primarily be earmarked for the village hall extension. The Council reviewed its reserves policy as usual in January 2019.

Precept - As for 2019/20, the Council set its precept at a level resulting in only a modest increase in the Parish Council portion of the council tax. The precept gave a Band D equivalent for 2019/20 of £136.54. This is an increase of £0.77 or 0.57% above the Band D equivalent charge in 2018/19.

The Council provided financial assistance to:

Connections Bus £7,931

This is a charity providing youth work services across Cambridgeshire and is the largest provider of open access youth clubs in Cambridgeshire.

Little Owls £4,400

Little Owls is our village Preschool. They are a small village charity, managed by a committee of volunteers. Their aim is to provide good Early Years education to local children and give them a sound transition to primary school.

The Warden Scheme £3,000

Haslingfield Community Warden Scheme provides support to the elderly and infirm in the parish of Haslingfield. Visits are made on a daily basis, Monday to Saturday by the Warden, Deputy Warden or one of a team of volunteers. The Warden is available as a 'friendly neighbour' to ensure members, of all ages are well and to help with small tasks and local shopping.

All Saints Churchyard Maintenance £500

The Council continues to make its premises available at concessionary rates, and in some cases free of charge, for various community events and services.

Other major items of expenditure for the period were:

Village Hall loan repayment £10,570

Salaries £16,830

Groundworks £15,307

Village Hall extension fund £30,000

Skate Park fund £10,000

Haslingfield Parish Council Meetings - The Council meet on the 2nd Monday of each month and everyone is welcome.

Publicity/Information - The village website – haslingfieldvillage.co.uk – continues to be updated on a regular basis and is well worth a visit for anyone who wants to stay

abreast of what's happening. We also keep residents informed of what is going on in the parish through Newsletters which are hand delivered to all properties in the village every four months. This year's Annual Parish Meeting was publicised on the village website, in Church and Village magazine and on the two Parish Council noticeboards.

Planning - The council met 15 times to discuss 35 planning applications, some straightforward, some not. It's important to bear in mind that it's the South Cambridgeshire District Council which makes the final decisions on planning applications, but the parish council submits comments and recommendations, having taken on board the views of members of the public who are welcome to attend the meetings.

Plans and Priorities for 2019/20 - In my view, the Parish Council's most important priorities for 2019/20 are: investigate the possibility of upgrading a new skate park; ensure the successful build of the extension of the Village Hall; resurfacing of the Playground; repairing the Wellhouse Meadow wall / repainting the Bakehouse and continuing the care and maintenance of the Parish Council's hedges, trees and green areas.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their dedication and for the amount of time they are prepared to give to enhance life in the Village and my sincere thanks to the Parish Clerk, Vicky Crowden who hit the ground running in June last year and hasn't stopped running since.

Jenny Jullien May 2019