

**Haslingfield Parish Council**  
**Annual Parish Meeting - 23 May 2022**

**Chairman's Report 2021-2022**

Welcome to our first face-to face Annual Parish Meeting since May 2019. Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was the last face to face Parish Council Meeting for about a year; during that period all our Parish Council Meetings were held on Zoom. And it wasn't until May 2021 that the High Court decreed that Parish Councils could no longer hold Zoom meetings. There were advantages to having Zoom meetings; we had many more people 'attending' the Parish Council meetings, people who in the normal situation couldn't attend: parents, guardians of young children or elderly parents. I think we all enjoyed and benefitted from this. The disadvantage for the Parish Councillors was that it became more difficult to interact with each other easily, which slowed things down. But this did give us an opportunity to rethink our meetings. So, we are now offering not just face-to-face meetings but a hybrid meeting offering. Anyone with a computer and WIFI connection to attend the meeting on Zoom. We've done this for the last couple of months and it does seem to be working well.

**County Broadband** - County Broadband Building work started in the village in August 2021, with the aim to complete most of the installation by the end of October 2021. A free connection to the village hall was also included along with a free public WIFI hotspot. It is now mainly up and running and we have received many comments that it is working well with much improved speeds. A big thank you to all that have supported the project, which helps to future proof our village for generations to come.

**Connection Bus** - The Connections Bus has continued to be an asset for children in the village, but it has recently proved difficult to find volunteers to replace long standing villager supporters, so it was agreed that the Parish Council would fund the payment for the helpers. Cllr Diana Offord reported at the April 22 meeting the bus continues to be well supported.

**Eco Group** - At the September Parish Council Meeting, Michelle Golder and Lisa Redrup on behalf of the Eco Group, presented a compelling case requesting that the Parish Council should declare a climate and ecological emergency. Cllr Zoe Ratnasothy volunteered to work with the group representing the Parish Council. The Majority of the Parish Councillors supported this initiative.

**EWR** - Dr William Harold very kindly gave me a report on East West Rail. It is very detailed and very important, so we will arrange to have it posted on the notice boards and website.

William's report - According to letters from the Department of Transport to the local conservative MPs Anthony Browne and Richard Fuller in Bedfordshire, the new Rail Minister is reviewing the business case for the EWR between Bletchley and Cambridge. They expect to report on their findings in June. These MPs are setting the expectation that the railway will be cancelled, this is based on information that they have not disclosed, but Anthony Browne has also met Grant Shapps. Their interaction with the rail minister has been facilitated by the activities of Cambridge Approaches and BFARe (which is an acronym for Bedford for a Re Consultation). Meanwhile the rail minister and EWR Co. are indicating that the project is full steam

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ahead. EWR Co. are arranging a series of public meetings starting in Bedford and working towards Cambridge. They do not expect new information to be released at these meetings. A recent strategy report issued by Network Rail in March assessed how well the railway performs against the road network at peak times. A letter signed by about 70 local parish councils and councillors across political parties and from all over South Cambridgeshire including the Mayor Dr. Nik Johnson was sent to the DfT asking for the publication of the business case. This received substantial local press coverage. This question was substantially ignored by the Rail Minister. The Campaign group BFARe sent a similar letter and received a similar response which left some room for the possibility that the project would be cancelled. Anecdotally, the northern approach to Cambridge does not seem to have been ruled out. EWR Co. have also held a series of Local Representative Group meetings with local PCs and Councillors. Little new information was revealed. EWR Co. have a new CEO Beth West; her previous positions include being Commercial Director for HS2 and with Transport for London. The demise of the Ox Cam Arc should fundamentally undermine the case for the railway, but this has not been acknowledged by EWR Co. Attempts to get EWRCo. to answer questions left over from the 2021 consultation are with the Information Commissioner's Office. A follow up by the MPs office failed to make any progress.

**Planning** - During the year the Parish Council discussed twenty-four Planning Applications; of those applications we supported fifteen, objected to seven and gave no comment to two of the applications. The higher-than-normal number of objections was since having declared a climate emergency, we could not support new builds without evidence of solar panels, ground/air source heating and a high standard of insulation. The final decision of all applications is the responsibility of the Greater Cambridge Partnership; the role of the Parish Council is to comment on the applications.

**Traffic Calming** - Since the introduction of the traffic calming in Barton Road, and a Vehicle Activated Sign being moved around the village on a regular basis, evidence is that speeds have reduced, but there are still some areas of concern with vehicles driving through the village too fast. We have started discussing the possibility of introducing new 20mph speed limits throughout the village. The County Council's Highways and Transport Committee are looking to establish the implementation of 20mph schemes throughout the county. This is something we are very interested in investigating further and will be seeking the views of the Parishioners.

**Skate Park – New** - Back in May 2021 after a meeting chaired by Cllr Ben Mavely and attended by many interested parties, it was agreed that the new skate park would stay where it was as there was no other suitable site within the village. At the September meeting Cllrs Jenny Jullien, Ben Mavely, Simon Duke, Andrew Gillies, and Zoe Rathnasothy agreed to set up a working party to review tenders for a new skate park. At the January 2022 meeting Cllr Ben Mavely announced that two tenders had been received and the skatepark subcommittee would use a scoring system to select the preferred supplier. Betongpark was selected to design and install the new Skatepark equipment which will likely be completed in the Spring of 2023. Since 2012 Betongpark has worked passionately to design and construct unique spaces for skateboarding and urban activities. Founded originally in Oslo before establishing a second office in London, Betongpark is recognised as one of

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Europe's industry leaders in skatepark design and construction. We were particularly impressed with their Environment and Sustainability credentials.

**Skate Park – Old** - Regretfully, all the equipment has had to be removed as it passed its sell by date and was potentially dangerous. The area will continue to remain open for the time being.

**Parish Council website** - Cllr Clive Blower and Parish Clerk Lise Jackson are working on a new website. [www.haslingfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.haslingfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk) It is currently being written so some of the information is not complete. Soon, it will contain information about the Parish Council, such as its documents, rules, agendas, and minutes. The existing village website [www.haslingfieldvillage.co.uk](http://www.haslingfieldvillage.co.uk) continues to be the best place to look for information about the village and events. If you have a good idea for something new, would like to change something or would just like to have a chat with us, please get in touch using email [clerk@haslingfieldparish.co.uk](mailto:clerk@haslingfieldparish.co.uk) or the phone number 01223 870269.

**Precept** - At the January Parish Council meeting Cllr Tony Adcock presented the proposed Precept for the period April 2022 to April 2023, and it was noted that the cost per Band D property was reduced. All the Parish Council supported this.

**The Queens Green Canopy** - The Queens Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, so don't forget to record any trees you have planted this year on the website <https://queensgreencanopy.org/map-education-hub/ggc-map/#/> or just google Queens Green canopy map. Cllr Diana Offord announced the Parish Council have planted nine trees; they are in both sections of the Wellhouse Meadow, Trinity Close and Chestnut Close.

**Queens Platinum Jubilee** - At the November Parish Council Meeting, Cllr Jenny Jullien stated that she had attended a Zoom presentation by the Lord-Lieutenants' Office providing information on the national celebrations that are planned. The Parish Council Offered to set aside £1,500 for the event. Michelle Golder, along with members of the Eco Group, organised meetings and started planning the weekend. Cllr Jenny Jullien and Cllr Diana Offord, representing the Parish Council, joined the steering group meetings. The weekend has a very strong eco stream and is being funded by both a grant from the National Lottery and the Parish Council. Programmes have been delivered to every dwelling in the village; I hope you have all received a copy. It is destined to be a very successful and enjoyable weekend.

**Finally** - Well, this is my final year, and a huge thank you to all the Parish Councillors and Lise Jackson for their total commitment to the Council and to the Parish.

Jenny Jullien May 2022