

**Minutes of the Great Horwood Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Great Horwood.**

Chairman’s Report Cllr John Gilbey, Chairman of the Parish Council, opened the meeting by welcoming the many residents from Great Horwood and Singleborough. Approximately 30 people attended.

Cllr Gilbey introduced the current five councillors on the Parish Council and thanked the representatives from the volunteer organisations for attending.

He also passed on apologies from Yvonne Taylor from the Cubs and Scouts, who was unable to attend due to being unwell with Covid. Claire Martin from Brownies also apologised for being unable to attend as the meeting clashed with Brownies. Meanwhile Mandy Cliffe, who was appointed as a temporary financial officer to support our end of year audit has a conflicting meeting for Little Horwood Parish Council and so was unable to attend this evening.

Cllr Gilbey noted that fairly recently two of our councillors did resign – Dave Taylor and Robert Davis. Cllr Gilbey also noted that Sue Brazier sadly could not be with us tonight as she is seriously ill with cancer. She’s had a series of radiotherapy treatments at oxford and has now started on chemo. We look forward very much to seeing her back in the future.

Cllr Gilbey went on to thank the other councillors and the attendees, as well as those who couldn’t make it tonight but contribute greatly to the running of the village, such as the Horwode Pece inspection team, the defibrillator inspection team, Jane Holland who manages the planting, Dave Taylor who will run the speed check device.

Cllr. Gilbey said that the Parish Council had once again supported Worthy Causes during the last year - £3286 was paid out to 7 recipients – The newly reformed arts and craft group, the football club, the community bus, scouts, GHCofE school, the silver band and WI. We also managed to deliver a very small reduction in the GH contribution to the precept.

He told us that the Parish Council deal with a lot of planning applications – the Nash Road site is nearly full now and we have delivered welcome packs to the new residents. There was a thank you from one of them on Facebook, which receved 26 likes, so seems to be a good thing. Other main areas are Home Farm (16 houses), to convert the service station into 4 houses and also into Nash the travellers site that has 4 applications that go back a long time. All are still ongoing.

In future Buckinghamshire will be required to make a new local plan. Already the owners of the airfield have tried to argue it is a brownfield site in order to prioritise for development. The PC has objected to this but it is likely that this will be a focus for years to come.

Nook Park has been another focus. A very frustrating saga for those who live there and the parish council. In the early days we emailed the Borough Council asking for them to support – we were told this was a civil matter and the council couldn’t intervene. More recently though the Council issued a hedgerow replacement order, but there are questions about how that can be done after all the work that has been done.

The other big issues are road closures and pot holes. We have had a lot of complaints from our residents and we did raise the issue with the Council and didn’t get very far with that. We did raise the issue of the state of the road and we invited the new Highways Community Liaison manager to visit the High Street to experience it. We asked when will it be completely resurfaced, and noted that this concern had been inflamed because many of the side roads in the village were resurfaced when the High St was the obvious priority. We were told that the road was reviewed constantly with regular inspections. Any works will be carried out in line with our Highways Inspection Policy to ensure the funds are spent fairly across the community. The best recommendation given was to use the Fix My Street website to log issues, and we encourage residents to do this.

We got a litter pick done – hugely grateful to Yvonne Taylor and her Cubs, Scouts and Beavers who did a great job, along with a team from Nook Park and the cricket club.

There is also due to be a solar farm built on the fringes of the village, with an entrance on the A413. There will be some lorries coming through the village, but we are aware of it.

Finally John noted that we are two Parish Councillors short – we would love to get some new members from the village if anybody would like to volunteer.

The next Parish Council meeting is to be held on 15th of May and all residents are welcome. Updates can also be found on the website <http://www.bucksinfo.net/greathorwoodpc>

**3. Presentations by Village Organisations**

**Coronation Celebration – Liz Nicholls**

A variety of games and activities, face painting, drinks for purchase, WI providing cakes and more. This will be on the Monday of the coronation weekend and more details can be found in Focus.

**Buckinghamshire Council - Sir Beville Stanier**

Sir Beville introduced himself and the team. He noted that The budget had gone up by 4.9%. It would have been less but we put in an extra 2% for social services. Without that it would have been 2.9%; far less than inflation, due in a main part to the merger of the 4 district councils into the county council. Sir Beville mentioned that he was aware of the state of the roads in the Parish and said it was a focus and an area where they hope to improve. Cllr Gilbey requested that Sir Beville lobby on our behalf in respect of our High Street and Sir Beville said he will personally take it up next time he meets with the local area technician. Cllr Cousin asked whether anybody checks repairs as the very large pot hole on the High Street that was supposedly repaired recently has a gap all down one side looks unlikely to last more than a couple of months. Sir Beville confirmed that he would raise this point.

**Ann Biggins – WI President**

Pleased to say flourishing again post pandemic. 26 members and hard working committee. We are looking forward to a pearl day on the 29th of April, which is open to everyone in the village (see posters). We look forward to putting our baking skills to the test for the coronation but we also have two walking groups and participate in a walking netball team.

**Sheila Cadge – Winslow and District Community Bus**

A huge thank you for the money received from worthy causes. Have been able to continue to deep cleaning the bus once a month, which is very much appreciated by the passengers. We have also been able to buy 3 booster seats for youngsters on the bus and they were used for 3 trips for Ukrainian families. If others want to make use of the bus just call up and book your place – things are ramping up again after a hiatus during COVID. Always keen for new drivers if anybody is interested.

**Vice Chairman Scouts and Brownies - Paul Ketteridge**

Two written reports for Scouts and Brownies.

Girl guiding is from Rainbows to Rangers and they enjoy a range of activities. In the last year they have built dens, learned about WW2, learned DIY tasks, enjoyed walks in the dark and messy challenges. They are now enjoying learning about and experiencing the natural world around us. We have 24 girls aged 4-17 with rainbows doing especially well but we are worried other girls are missing out on the chance to make friends, try new things and enjoy new experiences.

On the scouting front, scouts have welcomed some new leaders – the Beavers have Ben and Julia, Anna has stepped up as cub leader replacing Emma – 16 beavers, 12 cubs and 13 scouts. All sections have been offered a chance for residential experience – Beavers and Cubs went to Leighton Buzzard and Scouts went to Phasels Wood. There will be three great activities at the Coronation event which will showcase some of what the scouts do. The groups are also fund raising to renovate their HQ, including the addition of a disabled toilet.

**Paula Shaw – Head of Great Horwood C of E School**

Pleased to say the school has had a quiet year. Children are back in school and we are learning and having a good time. Visits to MK museum, Bancroft Roman villa, visits from Medical Detection Dogs, trips to Caldecotte and more. Quite a lot of decoration has been done inside the school, including the school hall. The conservation area is still being improved and going from strength to strength, with wildlife flourishing including the greater crested newts. We are now fund raising for a reflection and spiritual area called the garden of hope. The school said thank you for the funds from GHPC and passed on a note from the school – the planetarium filled the entire school hall, it was fantastic. Numbers are stable – we will be around 75-80, but we have spaces in every year group and would welcome more children. The biggest challenges are pupil numbers, recruitment and budget.

**Margaret Michalski** **– Arts and Crafts**

There is a group that meets at the village hall on a Friday morning 10-12. It was started 14 years ago. We do painting, embroidery, drawing with a good supply of tea, coffee and biscuits. We regularly do projects and we have for example done card making, pin flare, quilling, painting, drawing, stained glass and more. Post Covid membership dropped, we didn’t want to put up subs but instead we managed to raise some more funds. Recently membership has increased back to pre-covid numbers but we are always happy to welcome new members.

**Vyv Rudd - Chairman of Great Horwood football club**

Strong year on the pitch. We have Juniors at U8, 9, 10 and 11 and will start a new U8 group next season. He thanked the Parish Council for the worthy causes support for the new kit for the Jr U8s. First XI are top of the league, but Stony have two games in hand and are likely to win the league. The vets had a mixed season but have enjoyed themselves. We will be at the coronation celebration and hope to recruit more players from the village and adults to help run the club.

**Ian Lamberton – Village Hall Committee chair**

Nora is a long standing resident and this year she is 100 years old. But this is not the only centenary as the village hall also celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. June 23rd 1923 is when it was opened. We have had christenings, wedding, parties for people of all ages, jumble sales, drama groups and more. During Covid we even kept going, including the visiting post office and we kept that going throughout. The Hall doesn’t meet the needs of the present day – such as lack of accessible toilets. Committee – Russell, John and Caroline, who have been fantastic supporters. We are looking to develop the Village Hall – we have appointed architects and will go out to tender. Possibly a moveable stage so we can show films, but either way it will be upgraded. We welcome ideas as it is not too late to make changes. By Christmas we hope to present a brand new look for the hall. Tony Pearson from Singleborough is the new treasurer and was introduced to the group.

**Russell Margerrison – representing Focus**

Russell and David Brazier have shared editorship and Russell will be working on it alone for the time being. We manage to do 10 copies a year for the village and Singleborough. Huge thanks to the printer, the distributors, advertisers and contributors. Last year was the most challenging year – the first time we lost money as costs increased over 20% (printing) and most advertising is fixed rates. So if anybody knows someone who might like to advertise in Focus please let us know. Cllr Gilbey mentioned that if there are ongoing issues with financing please let the Parish Council know as we may be able to offer further support.

**Andrew Cook – Chairman of the Silver Band**

The band had a successful year in 2022 and we restarted our training band in September with 2/3 trainees and all are doing really well. We attended a number of engagements, including the Winslow parade. 12 engagements in December including Christmas concert and carols on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. We had two well attended events in March. Bookings are strong for the remainder of the year. We are missing some key positions in the bass section, so we are relying on guest players when needed, but we are looking for new trainees and experienced players. It is never too late to learn – more information can be found on the band website.

**Alan Biggins – footpaths**

23/24 miles of footpaths in the parish. Some are well used and some hardly used at all. Alan keeps an eye on stiles, gates and so on and in wet weather Alan tries to keep gates accessible with hardcore. The landowners in general are very good. The solar farm is the only problem at the moment in terms of significant damage to the ground and signage that has not been replaced. The PC is in discussions with the owners and will follow up on this topic.

**June Margerrison**

June has been Church Warden for over 20 years. We now have a new rector – Dr. Stephen O’Connor. The new church roof was acquired last year and huge thanks for the contributions from across the village. There is always more fund raising to be done as we weren’t able to replace the roof on the North Porch or repair the damage done to the walls after the roof was missing. We continue the strong links with the village school which are very welcome. June also passed on her prayers and those of the other parishioners and her well wishes to Sue Brazier and her husband Dave.

**John Nicholls – Horwode Pece**

John updated on the maintenance of the Rec. It’s in good condition at the moment thanks to the volunteers. We have c. 11 groups who check the equipment every week – rain or shine. If you’d like to join the team that would be welcome. We have a working party, including two workshops that run during the year as well as managing urgent repairs throughout the year. The rec is now 14 years old and is doing really well thanks to the hard work of a number of villagers. We also put 4 tonnes of rubber chipping down to help make the areas safe for the children (supported financially by the Parish Council) – a huge endeavour by the volunteers. We also have a new picnic bench donated by Volkswagen Group UK that is made from recycled suspension blocks from the vehicles sat between two black poplars planted as part of what was the Queen’s green canopy. Please come down and enjoy the rec – bring a picnic!

**4. Open Forum**

A question was asked about latest situation re Nook Park?

Cllr Waller – all the vegetation and hedges around the site have been removed. Sadly Bucks council, who were informed at the time that this started have done little so far to support the residents in the way they would have hoped, particularly given the owner is licensed by the local council. There is an ongoing investigation being carried out by the council, but very little feedback has been received to date despite many emails to the council from the residents. Andy noted that we are always grateful for support from the wider village. Sir Beville Stanier offered support if there is anything he can do to help.

No further questions were raised. Cllr Gilbey reminded residents that if there were any questions subsequent to the meeting they could be raised during the public participation session in any Parish Council meeting. The meeting closed at 8.55pm