

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PARISH OF
HILPERTON HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, HILPERTON,
on TUESDAY, 3rd MAY, 2005, at 7.30 p.m.**

CHAIRMAN: Mr. E. Clark, Chairman of the Parish Council, presided.

PRESENT: Sixteen members of the public, including parish councillors.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr. V. Bielecki, Mrs. J. Clark, Mr. S. Thompson, Mr. A. Sawyer, Mr. J. Willis, Mrs. C. Beckett and Mr. P. Hayes.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman introduced himself and Mrs. Marylyn Timms, the Parish Clerk.

3. MINUTES OF THE 2004 PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on the 4th May, 2004, were agreed and signed (Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Mr. House, all in favour).

4. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 6 – Village Design Statement: After much hard work by the VDS team, the Village Design Statement was adopted as supplementary planning guidance by West Wilts. District Council on the 30th March, 2005. The Parish Council funded the project right from the start and applauded the hard work of Eric Egar and his team.

Minute 6 – Play Areas: Another year had gone by without the adoption of the Hammond Way play area by the District Council because of an ongoing dispute with the developer, Wimpey Homes. The District Council had now decided to adopt the area in its current state and landscaping had commenced. The play equipment destined for Hammond Way, ordered, paid for and stored by the Parish Council for quite some time, was erected on the Village Hall playing fields during the summer of 2004 following representation at last year's Annual Assembly by youngsters from the Newleaze area who requested additional leisure facilities at that end of the village, and had proved a great success. The Chairman thanked all the youngsters concerned, together with Mrs. Sheila Sawyer, Mrs. Kate Hayes and Mr. Brian Cullern for their efforts. A further order would shortly be made for equipment for Hammond Way and it was hoped that this would be in place by the summer. A grant from WWDC of £2,425 would go towards the purchase of the play equipment.

Minute 8 – Stiles: The Clerk had contacted Wiltshire County Council's Rights of Way officer following last year's meeting, concerning the difficulty some elderly people had in getting over stiles. He had informed her that the County Council had an obligation to enable access to all people along footpaths, but the minimum landowners had to provide (under current legislation) was a stile. Anything else would have to be financed by other parties, i.e. Wiltshire County Council, parish councils etc. He had visited the stile at the Trowbridge end

of Middle Lane which was causing a problem and this had resulted in the stile being made more 'user friendly'.

Minute 8 – Community Groups: The Parish Council now had a list of groups using the Village Hall, the Community Centre, the Church halls and schools but did not as yet have a list of landowners in the village.

Minute 8 – Parish Council's Liaison Group: Mr. Kendrick Jackson had attended meetings throughout the year on behalf of Hilperton Parish Council, for which he was thanked.

5. FINANCIAL BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Clerk reported that the precept for the year ended 31st March, 2005, had been set at £19,646, again with no increase in the levy. The total income for the year amounted to £20,881 with a total expenditure of £22,548. This included assistance given to the Village Design Statement team (£2,875), an interest-free loan to the Paxcroft Mead Community Centre (£5,000) which the management committee were now paying back in regular monthly instalments, play equipment (£2,796), litter bins, bus shelter repairs, a new notice board, general administration and various grants.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2004, were adopted by the Parish Council in June, 2004, and the audit was completed by September, 2004. The accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2005, were in the process of being prepared and would be available for inspection before the annual audit later in the year.

There were no questions.

6. PARISH BUSINESS

Paxcroft Mead Community Centre

The Chairman reported that, during 2004 and the early part of 2005, the developers, Marshgate Developments, had been dragging their heels on the issue of the transfer of the community centre to the Parish Council as Custodian Trustees. However, at last matters seemed to be drawing to a satisfactory conclusion, and the transfer – on the Parish Council's terms - would shortly be made. The Community Centre, at their recent Annual General Meeting, had also stated that they were happy with the Deed of Trust and that could now also be signed by the Parish Council.

School Governors

Both Jenny Sinclair, governor of The Mead Primary School, and Pam Turner, governor of Hilperton CE Primary School, had continued to keep the Parish Council up to date on the activities at both schools. There had been no major problems throughout the year and the Chairman reported that The Mead School now had the go-ahead to double in size by the start of the autumn term. The Chairman expressed the Parish Council's gratitude to both governors for their commitment.

Grants and Loans made throughout the Year

The Chairman explained that Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowered local authorities to make grants to voluntary bodies where no specific grant-making power

existed in other legislation and where, in the council's opinion, the grant would benefit any part of its area or any of the inhabitants. During the year the following grants and loans had been made:-

September, 2004: Interest-free loan to the Paxcroft Mead Community Centre of £5,000 for various improvement works. This was now being paid back at the rate of £100 per month from January, 2005.

September, 2004: Section 137 Grant of £100 to Wiltshire Search and Rescue.

October, 2004: Section 137 Grant of £250 to the Independent Living Centre at Semington to help towards the cost of essential exterior works.

November, 2004: Section 137 Grant of £150 to the West Wiltshire Wide Citizens' Advice Bureau for assistance in funding their activities.

January, 2005: Section 19 Grant of £1,089 to Hilperton Village Hall to assist in the funding of the annual grounds maintenance and public liability insurance.

March, 2005: Section 137 Grant of £1,000 to 'Hilperton Presents' to assist in purchasing lighting and sound equipment for the Village Hall.

Notice Boards, Litter Bins and Bus Shelters

The Chairman reported that a notice board had been erected on the side of the Budgens building and a new one would shortly be ordered for Marsh Stores.

As had been said last year, despite the provision of many more bins throughout the year in the village and on Paxcroft Mead, there was still a considerable number of irresponsible people who allowed their dogs to foul pavements. Unfortunately, unless dog owners were actually seen ignoring the mess their animals made, there was little a dog warden could do about the situation. The Chairman added that someone appeared to be willing to take on the (unpaid) role of parish dog warden but he did not reside in the parish.

Parish Council Newsletter

The Chairman had received some positive responses to the latest Newsletter recently circulated but he apologised for the fact that the circulation had taken rather longer than anticipated.

Village Maintenance

Work had continued to be carried out by Wiltshire County Council's Parish Lengthsmen following the scheme's reinstatement last year. The Chairman also thanked various parish councillors for continuing to undertake various summer maintenance jobs, including the power washing of the bus shelter along the Trowbridge Road.

It was pointed out that the grass in the village was not cut as often as it should be, and a suggestion was made that the Parish Council might use some of its funds to get a contractor in. The Chairman explained that village maintenance was something for which the Parish Council had a responsibility, but grass cutting was not. Residents already paid for this in their council tax so, effectively, if the Parish Council used a contractor to do additional grass cutting, this would mean that they would be taxed again. It was agreed that this matter should be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council in May.

War Memorial

The War Memorial needed some fairly major works, including the provision of a damp proof membrane, and the Chairman said that the Parish Council had applied to English Heritage for a grant, through the War Memorials Trust.

He added that a wreath would be laid at the War Memorial on the 9th July to commemorate the anniversaries of both VE and VJ days.

Mrs. Sheila Sawyer had continued to oversee the planting and watering of flowers at the War Memorial and sweeping around the site, and she and her helpers were thanked for their commitment. Mrs. Lesley House had recently taken over the planting of the flowers from Mrs. Sawyer as, after fifteen years, she felt it was time someone else took on this task. Again, Mrs. Sawyer was thanked and Mrs. House was welcomed.

Hilperton Relief Road

The Chairman reported that when the first application by Persimmon Homes was received by West Wilts. District Council the Parish Council, as agreed, had put the plans on view to the general public on two occasions in the Village Hall. A special meeting was then held on the 21st October, 2004, to consider the application, which had resulted in an objection being made by the Parish Council to the application as it stood, on environmental grounds. This application was deferred by the District Council and a new, identical application was received in January, 2005, which was also given consideration by the Parish Council in March. This second application also resulted in an objection being made, again on environmental grounds, but the Parish Council had sought clarification from the District Council on the points made and had asked them how the objections might be resolved. A letter had now been received from the planning officer dealing with the relief road application, in response to these points.

At a special meeting of the planning committee of West Wilts. District Council on the 7th April the application by Persimmon Homes for a relief road through The Gap resulted in permission being given. Nineteen conditions had been imposed and the Clerk read through each one.

Parish Council Website

The Chairman was pleased to report that Hilperton Parish Council now had its own website (www.hilpertonparishcouncil.org.uk) which had been in operation since the beginning of the year. Details of agendas and minutes were regularly posted on it, together with contacts at District and County level. The website was there to discharge the Parish Council's requirements under e-government legislation.

Police

The Chairman reported that Sergeant Mark Kent had called in before the meeting to express his apologies for not being able to stay as he had to attend to an emergency.

There had been a number of changes in police representation at Parish Council meetings throughout the year. WPC Jo Philpott had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council in May, 2004, and had introduced herself as the new community policewoman but was then not seen again. Sergeant Perrett took over as the new sergeant for Hilperton and Staverton and he was contacted by the Clerk who stressed the need for regular contact with the community officer. During this time Hilperton had been incorporated within the

Trowbridge urban policing area and it was felt that the parish was not benefiting by this and more community beat officers were needed. Sergeant Perrett then moved on and acting Sergeant Bettles took over.

By November, 2004, there had been no police presence at any of the Parish Council meetings since May, which resulted in the Clerk writing to Inspector Hookings at Trowbridge police station about this sorry state of affairs. She received a reply from him, recognising the fact that the Parish Council lacked support from the police, and he also enclosed a list of community officers with a geographic responsibility for the area. P. C. Mark Giles attended the December meeting and gave details of crime statistics for Hilperton, most of them occurring in the Navigator Close/Towpath Road area of the village. P. C. Gary Fox attended this year's January meeting with details of crime related to banks and cheques, thefts, damage to property and vehicles, offences on building site and a few domestic violence cases.

In March this year the Parish Council was informed that there would be a new community safety officer in an area which included Hilperton, who would shortly commence training and be operational in June. She would not have the same powers as police officers but would patrol her designated area acting as a deterrent to potential criminals.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) The Chairman said that, apart from the usual planning applications for the parish which the Parish Council regularly considered, comments had also been given on the East Trowbridge Development Brief, the provision of bus stop clearways, an audit of crime, disorder and drugs misuse in Wiltshire, the Wiltshire Local Transport plan, the increase in car parking charges and the review of the constitution (relating to planning applications) by West Wilts. District Council. There had been a number of Tree Preservation Orders placed on important trees within the village. The Parish Council, through Sir William Brown's (Coal) Charity continued to make small annual disbursements to needy people in the village.

b) Mr. House asked if the pedestrian refuges were in place along Whaddon Lane and the Chairman replied that they were but they did not appear to be very well maintained. The Parish Council would therefore contact Wiltshire County Council on this issue.

c) Mrs. Sawyer said that the part of the cemetery reserved for the burying of ashes was in a sorry state. The garden part was choked with weeds and was not being maintained or weeded properly. The bed behind it was completely out of hand with runners spreading all over the place and nothing being cut back. This was another matter to be reported to West Wiltshire District Council.

d) Mr. Cullern commented on the problem of vandalism on Paxcroft Mead, the latest incidences being graffiti sprayed by spray gun on walls at the top of the Community Centre and at Budgens. This matter would be raised with Trowbridge Constabulary.

e) The imminent closure of Hilperton Post Office was causing concern in the village and the possibility of some sort of part-time post office was discussed. The Chairman said that the difficulty was that Hilperton Post Office was classed as 'urban' and as such must be open five and a half days a week. The Post Office would have to be re-graded to 'rural' before a part-

time service could be established and then it could be run from, for example, the Village Hall or some privately owned establishment. It was agreed that the Parish Council should do all in its powers to push for the re-grading of the Post Office so that some sort of service could be provided as soon as possible.

f) Mr. Drewett said that there was a problem with cars parking outside the Post Office on double yellow lines and it was agreed that, as this was a safety issue, the police should be contacted.

8. CONCLUSION

The Chairman informed the Assembly that the Parish Council continued to encourage members of the public to attend the monthly meetings and to visit the Parish Council's website. He thanked Councillor Trevor Carbin for his support as the local County Councillor over the last four years and all the Parish Councillors for their support throughout the year.

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

Signed

Date