

Hopton Wafers Parish Council

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held at 7 pm on Monday 20th May 2019
at Hopton Wafers Village Hall

Present: Cllr Roger Hayward, Cllr Barry Buffery, Cllr John Price, Cllr Derek Bytheway, Cllr Peter Cuthbert, Mrs Marilyn Wood (Hopton Wafers Church); Mr Ted Wilkes and Miss Sheila Webb (Hopton Bank Methodist Chapel); Mr C Woodward, Mr R Hodge, Mr J Watkins (Hopton Wafers Village Hall), Unitary Cllrs Madge Shineton and Gwilym Butler and three parishioners.

Parish Clerk: Mrs D McBride.

The meeting commenced at 7 pm with Parish Council Chairman Cllr Roger Hayward in the chair.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave thanks to Cllrs John Price and Derek Bytheway who recently retired from Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council after many years in those roles. The Chairman thanked all the other councillors for their efforts over the past year and highlighted that we do have a vacancy if anyone is interested in joining the Parish Council. The Chairman thanked the Clerk, Dorothy for managing all the administration, Chris Bargman for environmental maintenance and also Marilyn Wood for her internal audit work.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Turner and the PCSO Beth Hinton who were unable to attend.

3. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 30th April 2018

Copies were available for those present and everyone was satisfied they were correct - signed by Chairman.

4. Police Report – Safer Neighbourhood Team

PCSO Beth Hinton has sent a written report (attached with Minutes) which the Clerk read out. Ludlow SNT are aware of several incidents whereby sheds and garages have been broken into yet some had not even been locked. Please consider property marking such as SmartWater. Ludlow SNT are looking to carry out crime prevention workshops – if you are interested please let them or the Parish Council know so that an event can be arranged.

5. Hopton Wafers Parish Council Report

Chairman, Cllr Roger Hayward read the Parish Council Annual Report which had been prepared by the Clerk (attached with Minutes). Cllr Hayward thanked all our community volunteers who look after the three defibrillators and Mrs Quickenden for her CPR and defibrillator training. Council has considered many planning applications this year and generally we are more satisfied with the Planning process but are mindful that some development does not fit the criteria for local affordable housing. We have an improved relationship with our local policing team who are very supportive of SmartWater, Community Speed Watch and general reporting of issues. Our accounts are complete and will be published in due course. We have supported local community groups financially: Hopton Wafers PCC, Doddington PCC, Hopton Bank Chapel, Cleobury Mens Shed, Hopton Wafers Village Hall and Cleobury Mortimer Community First Responders. We were successful in obtaining the Environmental Maintenance Grant again which enables us to undertake minor highways works, verge maintenance and litter picking. Severn Trent are planning mains drainage for the Hopton Bank/Doddington area but work will not start for another year or two. Works up New Road to Whatsill have been further delayed but we have been assured that we will be kept informed. We are pleased to hear that Doddington Lodge is re-opening soon and together with the new Care Home in Cleobury offers local choice and valuable employment opportunities. We represent the parish by making comment on consultations concerning planning, policing, health and postal services and work with neighbouring parishes, community groups and unitary councillors to support each other with various projects and issues which affect us all. Going forward in 2019 we are looking to achieve some speed management improvements in the parish and the provision of a new bus shelter at Doddington. We will continue to support all our volunteer community groups and are very grateful for the work they do.

6. Hopton Wafers Church Report

Mrs Marilyn Wood (Hopton Wafers PCC Treasurer and Church Warden) read her report (attached with Minutes). The PCC has just received an independent report which highlighted that various repairs need to be carried out to the porch and roof in the near future. Grants are being applied for which should cover most of the costs however there is still the onerous task of paying the annual 'Parish Share' to the Benefice which becomes more difficult given the ever-declining numbers of regular Church attendees. A number of fund-raising events are being planned over the next six months including a Quiz, Wine Walk, Pimms on the Terrace, Cheese and Wine Tasting, Harvest Supper, Carol Service and Grand Raffle. We are grateful to the Parish Council for continuing to support us by giving a grant towards grass cutting. Thank you so much, we do appreciate your support in keeping our Churchyard neat and tidy. We had a tidy up event this weekend in the churchyard when 19 volunteers worked for two hours followed by a picnic – a very productive and sociable occasion which will probably become a regular event.

7. Hopton Bank Methodist Chapel Report

Mr Ted Wilkes reported that the Chapel continues to provide a centre for worship and the congregation has increased. This is due to Tenbury and Cleobury ceasing to hold regular services - they are not closed though and can still be used. No services were cancelled this past winter unlike the previous one although the Beast from the East left a legacy of defective water pipes which needed work, also a replacement fence at the back and two new Notice Boards. The building dates from 1880 and time has caught up with the fabric of the building. The grounds are kept neat and tidy. Thanks to the Parish Council for their donation towards this – we are most grateful.

8. Unitary Councillors' Reports

Unitary Councillors Madge Shineton and Gwilym Butler had both sent written reports – (copies attached with these Minutes). Cllr Butler covered Finance, Business and the Economy. He is hopeful that Defra's recent report which recognises how much rural areas put into GDP will help Government when looking at their funding to rural areas. Cllr Shineton covered Health, Planning, and Public Transport. Cllr Shineton spoke of the importance of parish councils getting involved in the Local Plan consultations and the benefits of proposals for the hospitals.

9. Hopton Wafers Village Hall Report

Mr Robert Hodge, Treasurer, spoke about the uncertain future of the hall which has been running at a loss for the past three years. There are some reserves but when it costs £1,100 just to open the Hall, these reserves will be gone in 7-10 years. All regular hirers have gone and there are also looming maintenance problems with the Play Area equipment, fencing, retaining wall, roof and soffit boards, lighting and heating plus general redecoration - likely to cost £10-15,000. Thanks to the Parish Council for their grant towards the decorating work, also to John Watkins for his work. Over the past 10 years the Village Hall has only had a tenth of the money which the Parish Council has given to the churches so more funding requests will be forthcoming. Fund-raising has started with a successful 'Story-Telling Evening', with a BBQ planned in July. Cllr Buffery asked how the Hall advertises and how hire charges compare to other local Halls. Mr Hodge stated that they are advertising in the Clarion and whilst Doddington is probably cheaper a whole morning or afternoon session is only £50 including electric. Cllr Butler suggested community volunteers could help ie electricians, builders etc as has happened with Cleobury Mens Shed or consider renting a room out as an office. Mr Hodge and Mr Watkins confirmed that they are trying to make the Hall more attractive for business functions but need to sort out the Health and Safety first and then get marketing.

10. Parish Matters and Questions

Mr T Evans raised concerns that more development down Earls Ditton Lane will put more vehicles on the road, affecting the infrastructure and increasing the likelihood of accidents. The steepness and angle of the junction with the A4117 is very difficult for people turning right towards Cleobury and felt this should be reconsidered, perhaps utilising the slip road on the left side. He has previously had two cars in his garden and so, installed a crash barrier inside his fence. Mr Evans feels that no-one is being heard over this concern. Cllr Bytheway said the Parish Council has complained bitterly about proposed development here. Cllr Butler stated that this junction is on the Place Plan for improvement and one option, perhaps, could be traffic lights, funded from development.

Mr Hodge announced that following the school closure in 2012, it has since been converted and will be going on sale next week. All proceeds, thanks to Mr Woodward, have launched the Woodward Educational Trust which is now open for business. Grants are available, for residents of Hopton Wafers and those in the Benefice area, for education purposes. Please contact Mr Hodge for more information.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

It was agreed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting (Minute Ref 2020/03) that these minutes are a true record of the meeting, subject to the following corrections:-

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

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