

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, GREAT HASELEY ON
18 MAY 2015 AT 7.30 PM**

Present

D Simcox, Chairman of the Parish Council
Six members of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 April 2014 were approved and signed.

Chairman of the Parish Council's report

Well, that's another year gone. This might look a bit strange but the rules are that until they have signed their acceptance forms none of those who were successful in the election are actually councillors. As Chairman of the old council, I remain as chairman although not yet a councillor until a new Chairman is elected by the councillors so here I sit in splendid isolation.

The works at the Plough Pub are now all but complete. There was a change in tenancy in November and things seem to be working reasonably well.

Frustratingly, there are still holdups with the planned affordable housing although changes in personnel but the Parish Council keeps pushing and it is hoped that it won't be too long before things finally re-start.

The new trees on the remainder of the allotment land have survived their first winter and are looking good. We attempted to get the Village Institute registered as a Community Asset but the Oxford Diocese successfully appealed the decision and following an attempt to find a tenant, it is now for sale with the rest of the former school site.

Following on from The Village Plan, I attempted to get an interested group to re-start the village fireworks but not a single person could be bothered to attend the re-start meeting. This attitude seems to be all too common these days with the cry of 'someone must do something about ...' but it always seems that they expect the 'someone' to be someone else and never themselves; very disappointing.

The number of planning applications has increased this year, up from 18 last year to 26. I have addressed the planning committee on two occasions when the Parish Council's views were at odds to the officer's. I was able to get them to agree with our point of view on one of those occasions. The arson attack that all-but destroyed the SODC offices at Crowmarsh has caused remarkably few problems apart from venues for meetings and for election nominations. The temporary office are to be at Milton park, Didcot but I hope that the permanent replacement will be back at Crowmarsh, either in the same site or perhaps at the adjacent Hydrology site.

The Clerk organized the Parish Council's annual Spring Clean and provided an excellent lunch for those who helped and a year on, the footpath is still looking good.

Many of the problems with drainage remain un-resolved but there have been a couple of notable successes. We have persuaded OCC to put in a gully on the bend in Rectory Road near the track to Sands Farm and between OCC and the Parish Council, we have been able to persuade the responsible land owner to clean out the ditch opposite Keeper's Cottage on the road to Little Haseley. There is much more that needs to be done but budgetary constraints seem to make at least some the rectification of some of these unlikely. We have been successful in getting the road from Little Haseley to Ditch End and two sections of Latchford Lane re-surfaced following a serious deterioration in the surface of these sections.

We continue to support the Village Hall and following our contribution to the new floor we are holding funds for their planned kitchen refurbishment. Openreach are working to bring higher speed broadband into the village but there seem to have been problems with getting the cables through the ducts to the already installed cabinet and our go-live date seems to have been pushed back from March 2015 to December 2015.

The efforts of the Clerk in her role as Responsible Financial Officer and Peter Cawdron, our internal auditor, mean that we received a clean bill of health from the Auditors; my thanks go to both of them. The changes to the rules for small Councils seem to be a little way off but seem to mean that in the future we might not need to use an external auditor. We have again been able to reduce the level of the precept to reflect our reduced outgoings as a result of paying off the loan to purchase the Allotments.

Our Rector, Victor Story, retired in February and the Parish Council decided to mark this with a tree in the churchyard.

The annual pumpkin show was a great success once again and thanks are due to all involved. The village once again had a very splendid illuminated Christmas tree and thanks are due to the grower in Wheatley who supplied the tree for free and to all those who helped with its collection, erection, decoration, electrical supply, removal and disposal.

The Haseleys continues to look excellent and the advertising revenue is holding up well and a big thank you to all those who are involved, including the editor, the delivery team and the webmaster.

Finally, it just remains for me to thank all the Parish Councillors, particularly Terry & Nick who were unsuccessful in the election, for their work and support during the year and to Stephen Harrod who was both our District Councillor and County Councillor last year and who has been successfully voted back in as District Councillor. Last but by no means least; I would like to thank the Clerk who manages to keep the Council on the straight and narrow.

Responsible Finance Officer's Report

During the year ended 31.3.15 the Parish Council has worked within its budget generating slightly more income due mainly to advertising in The Haseleys and spending slightly less than that budgetted. The Council received a satisfactory audit from the government appointed external auditors BDO Stoy Hayward for 2013-14 accounts and thanks go to Peter Cawdron who again acted as the 'Council' internal auditor.

A number of charitable donations were made as permitted under Local Government rules and the Parish Council has continued to support the Playing Fields and the Village Hall.

On the income side, the advertising revenue for the Haseleys has increased slightly on last year and it is hoped to generate more during the current financial year. Again, a small amount of income on the Book of Walks and the Book on the Haseley War Memorial.

On the expenditure side The Village Hall have not asked for all their outstanding grants so it is possible they will ask for this in the current year. Insurance continues to rise, mainly for the Playing Fields and grass cutting has increased this year. Also, St Peter's has not claimed any money for grass cutting for 2012 and 2013. Once again there was a village Christmas tree and the village springclean.

The annual audit will take place over the next couple of months and it is hoped that there should be no problem with this although the internal auditor is suggesting that there is too much in reserves and the Parish Council should look at ways in improve on the interest received on the Business Reserve Account.

District and County Councillor's report

As S Harrod was not present, no report was given.

Reports from organizations in the parish

Village Hall – D Mann reported that since the new floor had been laid in the village hall there had been many favourable comments. A professional window cleaner has been employed. There had not been quite so many activities in the village hall over the year, the Christmas party and the art day were two that he fallen by the wayside due to lack of support. The Village Hall Committee had again organized the village Christmas tree and an additional decorated tree at the end of Mill Lane. It was hoped that the new kitchen would be installed in September.

Haseley Archive Group – J Andrews reported that it had been another successful year for the group. They had published Lives from the Haseley War Memorial. They had put on two exhibitions, at the village fete and the Horticultural Society show. One project that had been undertaken was the mapping of all the gravestones in St Peter's churchyard and another was looking at the history of one of the old families in the village that was responsible for most of the buildings. The latest project is the history of all of the houses, old and new, in Great Haseley and the group was trying to encourage householders to get involved.

Playing Fields – The pavilion has been re-painted and grass mown and the rubbish has been removed. Tiddington and Great Haseley have been playing cricket.

Allotments – All the new guidelines have been given out to allotment holders and they seem happy with them. All allotments are now taken and a waiting list will be started.

Affordable housing

This has been stalled over the year for a number of reasons due mainly to changes of personnel in ORCC and SOHa. However, it is hoped that plans will be available towards the end of May.

Public discussion

There was no public discussion.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

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