

# Hamble Parish Council

The Local Government Act of 1894 required rural areas with a population over 300 to establish a Parish Council. As Hamble had over 400 people, an open meeting known as a Parish Meeting had to be convened to elect a Council.

On the evening of 4th December 1894 the first Parish Meeting of Hamble-le-Rice was held in the village school in School Lane with 27 electors present. The Rev. Joseph Curling was unanimously elected to chair the meeting, after which he stated the purpose was to elect five Councillors. After receiving nomination papers and given an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates, Hamble's first Parish Council was elected.

Charles Brown a farmer, Thomas Norris a grocer/baker, Albert Penney a dealer in fish, Arthur Robinson the blacksmith and John Scovell Junior a shell fish merchant were the first Parish Councillors for the village. Their average age was 37 and all but one were born in Hamble.

A fortnight later they held their first Council meeting. John Scovell was elected first Parish Council Chairman and the other Councillors were appointed various duties including Thomas Norris who agreed to be the first Clerk to the Council.

It must be remembered that Hamble then was very different from today. Hamble-le-Rice as it was known, consisted of just the old part of the village with only four large houses (Sydney Lodge, Sydney Farm, Hamblecliffe House and Grantham Cottage) west of the old Vicarage and nearly all Satchell Lane was in Hound. In fact the village's boundary was along Lovers Lane, across the fields to the river where Port Hamble Marina's entrance is today.

In the following years, subsequent Councillors were elected in much the same way. Nomination papers were submitted, questions were asked of the candidates at an Annual Parish Meeting and then chosen by a 'show of hands'.



*Two of the original first Councillors.  
Arthur Robinson - Blacksmith. Charles Brown Farmer*

In 1897 William Homan of Netley was appointed first paid Clerk (£6 per annum). Previously Councillors undertook the Clerk's duties as an honorary appointment. When William Homan resigned, John Scovell undertook these duties as well as those of Chairman or Councillor until his death. Since then the Council has always employed a Clerk.

The 1901 Annual Parish Meeting discussed a request from some residents in Satchell Lane to be included in Hamble. This was agreed and most of Satchell Lane, including all the houses, was transferred from Hound to Hamble in 1902.

The early business of the Council included protecting and maintaining rights of way especially to & over the foreshores, the purity of water at the parish pump, waste disposal, highway matters such as gravel for the roads etc. Street lighting was another duty they undertook and in 1900 the village lamp lighter was paid 18 shillings (90p) per month and 10 shillings (50p) for storage during the summer months.

The Henville Educational Foundation, a legacy for the poor of the village, has always been part of the Council's business and in the early years hospital collections were also recorded through its minutes.

In the period prior to the First World War the number of Councillors was increased to seven, dealing with similar matters such as lighting rates, parish hards as well as allotments and the village fire brigade. As mentioned previously, waste disposal was one of the Council's responsibilities and at this time Mr Hodder held the Council's scavenging contract for dealing with refuse and pails from earth closets.

In November 1915 the Council decided to change the venue of its meetings from the School to the Reading Rooms (now Ye Olde Coffee House) in Rope Walk. The hire fee was 12 shillings (60p) per annum but the Annual Meetings continued at the School.



*Hamble Village School.  
The venue of the first Council meetings.*

At the beginning of 1920, Council meetings and Annual Parish Meetings moved to the Memorial Hall, then a wooden hut, which was located to the left of the old Vicarage entrance (now 'Dulcars'). It was built as a memorial to all those who had fallen in the First World War and was used for other village activities such as scouting.

Although the Parish Council had never owned Hamble Common, the Green or other common land in the village, it has throughout its history endeavoured to protect them and the associated villagers' rights. No more so than in the 1920s and 1930s.

Attempts were made to enclose Westfield Common or parts of it, including trying to put a gate across the top of Coach Road. The rights over Tithe 150, the foreshore between Westfield and Hamble Commons, enabled the Council to require Shell Mex to build their

jetty so that a laden horse and cart could pass unobstructed under it to collect seaweed or for other purposes.

The Council was first handed control of the Village Green by its owners, Winchester College, in 1901 but under the Commons Scheme of 1923, the Parish Council was delegated the powers of management of both Hamble Common and Green. This lasted until the mid 1950s.

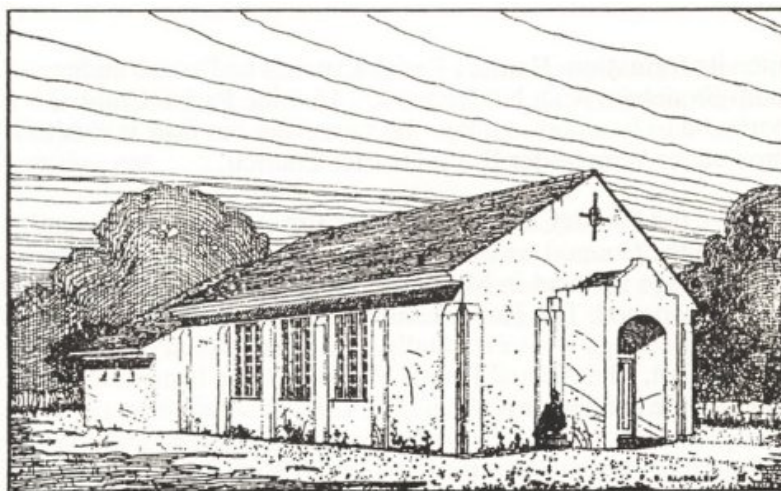
In 1925 Hamble's boundaries were extended to include the rest of Satchell Lane, Hamble Lane from Sydney Avenue to Satchell Lane including the land bounded by them. 1927 saw the number of Councillors increased from 7 to 9 and they continued to discuss matters such as the repair of footpaths, the state of hards etc.

Planning and controlling the development of the village became an increasingly important part of the Council's work as the 20th century progressed and in 1931 a scheme and plan for Hamble was put before a public meeting for discussion.

One of the requirements of the Local Government Act of 1929 was a review of Urban & Rural District Councils. As a result of this Act, some Parish Councils amalgamated or disbanded - this included Warsash Parish Council which ceased to exist as it went into Fareham Urban District.

Since its formation, Hamble Parish Council had come under South Stoneham R D but from 1932 Hamble Parish Council continued to function in much the same way but now it came under Winchester Rural District Council.

By 1932 the Parish Clerk's salary was £25 per annum. Around this time the Council was involved in discussions about building a new village hall and in May 1933 the present day Memorial Hall was opened. The Parish Council were made Trustees and Council meetings were eventually held here instead of in the old wooden hall. The Annual Parish Meetings have been held at this venue to the present day.



*Memorial Hall, opened 1933.*

During the years between the two World Wars one of the Parish Council's tasks was recommending tenants for Council houses and their priority order.

Hamble's first female Councillor was Miss Charis Fry, who was co-opted in November 1936 and subsequently elected at the 1937 Annual Parish Meeting. She was the daughter of C B Fry the famous sportsman, who ran the Training Ship "Mercury".



In 1938, Winchester R D Council asked if a "show of hands" was the best way to elect Councillors. Those present at the Parish Meeting said 'No', even though the procedure for electing Councillors did allow a group of dissatisfied electors the right to demand a poll, as happened in 1928.

After a local boatman had rented the Hamble River foreshore from Winchester College, the owners, great concern was expressed. At an Annual Parish Meeting the Parish Council was requested to negotiate renting the foreshore so as to preserve the existing character and parishioners' rights. The Parish Council obtained a 21 year lease in 1934 but by 1939 they were able to arrange the purchase of this great village asset and become its owners.

Other items listed as being owned by the Parish Council in 1939 were a tun cart, 37 street lamps, deed box & chest kept at the Clerk's residence, a copy press, portable table for Council meetings, one Imperial typewriter and a cupboard in which to store it at the Memorial Hall. Notice boards at the Post Office, Satchell Farm and at the junction of Beaulieu Road and Hamble Lane were also included in the inventory.

Many prominent village names appear as Councillors throughout the first 50 years of the Council. They are too numerous to relate but the brothers Bert & Walt Luke were noted as making a great contribution during this period. (The Luke brothers operated their own boatyard in Back Street, now Rope Walk, and the area that has now become Port Hamble Marina.) Father and son, Charles and Alf Taylor, the village builders/undertakers/coal merchants, also both served as Chairman of the Council during this time.

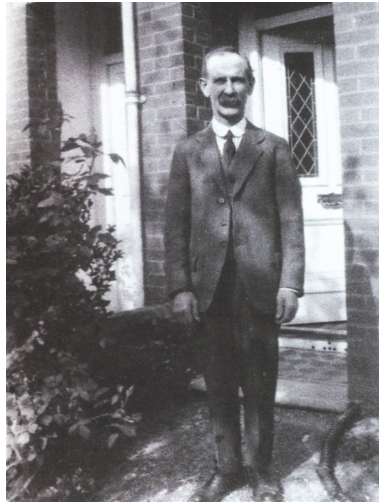
Bert Luke was elected Chairman nine times and a Councillor for 36 years, while his brother Walt served the village for 40 years and was Chairman three times and was the second Honorary Clerk. On his retirement, Walt recalled the struggle with Hound over the new boundary line, the taking over by the Council of the Common, the coming of sewerage, the first lighting of the roads with oil lamps, followed by water, gas, electricity and telephone services, all within his time.

The Council of 50 years ago included the village schoolmaster, a grocer/baker, electrical shop owner, a toolmaker/shop convener at the aerodrome, a boatyard owner & one of his yacht designers plus a few with other occupations and a retired person.



*Hamble River Foreshore purchased 1939.  
Hamble River Sailing Club in background where Council meetings  
were held after the Second World War.*

At the beginning of 1945 the venue of the Council meetings changed from the Memorial Hall to the premises of Hamble River Sailing Club which were then at the 'Bugle' where Oyster Quay is situated today.



*William Hampton  
Hamble Parish Council's  
longest serving Clerk.*

By 1946 the elections were by nominations and a poll, which was estimated to cost £15. 1947 saw the resignation of William Hampton due to his health and that of his wife. He had been the Parish Clerk for just under 50 years and when he was appointed in 1900 his salary was just £4 per annum.

From March 1948 the Council minutes were typed & no longer hand written. Prior to this the Council did have a typewriter but used it for other Council business. In fact they lent it to a local aircraft firm earlier in the decade to aid the war effort. From this time the Council meetings moved back to the Memorial Hall.

During the Second World War many of Hamble's facilities were requisitioned, including the Council's river foreshore for a U.S. Army Water Division repair depot. Therefore in the late 1940s and early 1950s the Council set about a foreshore reclamation scheme including the provision of a dinghy park.

In 1949 the Council purchased the ground known as Mount Pleasant for playing fields, which is now today's Recreation Ground. The Council also became owners of Bartletts Children's Recreation Ground at the end of Hamble House Gardens.

During the war public rights across the aerodrome were closed for security reasons and the airfield owners wished them to remain closed afterwards. They agreed to put up the money for the purchase of Mount Pleasant and transfer land for Bartletts Children's Recreation Ground to recompense the parish.

At this time Mount Pleasant playing fields were in the Parish of Hound but in 1951 Hamble's boundaries were again extended to include the west side of Hamble Lane from Lovers Lane to the railway line.

At meetings in the late 1940s, villagers expressed their concerns about problems with the Junior School in School Lane. Therefore in the early 1950s the Council agreed to sell part of Mount Pleasant to enable a new Primary School to be built.

Throughout its history the Parish Council has dealt with transport issues, such as encouraging improvements to bus and ferry services, the state of the roads, a railway halt for the village (which was eventually achieved in 1942) and dealt with complaints about low flying aircraft from Hamble airfield.

By the mid 1950s the size of the Council had increased to the present day number of 12 Councillors. In 1958 Susie Bartlett was the first woman to be elected to chair Hamble Parish Council. (Her father had been Chairman earlier and her grandfather was one of the original first five Councillors.)



*Hamble Foreshore mid 1960s.  
The Council license the boatmen to operate from their land.*

In March 1963 the Council meetings moved from the Memorial Hall to the new Sports Pavilion at the Mount Pleasant recreation ground. In the following years the provision of a swimming pool was much discussed but the idea was eventually dropped. In 1968 workmen levelling part of these playing fields found an earthenware pot containing more than 2000 Romano-British coins of which the Council claimed ownership.

The 1972 Local Government Act saw a major change in local government with effect from April 1974. The reorganisation saw the demise of all previous authorities with the exception of parish councils and in their place new county & district councils were born. The powers of parish councils were also extended, one of the most important being the right to be notified of all planning applications.

From 1974 Hamble Parish Council ceased to deal with Winchester RDC but now came under Eastleigh Borough Council.

The Parish Council became increasingly concerned by the wide range of hours that Clerks were expected to conduct business ie. weekdays, evenings and weekends. Therefore a concrete garage was purchased, erected next to the pavilion and adapted to an office. The Clerk's own telephone number was transferred to the new office which was then opened with set hours.

In 1981 the Clerk's office was moved to the Memorial Hall and for the first time, letters were no longer addressed to the Clerk's own house.

The Council took over the control & ownership of the new burial area at the rear of the church in 1986. Also at the end of the previous year the church's "Parish News" publication ceased. Therefore in 1987 the Council started its own village magazine.

Over the last part of the 20 century, planning & controlling development in the village was an important part of the Council's work including attending public inquiries. During this time plans to develop the old Training Ship "Mercury" site, the Copse, the airfield and its sports field, Manor Farm, Ensign Park are some that have proceeded, while others, such as housing at Hamble Point, were not allowed to go ahead.

The Parish Council was involved in the consultation process of local plans such as the 'Hound, Hamble & Bursledon' and 'Hamble River' plans which endeavour to control developments. Unfortunately, although the Parish Council has repeatedly asked, Hamble has failed to get its own representative on the Hamble River Management Committee.

In the late 1980s the Council's river foreshore was greatly improved in various stages with new quay walls, environmental improvements and better parking facilities which now provides extra income. A long-awaited public jetty was also provided by various other authorities in 1993, which is managed by the Harbour Master.

Over this same period, Roy Underdown was elected Chairman of the Council 17 times, therefore achieving the status of being the Parish Council's longest-serving Chairman. The last Clerk with whom he worked particularly noted his tireless work for the benefit of the community.



*Chairman Roy Underdown receiving new chain of office  
from local Oil Terminal Manager who donated it to the Council.*

During the early 1990s a computer was installed for the Clerk's use and for official purposes the Council reverted to using the name Hamble-le-Rice. ("le-Rice" can either mean "brushwood" or "the rise".) 1994 marked the Parish Council's centenary and it was celebrated by holding a special Council meeting, with current & former Councillors and Clerks attending, as well as an exhibition depicting Hamble over the last 100 years.

In the mid 1990s the Council leased for 99 years part of the former airfield to form the College Playing Fields and the Roy Underdown Pavilion was built and it became the new venue for Council meetings. This land became available from Eastleigh Borough Council as part of planning gains following the loss of the College of Air Training sports field.

The Council's Millennium project, in conjunction with the Memorial Hall Management Committee, was to seek grants and undertake a major refurbishment of the Memorial Hall. In 2002 the Council purchased a significant part of Southampton Water foreshore located off Westfield Common, using funds gained from an out of court settlement relating to another piece of foreshore within the parish.

In recognition of its Councillors and staff's good work on behalf of the parish, Hamble Parish Council was the second in Hampshire to be awarded Quality Parish Status in 2004.

In 2008 a Parish Plan was produced which enabled parishioners to identify things that they valued in the community and gave guidance for the future of the village.

A 99 year lease was agreed with Angelfish (Southampton) Ltd in 2009 so that an enlarged improved cafe could be built on the Council owned foreshore. The following year a 99 year lease was agreed with Hamble Lifeboat for a replacement station.

During 2010 Eastleigh Borough Council transferred many of the assets that it held in Hamble into the ownership of the Parish Council. This included Westfield Common, the buffer zone between Spitfire Way & Cirrus Gardens and other open spaces in the village.

In the same year the Council purchased the former BP premises off Hamble Lane which were leased to provide facilities for the community. These facilities are used by Hamble Squash Club, Hamble Football Club and Hamble Sea Scouts.

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