

# Upper Hardres Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting

**Tuesday 21 May 2019, 7.30pm at Bossingham Village Hall**

### Minutes

#### Chairman's welcome

Chairman Paul Gordon welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Attending: Councillors Angela Waldron, Janice Rosen, Nick Waldron, Rob Quincey, Clerk/RFO Clare Hamilton, KCC Councillor Michael Northey, CCC Councillors Robert Thomas and Matthew Jones-Roberts, 9 parishioners. Apologies: Nick Smith (Hardres & Stelling News), Robbie Gambrill (NHW), Rob Veltman (footpath warden).

#### Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 May 2018

Minutes of 2018 APM were approved and signed by Cllr Angela Waldron who chaired that meeting.

#### Chairman's Report

**Planning applications** Since last year's Annual Parish Meeting, we have commented on 25 planning applications which is a record year for the parish.

**Bossingham Playing Field** This great asset to the parish is well-used and well-maintained. Particular thanks go to David Webb for carrying out weekly playing field inspections.

**Roads** We are pleased that Lime Kiln Lane has been treated, and are investigating if anything further can be done to address the flooding after heavy rain on Hardres Court Road at the junction of Vicarage Lane. Do keep reporting potholes to KCC or to a councillor who will report them for you.

Last year, we announced the forthcoming funds from KCC Councillor Michael Northey's Members Grant to install village gateway signs on Pett Bottom Road in Lynsore Bottom. This work is now complete and reduced driving speeds have been reported, which was the intention.

**Village Hall** The Village Hall continues to need regular bookings and parishioners are encouraged to support it wherever they can. Maintenance work is ongoing and costly, and bookings pay towards the upkeep. Following an insurance claim for damage caused by subsidence and the subsequent work, the hall will be redecorated internally sometime this year.

**War Memorial** Thank you to John Pitcher for his dedicated work on the war memorial garden and village hall flowerbed. The memorial is a fitting tribute to those villagers who gave their lives in the great wars.

**Village Tidy Days** Our rural environment is very special and our Village Tidy Days help to keep it that way. They are also a sociable occasion and good exercise too, and a great way to meet others whilst improving our wonderful Parish and enjoying some exercise all rolled into one. Do join us for the next one (to be announced).

**Oak Tree** The diseased oak tree was removed by KCC in April and they will return at some point to grind out the stump, remove infected soil, and plant a replacement tree. Wood from the felled tree is currently in storage as we decide on a fitting use for it. Having considered a sculpture, our current thinking is for a Mile Post, perhaps carved with miles to Canterbury, Stelling Minnis, and Belgium in honour of the Belgian refugees who donated the tree in WWI.

**Parish Email List** Following the requirements of GDPR, our Email List is down slightly to 20 parishioners who receive meeting Agendas and Minutes, notices of Planning Applications, Highways information, and any other useful information relating to the parish. This is a method of contact that can deliver information at short notice whilst also containing any relevant website links, particularly that for the reporting of potholes. Requests to join our Email List must be made via a Consent Form which will be available at all meetings and from the clerk.

**Welcome Pack** We have compiled a Welcome Pack for new residents which is available as a pdf on our website and as a paper version if required. It contains useful information on local services, clubs and societies.

**Parish Grant Fund Awards 2019** We are once again able to offer small matched Grant funding to local groups. We received just two applications this year, and are pleased to award funds to Bossingham Pre-School and the Friends of Stelling Minnis School. We look forward to receiving more requests for the 2020 funds.

We are very fortunate to live in a fantastic area which is enhanced by everything we do as a community. The more involvement we all have, the greater we can achieve. If you have any ideas you feel would enhance the area or the Parish Council, please just let us know.

## **Clerk/RFO's report**

**Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019** The Precept was slightly higher in 2018/19, which was mainly due to the clerk's salary, as the National Association of Local Councils salary scale for parish clerks increases slightly each year.

**Concurrent Functions Funding** received from Canterbury City Council pays towards the cost of grounds maintenance for the Playing Field and Village Hall; rubbish collection from the village hall; and the annual playing field safety inspection. The Village Hall shares the cost of grounds maintenance.

We have a **Parish Council Reserves Policy** which includes Restricted funds for repairs to the village hall, car park, maintenance of playing field equipment, and the annual Parish Grants Fund. We aim to keep a healthy amount in Reserves to meet any unexpected expenditure.

This time last year, the clerk was studying for the CiLCA qualification (the Certificate in Local Council Administration), and passed this in June. With the knowledge gained, we are adhering to the necessary rules, regulations and procedures - of which there are many - and are moving forward professionally and efficiently.

## **Reports**

KCC Cllr Michael Northey, CCC Cllrs Robert Thomas and Matthew Jones-Roberts - reports in Appendix.

## **KALC Community Awards Scheme**

CCC Councillor Robert Thomas was invited to present a KALC Community Awards Scheme certificate to John Pitcher for his unstinting dedication to Upper Hardres, his energy and commitment in restoring the Bossingham and Stelling Minnis War Memorial garden, and for arranging a WWI memorial service involving Stelling Minnis School in November 2018.

The formal part of the meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed ..... Paul Gordon Chairman xx May 2020

*Chairman Paul Gordon*

*Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton* | [uhpc.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:uhpc.clerk@gmail.com) | 01303 257321 | [www.upperhardrespc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.upperhardrespc.kentparishes.gov.uk)

## Councillors' Reports

### **KCC Councillor Michael Northey** *Kent County Council*

I am sorry not to be able to be with you very often but there are 16 parishes in my area and many meetings clash. Anyway, here we are for the APM (it clashes with another one elsewhere!). First many thanks for the excellent work and tireless energy of your parish council, who do so much for the whole community. People often fail to realise just how important parish councils are – but they do things other councils cannot, being so close to local people and needs.

Clare, your clerk, keeps me in touch. I am pleased that I was able to find a grant of two thousand pounds to provide village gateway signs on Pett Bottom Road for safety awareness and to slow traffic. Last week I signed the paperwork for a grant of five thousand pounds for the excellent community project for facilities at St Peter and St Paul Church. It was a pleasure to visit the church and meet people there a few months ago. Well done to the indefatigable people who worked so long and hard on this project, costing over £100,000.

As so often, everywhere, all over Kent the main common worry is traffic. It has for example become much more difficult and unpredictable for me to get to County Hall since first being elected in 2005. Almost every second day there is a hold-up somewhere in the system. However, it is good to see the work being done around the parishes as KCC Highways prepares a Highways Improvement Plan for each parish.

In early February Highways announced an ambitious plan to clear vegetation from Kent's footpaths, and along highways. There are plans to employ more highways inspectors.

Five new drainage engineers and a planned team leader have been recruited to help tackle flood risks. They will be looking after the vast numbers of drains in Kent. KCC includes round 250,000 roadside drains, 250 ponds and lagoons, 25 pumping stations and 8,500 soakaways. These numbers are constantly increasing, because of new housing developments all over the county. We are still asked to report any issues on the website.

Regarding Brexit, £33.48 million has been invested in Kent to help improve roads for any eventuality. Of this £10 million has gone on pothole and foot-way repairs, £15m on carriageway renewal with low noise surfacing, over 5,000 gullies repaired, lagoons and soakaways cleared; with hard cut of vegetation and clearing of verges. Manston is being resurfaced to take possible demand to park lorries.

On 5 April 2019 KCC announced that the collection of 3,000 handwritten parish registers held at Maidstone has gone on line for the first time. More than 2.6 million fully indexed baptism, wedding banns, marriage and burial records spanning more than 400 years of Kent history are now available to search online exclusively. To find out more please visit: <https://www.kentarchives.org.uk> People will be able to track their family history in an exciting and accessible manner. This is part of a partnership between Findmypast and KCC Archives.

KCC provides over 300 services. The KCC website shows the wealth of activities. This is also valuable for reporting problems, or finding out how to access help, such as social services needs. So many thanks to them and especially yourselves, not only council, but people and clubs, individuals, church and other groups, etc, for all you do make this lovely area an even better place.

### **CCC Councillor Robert Thomas** *Chartham and Stone Street Ward, Canterbury City Council*

### **CCC Councillor Matthew Jones-Roberts** *Chartham and Stone Street Ward, Canterbury City Council*

Robert Thomas introduced Matthew who has replaced Rosemary Thomas as our ward councillor. Matthew thanked Rosemary for her twenty years' service, a sentiment echoed by parish councilors and parishioners.

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## Reports from parish groups

### **Bossingham Playing Field** *Clare Hamilton, Parish Clerk*

This great asset to the parish is well-used and well-maintained. Equipment in place appears to be 'just enough' for the parish's size and needs, however, if a parishioner would like to suggest any further equipment (and how it could be funded) we will consider its suitability.

We continue to remind SeRCO to empty the litter bin and they continue to forget us! If the bin is full, please help us out by taking your litter home. Parishioners are reminded that dogs are not allowed on the playing time at any time.

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## **Bossingham Village Hall Management Committee** *Mark Rosen, Chairman*

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018 Andy Osborne removed the Beech tree and reduced the Oak tree. This tree work was necessary as the insurance company felt the Beech tree roots were the cause of the subsidence and cracking in the Hall near the ladies toilets. The insurers have monitored the crack since the tree work and now feel the Hall is no longer in danger of any more subsidence and have contracted builders to paint the inside of the Hall. I'm awaiting a date from the builders.

The village hall roof repair, the boiler inspection and the men's toilet emergency lighting repair are all on hold as I feel we cannot spend any money without putting the Hall in jeopardy of closing. The Hall at the moment does not have enough regular users to pay for repairs and the inspections but by using our savings we are able to keep the Hall going by paying for the heating oil, electricity, water and sewage, bin collection, gardening and cleaning (only the cleaner is paid and all Officers are un paid positions). I have asked the Parish Council for financial assistance for the roof repairs but have not received a positive answer. I have explored grants but they are for either new projects or require 80% repayment which is not practical for our financial position.

The Management committee welcomes Ruth Derham, to replaces Sarah Hymers as our Secretary. We thank Sarah for her time as Secretary

I want to thank everyone on the Committee for their help and voluntary support.

Thankyou also to my wife for her hard work arranging the hall bookings.

Thank you to Dan as treasurer for making sure we have enough money and Peter Crouch for auditing the accounts.

Thank you to the Parish Council for their continuing support

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## **Hardres & Stelling News** *Nick Smith, Editor*

Firstly, a big thank you to all who have written articles for inclusion in the Parish Magazine for without you there would not be a magazine. I know that many readers look forward to the regular contributions and the occasional letters from readers.

Contributions regularly include community news from County, District/City, and Parish Councils together with the two Parish Churches and a message from the Parish Priest; as well as those from the Neighbourhood Watch, Headteacher's letter, History Group, Gardening Society, Helen the Vet, Johns Haffenden's Farmers notebook, Minnis Managers, Baillies Quiz (he's a clever dog you know), a brief weather report as well as information on the mobile library dates and tea & natter afternoon. With occasional articles from other clubs, societies and individuals these all go to make what I hope is an interesting and informative Parish Magazine with something for everybody.

Once again the magazine was entered into the National Parish Magazine of the Year competition and gained 36th place out of 400 entries in the A5 category.

The Children's front cover art competition was well supported with 23 Entries. The winner was the December issue front cover and runners up were printed on both the back and inside covers, all in colour. There will be a competition again this year, but you will have to wait until the September to find out what the subject is.

A big thank you to Bruce & Margaret Crawford and their band of delivery agents for getting the magazine to you; to Ann Day for handling the finances and selling all the advertising spaces, not forgetting Emma and Bruce at Stelling Minnis Stores for willingly holding copy for me and allowing some readers to collect their magazine from the shop.

Any photos for the front cover should to be in Portrait format, please.

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## **Neighbourhood Watch** - Upper Hardres, Stelling and Bossingham *Robbie (Robert) Gambrill*

I continue to act as NHW Coordinator and collate information pertaining to our locality. I receive approximately 3 calls each week from people who are concerned about situations affecting them or neighbours. I accept their reports but

must insist that they use the **101** system as I am unable to report on their behalf. I continue to seek the help of an assistant with whom to share some duties.

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## **PCSO Report** *Gavin DODWELL 46057923*

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## **Stelling Minnis Primary School** *John Gray, Headteacher*

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## **Stelling Minnis & Upper Hardres History Group** *Ros Shefford*

We usually meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month in the Meeting Room of Stelling Minnis VH. There are some exceptions such as Christmas, Easter or holiday periods when many members are away.

Over the past year, much of our time has been taken up with collecting and collating various articles for our book 'Minnis Memories & More'. This is now with the publisher and the launch date is Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2019 at Stelling Minnis Village Hall between 6.30 – 9 p.m. We shall be providing drinks - wine, tea, coffee and juices together with some nibbles. Everyone is very welcome to come and join us and see the book with its articles and stories from around The Minnis.

Our History Group provides monthly copy for the Hardres & Stelling magazine and the feedback from readers is good. Articles of local historical interest or anything generally relevant can be used. Such articles can be put on file and pulled out for use over the year.

Once again we enjoyed a very entertaining and enjoyable Christmas Quiz put together by one of our members who always seems able to provide an assortment of things we ought to know but just can't remember at the time.

The talks we hosted were 'Woolwich Women at War' by Steve Hookins, one by David Brocklehurst of the Battle of Britain Museum, Hawkinge and the latest 'A Schoolgirl's War' by Mary Smith. All were well attended and enjoyed.

We had a very enjoyable outing to Brook Church and the Agricultural Museum next door. Our guide in the church was very knowledgeable and it is a delightful place. After lunch in Wye, we had the great good fortune to be at the Museum while a wedding was taking place at the church, when the bride was taken to her wedding in a horse-drawn haywain in glorious sunshine.

Only a few managed a visit to Lympne Castle to enjoy their afternoon tea and have a look round. This will have to be repeated as the grounds and castle are worth seeing and the tea was phenomenal.

We hope that Andy Linklater, our archaeologist friend, will find time in his busy schedule to do another 'house read' in the village and very much look forward to seeing him again, as these 'reads' are not only very interesting but Andy puts over his knowledge so well.

Plans and suggestions for the coming year:

Minnis Memories & More – book launch on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, as above.

Another talk by David Brocklehurst of the Battle of Britain Museum

A visit to the WW1 trench opened in Elham

A visit to the Martello Tower

Caves at Ramsgate

A sail on SB Greta from Whitstable

Some meetings to be social ones held locally over an evening meal.

Our annual subscription is £10 which entitles members to reduced price tickets for talks. We are looking to increase our membership and encourage younger people. To this end it was agreed at our AGM that we offer a student rate of £5 for those in further education or at university.

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## UHPC Footpath Warden/Observer *Rob Veltman*

The PFW/O has walked during the year every publicly accessible footpath and bridleway in the parish (except for CB367). Note that not all publicly accessible footpaths are public rights of way (PRoWs): some are 'Unclassified County Roads' such as the long path leading from the Lime Kiln Road crossroads to Bow Hill, or 'Permissive Footpaths' such as the path in Atchester Wood leading to Lynsore Court Road.

Improvements and activities include the following:

- The parish paths, whatever their status, are generally in good condition, and only a few stiles remain, as on CB375 by The Manor House and on CB372 near Stone Street
- CB372: the stile on Hogg Lane has been replaced by a sturdy and amenable one, following last year's report
- CB376, the 'backbone' of the parish, leading from Lynsore Bottom to the Stelling Minnis boundary via Bossingham, has been considerably improved, with the removal of obstacles such as gates and hedge gaps at Mann's Hill. Also, following last years' report, the collapsed post on CB376 holding up barbed wire has been re-instated
- CB378 Following a communication by the Parish Clerk to the PFW/O, Averil Brice Kent Countryside Access Warden, and Steve Brice stabilised the stile and created a gap at the termination of this footpath opposite the Village Hall.
- The status of the northern extension of Split Lane on the edge of Atchester Wood, a little south of UH in Stelling Minnis parish, is unknown. Some attention has been given to it by UH resident, Peter Crouch, and the PFW/O with a view to assuring its long-term public accessibility. Its proximity to UH makes it of interest to UH residents. If any resident or other person has information about its history and use, please communicate this information to the PFW.
- s.31(6) Highways Act 1980 notices: these are occasionally posted, as on the waymarker post at the top of CB381 near Clambercrown. They amount to a declaration by the owner of land where a PRoW passes that no further dedication of his or her land for public footpath creation is envisaged.

The PFW/O has recently noticed the following faults, which he has reported to the County Public Rights of Way office for remedial action:

1. CB372 Stile closer to Stone Street is too high for less able people to climb
2. CB362 In its UH section leading from Stone Street, rape seed crop has grown over the path, impeding passage.
3. CB373 The gates at both ends of the path joining two points on Hardres Court Road carry notices which are illegal under Health & Safety legislation. These notices state that bulls are in the field crossed by the path. At no time has the PFW/O found on using the path that the field in question was being occupied by a bull. The signs might unnecessarily deter walkers from using the path. This was noted in PFW/O's report for 2017/18.
4. CB375 Leading from The Manor House to Pett Bottom Road via Burstled Wood. Close to where CB375 meets CB374 in Burstled Wood, a large tree has fallen across CB375 significantly impeding passage. Averil Brice, inspected the site and referred the task of removing the obstacle to KCC/PRoW. Averil and Steve Brice, while on site, created a way around the tree.
5. CB362 PFW/O for Lower Hardres pointed out that the path has been diverted around Great Catt's Farm away from the farm buildings for reasons of safety (dogs). All concerned agreed that the diversion, which is now well waymarked and fenced off, should be officially recorded on the County's Definitive Map and OS maps.

The PFW/O has drawn up a revised inventory of paths in UH. In relation to CB362 (Stone Street to Catt's Wood Road), CB366 (Pett Bottom to Broxhall Farm Road), CB367 (Catt's Wood Road to Hardres Court Road), the PFW/O noted that the KCC/PRoW website shows that these footpaths are not located entirely in Upper Hardres, some sections of them being located in Lower Hardres (see revised footpath inventory for 2019). These new observations result in a small reduction, less than 10%, in the total length of publicly accessible footpaths and bridleways in UH.

My thanks for their assistance during the year to the Parish Clerk, the Parish Council, KCC/PRoW, Roger King, Local Footpath Officer Co-ordinator for East Kent, and Averil and Steve Brice.

**Robert Veltman** UH Parish Footpath Observer/Warden

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## UHPC Tree Warden *John Pitcher*

**Felled trees** It has been sad to see two prominent trees having to be felled in the village, one the copper beach by the village hall due to likely root damage to the building, and the other, the Oak tree in the centre of the village due to honey fungus. Ash Dieback continues to be a major problem across the country. There is evidence of it here locally in Kent so any sightings of such trees looking to have it should be reported to local authorities.

**Meetings and courses** I have attended various meetings in relation to tree and pond courses etc and generally have been kept apprised of the good work being undertaken by The Woodland Trust and The Kent Tree and Pond Council. They really are dedicated groups.

**War Memorial garden and Village Hall flowerbed** I continue to maintain and develop the garden by the village hall and now The War Memorial and garden around it. It was most satisfying to bring all the local school children to a Service of Remembrance on the 9 November last year and also to have it all looking appropriately presented for the Centenary Service on Sunday 11 November, when there was an excellent turnout of the public to remember all those who gave their lives in the two World Wars. It has been very rewarding to me to give something back to the village where I was born in the last of the two World Wars.

**Tree register** I will shortly be compiling a tree register. The history behind this idea follows an incident in 2012 when a tree fell and killed a motorist in Whitley and subsequent civil action in 2016. It was extremely complex concerning liability, but the Parish Council were held responsible for not monitoring the state of the tree in previous years, plus using unqualified people to report any suspected faults if apparent. There are now all sorts of suggested actions but none of it is an exact science. Tree Wardens are NOT considered to be expert enough to carry out such inspections or give advice as to potential dangers and are advised not to be involved, although there is nothing to suggest they cannot compile a register of Parish trees. Even tree surgeons may not have sufficient expertise! There is a draft paper on this subject and it may be advisable to have a meeting of councillors to discuss a policy to deal with all this.

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## Village Gateways



To alert drivers to their speed, and to encourage careful driving through the hamlet of Lynsore Bottom, two Village Gateway signs were installed by KCC Highways on Pett Bottom Road in May 2019.

### Cost breakdown:

KCC Highways cost	£ 2,628.00
KCC Member's Grant (Cllr Michael Northey)	£ 2,000.00
Donations from parishioners	£ 600.00
Cost to UHPC	£ 28.00

## **Village People Amateur Dramatics** *Graeme Faber*

It is always difficult to choose a panto when you don't know if enough, or suitable, people will come forward to fill the parts. We decided on Snow White for our 2019 show and were delighted to see lots of new people come to join us, both adults and children. Our three performances were very well attended and we received many lovely comments from our audiences. Village People is a member of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association and for the first time in our 36 years our District Rep. came to see our show. We were thrilled with the review she gave us - "you were swept up into 'pantoland' from the off" she said "and the stage was set ready for some excellent performances from a mostly young cast". She went on to praise individuals and said "there were many cast members involved, playing a variety of roles, who all worked brilliantly to ensure the show was a success and each member should be congratulated for their commitment and effort. The energy and enthusiasm of the full company shone through the whole show and this youthful cast should be congratulated on a job excellently done."

Village People would like to thank Stelling and Bossingham halls for their rehearsal facilities; other hirers who moved to free Bossingham hall for performance week; Stelling Minnis Stores for once again selling tickets and all those who supported us, proving that panto is still alive and well in Bossingham.