

## Hawkey Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 7pm

### MINUTES

**Present. Cllr Caukill, Cllr Oppenheimer and Cllr Louisson and 5 residents. K Horton (Clerk)**

#### 1) Open meeting

- a) Welcome
- b) Apologies for absence. Received from two Cllrs.
- c) Acceptance of Minutes from last APM (17<sup>th</sup> April 2024). Proposed and accepted. Duly signed

**2) Chair's Annual Report.** Attached as Appendix One. Cllr Caukill provided an overview of the work achieved in 2024/25. All Cllrs thanked for their time and effort to progressing the work of the PC. Cllr Sinclair noted thanks to Cllr Caukill for his work as Chair.

#### 3) District Councillor Charles Louisson's Annual Report.

- Housing targets have dramatically changed with change of government. East Hants was 575 target for whole district. After 1,074 (80% increase) and paper went out for consultation and target was 1,142. 1,119 is now the figure. No 5 year planning supply and this has increased the number of speculative planning applications. Hard to turn down and also has to finance appeal. EHDC has been challenging govt target given the impact of national park. Prepare local plan based on housing stock in and out of national park. 820 (3/4 and in ratio to KC's advice). Pressure would then be put on national park to take on . Will take a few years to work out
- Empshott Grange. Highways have a holding objection in relation to application. Most recent correspondence, Highways are holding their refusal. If it were to progress then would be heard at Committee. Concerns are likely to apply to any application from Quarry Farm.
- Waste collection. Going smoothly at the moment. Government is pushing for collection of food waste and EHDC will mean new vehicles are required – 4yr waiting list.
- Devolution. EHDC and HCC will cease to be and be replaced by a Mayor – election in May 2026. Mayor will be responsible for strategic planning across whole of Hampshire and IOW. Hampshire will be split into a number of Unitary Authorities (each with a min population of 500,000). In September, final proposal for structure of Unitary Authorities is required. Government will arbitrate on final structure.

Q. What are EHDC preferences on which other DC to work with?

A. Need to geographically attach and financial standing will clearly be a consideration. Boundary changes are not permissible in first round of establishing Unitary Councils.

#### 4) County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer's Annual Report. Attached as Appendix Two

- Devolution. HCC very conscious that councils should not be too big and remote. Think it likely that there will be three or four Unitary Councils. Likely that Area Committees would sit under Unitary Councils and PCs would have seat at the table here.
- In addition to written report, Cllr Oppenheimer confirmed that investment is being made to expand recycling capabilities.
- Planning Enforcement has taken place in local planning infringements following High Court action. Cllr Oppenheimer wants it to be clear that HCC will take action on such matters.

## 5) Open Forum. No residents in attendance

6) Meeting closed 7:45 pm

### Appendix One. Cllr Caukill. CHAIR'S REPORT 2025

- The Parish extends from near Bradshott on the other side of the Selbourne Road, down to Snailing Lane and through to Empshott, Hawkley and then down to Oakshott. It comprises a little over 200 dwellings and about 400 residents are on the electoral roll.
- The Annual Parish Meeting is not a meeting of the Parish Council – rather it is a meeting of the people of the parish intended to provide residents with the opportunity to “Have their Say”. That said, mine is the first of three reports on the agenda – opportunities to set out what has been accomplished – and what issues need still to be addressed.

### Future of Hawkley Parish Council – Devolution

- You will have heard of the ongoing process to ‘merge’ the operations of the Councils of Hampshire County, the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth and Southampton City into a single unitary authority. The district councils will be dismantled and their operations assumed by the unitary authorities or devolved to Parish and Town Councils. The precise mechanisms are under discussion and remain a long way from being finalised and may involve restructuring some parishes. It is going to take probably two years for the dust to settle. What is clear though is that Parish Councils will continue to exist and that means our community will continue to need Parish Councillors.
- Although the next elections may be two years away – vacancies can arise from time to time and so it is good to have people in reserve and particularly to cover any vacancies which arise at election time. We would be particularly interested in hearing from any interested residents of Empshott, Snailing/Uplands Lane and Oakshott. Feel free to discuss this with any councillor, or our Clerk - Katherine.

### Projects

- The final parish **fingerpost sign** has been refurbished and reinstalled bringing the refurbishment project to a close after probably five years. Great to see the signs reinforcing the character of the parish.
- **Phone boxes**
  - **Upper Green** – David Large has started to progress the refurbishment– the project will be dealt with in stages, probably over a 6 month timeframe. Anyone interested in helping should contact David directly.
  - **Lower Green** Thanks to Simon Dixon for keeping it spic and span.
- **Ponds.** Following professional advice received on the improvement and maintenance of the parish ponds, Cllr Buckle has given a great deal of time leading and managing the project working with interested residents and environmental groups to improve the appearance and biodiversity of the three ponds. Planting is planned, some natural filtration of the incoming water is to be explored.

One outstanding task that will be covered in our PC meeting at 7:30pm, is to confirm the PC's role in the maintenance of the ponds (in conjunction with other agencies) and the general upkeep of the surrounding areas. A risk assessment will also be maintained which will note, amongst other things that the ponds are not a suitable venue for events and that swimming will be prohibited - the ponds are reasonably deep (1-2 metres).

**My thanks to Liz for all her work to date on this project. The ponds are a unique, natural asset of the parish**

### **Planning**

- Our role in the planning process is as statutory consultee whose views are for consideration by EHDC under their authority delegated by SDNP. During 2024/25 we reviewed 20 applications relating to the parish the majority of which were in connection with tree surgery and refurbishment of telegraph poles by SSE. Only 7 related to building refurbishment or change of use, but far fewer than in earlier years in which 20-25 applications was not uncommon. Including site visits and discussion, the time given to considering these applications should not be underestimated. I thank the members of the Planning Advisory Committee (Jo Humphrey, Liz Buckle, Susan Sinclair and Iona Wallace).
- There are two sites in the Parish where proposals have been made to establish SEND schools or Alternative Provision facilities. While the increasing need for SEND schooling is incontrovertible, both sites (Empshott Grange and Quarry Farm) present traffic challenges on the network of country lanes which give our parish its character and the applications currently remain under consideration.

### **Affordable/Social Housing**

- We are conscious that the community is ageing and that most planning applications expand the floor space of the existing housing stock – over time houses will become even further out of the reach of any families earning their living in the local community; therefore some smaller, less expensive housing is desirable.
- The Government's focus on housing has led us to explore whether any further development is likely to be approved in Hawkley and, if so, perhaps to take the lead so we can influence the outcome.
- Under the SDNP Local Plan, it is unlikely that any new development of open market housing would be approved. However, a small social housing development on a "Rural Exception Site" of up to 10 dwellings. is a possibility. The criteria for approval are reasonably subjective so we have been engaging with EHDC and Action Hampshire to identify the types of site that might be possible.
- It is not possible to have a conversation with local residents without them focussing on the precise locations being considered and how it affects them – that is only natural. However, because there is little financial or other incentive for landowners, most of whom live in the community, to make land available and so there are currently no proposals under consideration.

### **Traffic and speeding**

- There continue to be concerns about traffic volumes and speeds in various parts of the parish. Concerns resurface from time to time most of which were considered and dealt with under HCC's 'Community Funded Initiative' in the period 2017-2021 to the extent that our limited

resources would allow. Probably the most concerning today is at **Stairs Hill** where there have been a number of RTAs over the years including a head on crash last autumn. Together with local residents, we have again engaged with Hampshire Highways seeking further improvements to the signage and other measures aimed at reducing speeds.

- The best solution would be a proper Speed Camera but no-one has budget to provide these (cost circa £40,000 each). Our most recent proposal to Highways has been to allow residents and the Parish Council to contribute to the cost of installation – so far without success.

### **Maintenance of Roads, verges and footpaths**

- We routinely ensure that the parish roads, signage, salt bins, verges, ditches and drains are kept clear and tidy using either the parish's lengthsman team or escalating concerns to the appropriate team at HCC. Pleased to confirm that funding for the lengthsman service has again been provided by HCC – this finances about four visits a year.
- The wet weather made the need for clear ditches and gullies extremely important. We wrote to all residents to remind them of their responsibilities and we are grateful for the actions taken in response. We have again approached Hampshire Highways re the recurrent flooding of Vicarage Lane
- We also keep an eye on the verges around the Parish. While HCC will trim dangerous 'sightlines' on request, budget pressure has reduced their maintenance of the verges more generally to a single cut resulting on them becoming overgrown, restricting visibility. Fortunately, our local land owners have been diligent in maintain hedges and verges for which many thanks.
- Thanks to Lower Green Farm for mowing Lower Green and to Hawkley Place (supported not a little by Aaron Stewart) for mowing Upper Green. Thanks also to Nigel Brown who we rely upon for routine maintenance around the parish.
- Footpath warden. Hangars Way and other byways are popular with residents and visitors and HPC has engaged with other parishes and SDNPA to flag joint concerns such as the BOATS. Indeed HCC have a new initiative in hand in this regard.

### **Donations and Grants**

- We have the capacity to make small grants and donations to activities with a local impact. Again, this year we supported Rosemary Foundation, East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau, Homestart Butser and HIOW Air Ambulance

### **Finances**

- All of this has been achieved on our low annual precept of £17,000 (collected through your Council Taxes). For 2025/26 it was agreed that the precept should be increased to £17,500 – about £90 per household on average.

### **Final thanks**

- So that's the year that was 2024 - 25. None of this would have been achieved without our committed team of councillors whose contributions and efforts often go unremarked and even un-thanked. So, I specifically thank Iona Wallace, Georgie Stewart, Susan Sinclair, David Large, Liz Buckle, Jo Humphrey and Charlie Butcher for their considerable contribution and their commitment to serving our community.
- Also thank our County and District Councillors, Russell and Charles, who have each made time for Hawkley and given help and guidance where they can.

- .. and a special thank you to Katherine for everything she does!

## Appendix Two. Annual Report from County Councillor Oppenheimer

1. The Hampshire Pledge The Hampshire Cabinet have developed a “Hampshire Pledge” which we are launching this month. I would like to share the pledge with you – see below. The intention is to set out what people can expect from the County Council whilst also encouraging people to take pride and interest in their local community and in their own health and wellbeing. I hope you agree that this is a worthwhile initiative, I would welcome any feedback.



2. Highways Update Despite another wet winter with unprecedented rainfall and several severe storms, Hampshire Highways have kept our road network in relatively good condition. We have not seen an overload of defects as happened two years ago. Over 1,000 fallen trees were cleared from roads overnight during storms. I appreciate that Parish Councils have had to show patience at times. But the roads are noticeably in a much worse state in West Sussex! Now that we have some drier weather I am confident that the Highways teams will quickly address all the outstanding issues.

Despite the funding challenges at HCC, I am pleased to say that an extra £7.5m funding went into Highways in the 2024/25 year. This funding made a difference because it meant that more crews were on standby and more resources were available to those crews. For the coming year, starting on 1 April, national funding for Hampshire Highways has increased by an extra £14,099,000. This puts us in a strong position for the next 12 months. In addition, £4.25m of HS2 money from the Network North scheme is being used each year to resurface 19 main routes across Hampshire, including the A272 through Stroud, over the two-year period 2024-26.

The Highways Engineers have a difficult job and I think they deserve huge credit for their professionalism. The greatest difficulty this year has been surface flooding. The high water table and the heavy rain have caused many localised problems. The reality is that the flooding teams are stretched. The best advice I can give is to keep [reporting flood problems on the website here](#) and also make use of the tips in the [Community Toolkit](#) on flooding.

3. Hampshire Forest Partnership The Hampshire Forest Partnership which I launched in 2022 continues to go from strength to strength. Over 60,000 trees have now been planted. The winter planting season is just now ending, which makes this a great time to start planning for the next planting season in November 2025 – February 2026.

Free trees and free advice are still available from the HFP team. It would be great to get some more mini-forest projects underway following the success of the mini-forest in Sheet, next to the Adhurst allotments. If you would like to discuss a potential site please drop an email to: [treeplanting@hants.gov.uk](mailto:treeplanting@hants.gov.uk)

4. Standing up for Hampshire Over the last year, HCC has taken a prominent role in standing up for Hampshire. In our view, Hampshire has been disproportionately affected by Government decisions which were not part of the Labour manifesto.

We have pushed back on the family farms tax which will affect several hundred farms in Hampshire. Hampshire is a county which depends on its family farms for our food, economy, landscape and environment. So in my view it is right that we are taking this stand. We have also written to the Government to protest about the scrapping of winter fuel payments to pensioners. This policy decision will affect Hampshire more than other counties due to our demographics. Finally, we have also led the protests against the Chancellor's increase to Employers National Insurance. This will push up costs for the Council and for care homes by tens of millions, and these costs will ultimately be borne by local taxpayers. We hope that the Chancellor reverses course in her March budget.

5. Year of Health and Wellbeing In September 2024 HCC launched a Year of Health and Wellbeing. By coincidence I also took on the role of Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing that month. This initiative comes under the auspices of the Hampshire 2050 Partnership: a partnership of local government, business, universities and the voluntary sector. The aim is to integrate health and wellbeing into our workplace policies and day-to-day working practices. It is an opportunity for cross-sectoral working focussing on the health and wellbeing of Hampshire's residents. The three core priorities of focus during the Year of Health and Wellbeing are:

- Physical activity
- Mental wellbeing
- Childhood obesity

I see this as crucial to improving our quality of life in Hampshire. A healthier workforce will also be good for the local economy and will relieve pressure on the NHS. The priorities also intersect with the partnership's other key strategic drivers including impact on economic prosperity, climate change and the natural environment. A toolkit is available at this link:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/visionforhampshire2050/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-toolkit>

6. Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) Following years of sustained lobbying by Councillors across East Hampshire, we are getting closer to a new HCC policy on management of our BOATs which will reduce conflict, damage and nuisance caused by vehicles.

I am optimistic that the new policy will be approved by the Summer. In future, the intention is that the County Council will seek to maintain its unsurfaced road network as natural unsurfaced corridors for all users to use and enjoy; it will not surface routes to cater for vehicle use. Instead, the County Council will seek to sustainably preserve the physical character of the route and may seek to reduce levels of usage to allow for fluctuations in the condition of the route.

The County Council may then take action to limit or prevent access by motor vehicles, to prevent damage, to ensure that non-motorised users are able to use the routes, and to protect and preserve the nature and character of the route. A new Byways Operating Procedure will give greater weight to environmental designations. Seasonal Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) will be applied to a wider range of byways thanks to a new High Amber category. Signage and barriers will continue to be implemented and further TRO measures may also be considered. I feel that this is definitely a step in the right direction which will benefit local communities and the environment.

- 7. Beavers return to the South Downs after 600 years In December 2024 a pair of Beavers named Willow and Wilson were introduced to the River Meon near Petersfield, having been transported from Scotland by the Beaver Trust.

The semi-aquatic mammals, which were hunted to extinction in the 16th Century, create wetlands and wildlife habitats. The impact they have on their new environment will be tracked by a team of academics from Southampton University. They have been busy beavers and have almost chewed their way through this crab apple tree! You can follow the adventures of the Beavers on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Meonsidemeads/>

- 8. Government consultation on Devolution underway Hampshire residents are invited to have their say on devolution proposals for Hampshire and the Solent region in a Government consultation which is ongoing. The consultation runs until 13 April 2025 and I would encourage everyone to respond. Commenting, Leader of Hampshire County Council Leader, Councillor Nick Adams-King said: “Devolution represents the biggest change to local government in a generation and as such, it is really important that local people across the wider Hampshire area have the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Collectively, alongside our three partners, joining the Government's Devolution Priority Programme is a fantastic opportunity for Hampshire to self-determine and shape devolution proposals in the best interests of our residents and communities.”

HCC has also developed its own web pages about devolution, including Q&As, which can be found at [www.hants.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.hants.gov.uk/devolution).

- 9. Summary of grants awarded by me For transparency, every year I publish my list of grants awarded. Here is the list for the year ending March 2025.

Applicant	Project	Grant (£)
Ropley Parish Council	Installing Kissing Gates to improve access to Ropley footpaths	800
Newman Collard Playing Fields Trust	Bulb and wildflower Project	800

Greatham Parish Council	Community Minibus – purchase of 17 seater to support primary school and the village.	900
Steep War Memorial Club	Potted flowers to improve look of the Village Hall	250
Home-Start Butser	Nurture Parenting Puzzle Training	800
Froxfield & Privett Parish Council	Parish Verge Cutting	800
Steep and Stroud Newsletter	Keeping communities informed and engaged	800
Steep Film Society	Installation of Induction Loop, PA system and professional tuning	500
Petersfield Shakespeare Festival	Production of Twelfth Night	750
Petersfield Twinning Association	Exchange Visits from Warendorf and Barentin	800
Sheet Parish Council	Speed Reduction measures	800
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,000</b>

Normally, this year's grant round would reopen on 1 June 2025. But the delay to the elections and the budget gap at HCC have complicated matters for this coming year. No decisions have yet been taken on the availability or not of County Councillor grant pots for the year 2025-26. I am expecting that the decision will be taken in September 2025. I am afraid that this means that I will not be able to consider any new grant requests until September.

**RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER. County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers**