

Hethe Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Thursday 29th April 2021 at 8.00pm via Zoom

Councillors Present: C Sharpe (Chairman)

Mrs. J Ramsey

Mrs. J Elkington

D Overton

S Wallace

P Ward

In Attendance: Mr D Jakeman (Clerk)

Cllr Wood (District Councillor)

1. **Apologies** Cllr. Mrs. Hartwell, Cllr. Ian Corkin County Councillor

2. **Declaration of Interest**

3. **Chairman's Report** The impact of the pandemic has changed our daily lives perhaps forever. For the PC our meetings have moved online and for some councillors up North this has afforded a wider than anticipated audience and some celebrity.

The closure of our Village Hall, no Fete, loss of revenue, closure of the play park. No football. We managed to represent the Village at the war memorial with the planting of flowers and with Councillor Attendance. All were appropriately distanced. Many intra-Hethe partnerships have formed to collect prescriptions and groceries etc for fellow villagers. Support & kindness has been very necessary. A huge thank you on behalf of myself and the PC to all who have given their own time and energy during this difficult time, to help others.

There have been some positives though. After Brackley Town Football club ended our association after 11 years we were faced with additional costs to maintain the recreation ground. Word soon got around though that our football field may be available for regular use. Consequently we now have Ashton Folly FC playing regularly in return for ground maintenance.

We have dealt with fewer than usual planning applications this year. However, if one, in particular, is successful. The plans for the upgrade of the Village Hall. We will see fund raising activities start. Hethe Parish Council will endeavour to do their best for Hethe.

4. **County Councillor's Report** With so many elections taking place on May 6th (including my own County seat) I may not be able to make your annual parish meeting and I thought a written report would be helpful.

2020/21 has been dominated by the Coronavirus pandemic. It has arguably been the biggest civil emergency since World War 2 and certainly the most serious public health emergency in over 100 years. Councils have been at the forefront of the response, being called on to deliver a whole range of support services, often with no precedence and with a workforce of over 5000 people working from home. Partnership working has been more important than ever, and Oxfordshire County Council has worked closely with the city and district councils, NHS and

various voluntary organisations and charities to support residents and businesses in the County. I am happy to say that in addition to C19 related activities, the councils “business as usual” activities have also continued, albeit sometimes in different ways. Highlights of both include:

- **Adult Social Care:**
 - Experienced a 30% increase in demand
 - Delivered 25% more homecare visits
 - Commissioned over 100 mental health assessments each month
- **Children Services, Education & Families**
 - Continue to look after more than 770 children in care
 - Successfully supported schools and families and achieved a 97.3% return of pupils in March
 - Implemented a full test regime for every pupil in Oxfordshire
 - Followed up, on average, 438 contacts per week from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH)
- **Customer Services:**
 - Handled over 90,000 calls and 40,000 emails
 - Maintained or improved all key performance indicators
 - Made over 10,000 outward bound calls and 6,700 emails to clinically very vulnerable residents who were asked to shield.
 - Contact tracing team successfully contacted over 2,000 people that the national test and trace had not been able to reach
- **Financial Support**
 - Paid out £2.3million pounds in grants for food and other essential items to community food services and those in need
 - Supported children in receipt of free school meals with £15 per week during the Christmas, February and Easter holidays
- **Highways**
 - Took the opportunity of quieter roads to treat 1.5million sq.M of highways at over 220 sites
 - Repaired over 40,000 potholes
- **Countryside Team:**
 - Repaired 87 foot & bridle bridges
 - Cleared 1,765 miles of public rights of way
- **Fire & Rescue**
 - Were often at the forefront of the C19 response
 - Carried out 2,334 Safe & Well visits
 - Fitted 1,214 smoke alarms for vulnerable residents
 - Delivered 800 laptops to more than 140 schools to support home learning
- **Trading Standards**
 - Investigated over 600 C19 related complaints
 - Recovered £49,000 for victims of scams and doorstep crimes
 - Blocked 26,000 nuisance and scam calls
- **Cultural Services (including libraries)**
 - Delivered 12,000 online music lessons to schools
 - Loaned 926,335 items to readers, including more than 24,000 items during the first two weeks of the click and collect services
- **Registrars**
 - Maintained death registration service throughout the pandemic
 - Cleared a backlog of 7,193 baby registrations in just 7 weeks once they were able to do so again in June

- Carried out 1,052 citizenship ceremonies

There are very many more examples of the extraordinary range of activities, but I hope this gives a taste of the highlights. Of course, this has all come at a cost. The national government have supported the majority of this activity financially, but there is still a shortfall and whilst work continues to close that gap, it will continue to wash through the accounts of both OCC and CDC for some time to come.

Turning to my own ward/division, it was incredible to see how the community responded to the pandemic. Across the county and in every parish, I represent, community volunteers came together to support vulnerable friends and neighbours. This was enormously helpful to CDC/OCC who could literally call on help on a street by street, village by village basis. Harnessing that goodwill and ensuring we deliver a strong recovery from C19 will be an important priority for me going forward.

Of course, there are challenges too:

- The adverse weather events in November and December 2020 resulted in considerable internal property flooding across more than 12 parishes. I instigated more than 12 flood investigations and I am currently working closely with OCC, CDC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency to ensure we do as much as possible to minimise the impact of more intense weather events in the future. I am happy to say that work is making good progress, with real change already happening on the ground in many of those affected areas.
- Speeding remains a problem in many villages. I have worked with communities to ensure that where there is a desire to do so, they can engage with the correct OCC officers to implement 20mph schemes. This has already happened in Mixbury, Wendlebury & Launton (school zone) and soon, Heyford Park and Chesterton. Likewise, I have used my Councillor Priority Fund to help implement additional traffic calming measure, such as the Vehicle Activated Signs in Lower Heyford, Fringford & Stratton Audley. Mitigating the impact of traffic, particularly HGV traffic, will remain a priority in the year to come.
- The area remains under considerable pressure from inappropriate & speculative development, as ever, I stand ready to oppose that wherever it happens, and I have led a number of refusals for such schemes at CDC planning committee. Equally, I remain committed to ensuring that communities are fully represented with bodies such as HS2, East West Rail and Dorchester.
- As you will see from the attached report, over the past 3 years I have used my Councillor Priority Fund and other Covid related grants, to support a full range of village priorities. Grants in my division over that period have totalled more than £47,000, which often helped free up other contributions, meaning that the community I represent has benefitted by more than £100,000 of funding to support their local priorities.
- I have also worked closely with a number of local businesses and organisations who did not automatically qualify for government support grants, successfully securing more than £100,000 of grants that they would not otherwise have received.
- There is also a whole range of casework that I engage in on behalf of individual residents. By its nature, it is often very sensitive and it would be inappropriate to discuss it, but it remains some of the most challenging and rewarding work I do in the division

I hope that gives a flavour of the work that has been carried out over the past 12 months. I'd like to say that I had been able to achieve everything I set out to do, but sadly some remains a work in progress, but I look forward to working with renewed vigour post-election, to help ensure that we really do build back better and stronger, enabling our communities and their very many voluntary organisations, to hit the ground running as we emerge from lockdown.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the community volunteers and members of the parish council, who freely give of their time to help make the places we live special. You really are the best of us. Thank you for all you do!

Councillor Priority Fund & CDC Covid Response Funding Awards over the 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21

- **Ardley with Fewcott**

- Village Hall & Playing Field Management Committee New boiler replacement: £1,500
- AwF Gardening Club support for annual produce show: £420
- Village Hall & Playing Field: Vehicle entry barrier & Marquee: £686
- Village Hall: Heating/cooling unit for meeting room: £1,195
- Sub-total: £3,801

- **Blackthorn**

- Village Hall: Community microwave: £250
- Sub-total: £250

- **Chesterton**

- Help with additional allotment costs during Covid: £500
- New printer for weekly community C19 newsletter: £494
- Chesterton Football Club: C19 safety packs for all teams: £500
- Sub-total: £1,494

- **Finmere**

- Replacement village bench: £500
- Sub-total: £500

- **Fringford**

- Shelswell & Fringford Preschool: All weather play area: £1,000
- Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley Life Bus visit to school: £550
- Sub-total: £1,550

- **Hethe**

- Parish Council: Bench & Lawnmower for park £800
- Sub-total: £800

- **Heyford Park**

- Residents & Community Development Association Event Tent £720
- Residents & Community Dev Ass. Equipment to support pandemic food parcel distribution to shielding residents: £447
- Heyford and Bicester Veterans Group Community Centre kitchen equipment £769.95

- Heyford & Bicester Veterans Group: Phone & Internet contact and general support for activities: £ 1,280
- Support for Heyford Park Pantry (food bank): £500
- 1st Heyford Park Scout Group COVID 19 re-start programme: £1,000
- Heyford Park Football Club: COVID safety support: £335
- Heyford Aardvarks Running Club: Club development funding: £700
- Community Garden: New secure shed: £500
- Sub-total: £6,252

- **Launton**
 - Village Rock Chorus: post COVID recovery support: £335
 - Launton Lines Newsletter: Post Covid recovery support: £335
 - Friends of Launton School: community outreach equipment: £1,290
 - School 20mph zone: £2,000
 - Sub-total: £3,960

- **Lower Heyford**
 - Bowls Club: New roof for outside area: £648
 - Bowls Club: Replace fence and new equipment shed £1,440
 - Replacement gates on playing field: £2,000
 - Kings George Playing Field: Pavilion refurbishment: £2,000
 - Parish Council: Village wide speeding signs scheme £4,650
 - Sub-total: £10,738

- **Middleton Stoney**
 - Village Improvements & planters: £1,000
 - Middleton Stoney Cricket Club post COVID recovery support: £335
 - Sub-total: £1335

- **Shelswell Benefice**
 - Little Lambs Parent & Toddler Group: Safety equipment & Minibus hire for Shelswell by the Sea outing: £,1263
 - Shelswell History Festival: Financial support: £500
 - Sub-total: £1,763

- **Stoke Lyne**
 - St Peters PCC: New kitchen as part of refurb: £2,637
 - St Peters PCC: Provision of broadband to community space: £414
 - Sub-total: £3,051

- **Stratton Audley**
 - Repair of village clock £1,800
 - New footpath around village pond: £1,500
 - Vehicle activated speed sign: £1,800
 - Sub-total: £5,100

- **Upper Heyford**
 - Support for the village Reading Room: £500
 - Planting trees and hedgerows: £1,000
 - Sub-total: £1,500

- **Division Wide**

- Start-up-online: COVID-19 Peer Mentoring scheme £1,000
- 1st Fritwell Scout Group: Refurbishment of premises to make Covid compliant: £250
- Oxford Care Leavers Association: Christmas presents for care leavers £200
- Children in care Christmas dinner £131
- Children in care Christmas event £500
- Comet Community Bus: £2,885
- Sub-total: £4,966

Total Grants 1st April 2018- 31st March 2021: £47,060

5. District Councillor Report I would like to thank the Parish Council for all they have done for their communities over the past few months in supporting the covid pandemic. The District Council challenging workload has gone up dramatically, we have had to cordate the voluntary sector, keep in touch with support organisations, deliver the governments priorities and do our best to keep everyone safe. Like most employers that were able to our staff have been keeping safe by working form home and delivering Council Services for the District. We met the difficulties of changing our telephones so that staff could use them from the home environment. Productivity has gone up and the senior leadership are looking at staff being given the opportunity to work from home more when the pandemic is over. Virtual meetings have been just as good and have worked well during this difficult time. We have suffered increased costs during covid. The Business Rate system is due to change, and CDC won't be able to keep as much money it should be noted that most of the rates go via us to central government and we only receive a very small amount. We continue to work with OCC. Unfortunately car park charges will be going up across the district. We will also be introducing a separate food waste system next year and will be making a charge to empty the brown bins in line with other Councils.

6 Village Hall The Village Hall has been closed for three quarters of the year because of covid, We have a line dancing group starting when we open up after restrictions and two Wedding Receptions. We have our planning application in at the minute and hopefully that will pass, and we will be busy fund raising and obtaining grants. We are planning an outdoor event in June teas, BBQ etc to bring the community together a bit. We have had a Smart Meter installed for the electric so we can monitor the usage easier. Just looking forward to getting back to the new normal.

7. Hethe Play & Stay Due to restrictions obviously the play and stay has been on hold and that continues while the impact of having to clean toys etc and keep children apart is felt. In the coming weeks we are planning on reopening outdoors when weather improves. We plan to run this over much of the summer holidays also we have some spare funds which we are planning to use for an outdoors sand play table and toys, lots of the parents are keen for their children to be socialising again so we are looking forward to that happening once the finer weather kicks in.

8. Open Forum

9. Chairman's Closing Remarks Cllr Sharpe thanked everyone for joining online and I hope that we are going to be able to meet safely in person soon that would be really great. See you all soon.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

