

Hethe Parish Council

Minutes From The Annual Parish Meeting Held on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7.30pm In Hethe Village Hall

Councillors Present Mrs J Ramsey (Chair) Mrs J Elkington, D Overton, M Tweedale

In Attendance: D Jakeman (Clerk)

- 1. Apologies** Cllr Mrs Hartwell, Cllr Wallace, Cllr Wood (District Councillor)
- 2. Declaration of Interest**
- 3. Chairman Report** It has been another good year for Hethe. We have continued to see new villagers join us and the overall village vista remains a calm and pleasant one. Our facilities are popular with residents and visitors alike and it is good to see the improvements we have pushed for start to bear fruit, namely the increase in high-speed internet and traffic calming to 20mph. The pop-up pub goes from strength to strength and increasing activity in the village hall is good news for keeping Hethe's amenities open for business. While we are concerned about local overdevelopment, we remain fortunate that we are still somewhat protected from what other local communities nearby are facing and are willing to lend our voices to them when they ask to collectively protect our local environment. I would like to thank my fellow Counsellors, and the Clerk, for their continued focus and efforts this year and look forward to us all doing more of the same in 2025.
- 4. County Councillor Report**
- 5. District Councillor Report**
- 6. Reports From Village Associations**
 - 6.1 Village Hall** The hall has regular bookings with Yoga/Karate/Line Dancing/Shelswell Benefice/After School Clubs/Parties etc. John Horwood's Line Dancing remains a popular feature twice a week. Stay and Play may be stopping soon as they have no one to run it. Hethe Darby and Joan now run their monthly meetings and bingo at the hall and are keen to help run the village fete this year. We also accommodate the Hethe Pop-Up-Pub, run monthly by Jean and Jill, this has been a success over the winter months providing a community meetup for the village.
 - 6.2 St Edmund & St George Church** We tend to forget the importance of the church within the community. The building is Grade 2 Listed and is sited within Hethe Conservation Area. There is also a Grade 2 Listed Headstone dated 1682 in the churchyard. The walls include some stonework from the original church built in the 12th Century. There are features of interest such as the many mass dials on the south wall, a stone face embedded in the stone in the east wall and two interesting stained-glass windows including some medieval fragments.

Paths are kept clear to the areas of the churchyard which are visited frequently. Some parts are being managed for wildlife while other areas are maintained to as high a standard as possible.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in our church and to become part of the church community. The church is open all day to anyone who wishes to visit, pray or just enjoy some peace and quiet. We are also committed to being fully part of the community and taking our place in the building of good relationships with all who reside in the Parish. A varied collection of books is available in the church for anyone to borrow and food is donated and is available in the church for anyone in need.

To facilitate this work, it is important that the church building is maintained to as high a standard as is financially possible.

The congregation is small – there were an average of seven of us at regular services last year. As a small congregation, we are not able to give the amount of money needed to keep the church open – last year we had to pay out over £3,000 more than our income. We are grateful to those people in Hethe who currently give regularly to the church, but we have lost several donors in the past four years and the cost of keeping the church open is increasing.

Some urgent repairs were completed last autumn to stop water entering the building from the roof. There is more work required to further prevent water ingress from inadequate drainage and take away water which drains into the north aisle from the churchyard.

It is understood that the Parish Council has some responsibility towards maintaining graveyards. In 2024 we paid £2,300 for works to trees and £600 for strimming. While the need for tree works is not an annual requirement, strimming at least once a year is necessary. Any contribution to meeting that cost from the Parish Council would help.

7 Open Forum

7.1 Warehousing Near Baynards Green. Will Jones from Tusmore Estates, gave members an overview of what was happening with the warehousing project. Tusmore would like to work with local villages in objecting to this development. Hethe PC also have concerns about the development and do not support it. Members welcomed the opportunity to work more closely with Tusmore Estates to protect our local environment from being over developed. Members thanked Will for coming to the meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting 20th May 2025