

Annual Parish Meeting 13 April 2022 – Chair’s Report

Appointment of Parish Clerk

For several months of the past year the Parish Council has been operating without a Parish Clerk. This made things extremely challenging for Councillors and definitely meant some of our initiatives have been delayed. We are therefore very glad to have now appointed Maria Manthorpe to the role of Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.

Maria has not been a Parish Clerk before, but has previously held responsible roles in the corporate world and has very relevant and transferable skills. She is undertaking the available training courses and is already making a difference. We are pleased to welcome her to the team.

Queen’s Green Canopy

The Parish has been gifted 10 mature trees to plant as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy.

The aim of this project is to plant 10 million trees across the UK to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. We have planted six of these trees in the Recreation Ground, three on the Crescent Green and one in the Allotments. We have also purchased a plaque from Royal British Legion Industries, created by disabled ex-service personnel, marking the fact the trees are part of the Queen’s Green Canopy.

This has been a rare opportunity for mature trees to be planted in the Parish, so we are delighted to have been able to accept this gift in commemoration of the Queen’s long reign.

Devolved Services

Many of you will have seen that the level of landscaping work carried out by Milton Keynes Council (MKC) has deteriorated considerably in recent years. MKC are now very keen to pass on responsibility for landscaping to the parishes, and Councillor Philip Turnbull has taken the lead on evaluating this option.

He has had meetings with Castlethorpe and Hanslope Parish Councils, who picked up landscaping responsibilities two years ago and are very pleased to have done so for the following reasons:

- Control over what is done, when it is done and how it is done
- Far less aggravation for Parish Clerk trying to ensure work is carried out, which is currently a very time consuming and thankless task

Castlethorpe and Hanslope PCs are happy for Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council to join their landscaping partnership, which will improve overall purchasing power for the three parishes.

The downside is that this will unfortunately cost more, as the grant from MKC will not be sufficient to carry out the level of service we believe is necessary for the Parish.

Contracts have not yet been negotiated, but initial soundings indicate that the MKC grant will cover approximately 50% of the costs for the next three years. We estimate this could lead to an additional £12p – 16 per month per Band D household on the precept.

The Parish Council, after much debate and consideration, and a request for comments in the Parish Magazine, agreed that we should take on landscaping from April 2023 in order to provide an improved level of service. We feel that without taking control of landscaping the parish will continue to see a worsening service from MKC’s contractors.

Dogs

Dogs in the recreation ground was a recurring issue for the Parish Council, this year as in many others. We explain repeatedly that dogs ARE NOT PERMITTED on the Recreation Ground. The only exception is using the public right of way across the Rec, when dogs MUST be kept on the designated footpath and on a lead.

It is very disappointing that not only are some dog owners continuing to ignore this, and abusing people who politely ask them to take their dogs out of the rec, at least one person is deliberately tearing down the notices reminding everyone dogs are not allowed, which is of course criminal damage. We intend to consider our legal options to take action against the small minority of dog owners who flout the rules.

Obviously we would like to thank the vast majority of dog owners who do respect the fact that dogs are **not** permitted on the rec.

The Parish Council has had an additional dog waste bin fitted (near the bench at the top of Wolverton Road). We have also engaged a new waste contractor and are pleased with an improved, more reliable service.

Traffic Initiatives

We continue to work with Milton Keynes Council over a number of traffic initiatives and have a meeting scheduled with the Interim Head of Highways to discuss these requests in more detail.

These include:

- Zebra Crossing in Wolverton Road
- 20 mph speed limit for the High Street
- 40 mph speed limit between Wolverton Roundabout and the new village
- Closing the gated road across the lakes to non-emergency vehicles
- Review of double yellow lines/zig zag lines outside the school

Website – change of platform

There may not be an obvious change in the Haversham-cum-Little Linford website, but during the year the website has been transferred to a new platform. This change was necessary as it became increasingly difficult to upload new content to the previous version and as a result the site was becoming more and more out of date. The Parish Council is grateful to Councillor Barry Clift for his efforts in working with our contractor to get this new site into operation.

Allotments

Councillor Jemma English manages the Allotments on behalf of the Parish Council and she has undertaken a number of improvements over the past 12 months. As a result renting an Allotment is increasingly popular and there is currently a short waiting list for vacancies. Currently running the Allotments means in a small call on Parish Council funds; it is the Parish Council's intention for the Allotments to break even for 2023/24.

Litter Picking

The Litter Picking Group set up by Councillor Philip Turnbull has continued during the past year, with great success. Please contact Philip by emailing the Parish Clerk if you are interested in getting involved in this very worthwhile project – hi-viz jackets and litter grabbers are provided.

Approximately 100 bags of litter and many bulky items have been collected in the past year.

Application for Public Right of Way

As previously reported, the Parish Council have made an application for the well-used footpath at the end of Brookfield way to be designated as a Public Right of Way in order to protect its use for residents in the future. We are awaiting further information from MKC about progress.

S106 Projects

We used the final tranche of S106 money resulting from the development of Oakridge Park on the following projects during 2021/2022:

- Full refurbishment of the Skate Ramp – with additional donation from Skate Ramp users
- Funds towards the internal decoration of Social Centre
- A disabled access ramp for St Mary's Church – with additional donation from Councillor George Bowyer's ward budget

Defibrillator Campaign

What an amazing job the Defibrillator Project Team have done so far in raising funds and working through all the technical challenges. You may have noticed that the phone has been removed from the kiosk in the old village. The Parish Council have taken over control of the kiosk from BT and it will be used to house one of the defibrillators. A huge thank you to the project team, and especially Jane Dawes, for all the hard work to reach this stage. A sincere thank you also to everyone who has donated so far.

Bench at the top of the Rec

Following a request from two elderly parishioners, the Parish Council agreed to place a bench at the top end of the Recreation Ground. We also decided to place a plaque on the bench in memory of Pat Brightman who did so much great work for the Parish and is sadly missed by many.

SpeedWatch Volunteers

Councillor Carol Langham recently attended a meeting with MKC's new Road Safety Officer, Keith Wheeler. He was speaking to Parish Councils across the borough to discuss the issue of speeding, the upcoming developments with Community SpeedWatch and explain how MKC is considering addressing the whole issue of speeding in the future.

Councillor Langham learnt that the old Community SpeedWatch scheme no longer exists. It has been revised and revamped, with the emphasis on 'community'. Thames Valley Police (TVP) have signed up to a national SpeedWatch scheme (www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/speedwatch/) which provides training, and will interrogate data so that ongoing issues will trigger more action.

The scheme promotes personalised education as a methodology that is just as efficient to help bring the problem of speeding under control. Organising concerned, proactive community volunteers on a grand scale is vital to succeed with this goal – see <https://www.communityspeedwatch.org/FRONT-v2-Home.php> for more information.

TVP are encouraging Parish Councils to purchase their own equipment for the SpeedWatch scheme – for instance, a speed radar gun can now be purchased for under £200. Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council are keen to sign up to this new community focused scheme, but it will need a number of committed residents to volunteer their time and get involved in a local SpeedWatch group. We have had a small number of volunteers but we really need to have more people expressing an interest before we can get this project off the ground.

Does speeding through the parish concern you? Would you like to get involved to do something about it? If so, please email the Parish Council at haversham.ltlinfordclerk@gmail.com and we will aim to get interested parties together, organise training and equipment purchase etc.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Parish Council and Steering Group have been preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for quite a while. The aim is to protect the great things about the parish while delivering a small amount of appropriate housing development which the majority of parishioners have indicated they support. This should have the added bonus of offering protection against speculative development.

We have now reached the stage in the process where a Pre-submission Plan has been prepared for public consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Pre-submission Plan and related maps, as well as several documents which form the evidence base for the Pre-Submission Plan are available to view on the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council website.

This is not the final Neighbourhood Plan - it is an opportunity for Parish residents and statutory consultees, such as MKC, Heritage England, Anglian Water etc. to provide feedback. MKC will then hold a further consultation before Independent Examination and finally a Yes/No referendum of Parish residents.

We are really interested in the views of Parish residents as well as those of the Statutory Consultees. Please read the documents on the website and provide your feedback as laid out on page 3 of the Pre-Submission Plan. The closing date for the consultation is **Friday 22 April 2022**.

In order to reduce costs and waste we have not produced pre-printed copies of these documents; please email the parish clerk (haversham.ltlinfordclerk@gmail.com) with your name and address if you need access to a printed copy of the Pre-Submission Plan.

The Steering Group remain convinced that it is really important for the Parish to have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan so that we can ensure development in the Parish is of the scale and type the community wants and provides some protection through the National Planning Policy Framework against speculative developments.