

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Hales & Heckingham Parish Council held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.00pm in Hales Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr J Herring, Chairman  
Cllr B Herring  
Cllr A Mason  
2 members of the public

**In attendance:** Anne Panella, Parish Clerk

**Welcome by Chairman of the Council**

Cllr Herring welcomed everyone present and thanked them for attending the meeting

**Apologies**

Were received from County Councillor Stone and District Council Billig

**To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

The Minutes were agreed as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

**To receive a report from the Chairman of the Parish Council on the Council activities during the past year**

Last year I reported that I was disappointed that, for most of the year, we were operating with only six councillors out of seven. At the election in May 2015 we were reduced to only three which is the minimum number required for a quorate parish council.

In September the Clerk resigned and since that time we have had two temporary Clerks; first from the Loddon Clerk and currently from Anne Panella, who has been our Clerk for the past six months. This meeting, however, will be her last meeting to attend.

We started the year waiting for a Feasibility Study on the bus stops on the A146 and finished it expecting a roundabout at the busy A146 junction in to the village. Whilst we were pursuing the bus stop issue it emerged that NCC had re-classified the junction as a 'black spot' and had revisited plans drawn up several years ago. An Open Day was arranged by the council so the plans could be shown to the parish and this was followed by a presentation from NCC. All very positive and we are currently awaiting news on funding. It is worth saying in this report that we had had significant support from our County Councillor, Margaret Stone.

The Community Composting Scheme has been an enormous success, both in the amount of garden waste collected and in community involvement. A healthy number of volunteers regularly turn up to help process the waste and a significant amount of soil improver has been produced and returned to the participants in the scheme.

Traffic speed through the village continues to be an issue and it now appears that the Vehicle Awareness Sign is ineffectual. The Council has been working on this issue during the year. One of the themes followed was to get information on what speed checks/prosecutions had happened in recent years. Despite an FOI request this information was not forthcoming in the form we expected; however, a traffic policeman was spotted the other week with a camera in the village.

The Council has obtained information on new playing field equipment but there are no immediate plans for the Playing Field currently.

As in previous years there have been a number of planning applications and the council has debated these and responded accordingly to either the District Council or the Broadland Authority. It is good to see that Heckingham Park is now complete and people have moved in although STILL the Badger development is yet to start.

Superfast broadband is planned and should be with us before the next annual report.

Looking back on the year I am surprised by the amount of progress made by so few councillors and disappointed by the lack of involvement from the parish (excluding those who regularly attend our meetings). I have to think that if things don't change there will be a different annual report next year, if there is one at all.

I would like to close by thanking members of the Council and our Clerk for their efforts over the year and those councillors who have contributed previously but decided they were unable to stand for re-election.

### **To receive a report on activities over the past year from County Councillor**

Conservative Party has retaken the County Council following the collapse of the Rainbow alliance which has held power for the past three years. Today, the Greens withdrew their support for the Labour led administration. Conservatives have 41 members, Labour 14, Greens 4, UKIP13, liberals 10 and 2 unaligned. 84 members in total

**2016 County Council report:** As your County Councillor I represent your interests on a range of issues, from Health and Well Being to Highways and amenities. I have 23 Parish Councils whom I support. The County Council has responsibility for a range of services including Children's services; Adult Social Services; Communities which includes Libraries, Fire services and Adult Education; Environment, development and transport; Policy and Resources;

**Devolution** Discussions continue and it is planned that the public will be consulted during the summer, prior to a decision being made. The offer includes over £1 billion of new money to support economic growth over the next 30 years.

**Potholes:** are a familiar feature and are a priority with the NCC, agreeing to the provision of an extra £1.25 million to address the problem; the Government added another £1.5 million in this last week.

**Website:** an improved website has been created and went 'live' on of 1st April.

**Broadband:** 80% of areas now have super fast broadband now with a target of 97% of communities by 2020

**Recycling:** Hempnal recycling has reopened full time following increased demand.

**Parish partnership:** (local issues) Funding continues for further year whereby NCC will match fund up to 50% of the total cost of a project, for example, Speed Awareness monitoring equipment.

**Health services:** All Hallows' has been under threat for some time. I was involved with a threatened immediate closure of some beds at All Hallows' over Christmas by South Norfolk CCG and managed to secure a reprieve so that patients and families and the management team had six months to consider alternatives. A good compromise has been achieved and the beds will remain.

**GP practices:** Many patients have complained that they are unable to get appointments when they want them. I have chaired several Task and Finish Groups concerning these issues and as a consequence the Department of Health are looking at GP recruitment, training and retention. We have asked them to take an urgent look at funding medical schools as an anomaly discourages medical students to train as GP's.

Stroke services have improved significantly with more rapid diagnosis and treatment by specialist teams and the addition of more Consultants and nursing staff whilst the Reablement services in the community are working to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions because of social rather than medical needs.

#### **Any Other Business**

No issues were raised. The meeting ended at 7.10 pm