

# WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at 7.30pm in Village Hall, St John's Close.

Present Cllr Alistair Marr - Chairman  
Cllr Andy Notman  
Cllr Neil Farbon  
Cllr Simon West  
CCllr Steve Criswell  
  
Mrs Amanda Augstein – Clerk

Also present - 8 members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – received from Cllr T Huggins and Cllr Augstein
2. **TO SIGN MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th April 2013 were read, approved and duly signed as a true record.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – see attached report
4. **FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** – the clerk was unable to present a full financial report as the last bank statement had not been received in time for the meeting and therefore the accounts had not been reconciled. This will be presented at the Annual meeting of the Parish Council on 14<sup>th</sup> May and the accounts will be available for inspection as normal, see notice-board for dates.
5. **VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**
  - **Village Hall** – see attached report presented by Annabel Farbon. Referring to HDCs recent demand of 2-years' business rates for the Village Hall, Cllr Marr offered to write a letter to the District Council in support of the VH committee disputing this charge.
  - **PCC St John the Baptist Church** – see attached report, presented by Shirley Firth
  - **Natural Woodhurst** – see attached report, presented by Karen Holley
6. **Huntingdon Association for Community Transport (HACT)** - Jo Philpott (manager) explained that HACT is a charity serving the Huntingdonshire area for people who have difficulties accessing conventional modes of transport. It is aiming to provide a convenient, affordable and safe transport service for those living in rural areas with limited or no access to regular bus routes. The scheme has been running for a year, has 700 participants and is open to all, provided you are a member. OAPs can join for free, while other users pay £15 per annum to join. All agreed that many Woodhurst residents could benefit from the scheme and information leaflets would be distributed with the next newsletter. See: <http://www.hact-cambs.co.uk>
7. **Timebanking** – Although this was discussed at a previous council meeting, Cllr Notman explained the benefits of Timebanking, suggesting that Woodhurst could run a scaled-down service. CCllr Criswell advised that it would help community

resilience, especially older and more vulnerable residents. Karen Holley hoped that it may help village organisations to recruit more volunteers in the future.

- 8. Cluster Meeting Update** – since WPC were unable to attend this meeting in March at Somersham, Cllr Criswell gave a short overview of topics discussed, with the aim and structure of the meetings to help enable smaller villages to share information and ideas. Local joint committees were discussed, where a group of councils can meet at a host parish with the power and constitution in place to vote and make decisions that affect the wider area and community. It was agreed to continue further meetings to discuss the future and health of communities in light of the shrinking local services. St Ives Town Council will also be holding a Cluster Meeting in the near future and Woodhurst are likely to be invited. Cllr Criswell asked WPC if residents would feel more aligned to Somersham or St Ives for future meetings.
- 9. Speedwatch** – Cllr Farbon was approached by a resident regarding the speed of traffic on Church Street at peak times. A Speedwatch session was discussed, which relies on volunteers to help oversee the project. No villagers have come forward presently. Cllr Notman commented that the previous Speedwatch attendance showed that Woodhurst traffic speeding was considerably less than in other villages.
- 10. OPEN FORUM** – the Chairman invited thoughts and comments from the members of public present:

Annabel Farbon raised the issue of late-night ‘boy-racing’ towards the south of the village around Burleigh Hill, St Ives, with the concern that this could become more of a nuisance in and around Woodhurst in future. CCllr Criswell will investigate.

Shirley Firth asked about the re-opening of the roadway across Wyton airfield for walking/cycling purposes. The Chairman advised that flying is likely to continue for some time until preparations are made for the University Air Squadrons’ move to Wittering. CCllr Criswell stated that a cycle path has been requested in the future development plan. Consultations and exhibitions are due to take place in the autumn.

Cllr Notman reminded WPC that no correspondence has yet been received from Highways regarding plans for the structural improvement of Church Passage. It was requested that this be considered from the maintenance budget. CCllr Criswell will follow up.

Cllr Notman also mentioned that the Village Pump wood casing is disintegrating. This needs to be investigated and decisions made on repair. In the first instance it was decided to contact a local carpenter for advice. Cllr Marr will make contact.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed .....

Date .....

## **Woodhurst Parish Council Chairman's Report 2014**

Over the past year Woodhurst Parish Council has worked diligently for the benefit of Woodhurst residents. With the prospects of a further squeeze on public finances and the push towards a 'Localism' agenda, it is very important that the parish continues to be well represented both at County and District level.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting the Council has met for six scheduled meetings and convened for two extra-ordinary meetings. We have discussed matters raised locally, planning applications referred to us by Huntingdon District Council (HDC), local environmental issues, correspondence received and our finances.

Members of the council attended the first Parish Council Conference which highlighted the tough decisions that will need to be taken in the light of the severe council budget cuts. The impact these will have on us may well be significant but they can be mitigated. By developing better links within our local community, it is hoped that we can make better use of the services that are available locally. To this end, future meetings are planned such as the recent Cluster Localism Get-together. We were recently invited to attend a Time-banking seminar at Somersham to see if a similar scheme could be implemented within our own parish.

We made representations to the A14 consultation and will present our views during future consultations on the Strategic Plans to develop RAF Wyton and Alconbury airfields. The impact this will have on the Local Development Plan to 2036 will become clearer when it becomes available later this year.

I would like to say thank you to all of those who have given up their time to improve village life, whatever their contribution. Whether it is within an organisation or acting as an individual it is recognised and appreciated by the whole community. Retiring after many years of cleaning the bus shelter, I would especially like to thank Pat Newell and wish her all the best in the future. Her role has now been taken on by Lois and Brenda. In addition, I would like to thank Andy Notman for continuing to run the village website and for compiling the parish newsletter. Amanda Augstein has taken to her new role of parish clerk, and has provided excellent support to the Council.

With the assistance of HDC, the council recently orchestrated a litter picking weekend at which half a dozen or so volunteers turned out. The amount collected over the two days was quite staggering. A big thank you must go to all those who did such a sterling job. It is hoped that a follow-up session will be scheduled for the autumn.

I am sincerely grateful for the valuable contributions and the continued support of the council throughout the year and look forward to another challenging year ahead.

**Alistair Marr**  
Chairman

## Woodhurst Village Hall - Report to Parish Meeting 2013/14

### Background

Woodhurst Village Hall is constituted by a trust deed made by Woodhurst Parish Council dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 1987. The management committee has the responsibility for the management of the hall for the use of inhabitants of the Parish of Woodhurst (without distinction of political, religious or other opinions) including for the use of meetings, lectures, classes, recreation and leisure, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the inhabitants of the parish. The Village Hall is registered with the Charity Commission (No: 297010).

### Management Committee

Members of the committee are elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall, casual vacancies may be filled during the term. During the past year the following served as members of the committee:

Chair	Mr Simon West
Vice Chair	Post not filled
Secretary	Mrs Annabel Farbon
Treasurer	Mrs Tracy Bass
Letting Officer	Mr Simon West
Parish Council Rep	Mr Alistair Marr
Other Member	Mr Gary Davis;

### Annual Review

Through the ongoing hard work of all the committee members and volunteer villagers we have had another year of bringing the village community together at the Hall through family, social and fundraising events. During the year the Hall committee has arranged a number of Village Bar Nights, the Christmas Quiz, 100 Club Draw and, for the fourth year running a pensioners Christmas lunch where 26 Woodhurst pensioners enjoyed a full home cooked Christmas lunch with all the trimmings. Donations from villagers enabled the lunch to be laid on at no cost and in fact a small profit towards next year's event will be carried forward.

Some events continue to be a combined effort between the active groups in the Village (the Hall, Church and Natural Woodhurst); the Woodhurst Feast Week in particular acts as a fun and fundraising week when those that wish to in the village join together, as has happened for many hundreds of years. Feast Week is arranged by a small group of people with representatives from the Church, Hall and Natural Woodhurst.

Feast Week 2013 had as its main theme the subject of "trees" and thanks as always go to Shirley Firth for the time and research she put in to compile a very interesting survey. This subject appeared in the Church Service which started Feast Week, the Quiz Sheet, the Art Competition and the Photo Competition. Natural Woodhurst organised a bat walk and bbq, the annual garden competitions and a photographic competition with 12 selected photographs then being made up into a calendar which was sold in aid of the church. There was also a Summer Quiz as part of Feast Week in the Village Hall and the week finished with Cream Teas at Fullards Farm where all the result of the various competitions, the reintroduced Scarecrow Festival and the 100 Club were announced.

Feast Week 2013 raised £1,000.35. The proceeds are normally split between the Church, Natural Woodhurst and the Village Hall but this year the proceeds went towards the purchase of some new

folding tables and display boards which will benefit all three organisations and help reduce the time and effort taken to set up and put away events in and around the village.

The Hall has been and continues to be used as a venue for a number of different events including a Polling Station for HDC, the meeting room for the Parish Council, Natural Woodhurst events and Village meetings. A children's drama and singing class has also been a regular user.

The Hall has been privately booked during the year by residents for a number of family events. The Hall's facilities have been made available to the Church for their Advent Fair and for refreshments after the re-dedication service in the Church by the Bishop of Ely in June 2013.

Forthcoming events planned by the Committee this year include a Pudding Club, Feast Week events, Village Bars to be held on Easter Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> October, the Christmas quiz (06.12.14) and another pensioners lunch (07.12.14).

A formal letting agreement is being used for all bookings, attached to this is a copy of the Hiring Rules. A hiring agreement has been drawn up for the Village Hall equipment which is available for hire to villagers. Equipment now held by the Village Hall kitchen includes catering scale food warmers, crockery, cutlery, glasses and serving bowls these will ease those events where the committee and helpers are responsible for catering for larger numbers and have been hired out during the year for various villagers functions. Copies of the terms of hire are available on the Woodhurst Website.

### **The Premises**

As previously reported but with no further progress having been made during the year, the Village Hall Committee continue to investigate the replacement of the Hall which is nearing the end of its useful life but are struggling to secure architects drawings at a reasonable cost with which to take forward consultation and planning and funding applications. An environmentally sensitive building, possibly of a "barn style" incorporating optimum energy saving measures and with a designated furniture store area is being sought.

PAT testing has been completed to all portable electrical equipment, fire extinguisher servicing takes place annually and some remedial electrical works are under review. A pest control contract is in place. Ground maintenance (particularly the collection of leaves falling from trees in adjacent gardens and weed control for the gravel) is undertaken by committee members. A working party cut back the overhanging vegetation from The Chapel in summer 2013.

### **Finances**

A full financial report will be made available at the Village Hall AGM to be held on 14.05.14.

A demand has recently been received from HDC for non-domestic rates for the financial year just gone and for 2014-2015 for a combined amount of over £1,400. This has been appealed and a mandatory 80% rate relief has been granted; application forms for a discretionary relief of the remaining 20% have now been received and will be completed and submitted with supporting paperwork. Rates have not previously been charged on the Village Hall, services provided by HDC for the Hall are limited to around 4 wheely bin collections per annum.

### **Annabel Farbon**

Secretary, Woodhurst Village Hall Committee

16<sup>h</sup> April 2014

## **Report from St John the Baptist church Woodhurst**

The most important event in the life of the church last year was the visit of the Bishop of Ely in June. Bishop Stephen came to one of our Family Services to re-dedicate the church after the repairs had been completed. It was a wonderful service, followed by a reception in the village hall, which demonstrated the Bishop's knack of communicating with all people.

Since last year's report we have continued with improvements to the church and churchyard.

Outside we have removed more trees that were too close to the building and also some in the graveyard to increase the space available for future burials. The north-east corner has been levelled and grass seed sown.

Internally, an organ expert from Norfolk has examined the old pipe organ and given an estimate for repairing it of £11,236. Not only would it cost this amount but there is also asbestos in the blower which our insurance company says must be removed. The PCC are therefore considering removing the organ. This will give us more space at the west end of the church which could be used for our Open Mornings and Family Services.

Donations from two families in the village has enabled us to install a sound system which will prove very useful for occasions when we have a large congregation or when children are performing. There have been investigations into the tower where there are three floors. The top floor is in a bad state of repair and a new trap door is being installed in the lowest one. The specifications have been drawn up and have gone out to tender. When the work is completed we will once again be able to ring the old bell.

An alarm system has also been installed on the south aisle roof, as there had been three attempts to steal lead. All this extra work has been funded by the money remaining in the repair fund which was raised when the wall collapsed. This fund has almost disappeared and we are in the business of raising money for our yearly expenses which now stand at £9000 a year. There are increased amounts for our insurance which is now over £2,000, our parish share, alarm maintenance and nightguard service. We would like to thank everyone who supports us in our fund raising efforts, as without these we would not be able to maintain the church in the manner we would like to. Particular thanks must be made to our treasurer, Neil, who manages to make sure that our funds are spent wisely.

Thanks also to Brenda and Lois who not only clean the church but carry our many other tasks associated with making the church such a beautiful place. Rod who keeps the front and back graveyards looking immaculate.. The PCC have had a busy time this year with the resignation of the Rev Barter and the appointing of Rev. Susan Simpson who will become our Rector in September. During this interregnum the life of the church have continued as normal, and a large part of this is due to the work of the churchwardens. Last summer Linda left for a year in South Africa and Francis Muziro took her place for the remainder of the year. Special mention must be made of Jan Pinder who has been our churchwarden for the last five years. She has always been there to help and guide in all situations and we are sorry that she has now resigned but grateful for all she has done. At the moment no-one has come forward to take her place or Francis's so, probably for the first time we are without a churchwarden.

Finally our theme for Feast Week this year is the history of the village; there will be an exhibition to illustrate this theme, in the church on Feast Week Sunday June 22<sup>nd</sup>. I would be grateful if any one has any old photos or documents that could be used in the exhibition.

**Shirley Firth**  
Secretary

## **Natural Woodhurst – Annual Report**

Established on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009, 'Natural Woodhurst' exists to help maintain and improve the natural environment around the village of Woodhurst. Our remit, covers the stewardship of the various planted beds and containers around the village, the management of the Conservation Area under Phil Clark's guidance, and conservation projects around the village.

### **Committee**

Chair: Karen Holley

Secretary: Ruth Clark

Treasurer: Avril Mayall

Conservation Manager and Grants Officer: Phil Clark

Parish Council Rep: James Mayal

Other Members: Sally Barratt & Alastair McKellar

### **Overview April 2013 – March 2014**

Work this past 12 months has included the annual maintenance of the Butt Lane hedgerow and Ridges Pond, plus assistance to Avril and James in the rejuvenation of Swan Weir Pond (blanket weed continues to reduce, and water-life continues to improve. It will probably take another 3-4yrs to get the blanket weed fully under control)

We have continued with a sustainable planting scheme for the village tubs and flowerbeds, which has kept the planters green over the winter with the addition of only a few cyclamen for colour. The re-development of the Church Bungalow beds has moved into Phase 2, with the installation of the raised bed at the foot of the refurbished village sign.

Village Residents have helped us to sow two WW1 Commemorative Poppy Beds in the round beds on either side of the village sign.

In the autumn, the Moot Way Tree Seat was planted with bulbs in an attempt to provide some spring colour.

The Feast Week Bat Walk/BBQ and the Photographic Competition were a great success. The photo competition Calendar raised £115.66 for the Church. This is down on last year, mainly due to a rise in printing costs.

Throughout the year, we have held quarterly Open Meetings and Social events including the annual Dawn Chorus Walk and pub gatherings. We have made use of Facebook and email to keep in contact with our volunteers throughout the year. Our thanks to our volunteers, for all their hard work over the last 12 months.

### **Looking Forward**

Over the past couple of years, our volunteer pool has reduced as a number of our most active members have left the village or increased their commitments elsewhere. Although we still have a large number of supporters on our email list, we are down to a core of only 4 regular committee/volunteers and a few others who help when they can. Obviously, this has an impact on what we can achieve.

For the next 12 months we will maintain the village planters and flowerbeds. We will carry out annual maintenance on the Butt Lane hedgerow and Ridges Pond. We are sure our volunteers will continue to help Avril and James with the regeneration of Swan Weir Pond as they request it. Phil Clark, agreed with the Parish Council earlier this year that the Clay Pits Conservation Area would be maintained purely for wildlife from now on.

Our bank account is healthy, and so we are going to secure some professional advice with regards the Moot Way Tree Seat. Once we have some realistic options, we will consult with the residents of Moot Way.

We will once again host the Photographic Competition for Feast week. As there is no longer a demand among village residents for the Garden Competitions, it has been agreed with Annabel that these will no longer feature in Feast Week.

Beyond that, we are not planning any new projects in the next 12 months and our social calendar may have to be reduced. Whilst the sustainable planting scheme for the beds and tubs has reduced our replanting and watering work, if we get a dry summer we will still have a lot of watering to do.

In short, we are going to struggle a bit this year, unless we get some more volunteers! So, we will be outlining our plight to the village, in the hope of finding some new committee members and volunteers.

Our thanks go out to those within the village who have offered their time and skills to help this year, particularly with the Church Bungalow Beds and the ponds. We hope that village residents enjoy the new raised bed planting as it matures and the WW1 Commemorative Poppy Beds when they bloom in the summer.

Our End of Year Financial Report will be available at the end of May, after our after our AGM.

**Karen Holley**  
Chairman