

WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Tuesday 3rd April 2012 at 7.30pm in Village Hall, St John's Close.

Present Cllr Alistair Marr - Chairman
Cllr Terry Huggins - Vice Chairman
Cllr John Nicoll
Cllr Andy Notman
Cllr Peter Collins

D.Cllr Graham Bull

Mrs Elizabeth Pendered – Clerk

Also present - 10 members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – received from Cllrs Bob Newell and Simon West and Steve Criswell. Annabel Armstrong, representative of Village Hall, also sent her apologies
2. **TO SIGN MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2011 were read, approved and duly signed as a true record
3. **CHAIRMANS REPORT** – see attached report
4. **FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL** – the clerk was unable to present the 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 14th May and the accounts will be available for inspection as normal, see notice-board for dates
5. **VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**
 - **Village Hall** – see attached report, read by the Clerk in the absence of Annabel Armstrong
 - **PCC St John the Baptist Church** – see attached report, read by Shirley Firth
 - **Natural Woodhurst** – see attached report, read by Karen Holley
 - **Parish Plan** – see attached report, read by Andy Notman
6. **OPEN FORUM** – the Chairman invited thoughts and comments from the members of public present:

Phil Clark expressed interest in the upgrade of the village broadband connection. Cllr Bull said there are currently two initiatives being run by BT and our nearest exchange in Warboys was not expected to be upgraded before the end of this year. He suggested that the results from our Village Plan may add weight to our request.

Sally Barrett wanted to thank Andy Notman for his continued work in delivering the village newsletter, which she considered very useful and informative.

Rod Clements commented on the continued problem of speeding in the village. Cllr Marr suggested that we can ask Speedwatch to return. It was also mentioned that despite the 7.5 tonne weight restriction, there was a noticeable increase in the number of lorries passing through the village. Cllr Marr suggested that we all record the names of the offending hauliers and report them to the police or pass on their details to either himself or the clerk.

Shirley Firth commented that there are several buses that come through that are not in service. Cllr Bull made reference to the St Ives Road Safety Scheme and whether it is still going, and suggested we look into it.

Ruth Clark asked again about '30 mph' speed limit signs being placed on rubbish bins. Again, this was discussed but was considered probably illegal and it was felt there would be no long term benefit.

Avril Mayall asked if there was any chance of traffic lights or some improvement of visibility at the crossroads at the top of Wheatsheaf Road due to the number of collisions. Cllr Marr suspected that the fatal accident rate was not significantly high enough for anything major to be done. Cllr Bull commented that it would be very low down on the list of priorities.

Cllr Huggins asked Karen Holley, Chairman of Natural Woodhurst what was being planned to tackle the weeds in the beds at Swan Weir. Avril Mayall said it was on the agenda to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Sally Barrett thanked the Parish Council for their continued efforts and especially in keeping any possible encroachment of development from St Ives at bay.

Rod Clements asked if it would be possible for Natural Woodhurst to help in clearing some of the churchyard soil and green waste. Cllr Marr confirmed that this has been agreed in principle.

An extraordinary meeting was then held to discuss a planning application:

Planning Ref 1102161FUL The Council offered no comment to the application

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

These minutes are unadopted by the Council

WOODHURST PARISH CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012

Government funding cut-backs are having and will continue to have a significant effect on the delivery of local public services. In the next four to five years, the county council is looking at a forty per cent reduction in funding with little scope for raising the council tax. This represents an enormous challenge, and as a Parish Council we must be ready to embrace the concept of the government's solution of the Big Society. Essentially, this means targeting the services that are most valued and relying more on local communities to provide for themselves, using their own initiatives.

In this regard, Woodhurst has already been fulfilling part of this remit by recruiting the various volunteer groups to successfully service the needs of our parish. Indeed the council are indebted to all those who continue to give up their time so willingly to maintain the village assets and they should take pride in their endeavours. Notably the Parochial Church Council, which has been quick to respond to the immediate challenge of funding the substantial repairs to the roof and north wall. Special mention should also go to Andy Notman for supervising and finally picking up the baton of the Parish Plan.

Your Council has met for six full meetings during the past year. At these meetings we discuss matters raised locally, planning matters referred to us by the District Council, local environmental issues, our finances and correspondence received. In addition, some have attended a variety of additional meetings for training and information, such as the Ramsey Neighbourhood Forum.

Congratulations to Liz, our clerk, for gaining her qualification and who now holds a Certificate in Local Council Administration. Bob Newell has decided not to stand for re-election this time. On behalf of the parish council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his valued contribution over many years and wish him all the best.

Finally I would like to thank all the council members for their continued support and commitment over the past year and look forward to another interesting and challenging year ahead.

Alistair Marr - Chairman

Woodhurst Village Hall

Report to Parish Meeting

2011/12

Background

Woodhurst Village Hall is constituted by a trust deed made by Woodhurst Parish Council dated 6th March 1987. The management committee has the responsibility for the management of the hall (the property) 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.

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	Miss Annabel Armstrong
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 successful 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 second year running a pensioners Christmas lunch for nearly 30 Woodhurst pensioners. They were treated to a full home cooked Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, donations from villagers, local businesses and the Co-op enabled the lunch to be laid on at no cost.

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 NW.

Feast Week 2011 started with the Church service (once again superbly researched and arranged by Shirley Firth) which looked at the historic public houses of Woodhurst. This was followed by cream teas and a mid-week family rounders and bbq evening. Disappointing ticket sales caused the Barn Dance to be cancelled to minimize losses. Feast Week raised £568.40 which was split equally between the Church, Natural Woodhurst and the Village Hall.

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 recently commenced on a Thursday afternoon.

The Hall has been privately booked during the year by residents for a number of family events, as a rehearsal space for a drama production and as a meeting venue for some out of village clubs and societies. The Hall's facilities have been made available to the Church for their Advent Fair and for refreshments after an inter-parish service.

Forthcoming events planned by the Committee this year include Feast Week events, bar nights, the Christmas quiz and another pensioners lunch.

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. Copies of these are available on the Woodhurst Website or from Simon West.

The Premises

As previously reported, the Village Hall Committee continue to investigate the replacement of the Hall which is nearing the end of its useful life. Further prices for architect's drawings are awaited. The Parish Council and villagers will then be consulted before a pre-application consultation with HDC prior to a planning application being made and grant funding sought. An environmentally sensitive building with optimum energy saving measures is being sought.

Finances

A full financial report will be made available at the Village Hall AGM on the 4th May.

Annabel Armstrong

Secretary, Woodhurst Village Hall Committee

3rd April 2012

St John The Baptist PCC

Report to Parish Meeting

2011/12

This last year has been a traumatic one for the Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist Church. Before I come to the collapsing of the wall and subsequent events I will deal with the remainder of the year.

We still hold four services a month. Evensong at 6pm on the first Sunday, a short Communion service at 10 on the second Thursday, Family service at 10.30 on the third Sunday and Communion at 6pm. On the fourth Sunday. If there is a fifth Sunday a joint Benefice Service is held in one of the four churches of the Benefice. Our Benefice service in May last year was also to say goodbye to Rev. Ann Peters who had been the curate in the Benefice. A large congregation filled the church and we then went to the Village Hall for refreshments. The congregations at our Family Services is growing and we hope that Maria Dorman who has been taking them, is soon well enough to continue.

I reported last year on the attempted theft of lead from the south aisle roof. This was repaired in the summer, and we hope as they were unsuccessful in removing any lead they will have passed the message around that it is not easy to steal lead from the church in Woodhurst!!

We held several successful money raising events last year. Spring and Advent Fayres a Summer Supper, a Harvest Supper and we combined with The Village Hall Committee and Natural Woodhurst with Walk for Woodhurst and Feast Week. We would like to thank everyone who helped to organise these events, and which meant that we raised enough money to cover all our expenses for 2011 and a bit left over.

That is until the wall came tumbling down. It was noticed in November that the cracks in the exterior east wall of the nave seemed to be getting wider. The Church architect immediately inspected it and gave a report and a suggested course of action. We were following this plan when on Tuesday March 6th, the collapse of the wall was discovered.

To bring you up to date with the position at present. Scaffolding with sheeting to protect the wall from further problems with the weather will be erected after Easter. We are awaiting final estimates from three builders for the repair of the wall. One tree has been cut down, and there are three others that have to be felled eventually. We have established a charity giving web-site for those who wish to donate by credit card. Parishioners have been generous with their donations, and we specially would like to thank the Parish Council for their contribution and the Village Hall Committee who has given £1000 to the fund.

We have had donations from as far afield as Japan, New Zealand and Australia, all from people who have connections with the village. We will be organising Fund Raising efforts throughout the year.

Our next fund raising effort is on April 14th in the Church when there will be an evening of poetry prose and singing with Susan Jameson, Alan McMahon and Charlotte Woodman followed by drinks and canapés in the Village Hall.

There are many people we have to thank for their help and support during the year. Sally, the founder of our Open Mornings on the first Saturday of the month, and also for her plant stall. Brenda and Lois who clean the church, organise changing the frontals on the altars and make certain that there is a supply of candles etc. It is always a joy to go into the church. Rod and Ann who spend time ensuring that the graveyards are in perfect condition, particularly for special occasions. To all the members of the PCC who work hard to keep the church an important focal point for the village. There has been a church on that spot for over 800 years. Many generations of villagers have known and used it. Please help us to look after it for the generations to come.

Natural Woodhurst

Report to Parish Meeting

2011/12

Established on 8th December 2009, 'Natural Woodhurst' exists to help maintain and improve the natural environment around the village of Woodhurst.

Our name is intended to reflect a broad scope of work stretching from 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. It also reflects our ethos of considering the environmental impact of all that we do.

Committee

Chair: Karen Holley
Secretary: Ruth Clark
Treasurer: Avril Mayall
Conservation Manager and Grants Officer: Phil Clark
Parish Council Rep: Peter Collins
PCC Rep: Linda Spencer
Other Members: Sally Barratt & Haggis FitzSimons

Overview April 2011 - March 2 012

Another busy year has seen volunteers continue with the 'Wild About Woodhurst' conservation project funded by the Big Lottery Fund. New volunteers have joined the group and we now have over 30 members. Volunteers have now taken on most of the planters in the village, compost and plants supplied by Natural Woodhurst as required. The barrow on the green opposite Swan Weir has been planted up with sedums as a first step in a more sustainable approach to planting. We have a Brushcutter and 4 trained members available to help with work around the village. Throughout the year we have held quarterly Open Meetings and kept in contact with members via email, Facebook and with social nights. Village residents have been updated via the Village Newsletter, Facebook, Church Coffee Mornings and Posters.

Funding/Sponsorship for April 2011 – March 2012

In addition to the 6.5K from The Big Lottery Fund we received we were also offered funding from the Walk for Woodhurst which we gave to St John's PCC to help fund their tree work. Mick George provided free soil to fill the revetments in Swan Weir Pond. The Environment Agency provided volunteers as part of their 'Green Days' scheme. We have returned £803 to the Big Lottery Fund which was allocated to a Interpretation Board, as we felt this project required more time and resource than we had available at the time. We will apply for new grant funding for this project in the future

Activities April 2011 – March 2012

Apr 2011 Wildflower planting opposite Swan Weir
 May 2011 Dawn Chorus Walk & AGM
 Jun 2011 Willow Hurdle Making & Garden Competitions
 Jul 2011 Revetments built in Swan Weir Pond
 Aug 2011 Revetments planted in Swan Weir Pond
 Sep 2011 Ridges Pond. & Claypits pond/path/meadow maintenance
 Oct 2011 Planters filled for winter/spring
 Nov 2011 Flowerbeds tidied for winter & Social Night
 Dec 2011 Butt Lane hedgerow maintenance & Brushcutter Training
 Jan 2012 Moot Way Tree Seat planting & Photo Comp launched
 Feb 2012 Bird Boxes repaired/re-located
 & Summer plants secured for village planting
 Mar 2012 Claypits Circular Path clearance and coppicing
 & Flowerbeds tidied for Spring & Social Night

Looking Ahead

Overview April 2012 – March 2013

The plan for the next 12 months is to consolidate the work of the previous 18mths, but maintaining the areas we have been working on. We are also going to overhaul the village planters and Church Bungalow Beds. For this summer, planting will have a red white and blue theme for the Jubilee. In the autumn a new sustainable planting scheme will be introduced to the beds and tree seat. We will also include sustainable plants in the planters.

Funding/Sponsorship for April 2012 - March 2013

We have received a grant of £150 from Parish Council to cover bench renovations and planting in the village. We are in discussion with Envar for sponsorship from their Community Fund for the coming year and they have also offered free compost (details tbc). Francis and Sarah of Hargreaves Plants, who live in the village, are very generously supplying us with summer plants for the village planters and flowerbeds free of charge.

Activities and events for April 2012 – March 2013

- April
 - Enter Huntingdon District Councils Green Hearts Awards
 - Create Jubilee floral display at Church Bungalows
 - Re-stock village planters to co-ordinate with Church Bungalows
- May
 - Weed revetments at Swan Weir Pond
 - Renovate South Street benches
 - Tues 8th AGM
 - Sunday 13th Dawn chorus walk

- Hurdle and Willow Craft for adults and children
- Feast Week
 - Bat Walk and BBQ
 - Garden Competitions
 - Photographic Competition
- Autumn
 - Cut meadow in Claypits Conservation Area
 - Renovate benches in Claypits Conservation Area
 - Re-new sustainable planting for Church Bungalows
 - Plant Moot Way Tree Seat with sustainable planting
 - Hedge restoration Claypits Conservation Area
 - Reedmace control – Claypits and Ridges Ponds
 - Re-stock planters for winter with more sustainable planting
- Winter
 - Maintenance of new hedging in Butt Lane
- Early Spring
 - Tidy Church Bungalow beds for Spring
 - Coppicing at Claypits Conservation Area

Financial Report

Our End of Year Financial Report will be available after our AGM on 8th May.

Karen Holley
Chairman

WOODHURST PARISH PLAN REPORT 2012

The Parish Plan Questionnaires were delivered to every house in the village last July and collected during August.

Around 300 adult questionnaires were handed out.

178 Adult and 25 Youth surveys were collected. Of these 13 adult and 1 Youth were treated as incomplete and were discarded (Completely blank or less than 5 question completed)

All have now been entered onto the computer and raw data will be made available.

PP Committee is now just three people, but it is still difficult to get the three of us together at any one time!

Next Steps

- Issue results report.
- Issue comments report.
- Consult with Parish Council and Village Organisations to decided what (if any) measures from surveys can be incorporated into a Parish Plan.
- Target for issuing full plan is Q4 2012

Andy Notman
Parish Plan Committee