

WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday 10th April 2013 at 7.30pm in Village Hall, St John's Close.

Present Cllr Alistair Marr - Chairman
Cllr Terry Huggins - Vice Chairman
Cllr Andy Notman
Cllr Neil Farbon
Cllr James Mayall

C.Cllr Steve Criswell

Mrs Elizabeth Pendered – Clerk

Also present - 8 members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – received from Cllrs Simon West, Alvin Augstein and D Cllr Graham Bull.
2. **TO SIGN MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd April 2012 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 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 8th 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
 - **PCC St John the Baptist Church** – see attached report, presented by Shirley Firth
 - **Natural Woodhurst** – see attached report, presented by Karen Holley
 - **Parish Plan** – see attached report, presented by Andy Notman
6. **OPEN FORUM** – the Chairman invited thoughts and comments from the members of public present:

Karen Holley spoke on behalf of Phil Clark who asked for an update on the upgrade of the village broadband connection. Cllr Criswell said that BT have the contract in hand. They have not yet revealed which areas are to be done or when. Cllr Notman said that he is involved in a project called "Ask Sam" and they have been monitoring his broadband speed and the lowest achieved was 1.6 and the highest 3.2. There is an event being held in a few weeks where they should find out some more details.

Sally Barrett thanked the Parish Council for the new paintwork carried out to the Telephone kiosk and commented on how good it looks. She asked if the Parish Council had any projects for the forthcoming year and whether the bus shelter could be a consideration. The Chairman thought this was a good idea. A suggestion was raised that, as it is the centenary of the Great War next year, maybe painting a simple poppy with the names of four servicemen from Woodhurst would be a fitting commemoration. Sally Barrett said she had seen one in another village (that also had no war memorial) and had thought how nice it looked. Cllr Huggins asked those present what they thought about replacing the shelter. The general opinion is that it is a piece of the village heritage. Annabel Farbon noted that the current shelter provides good weather protection whereas some of the newer designs don't. Cllr Huggins suggested that we could investigate some new designs, more in keeping.

Sally Barrett asked if the replacement/renewal of the Street Lights was a necessity. The Chairman explained that the County Council would be replacing theirs through a contract with Balfour Beatty and it made financial sense to have the Parish Council ones done at the same time. Nothing would be decided until there was a consultation with parishioners to look at the costs involved and then to budget for the expenditure. It is not likely to happen for 2 – 3 years yet so we have time to precept for it.

Cllrs Steve Criswell raised the matter of structural improvement to Church Passage and that Highways would now be considering this from the "maintenance" budget.

Cllr Andy Notman commented on plans to cease flying shortly at RAF Wyton and what implications this might have. Cllr Steve Criswell said that there will be significant housing development to add to the existing with the aim to make it more of a community and provide some amenities. Shirley Firth said that many years ago the Parish Council wrote to RAF Wyton asking if Woodhurst could extend their footpath to the Old Ramsey Road inside their perimeter. It was refused because of the flying aspect. She asked if the question could be raised again, now that flying would no longer be an issue.

Sally Barrett thanked the Parish Council for their continued efforts and hard work.

Meeting closed at 8.20pm

These minutes are unadopted by the Council

Woodhurst Parish Council Chairman's Report 2013

Having completed three years as chairman of Woodhurst Parish Council, I believe that the council continues to provide a valuable service to our community. The council has been engaged in representing our views at District and County Council level, not only directing services where needed but also raising awareness of the issues concerning our parishioners. The District Council budget restrictions will heavily influence how our parish is prioritised with regard to future spending, so it is important that we are represented fairly when our needs and aspirations are expressed.

Our recent bid for funds to renovate Church Passage as part of the 'Local Highways Improvement Scheme' awards was unfortunately unsuccessful. However, our local councillor Steve Criswell has fought on our behalf to raise the issue with the Highways department, so will now be given the priority it deserves. It was also encouraging that our voice in the 'Better Broadband' campaign was one of the loudest due to the large number of responses from our village. We wait to see what transpires.

I am pleased to report that the results from the Parish Plan survey will soon be available. It has been a long time getting to this point and I would like to thank all those who have dedicated their time to be involved with the project. The council will be focusing on how the data can be used to benefit the parish in future but it can already reinforce our stance when dealing with district and county matters.

Our aim to attain quality council status by achieving a set number of criteria still remains elusive due to our limited scope but does at least give us a target to aim for. One such benchmark, our Community Engagement statement, has been boosted by the implementation of our first open-door surgery held during March. It gave a chance for parishioners to meet face to face with councillors and was deemed a success. More are likely to be scheduled.

After carefully considering her options, I am sorry to report that Liz has decided to resign her post as clerk. Having worked diligently to improve the role, she has offered to remain actively involved in the transfer of duties to her successor. I would like to thank her for all she has achieved and wish her well in the future.

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their continued support and valued contributions throughout the year and look forward to another interesting and challenging year ahead.

Alistair Marr – Chairman

REPORT OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST WOODHURST FOR APRIL 2013

The collapse of a part of the external east wall of the chancel in March 2012 was the start of a momentous year for our church. Our first priority was to protect the wall from the weather while we obtained sufficient funds to have the wall repaired.

We were overwhelmed by the response, not only from parishioners but also those who had a connection to the village, some as far afield as Japan, New Zealand and Australia. We are very grateful in particular to Jennifer Fullard who donated the money needed at a critical time to erect the protective scaffolding, which with hindsight was essential in preventing further weather damage to the damaged wall. Also despite the scaffolding inside the church services were not interrupted.

Grants were obtained from Cambridge Historic Churches Trust; Huntingdonshire District Council; Garfield Weston Foundation and All Churches Trust. We are also grateful for generous donations from the Village Hall, the Parish Council the sale of calendars and cook books, and a sponsored walk.

After consultation with Natural England concerning the bats in the church, work commenced at the end of August. The cost came in under estimate, and there was sufficient money left in the fund to carry out work inside the church. This has just been completed, and includes lime washing the walls, repairing the wooden floor in the chancel, replacing damaged window panes and treating all the woodwork for woodworm. We hope in the near future to erect a new notice board in the porch, and install an alarm on the south aisle roof which will hopefully prevent further attempts to steal the lead.

None of this could have been carried out without the hard work of those obtaining grants, negotiating with the church architect, liaising with builders etc: This task mainly fell to our Treasurer Neil, who managed to bring order out of the many application forms etc, to sort everything and bring full reports to PCC meetings for discussion and decisions.

While the church repairs were going on work has also been carried out on the area outside. Trees have been cut down and pollarded to reduce the risk of damage to the church, trees have also been removed from the graveyard and work is in hand to remove the pile of earth from the north-east corner. All this is to make more grave spaces.

A church is not only the building, it cannot function without the help of many people. Thanks are due to our church wardens, Jan Pinder and Linda Spenser, to all members of the PCC. To Brenda and Lois who not only keep the church clean but also make sure that everything needed for church services is there and in order. To Rod who keeps the graveyard looking immaculate. To Keith who looks after the Gift Aid, this is a vital part of our fund raising during the year. Fund raising efforts last year included! A concert of poetry and song by TV personalities organised by Martin Franks; a summer supper with a Spanish theme; an Advent Fayre and Feast Week. And last but not least the Saturday Monthly Open Mornings organised by Sally which provide a great occasion for people to meet and have a cup of coffee and maybe win one of Tom's Cakes.

Fund raising cannot stop as it costs over £7,000 a year to keep the church open and available for the village to use, so we do ask for your continued support for our fund raising events.

Finally June 16th this year will be an important day in the life of our church as the Bishop of Ely is coming to a service to give thanks for the restoration of the church. Everyone is welcome and we hope we will have a full church that day.

Natural Woodhurst - April 2012 to March 2013

Established on 8th 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
PCC Rep: Linda Spencer
Other Members: Sally Barratt & Alastair McKellar

Overview April 2012 – March 2013

Work this past 12 months has focused on consolidating our existing projects. Plus, we have also started a project to re-design the Church Bungalow beds and devise a more sustainable planting scheme for the village.

Work has continued to maintain the new hedge line in Butt Way and the revetments in Swan Weir Pond. More marginal plants were added at the pond. Reductions in blanket weed, indicate our plan is working. As the planting matures over the next 4-5yrs we expect the pond to become clearer.

In the Claypits Conservation Area, with the help of Environment Agency volunteers, the dying Hawthorn has been cut back to prevent it collapsing on the footpath. The circular path is now fully accessible and other areas have been cleared of fallen trees and opened up to access for future work.

The Church Bungalow beds redesign began in May with the planting of red, white and blue bedding to celebrate the Jubilee. Many thanks to Frances and Sarah of Hargreaves Plants for donating all the plants. A new sustainable planting scheme for all our beds and planters has now been developed.

The Feast Week Bat Walk/BBQ and the Photographic Competition were a great success. The photo competition Calendar raised £266 for the Church.

Another highlight of the year, was making it through to the finals of the 'Hunts Green Hearts Awards', for our conservation work.

Winter planting was funded by a £150 grant from the Parish Council, in return for our help renovating the village benches. Our thanks to Gary Davis and Paul Thompson for their work on the benches.

Throughout the year, we have held quarterly Open Meetings and popular Social Nights. Via Facebook and email, we are in close contact with our volunteers. We continue to update the wider community via the Village Newsletter, Church Coffee Mornings and Posters. Finally, our thanks to our volunteers, both old and new, for all their hard work over the last 12 months.

For calendar of events, and future plans see next page:

Activities Undertaken April 2012 – March 2013

April	Entered 'Hunts Green Heart Awards'
May	Dawn Chorus Walk
May	AGM
May	Beds & Containers: Jubilee planting
June	Garden Competitions, BBQ & Bat Walk, Photo Competition
June	Social Night at The Crown, Broughton
June	Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weeding

July	Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weeding
Aug	Swan Weir Pond Revetments: clearing blanket weed
Sept	Churchyard: workparty
Sept:	Social Night, The Crown Broughton
Oct:	Claypits Conservation Area: tree work and meadow cut
Oct	Signs: planted for winter
Nov	Church Bungalow Beds: spring bulbs returned
Nov	Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weeding
Nov/Dec	Calendars for sale
Dec	Social Night, The Crown Broughton
Dec	Butt Lane: hedgerow maintenance
Feb	Bird Boxes: annual check
Mar	Social Night, The Crown Broughton

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Looking Forward

We will continue to maintain the areas we look after and the projects initiated. Our main focus this year will be on implementing our new sustainable planting scheme. We have 3 wildlife walks planned, and several Social Nights. Feast Week Garden Competitions have two new light-hearted categories this year, which we hope will boost participation. Last year's Photographic Competition and Calendar were such a success, that we are repeating them again this year, with a theme of 'Wood and Wildlife in Woodhurst'.

For calendar of up-coming events, see next page:

Draft Calendar for April 2013 – March 2014

- April/May
 - Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weed and plant, Sat 13th April, 10am
 - Amphibians by torch light, Mon 22nd April, 7pm, Village Hall
 - Dawn chorus walk, Sun 19th May, 5.30am, Village Hall
 - AGM, Village Hall, May, date and time tbc
 - Church Bungalows: build raised bed
 - Beds & planters: Sustainable planting
 - Re-instate West End bench
- Summer / Feast Week
 - Bat Walk and BBQ, Wed 19th June, time and venue tbc
 - Garden Competitions
 - Photographic Competition
 - Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weeding as required
 - Social Night
 - Open Meeting
- Autumn
 - Claypits Conservation Area: meadow cut & coppicing
 - Claypits and Ridges Ponds: Reedmace control
 - Beds & planters: plant spring bulbs & re-stock for winter
 - Swan Weir Pond Revetments: pond clearing if required
 - Social Night
 - Open Meeting
- Winter
 - Swan Weir Pond Revetments: weeding
 - Butt Lane: hedging maintenance

- Calendars for sale
- Social Night
- Open Meeting
- Early Spring
 - Beds & planters: tidy for Spring
 - Bird Boxes: annual check
 - Social Night
 - Open Meeting

Financial Report

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

Parish Plan Report for Annual Parish meeting 2013

Unfortunately we still haven't been able to publish and deliver the findings of the Survey, but we are very close; the final version is with printers for estimates and should be printed in the next few weeks.

It has been a long and slow journey to get to this point and it will be up to villagers, supported by the Parish Council and other organisations, to take these results forward and create a strategy for the future of the village.

With this in mind it is hoped that a new set of volunteers will come forward once the report is published to bring new life to the process and to find owners for any projects that are identified.

Woodhurst Village Hall - Report to Parish Meeting 2012/13

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 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	Mrs Annabel Farbon
Treasurer	Mrs Tracy Bass
Letting Officer	Mr Simon West
Parish Council Rep	Mr Alistair Marr
Other Member	Mr Gary Davis; Katie Prescott

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 third year running a pensioners Christmas lunch where 31 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 NW.

Feast Week 2012 started with the Church service (once again superbly researched and arranged by Shirley Firth) which looked at farming and agriculture in Woodhurst. This was followed by cream teas (relocated at the last minute to the VH due to the adverse weather) and a mid-week children's treasure hunt kindly organised by Amanda Augstein. 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.

Feast Week 2012 raised £853.70 which was split between the Church, Natural Woodhurst and the Village Hall. In addition the calendar funds from Natural Woodhurst to the church came to £288.

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 is also 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 an inter-parish service and the church poetry and prose evening.

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. Additional equipment has been purchased during the year for the kitchen including food warmers and additional crockery, 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 these are available on the Woodhurst Website.

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 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 with optimum energy saving measures is being sought.

PAT testing has been completed to all portable electrical equipment, fire extinguisher servicing takes place annually and some remedial work to the hard wiring to bring the system up to modern standards has been approved and is being arranged at a cost of £857 plus VAT. A pest control contract has been put 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 is to be arranged to cut back the overhanging hedge/shrubs from The Chapel, subject to first notifying the new property owners.

Finances

A full financial report will be made available at the Village Hall AGM.