

# WOODHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7.30pm in Village Hall, St John's Close.

Present Cllr Alistair Marr - Chairman  
Cllr Alvin Augstein  
Cllr James Mayall  
Cllr Andy Notman  
Cllr Simon West  
CCllr Graham Bull  
  
Mrs Amanda Augstein – Clerk

Also present - 3 members of the Public

1. **APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE** – received from Cllr Huggins, Cllr Farbon and CCllr Criswell
2. **TO SIGN MINUTES** – The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th April 2014 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 advised that District and County are still implementing cuts due to shortfall in services for the next 3 years. That said, Woodhurst PC hasn't increased their precept in the last 5 years and has managed to keep its costs down. The year-end for 2014-15 looks healthy, with a balance (not reconciled as still awaiting bank statement) of £12,405.49, up slightly on 2013/14 of around £200. VAT was claimed back last year which hadn't been completed for 3 years. As the councillors all know, although the overall combined balance looks high for a small community, this will be going towards the upgrade of 15 streetlights in the near future. The full accounts will be available for inspection as normal, see notice-board for dates.
5. **VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS**
  - **Village Hall** – see attached report presented on behalf of Annabel Farbon by the clerk.
  - **PCC St John the Baptist Church** – see attached report, presented by Shirley Firth
  - **Natural Woodhurst** – Karen Holley was unable to attend the meeting. However, the Chairman and Cllr Mayall explained that Natural Woodhurst is struggling to find new volunteers and, as such, any new projects are unsustainable without more members. A couple of events are planned for the summer which will hopefully encourage new interest and support.

**6. Speaker – Gary Davis, First Responder – East Anglian Ambulance Service –** Mr Davis addressed the council, explaining how Community First Responders were created (originally by MAGPAS) and how they are now run by The East of England Ambulance Service (EAS). Alerted by 999 services, there is a dedicated first responder control centre within the ambulance control. The aim is to get a first responder to a patient ahead of the ambulance. First responders are called to medical cases rather trauma cases. Mr Davis covers the Somersham to Pidley area, including Woodhurst, and provides back-up to the Bluntisham group who reciprocate. He plans to create a sub-group, covering Woodhurst, Oldhurst, Broughton and Warboys. First responders can acquire basic kits from the ambulance service. However, in addition they need funding for a defibrillator and Pulse Oximeter, costing around £1000. Mr Davis requested funding from Woodhurst Parish Council for this. Cllr Notman advised a decision could not be made at an Annual Parish Meeting and suggested this be added to the Parish Council meeting in May. CCllr Bull also suggested coordinating with Oldhurst and Broughton Parish Councils to discuss combined funding for the appliances, which will benefit the three parishes.

**7. OPEN FORUM –** The Chairman invited thoughts and comments from the members of public present:

A resident raised the ongoing issue of speeding, proposing another Speedwatch session, and HGVs driving through the village, which are clearly over the 7.5 tonne weight limit, causing damage to the roads, and suggesting a proportion are coming from The Grange. The Chairman advised the owner has been contacted and has been very helpful in addressing this by placing signage at the entrance and instructing tenants to make sure their delivery drivers are aware of the limit.

Regarding speeding, The Chairman advised that the previous Speedwatch session showed that average speeds were considerably less in Woodhurst than other villages. It also relies on volunteers to oversee the project and on previous occasions, when approached, no residents came forward.

The clerk read the Countryside Watch report in the absence of Cllr Huggins: Cambridgeshire Countryside Watch has been crowned 'Best Country Crime Fighter 2014' for the East of England, at the Rural Insurers Award ceremony which took place at Saddlers Hall, London in October 2014. On a less positive note, the usual thefts are still taking place, such as diesel and heating oil, trailer thefts and power tools. Hare coursing has increased in numbers of the past year with vehicles and dogs being seized by the authorities. Fly tipping is also a problem in the area. Any crimes should be reported to Stefan Gidlow – Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough Regional Officer.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm and thanked those who attended.

Cheques were presented and signed after the APM with parish councillors in attendance:

**Cheques:** Chq 100958 - £40.00 - Cambridgeshire Countryside Watch subscription:  
Chq 100959 - £15.00 - Lois Alsop: Bus Shelter Clean  
Chq 100960 - £15.00 - Brenda Bryan-Harris: Bus Shelter Clean

Signed .....

Date .....

## Woodhurst Parish Council Report 2015

Woodhurst parish council has endeavored to provide a valuable service to those living within the parish and has continued to represent their views at both local and district level.

Recently, we have witnessed a major historic event with the ceasing of flight operations at RAF Wyton almost a hundred years after it was first used by the Royal Flying Corps. Arising from the Local Plan to 2036, the development of the airfield site has been ear-marked by the district council as an opportunity to expand the much needed housing stock, not only providing additional accommodation for the Joint Forces Intelligence Group HQ but also for the projected increase needed for the Cambridgeshire area. The consultation on all aspects of this new development, including infrastructure, transport and public services will be our priority for the year ahead. After the parish plan highlighted a real desire to see improved internet capability, September saw the introduction of super-fast broadband. Many would agree that the availability of this new service has brought a massive improvement. I would like to thank Phil Holley for coordinating a fantastic collective response to the Connecting Cambridge campaign. This undoubtedly contributed to its early introduction.

Improvements to the roads and paths have been boosted by the resurfacing of St Johns Close and the commencement of work to improve Church Passage. The worst of the tree root damage has hopefully been rectified with further improvements to the surface being planned. The Wheatsheaf Road should also receive some surface repairs shortly. After considering several options, the council has made the decision to upgrade the street lights to the current standard being adopted across the county. Balfour Beatty has been contracted to carry out this work, which should begin later in the year. Fly-tipping and general litter along our verges continues to be a problem, though the recent litter-picking sessions by a small group of volunteers has improved things for now. Thanks to those who came along to help.

On behalf of the council, I would like to thank the clerk, Amanda Augstein, for all of her hard work and dedication during her tenure. We all wish her well in the future and we look forward to appointing a successor in the very near future.

Finally, I would like to thank the parish council and our district councillors for their continued support and guidance.

Alistair Marr (Chairman)

# Woodhurst Village Hall Report 2015

## Standing Items

### 1. 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).

### 2. 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;

### 3. Letting Procedure

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.

## Annual Report

The committee members and volunteer villagers have once again organised and helped at a variety of village events at the Hall and it has also been used in support of other events held at the Church. During the year the Hall committee has arranged a number of Village Bar Nights, the Christmas Quiz, 100 Club Draw and, for the fifth year running, a pensioners Christmas lunch where 28 Woodhurst pensioners and Sue, the new Rector, enjoyed a full home cooked Christmas lunch with all the trimmings. Donations from villagers enabled the lunch to be laid on at no cost with a small profit being carried towards next year's event. Our thanks go to all who helped with the food preparation, cooking, waiting on, washing up and for the organisation of a game of Bingo to finish off the afternoon.

There are a number of events which are a combined effort between the active groups in the Village (the Hall, Church and Natural Woodhurst); the Woodhurst Feast Week in particular is 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.

The theme for Feast Week 2014 was the history of Woodhurst and our thanks go to Shirley Firth for the time and research she put in to compile the very interesting booklet, the Feast Week service and also for setting up and hosting a fascinating history of Woodhurst exhibition in the church for two weekends. Neil Farbon arranged the annual anagram quiz on the same subject; under the well-known people section it was clear that not everyone knew that the Queen had been to (or should that be through) Woodhurst! Natural Woodhurst organised the photo competition and calendar on the theme of "Four Seasons in Woodhurst", which once again sold very well. The excellent family treasure hunt (organized by Andy Notman and Sara Oak) was well supported and a lively bar evening followed. Due to inclement weather the annual Cream Teas were held at the Village Hall, the turnout was so good that we were bursting at the seams. There were the usual ingenious and humorous entries into the Scarecrow Festival and the 100 Club (organized by Tracy Bass) was very well supported.

Feast Week 2014 raised £1,035.11. The proceeds are normally split 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. 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 various events.

Forthcoming events planned by the Committee this year include the usual Feast Week events, Village Bars the Christmas quiz and pensioners' lunch.

### **Premises Report**

As now reported for many years, the Village Hall Committee continues to investigate the replacement of the Hall which is nearing the end of its useful life. Drawings have been produced for committee consultation but further development of those has not been forthcoming from the architect over the winter. Once these have been finalised for village consultation the committee will look to take forward planning and funding applications. An environmentally sensitive building, incorporating optimum energy saving measures and with a designated furniture store area has been designed.

PAT testing has been completed to all portable electrical equipment, fire extinguisher servicing takes place annually. 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.

An insurance policy is held with Allied Westminster (Insurance Services) Ltd. The public liability cover is in place under this policy for a sum of £5 million.

### **Finances**

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

The non-domestic rates bill from HDC for the 2015 financial year has been charged at £165.16, a substantial discount for mandatory charity rate substantially reducing the £826 full charge.

### **Annabel Farbon**

Secretary, Woodhurst Village Hall Committee

## **Report of Church of St John the Baptist**

2014 saw some important changes for St John the Baptist Woodhurst. Perhaps the most significant being the appointment of Rev. Sue Simpson as Rector of the Benefice. She has already made a significant impact on the parish, endeavouring to make herself known to as many parishioners as possible. The second most important change was the removal of the pipe organ. This had not been used for some years and would have cost over £11,000 to repair. After much discussion by the PCC it was decided to apply for a faculty to remove the organ, which was granted in September. The removal has made a tremendous difference to the west end of the church, more than people thought, and has made the space in the church far more flexible for holding community events. Last year saw an exhibition of History of Woodhurst, a Blues Concert, Safari Supper, and Advent Fayre, all of which were well attended. The annual Summer Supper held in the village, this year with a French theme, was another successful event. The first Saturday of the month open mornings have continued with people taking it in turn to be hosts.

During the year one baptism one funeral service and two marriages were held in the church. There was a full church for all these events. There was also a service in August to commemorate the beginning of the 1914-18 war, and after the Remembrance Day service the congregation walked to the bus shelter which had previously been painted with poppies, to place a wreath remembering Woodhurst men who died in that conflict. There was a record attendance at the Carol Service, the newly formed space at the west end of the church being well used.

There are two projects in hand at the moment. To complete the renovations the floor of the bell tower has to be strengthened and a new trap door made, the bell re-hung so that it can be used once more. The bell frame is unique for this area and needs to be preserved. We have estimates and are hoping to obtain a grant for this work. Secondly we are in the process of incorporating the strip of land to the east of the rear graveyard and then registering the church and the land belonging to it with the Land Registry.

St John the Baptist Woodhurst is a beautiful little church and to maintain the building and look after the services takes a lot of time and effort. There are many people who work very hard to make this possible, and we are very grateful to all of them for giving up their time to help. Parts of the church have been on this site for 900 years, playing a part in village life. We want this to continue and grow.

**Shirley Firth**  
Secretary