

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of GREAT HOUGHTON Held on Tuesday 10th May 2016, in the Village Hall, Great Houghton

001/16 Appointment of the Minutes Clerk

The Parish Clerk, Mr Mike Billingham was appointed as the Minutes Clerk

002/16 Apologies were received from Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator Cliff Bebbington, Sgt Nick Paul Northants Police Cllr G Kilborn

003/16 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2015

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 12th May 2015 were approved by the meeting.

004/16 The Parish Council Chairman's report

After a few changes this year, we have a full complement of Councillors.

Shortly after our last Annual Meeting, our Clerk, Tina, left us to take a larger role setting up a new Parish in Wootton. Tina had done a great job in bringing GHPC up to date with regulations and procedures during her time with us. In an unusual step, one of our Councillors, Mike Billingham, stepped into the breach. We thought this would be a simple transition, but red tape meant that Mike had to act as a volunteer for the first 12 months. We thank Mike for taking on this role, without recompense.

Last year's plan to install defibrillators is in the final stages with just the fitting of the cabinets to complete. Once installed, the equipment will be accessed by contacting the Ambulance service and receiving the unlock code for the cabinet.

Our new village website was made live this year and will continue to be improved with additional pages and regular updates.

Planning

The Joint Core Strategy was finally adopted by NBC, and the major development applications were quick to follow. The large 1300 home development at Hardingstone has been approved and an appeal rejected, so we will start see these houses going up in the near future.

After the fight with Roxhill and Carlsberg last year, we had hoped that the threat to the land behind the church was safe from development. However, in the last month, Roxhill has submitted an application to build on behalf of Stanley, Black and Decker.

Highways

The state of our roads is always high on meeting agendas and we continue to struggle with the condition of road out to the Newport Pagnell Road. We are seeing increased use from HGVs and coaches. The damage to the road edges continues to cause severe flooding and significant risk of damage to vehicle wheels and danger to Cyclists. We have asked for some form of restriction, and our County Councillor has taken this on.

During the course of 2015, the County Council replaced all our street lights with energy efficient LED units. With a few exceptions, this went very smoothly and the results are on the whole an improvement. We are still trying to get the lights on Leys Lane changed, but being in South Northants, this is a challenge.

GHPFA GHPFA has once again shown that the deficit days are over, posting another surplus for 2015. The running of the bar has continued to be a great success and The bar takings continue to make a large difference to the finances, adding to the major fund

raising events of Bonfire Night and the Village Fete. Screening the Rugby World Cup matches was a great idea. The Christmas Social was held once more and was deemed to be a success, despite clashing with the final of "Strictly". The tennis court has now been fully resurfaced thanks to the fund raising efforts of Nicky

Wates and the tennis section members. Over £12,000 was raised from grants from South Northants Council, Northampton Community Foundation, Bernard Sunly Charitable Foundation. GHPFA and GHPC also made contributions. The Parish Council and GHPFA continue to work together to ensure the future of these fabulous facilities. Our thanks go to Bill, Chris, Angus, and the rest of the Committee for their hard work and commitment.

Police

Due to cut backs within the Police Service, we have seen a reduction in Police presence over the last year. We do receive monthly reports, but attendance at Parish Council meetings has ceased.

The training of our Parish Special Constable is continuing, but we have recently been informed that there will be a further twelve month delay before deployment. This is due to additional regulation being introduced.

Broadband

005/16 Reports from village organisations

Great Houghton Playing Fields Association

Committee Changes

At the first committee meeting held in May 2015, Bill Hart was elected Chairman, Chris Carr, Secretary and Gavin Kilborn, Treasurer. During the year, due to other commitments, Gavin had to step down as Treasurer, but has remained a trustee by becoming the second representative of the Parish Council. In addition, we were disappointed that Hayley Skevington had to step down as the Short Mat Bowls representative – Hayley had been a very positive addition to the Committee and her knowledge and enthusiasm will be sadly missed. We were extremely fortunate that Terry Burnham volunteered to carry out the role of Treasurer and was therefore co-opted on to the Committee. In addition, we were delighted to welcome back Nicky Wates as the new representative for the Tennis Club.

Playing Field

2015 was again a year of maintenance around the Playing Field rather than seeing any major works undertaken. Park Landscapes continue to be responsible for the cutting of the field and other associated field maintenance work. Following the ROSPA Annual report in June 2015 on the Children's Play Area a number of remedial actions were carried out to play equipment in the area.

Village Hall

Once again over 500 separate events were held at the hall and field during 2015. Following a detailed analysis of the hire charges made by various village halls and other similar venues in the County, the committee reviewed all hire charges and a number of changes were put into effect in 2015. The hire charges are displayed in the entrance area of the hall and are also published in the Great Houghton newsletter.

During the year, we had a change of village hall cleaners and we are very fortunate that this aspect of operating the hall runs so well.

The main hall was redecorated during April 2015 and internet access is also now available. During the year, the new village website became operational and GHPFA has its own page on the website – we need to consider how best to use this new method of communication.

The bonfire night was once again a huge success and was the largest income generating event held by the GHPFA during the year - resulting in a profit of just over £1,685. Many thanks to all individual clubs and village organisations that come together to make the evening such a success. Another highlight of 2015 was the Church Fete & Village Fun Day, held at the Village Hall and Playing Field on Saturday, 27th June 2015. This was organised by the Parochial Church Council in association with the GHPFA. The total profit on the day was £1,985 which was shared between the PCC and the GHPFA. We will continue to establish this event in our calendar and it will take place again during 2016.

Two other events that should also be highlighted were the Jumble Sale held during October and the Christmas Village Evening held on Saturday, 19th December. Both were very successful, but we need to think carefully about the timing of the Christmas event – this is something the Committee would like to grow into a much larger social gathering for the village, but it is difficult to find the right “slot” during the busy run-up to Christmas.

User Groups

All our major user groups have managed to continue using the facilities during the year, some of them are struggling to maintain their membership levels and the GHPFA Committee believes it has a duty to try and support the user groups in any way we can – they are the life-blood of the village hall and playing field.

During the year we held discussions with Houghton Magna FC and the outcome was that for the 2015/16 season they would play on Saturday afternoons rather than Sunday mornings. The Committee appreciates that this was not exactly what the football club would have preferred, but we believe it is the best solution at the present time, when taking into consideration all of the village hall users – especially those who use the hall at weekends. We would like to thank Houghton Magna FC for accepting this new arrangement and we are delighted that the Saturday team is having so much success on the field.

It is astonishing how much can happen in a year, if you have the will and energy to try. We reported at last year's AGM of the parlous state of the Tennis Court and how the GHPFA could not hope to fund all of the work needed. One year later and the tennis court is completely refurbished, sporting its painted purple and green final finish. Nicky Wates and her team are to be congratulated for organising such an incredibly successful fundraising campaign and thanks to the generous funding from Northampton Community Foundation, South Northants Council, The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation and the Great Houghton Parish Council, the work has been completed. The GHPFA made a financial contribution of £2,000 to the overall cost of the work, together with guaranteeing any shortfall in funding that might occur. A grand opening is planned later this year with the date to be announced.

GHPFA Finances

As mentioned earlier in this report, Terry Burnham has agreed to take on the position of Treasurer. Chris Carr has been taking an overview of the GHPFA finances on the run-up to the handover to Terry and will present the figures to the AGM. We are delighted that there will again be a surplus shown for the 2015 financial year – the actual figures have yet to be finalised but the surplus is expected to be over £6,000.

Management and Operation of the Bar

2015 was the second year of the GHPFA managing and operating the bar and it continues to be a huge success. We must stress to all villagers and other people hiring our facilities that the Village Hall are licensed premises and we are bound by all relevant licensing legislation. In addition, the GHPFA General Committee and Bar Committee are liable for the proper management and operation of the bar. Angus Buglass and his superb team behind the bar ensure this happens and this is the main reason why we have been able to post a surplus in 2015.

The bar has been officially named "The Nine Acre Bar" and a new sign is being produced and will be placed over the bar itself. Angus is very keen to host new events and social get-togethers in the hall and a very successful example of this in 2015 was the Rugby World Cup nights, attended by many from the village and beyond.

Conclusion

Once again, many thanks to Tony Skirrow and his colleagues at the Great Houghton Parish Council for all the support we receive from them and thanks also to everyone on the GHPFA Committee for all their hard work during the year. However, I really must extend a special vote of thanks to Chris Carr and Angus Buglass. It is because of the incredible amount of work these two people put in to the running of both the Village Hall and the Playing Field that we have been able to turn around the financial performance of the GHPFA. This has allowed us to carry out much needed maintenance work and also support ventures like the new tennis court. Like everybody else involved on the Committee they are volunteers and we are extremely lucky to have them!
William Hart Chairman GHPFA

Great Houghton Short Mat Bowls

The number of Club Members has grown by 17 over the past Year, which includes 3 Junior Members, which is fantastic news! The financial state is stable, with our increased numbers helping to cover The Club's expenditure. The Club has entered a number of NSMBA competitions, while not winning any all Members have enjoyed the competitive matches.

During the Year Internal competitions are run by The Club to increase experience & skills of playing competitive matches. These are a big success!

Due to the increased numbers The Club tried opening on a Thursday evening as well, but this ceased due to work commitments of the Members attending! This increased opening time might be tried again if Members' work commitments change.

The Annual Dinner was held at The White Hart in Hackleton, and was once again well attended with everyone having an enjoyable time

It is quite a while since the Club has been in such a healthy position in Member numbers & financially, and is pleasing to see 3 generations of males & females all coming together and having an enjoyable time in a fantastic facility! In the past year we have had birthday parties for a 7 year old & an 80 year old!

Andy Odell – May 2016

W.I.REPORT TO GREAT HOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL - MAY 2016

We have once again had a very happy and successful year as a W.I and enjoyed supporting Village events such as the Church Fete and Village Fun Day. Members have once again been very supportive when asked to help and are ever generous in donating cakes for the various stalls.

Our speakers for the year have been varied and interesting ranging from a Woodturning demonstration to a Pilates session. We have also had talks about beautiful Iceland, how to keep Honeybees at the bottom of the garden and the history of Delapre Abbey. January saw us enjoying a delicious hot meal with our husbands and friends at the Parsons Memorial Hall and in March we learnt about and sampled Indian Spices and Chutneys, some hotter than others.

We have had several outings including an afternoon tea at Frosts Garden Centre, Woburn Sands, a day at Denman which is the W.I College and a magnificent afternoon tea at Kilworth House. Nearer to home we had a tour round Boughton House and Gallones Ice Cream factory.

In June we were represented at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party by one of our members to celebrate the W.I Centenary.

We continue to hold coffee mornings on the second Friday of the month at the hall which has proved successful and good social events. Everyone is welcome

Our meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month in the Parsons Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. We are always happy to attract new members, they may be assured of a warm welcome.

Elaine Fleckney

006/16 Questions from the floor

There were no questions

007/14 Chairman's closing remarks

The Chairman thanked residents for attending

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.20

Signed

Date