

## **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Hardingstone Parish**

**Held on 9th May 2023, 7.45pm At Hardingstone Village Hall, High Street, Hardingstone**

**Present: 4 councillors, 10 members of the public, clerk,**

### **1. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Minutes approved and signed

### **2. Report from Police / PCSO**

Police had sent apologies

### **3. Report from West Northants Council**

No report from West Northants Council

#### **1. Report from the Parish Council**

##### **a. Chairman**

The chairman advised that this was the clerk's last meetings and thanks were given for her work over the last 7 years. A new clerk has been appointed but there will be a couple of weeks without a clerk. This means that there may be a slightly reduced service as councillors fill in.

The council is on a Steering committee at the Bike Park which meets quarterly to give and receive updates.

##### **b. Planning**

The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications in the parish but we do not make decisions. We are just able to give local perspective.

##### **c. F&GP**

The Committee is responsible, in the main, for budget setting; monitoring performance against budget; monitoring the effectiveness of internal control and financial reporting; undertaking all financial and legal issues relating to premises, land and equipment; the HR function, including recruitment, retention and training; and reviewing all policies of the Council on an annual basis and making recommendations to Council regarding their adoption at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Parish Council expenditure includes maintenance and mowing of the recreation ground; village maintenance; upkeep of the Parish room; Community events; annual grants to village organisations; salary and associated payroll costs for the Parish Clerk; insurance; audit costs; telephone, broadband and website costs; and ongoing training for Councillors.

The Parish Council had a surplus of £237 in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This was represented by receipts totalling £49,896 offset by expenditure totalling £49,659. Total reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 were £77,488 which included specific reserves of £47,908.

The precept for 2023/24 has been set at £65,000, an increase of £25,000 on 2022/23. This is as a result of sharp inflationary increases in expenditure together with a one-off exceptional anticipated expense of £20,000 to cover the cost of rebuilding a stone boundary wall which is the legal responsibility of the Parish Council. Taking this into account we expect an overall deficit of £4,396 in the current year resulting in year-end reserves of £73,092 which provisionally includes specific reserves of £47,908.

#### **d. Community and Open Spaces**

Over the year we have carried out several projects.

We have replaced several benches in the rec after some were damaged by unknown persons.

We helped with the cost of the mural in the rec, that turned out really great.

We with a lot of help from volunteers have planted over 100 saplings along the length of the low rail in the rec kindly donated by woodland Trust and arranged by Rotary club.

We have now eventually acquired Cherry orchard after many years of negotiations with the council.

We are looking into painting a mural in the bus shelter in the warren to improve the overall look.

Volunteers are on board with this project.

We are also now looking into putting exercise equipment in the rec for all to use.

The planters around the memorial on the green have been maintained by volunteers and parish councillors.

The planter at Hardingstone lane is maintained by the nursery in Hardingstone lane.

We thank everyone involved in this work to keep our village looking vibrant

Planters around the memorial are planted twice a year and watered by a neighbour.

Last June we held a successful event of the Jubilee and this was repeated this week for the coronation with a great turnout despite the weather.

In December there was a seniors Christmas tea party which was well attended.

Footpaths are regularly walked and paths to Delapre have been cut back by the bike park. Footpath across the SUE is still closed and will have part rerouted.

#### **6 – Neighbourhood Watch**

Pam Pease was thanked for her years of service from which she stood down earlier this year.

Whilst it is fine to put reports of crime or anti social behaviour on social media, there is a need to report to the police.

#### **7 – Reports from Local groups and Organisations**

##### **Hardingstone Academy**

No one present

##### **Scouts**

Squirrels were opened a year ago and there are now 24 with a wait list of 12 for this group. This is a new part of scouting and there are only 5 groups in Northamptonshire so there is interest from outside the village. Priority is given to village residents.

There are 2 beaver groups with 48 children and 2 cubs groups with 57 children and 2 scouts groups with 54 children – a total of 183 young people. The largest ever pack in Northamptonshire.

26 Scouts and explorers attended international camp in Switzerland and there are plans to have some attend in 2025.

Scout band is doing well with many events attended.

### **Village Hall**

The Village Hall is still a popular venue for many Child friendly groups and regular social activities, due to big increases in costs we are feeling the pinch like many organisations, our bookings are steady but there is a noticeable drop in income.

We are continuing to make improvements to our building a new CCTV system was fitted with a screen inside to help the users see who is trying to gain access and to keep the building secure for everyone.

We were very lucky to have The Princess Trust charity help us, by decorating our Foyer, painting the front railings, and staining the back fences. The young people were engaging, helpful, and it was joy to work with them.

Over the summer we plan to do improvements to the outdoor space new doors fitted to both stores on the patio area and to provide a dedicated kitchen and toilet facility for the garden our treasurer managed to secure some funding from Garfield Weston charitable fund, for this project which will start very soon.

Our small committee of dedicated volunteers work hard to support Gaynor our manager to keep the hall in a very good condition available to all village residents.

If you are interested in keeping this facility successful for our village and would be interested in helping, by joining our committee please get in touch with Paul Weatherley - Chairman at [hardingstone@outlook.com](mailto:hardingstone@outlook.com)

### **Allotment Association**

Parish Council were thanked for past grants. The project for this year is upgrading the footpath that runs through the site. This can get slippery in wet weather so wood chip has been put down and a hand rail.

Allotments are currently at capacity with a short waiting list.

It was asked if there can be a consideration to crop back some of the trees behind the village hall as they are casting a lot of shade.

### **Hardingstone Social Club**

I would like to start with a thankyou to the Parish Council for their generous grant of £200 towards booking speakers for the club. It was a relief to get back to a more normal routine despite the ongoing presence of Covid. Thankyou also to Lesley Francklow who worked hard to book the varied programme for the year.

In May we had a fascinating talk on the pioneering Amy Johnson from Roy Smart. The first woman to fly solo from England to Australia, setting long distance records and taking risks which may have ultimately contributed to her disappearance. In June we enjoyed a talk from Colin Ray on 'The History of the Music Hall'. We also had a short quiz about Queen Elizabeth11 as part of celebrating Her Majesty's 70 years on the throne. We have a break in July.

In August Bill Lockerbie fascinated us with an excellently researched account of 'The Story of the Lancaster Bomber Tragedy in Northampton'. This was a local event as the plane crashed in Delapre Abbey grounds after delivering repatriated POW soldiers after WW2. Some of the crew were rescued by local farm workers who were awarded British Empire Medals for their bravery.

The talk in September was from the Frank Bruno Foundation a charity based in Northampton which was founded to provide a safe environment for young people struggling with mental health problems. Frank is very much hands on and is proud of those young people who have reclaimed their lives and some now work for the foundation.

October saw David Heathcote explain how to improve 'Reduce, Re-Use and Recycle' in our lives. He answered many queries from the audience, especially on recycling and gave us some measures to help avoid food waste when making meals.

Laura Malpas showed us some wonderful slides of 'Amazing Japan' in November and her talk made it a very inviting idea to visit this beautiful, clean and polite country.

The Christmas celebration in December saw us welcome back Graham Waughman with his excellent catering. We really enjoyed the songs and sketches by the Hardingstone Players, especially the Health and Safety one!

In January, Nigel Ancil gave us another interesting and testing quiz. In February we invited Bill Lockerbie back for another excellent talk this time on Lamport Hall, where he volunteers, and encouraged us all to visit.

In March we had a follow up talk from Bruce Wright on his latest Rust Bucket Challenge. The slides illustrated their 2,500 mile journey in their brightly decorated £500 'rust bucket' car from Wellingborough to Venice and back, all in 4 days. This is to raise money for Prostaïd, and local charities We Mind and Kelly Matters.

In April 'The Dog in my Medicine Cabinet' highlighted the wonderful work done by the medical detection dogs based in Milton Keynes. The dogs are able to detect some cancers and warn diabetics of imminent danger. It was lovely to meet his dog too.

If you found this interesting, we would love you to join us on the first Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall at 8pm. There are varied and interesting talks booked going forward.

St Edmund's King and Martyr Hardingstone

The Church is a mix of faith based and community non faith events.

The Church has the well which is a community coffee shop and offers space for people to come together on a Tuesday and Friday Morning. This is run by volunteers both from the church community and non church volunteers. The well has guest speakers and themed days that link with

events such as MacMillan Coffee Morning and making Christmas decorations. The money raised goes to support the church for which the church is grateful. However at its heart it is a community outreach space.

The church has worked with the school offering experience days. These are where we set up areas in the church with different activities around a theme. This year it was the life of Jesus in our church. There were 6 stations each manned by people telling a short bible story and then an activity. Groups then move on. This was done with year 5 at the academy. We have also started to work with the High School and welcomed the reception children into the church.

We have been fortunate to have had our history tours and also our tower tours.

We also participated in the Ride and Stride where we welcomed people as they rode from church to church.

We were blessed by a wonderful Remembrance service with the uniformed branches coming into the church to be flag bearers.

Being a place of worship we offer a service for all major festivals as well as Sundays. Being the vicar of 4 parishes meant we needed to change service times and so we reinstated our pre-covid service time.

We offer Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals and even though the churchyard is closed for burials we are still able to receive burial of ashes.

### **The Supporters of St Edmunds**

This is a secular group to raise funds for the fabric of the building and repairs.

They obtained the grant for the mural in the Rec and ongoing are looking for funds to enable works highlighted in the 2021 report.

### **Friends of Hardingstone**

We continue to hold coffee mornings on the first Saturday of the month where we all get chance to highlight matters for discussion about things happening in Hardingstone. We sometimes refer these discussions to other organisations such as The Parish Council. We have increased the Craft Club meetings to 2 each month on the 2nd & 4th Mondays in the month 7.30 to 9pm Parish Room. Much chat woven round knit and stitch!

During the last 12 months we put 2 donations into the MurAll fund, and our logo is painted on the first panel in the Rec with other donors etc. We also helped organise the Remembrance Sunday event having revised the service sheet, after discussion with Rev Julie, and paid to have new ones printed on better quality paper with the correct wording of the National Anthem printing King and not Queen.

Several of us get involved in other organisations or activities in the village. We put up craft club made Jubilee bunting on the churchyard lime trees. This was used for the Coronation weekend. This year we again hosted a HOT meeting to kick off plans with HPC for the Coronation. We have designed the posters for this and had a roll a penny stall on the Monday and advertised for others to attend our events. Some of us were involved in the plant and cake sale in the churchyard.

We have been in existence for 17 years and although not as active now, we are pleased that our original aims set out in 2006 continue to be met.

- \* Re-kindle community spirit in Hardingstone.
- \* Foster the enthusiasm, skills and knowledge of people in Hardingstone to bring about gradual changes for the better.
  
- \* Generate social opportunities for more people to become involved in village life.
  
- \* Create a more united village by encouraging organisations, groups, and individuals to work together for the good of the whole village.
- \* Raise funds to improve facilities in Hardingstone.

### **History Society**

The Society has continued to prosper during its eleventh year. There has been a small loss of members, not exclusively to covid, but this has been balanced by new additions, mainly from outside the village. It is gratifying to note that we can attract people from as far away as Kislingbury

A succession of good speakers with interesting talks produced informative and entertaining meetings, which were followed by a second-half of readings or videos putting a final polish to the afternoons.

As far as time permits we continue to add to the website, particularly photographs, but we are always looking for new ones.

A Christmas trip to Earls Barton was arranged for our December meeting, proving so successful that there is to be a return visit in August.

### **Bouverie WI**

Bouverie WI meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2.00pm in Hardingstone Village Hall. We currently have 22 members, who enjoy friendship, entertainment and activities in our monthly meetings.

We were very grateful to the Parish Council for awarding us funding last year, 2022. We have had some very interesting talks over the past year, as well as craft and social events.

In July, Our speaker was Martin Sirot-Smith who gave an interesting and entertaining talk on Daily life in Tudor Times in character as "Laurence Washington, Lord of the Manors of Sulgrave and Stuchbury", appearing in Tudor dress, although it was the hottest day of the year with temperatures nearing 40 degrees. In October Julia Doherty told us all about her 500 mile hike across Spain, and Steve Dimmer visited us in February giving us an excellent talk about the Struggles of Walt Disney.

Members have played indoor curling and taken part in a beetle drive. We learned how to do felt craft and we all took home our hand made Christmas cards. Tonia at The Crown hosted our Christmas Lunch, and arranged some games of bingo after our meal, it was a very enjoyable

afternoon. Then at our December meeting, we held our Christmas Party in the Village Hall. The buffet was supplied by our members and games followed. To finish the afternoon, Father Christmas visited.

We have spent some enjoyable afternoons at the Crown, playing skittles.

Bouverie WI support Cynthia Spencer Hospice by providing home made cakes, and members assisted with the raffle at Christine Wilks' birthday party in the village in the summer.

WI Members will be providing refreshments at the Coronation event on the rec on Bank Holiday Monday in May.

We are always happy to welcome new members to our monthly meetings and look forward to seeing anyone who would like to join our friendly group in the future.