

The logo for Hampton-in-Arden features the name in a black cursive font, set against a background of two overlapping brushstrokes: a light green one on top and a light blue one on the bottom.

Hampton-in-Arden

Annual Report

2008/09

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

Introduction by the Chair

The annual cycle of the parish council commences in May with the election of officers. On this occasion Malcolm James, who had been our hard working Chairman for some years, had taken the decision to stand down. I think that everyone in the parish would like to join me in thanking Malcolm for his relentless work on our behalf and for the tact and diplomacy which he used to such good effect in his unique problem solving skills.

The council nominated me to be its new Chair, a role I accepted after much consideration and promises of continued support from Malcolm, for which I am very grateful.

During 2008 Councillor Roger Chapman resigned from the parish council as he and his family were relocating to Shropshire. Roger had been a hard working member of the council for many years and had a wealth of knowledge about council matters, particularly the environment of the village having chaired the maintenance committee for a long while. Roger had also been very involved with advancing the standing of Parish and Town Councils at higher levels of local government and had been instrumental in drawing up The Local Council Charter which has been adopted by Solihull MBC. I would like to thank Roger for his contribution to the parish council and wish him and his family good fortune in their new life.

The vacancy on the council was advertised and 2 excellent applications were received. Councillors wished that both could be appointed however following much discussion Alison Rolf was co-opted and we are very pleased to welcome Alison to our number.

In 2004 the parish council was awarded Quality Council Status which expired at the end of 2008. In this period the criteria for the award had been expanded and the re-accreditation process took a very thorough look at all our working practices. One of the criteria is that the clerk holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration which Helen Wood has now achieved. I would like to congratulate Helen for gaining the certificate; the assessment process was very detailed and completing the portfolio took much time. I would also like to thank her for undergoing the process because without her qualification the parish council couldn't be considered for Quality Status. I am pleased to say that we were awarded Quality Status in February and would like to thank those councillors who devoted their time and enthusiasm to the application process. It was certainly useful to look in detail at our relationships with the community, to value what we already do well and plan for future developments.

The Parish Plan has also been a work in progress this year and the draft action plan, which followed on from analysis of the returns, has now been distributed throughout the community for consultation prior to publication. We will then be approaching other bodies, particularly Solihull MBC, to take action on the issues of concern to the people of our parish.

Major work has been taking place at the recreation ground during the year. The land drains were replaced and the disturbance was used as an opportunity to install a cricket square, funded by a generous grant from George Fentham (Hampton-in-Arden) Charity. The whole area then needed to be levelled and seeded. Flood lights have been installed for the astro-pitches and it is wonderful to see high level hockey

being played each evening. The tennis court project commenced in February and will result in a fantastic facility. Again we have used the opportunity to improve the access pathways and approach area to the scout hut which now is much safer and far more aesthetic in appearance. Malcolm and I are looking forward to a period of peace at the recreation ground so that the area can settle down, the grass re-grow and become an attractive area that everyone can enjoy.

There have been some major planning issues during the year and the council continues to try and support parishioners' views when development is proposed. We are all pleased that the Motorway Service Area has been refused and that the enquiry into the proposed nursing home at the corner of Old Station Road also resulted in refusal.

2008 has been a very busy year, so what are our goals for 2009?

We will continue to look for ways of ensuring that our parishioners' views are reflected in the work that we carry out on your behalf. The introduction, on a trial basis, of parish council "surgeries" alongside the police surgeries taking place in the bakery will hopefully make it easier for you to share any issues of concern. Please also remember that all parish council meetings are open to the public where you have an opportunity to speak to the council.

We are hoping to introduce the "Speedwatch" initiative in the village during the summer and are still looking for volunteers who can spare a couple of hours a month to be trained to operate this worthwhile traffic calming scheme.

We are looking into establishing a youth council in the village so that the young people in our community can become engaged in the local government process and can have input into the provision of facilities that they would like to use.

In my first year as Chair of your Parish Council my biggest frustration has been the interaction with our principal authority. Solihull MBC appears to take little or no notice of the needs of Hampton-in-Arden and I intend to find a way of establishing a process which will result in better cooperation so that all the little things that you find frustrating on a day to day basis can be addressed in a timely way.

**Gill Lewis
Chairman**

Your Council

The Parish Council at 31 March 2009 was as follows:

Councillor Peter W Adams, 46 Meriden Road, B92 0BT	442100
Councillor Clive Bowen, 23 Lapwing Drive, B92 0BQ	443935
Councillor Malcolm James, 10 Elm Lodge B92 0BG	443710
Councillor Graham J Juniper, 29 Meriden Road, B92 0BS	442341
Councillor Dr Gill Lewis, 69 Meriden Road, B92 0BS	443517
Councillor Alison Rolf, 5 BelleVue Terrace, B92 0AR	442841
Councillor Roger Smith, 68 Old Station Road, B92 0EY	443232

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Helen Wood, the Parish Office, Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane,
Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH
01675 442976

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 May 2008 Councillor Gill Lewis was elected Chairman and Councillor Malcolm James was elected Vice Chairman.

The following sub-committees and representatives were appointed.

Planning Sub Committee: Councillor G. Juniper (Chair)
The Chairman and Vice Chairman
Councillor C. Bowen
Councillor R. Smith

Maintenance Committee: The Chairman and Vice Chairman (Chair)
Councillor P. Adams
Councillor C. Bowen
Councillor R. Smith

Communications Working Group: The Chairman and Vice Chairman
Councillor Roger Smith

Parish Plan Steering Group: The Chairman and Vice Chairman
Councillor C. Bowen

Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (Solihull Area):

Councillor G. Lewis
Councillor C. Bowen

Footpaths and Rights of Way Representative: Councillor G. Lewis

Airport Consultative Committee: Councillor C. Bowen

Conservation Advisory Committee: Councillor R. Smith

Local Strategic Partnership Forum: Councillor G. Lewis

The Parish Council also appoint trustees to: The Charity of George Fentham
The Hampton-in-Arden Recreational Trust

Meetings:

During the year 7 meetings of the full Council were held and attendance was as follows:

Councillor Peter Adams	6
Councillor C. Bowen	7
Councillor Malcolm James	7
Councillor Graham Juniper	7
Councillor Dr Gill Lewis	6
Councillor A. Rolf	3(co-opted during year)
Councillor R. Smith	6

Finance

Parish Councils are required by law to appoint an internal auditor to check the accounts, asset register, insurances and financial controls. From the report of our internal auditor a summary report is submitted for external examination by auditors appointed by the Audit Commission.

The un-audited accounts for the year 2008/09 are presented in this report.

The precept is the major form in which the Parish Council raises funds to carry out its work during the year. The 2009/10 level of precept was kept at the 2008/9 level. During the coming year the Parish Council has set a precept of £24.29 per Category D band household.

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council			
Income and Expenditure			
	Budget 2008/09	Actual 2008/09	Budget 2009/10
	£	£	£
Income			
Precept	22150.00	22150.00	22150.00
Sports Club Rental	2400.00	2400.00	2400.00
Recreation Trust Rental	500.00	500.00	500.00
Allotment Rental	100.00	85.00	100.00
Scout and Guide Headquarters Rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bank Interest	800.00	565.12	300.00
Miscellaneous contributions	18750.00	18751.15	300.00
Drawdown from Reserves	27000.00	27000.00	3000.00
VAT refund from Customs and Excise		9570.04	
Total Income	71750.00	81071.31	28800.00
	Budget 2008/09	Actual 2008/09	Budget 2009/10
Expenditure			
Section 137 Expenditure	100.00		
Grass Cutting Parish Land	3200.00	3412.25	3700.00
Grass Cutting Catherine de Barnes Common	300.00	165.00	200.00
Grass Cutting Church Yard	800.00	970.00	1030.00
Parish owned land Maintenance	5500.00	4040.98	3370.00
Recreation ground drainage and re-seeding	18500.00	18457.62	
Construction of Cricket Pitch	17000.00	17121.61	
Re-surface Playground	6800.00	6770.50	
Clerk's salary and expenses	4800.00	4779.08	5130.00
Donations and subscriptions	600.00	547.00	600.00
Office Expenses	200.00	438.92	400.00
Web site	800.00	352.47	400.00

Insurance	1300.00	1219.49	1370.00
Capital Expenditure	2000.00		2000.00
Sundries	200.00	280.77	200.00
Audit and Legal Fees	300.00	285.00	300.00
Room Hire	200.00	240.00	200.00
Village in Bloom	950.00	907.92	300.00
Parish Plan	1000.00	186.95	1000.00
Training	200.00	279.95	300.00
Contingency			1300.00
Transfer to Allocated Reserves	7000.00	7000.00	7000.00
VAT paid out		9486.84	
Total Expenditure	71750.00	76942.45	28800.00

Notes:

Actual Income/Expenditure 2008/9

Income

1. Income was greater than in previous years due to a drawdown from reserves to fund the drainage and re-seeding of the recreation field and the re-surfacing of the playground.
2. A donation was received from George Fentham Charity to fund the new cricket square on the recreation field.
3. Donations were received from the George Fentham Charity, the Sports Club and the Recreation Trust to contribute to the funding of the new footpath at the recreation field.

Expenditure

1. Expenditure was greater than previous years due to the major improvement works to the recreation ground (see above) and the re-surfacing of the playground.

Reserves

2. Reserves were reduced by £27000 to fund the improvements to the recreation ground, the re-surfacing of the playground and the work on the parish plan.

Reserves as at 31 March 2009

General Fund

	£
Reserves	22983.88
Less Committed Reserves 09/10	-3000.00
Total Uncommitted Reserves	19938.88

Planning Sub-Committee

Most planning applications have been discussed at the main parish council meetings but when urgent planning applications are received which need a response before the next meeting, the chair of the sub-committee consults with other committee members before sending a response which is then confirmed in the next meeting of the parish council.

The parish council has received 38 planning applications in 2008/9. This number is down on previous years which possibly reflect the financial uncertainty at the moment. They have ranged from minor tree works to more contentious plans such as

the siting of hardstanding for caravans at Shadowbrook Lane and change of use at Hampton Manor to a hotel and conference centre.

Last year we reported on three planning issues that were causing the village great concern. Two of these were resolved in the year and residents were delighted by the result. The third issue is still the subject of further negotiation.

The threat of a Motorway Service Area (MSA) at Catherine de Barnes has been with us for many years, since the original inquiry selected it as the preferred site for a MSA. The new public inquiry lasted for over 14 weeks, at enormous expense to Solihull council tax payers. Throughout that time the village was represented by George Goodall and the Parish Council and residents owe him a debt of gratitude for presenting our case against the plan. The Inspector turned it down and this was confirmed by the Secretary of State which should mean that we are safe for the future.

We were also delighted that the proposal to build a 62 bedroom care home on the corner of Meriden Road and Old Station Road was rejected by the inspector, after an appeal, following the decision by Solihull MBC to refuse planning permission. We are not against a care home in the village, but this was the wrong location.

Birmingham International Airport plan to lengthen their runway by 400 metres to allow fully laden planes to take off for longer flights. Solihull Council has passed the plan and are agreeing various environmental issues with the airport, such as reducing the number of night flights. Our main concern has been to keep the "Hampton Turn" where planes, when taking off in our direction, turn away from the village by 20% when they are 500 feet up and one nautical mile from the end of the runway. The Airport want to do away with this as it would allow them to get planes away quicker at peak times, but we are still hoping it can be kept, (although the turn would take place 400 metres nearer us), as it would still help keep the noise level down. The decision on this will be made by the Civil Aviation Authority and we will continue to negotiate with the Airport and if necessarily with the CAA. The aircraft will be approximately 100 feet lower over the western end of the village on landing but there isn't much we can do about this without international agreement to allow aircraft to approach on a steeper landing path.

Our new major concern this year has been the Government's consultants recommending up to 20,000 new homes in Solihull over the next 20 years. A great number of these might have to be built on the Meriden Gap and we are a key village in the fight to keep the green belt in this vital area. Again George Goodall is representing us, with his expertise on planning, at the Government organised meetings to discuss the plans. We shall have to await the results

Maintenance Committee

The maintenance committee is responsible for the management of the Parish Council's property, and works with other partners who share interests in the appearance and management of the village and its environs. The committee comprises members of the parish council together with representatives from the George Fentham Charity, the Parochial Church Council, the Governors of George Fentham School, the Scouts & Guides Supporters Association, the Hampton-in-Arden Sports Club, Hampton-in-Arden Recreational Trust, Catherine-de-Barnes Residents Association and an Independent Co-optee.

The maintenance committee is responsible for overseeing grounds maintenance within the village whether on parish council owned land as in the case of the recreation ground or the village green, on occupied land as in the case of the school field, play area and allotments, on grounds where a financial contribution is made as in the case of the churchyard or on those areas in the control of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) where the quality of workmanship and level of maintenance impact on the appearance and well-being of the village.

Contractors are regularly engaged to carry out routine work on behalf of the parish council. The parish council also relies heavily on contributions of volunteers such as the conservation group to provide enhanced levels of care to particular areas of our environment, including helping to maintain the appearance of the spinney and the various micro environments within it. The parish council is extremely grateful for the help it receives.

The recreation ground has undergone necessary drainage work in order to alleviate the problem of flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. While this work has been going on, the opportunity was taken to construct a cricket square within this area to enable junior cricket to be played in the village. We thank George Fentham Charity for their contribution to the project. Improvements have been made to the pathways on the recreation ground, allowing disabled access, jointly funded by all parties that use the field and a generous donation from George Fentham (Hampton-in-Arden) Charity

The parish council has given permission to the Sports Club to make the improvements to the tennis courts which has been difficult and disruptive during building works but will result in a great facility for the village.

The safety surfacing on the play area has now been replaced with a much better rubber surface. A pruning of planted area around the play ground has taken place, together with a major pruning of all council owned hedges in the village, leading to a better environment for all.

Maintenance of Catherine-de-Barnes Common normally revolves around maintaining the paths and making an annual cut of the grass. The assistance of Catherine-de-Barnes Residents Association is appreciated in helping the parish council to achieve its objectives.

The committee has met on three occasions during the last year.

Communications Working Group

The communications working group was established to conduct a review of the parish council's publications and promotion and to examine how best to transmit the decisions made by the council to people who live in the Parish.

Due to personnel changes on the parish council, this group has not been active and also the major focus of work for councillors has been on progressing the parish plan and the re-accreditation portfolio for continuing to be a Quality Parish Council. However the writing of the portfolio has required the council to focus on how we communicate with parishioners including the writing of a communication strategy to focus on community engagement. We hope to share with parishioners in the coming

year our plans for more active engagement with our community with such initiatives as the parish council “surgeries” and establishment of a “Speedwatch” initiative in the village.

The website has been reviewed and “Village News” has been updated but we rely on you all to give us news stories for inclusion on the website. The “village diary” is not much used and can also be a way of publicising your event. The website can be accessed at www.hamptoninarden.org.uk.

The Parish Plan

Parish Plans set out a vision of how the community wants to develop and the action needed to achieve it. They include everything that is relevant to the people who live and work in the community, from shops, local services and recreation to affordable housing, access to healthcare and the protection of the natural environment.

- It reflects the views of all sections of the community
- It identifies which features and local characteristics people value
- It identifies local problems and opportunities
- It spells out how residents want the community to develop in the future
- It prepares a plan of action to achieve it

The Steering group which was established to manage the development process have worked hard these past few months to complete the analysis of the questionnaires so that a final plan can be produced. The draft action plan has been circulated to all household in the village and following consultation will be the basis of the parish plan

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council 2009