



Hampton-in-Arden

Annual Report

2009/10

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

Introduction by the Chair

It is now almost two years since I was elected Chair of the parish council. Patience and dogged determination have definitely been necessary qualities in working towards established goals. I am pleased to report that in the later stages of 2009 we have begun to see some tangible results.

Firstly the Parish Plan has recently been distributed to all households. It started with consultation in 2007-8 to establish key themes; a questionnaire was distributed to each household and the information provided by parishioners has been analysed. The draft action plan was distributed in early 2009 for comment, following which the text has been combined with carefully chosen art work for publication. Although it has been some time since the original questions were asked we feel that the plan is extremely relevant to current issues and the council has already worked towards and achieved some of the stated objectives. The plan will form a framework for the future of the village and many outside agencies are looking at it to guide development of services.

The redesigning of the village web site is almost complete; it is bigger, better and brighter and we hope that it will become a more satisfactory source of information for the future. We have other plans to improve dissemination of information; a directory of villagers e mail addresses to allow easy communication; we may even venture into the world of twitter and face book. Parish Council Surgeries continue to take place on a monthly basis and it is extremely useful to address issues with community police officers and Solihull Council neighbourhood coordinator present. Please also remember that all parish council meetings are open to the public; you may just wish to come and listen, however a section at the beginning of the meeting is set aside for members of the public to address the council about any issues of concern.

At times last year it seemed that the Recreation Ground would remain a sea of mud forever but some patience and a great deal of endeavour on the part of a few villagers has resulted in fabulous facilities. Four new tennis courts have been completed and are excellent for coaching junior players and easy on the aging knee. The new cricket square has been lovingly tended through the summer and the cricket section of the sports club is steadily growing; its next project is to establish funding for cricket practise nets. It is certainly fabulous to see cricket being played on a summer evening. Two new boules pitches have been constructed behind the club house to allow teams to take part in league matches; this work has freed up space to develop a patio area. The tarmac pathways around the recreation field have all been improved and with planting and turfing complete the whole area is looking wonderful. It is now a real pleasure to walk through the recreation ground, spinney and new woodland and enjoy the brook flowing through the wild flower meadow.

We have been working steadily with the highways department at Solihull MBC to identify ways of reducing traffic nuisance. We have looked closely at calming measures such as speed humps and pedestrian crossings but each one brings its own problems, the noise of traffic crossing humps and risk of damage to our own vehicles. Our current aim is to try and raise awareness of existing speed restrictions so that traffic passing through the village is not so obvious or dangerous.

Community Speed Watch started in March; nine volunteers have been trained by the police and another training session is planned. We are catching speeding motorists, however the speed watch team feels that raising awareness of the speed limit is important; our volunteers feel empowered by the scheme. The frequency of Speed Watch surveillance will be increasing in the near future when more volunteers are

trained. We have had two vehicle activated speed signs installed and, at our request, the Council have conducted a traffic survey specific to heavy goods traffic. It is our perception that a great many HGVs use our roads but the survey showed that only 2% of traffic comprised large commercial vehicles, the accepted national average. The Fentham Road junction at Engine Mews has been identified for urgent safety improvement; bollards should soon be installed to keep the pavement clear for pedestrians and a street light has been requested.

Parking continues to be a problem; many older houses have no off road spaces and the number of vehicles per household is rising increasing congestion on our streets. The parish council has received several appeals through the year to intercede in disputes about parking so could we ask that consideration is given to other residents and off road spaces are used wherever possible. We would also like to request that cars are not parked on pavements as this makes access for mobility scooters and prams very difficult. Both the police and ourselves have written to households where parking is a concern and regularly leave notices on windscreens requesting more consideration in parking habits.

There have not been any major planning issues during the year but High Speed 2 is of serious concern and the parish council will work with the community, our M.P. and appropriate experts to mitigate the effect on the village environment.

In the spring of 2010 a vacancy arose for a parish councillor due to the retirement of Peter Adams. Peter has served as a councillor for many years and had been chair of the council for a period of time; he considers that having arrived at 'a certain age' he should give opportunity for a younger member of the community, with different skills, to join the council. The parish council, and the village as a whole, are extremely grateful to Peter for his immense contribution and for his balanced opinion and guidance on many issues over the years and wish him a long and happy retirement free of parish council duties. The vacancy was advertised and 2 excellent applications were received. Councillors wished that both could be appointed however following much discussion Martin Dove was co-opted and we are very pleased to welcome Martin to our number.

In 2010 we will continue to reflect parishioners' views in our work.

One of our immediate goals is to consult with our youngsters allowing them to have a voice in village affairs. We are about to establish a youth council in the village so that 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 this report last year I stated that one of my main aims was to improve our interaction with Solihull MBC and I am happy to report that we are beginning to experience a better working relationship. Council officers are starting to realise that the parish council understands village needs and are now approaching us for our opinion on certain issues.

I would like to close by thanking the many people in Hampton-in-Arden who work throughout the year to provide and improve facilities and conditions within the village for us all to enjoy, without their work our community would not be such a great place to live.

**Gill Lewis
Chairman**

Your Council

The Parish Council at 31 March 2010 was as follows:

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
Councillor Martin Dove 336 Kenilworth Road CV7 7ER (from 20/3/10)	0773 4531845

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Helen Wood, the Parish Office, Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane,
Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH 01675 442976
Email :clerk@hamptoninarden.org.uk

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12 May 2009, the following officers were elected;-

Chairman	Councillor Gill Lewis
Vice Chair	Councillor Malcolm James

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 C. Bowen
Councillor R. Smith

Communications Working Group: The Chairman and Vice Chairman
Councillor Alison Rolf
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; Mr S Duffield, Mr N Pettman, Dr M Shalley
The Hampton-in-Arden Recreational Trust; Mr R Bowker, Mr G Holloway

Meetings:

During the year 8 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	8
Councillor A. Rolf	7
Councillor R. Smith	8

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 2009/10 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 2009/10	Actual 2009/10	Budget 2010/11
	£	£	£
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	0	100.00
Scout and Guide Headquarters Rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bank Interest	0	14.38	0
Other Income	0	100.00	0
Drawdown from Reserves	3000.00	3000.00	
VAT refund from Customs and Excise		1034.49	
Total Income	28200.00	29248.87	25200.00
	Budget	Actual	Budget

	2009/10	2009/10	2010/11
Expenditure			
Section 137 Expenditure	0		
Grass Cutting Parish Land	3700.00	3273.00	3700.00
Grass Cutting Catherine de Barnes Common	200.00	144.00	200.00
Grass Cutting Church Yard	1030.00	990.00	1030.00
Parish owned land Maintenance	3370.00	3138.37	3600.00
Clerk's salary and expenses	5130.00	5042.18	5270.00
Donations and subscriptions	600.00	563.00	600.00
Office Expenses	500.00	504.56	500.00
Web site	400.00	343.75	700.00
Insurance	1370.00	1332.19	1400.00
Capital Expenditure	2200.00	2149.41	0
Sundries	200.00	195.14	200.00
Audit and Legal Fees	400.00	400.00	400.00
Room Hire	200.00	265.60	300.00
Village in Bloom	0	0	0
Parish Plan	1600.00	1590.06	0
Training	300.00	180.00	300.00
Transfer to Allocated Reserves	7000.00	7000.00	7000.00
VAT paid out		1388.32	
Excess Receipts over payments		748.59	
Total Expenditure	28200.00	29248.87	25200.00

Notes:

Actual Income/Expenditure 2009/10

Income

Some items of expenditure were funded by a drawdown from reserves of £3000. This was because the expenditure had been allowed for but not spent in the previous financial year.

Expenditure

Savings were achieved on the grass cutting and maintenance budgets mainly due to a delay in some maintenance work being carried out.

Capital Expenditure included a new notice board for the Recreation Ground and a new photocopier for the parish office.

Reserves as at 31 March 2010

General Fund

Reserves 1/4/09	£ 22983.88
Less committed reserves 09/10	(3000.00)
Plus contribution to reserves 09/10	7000.00
Excess receipts over payments	2.50
Total Reserves	26986.38

The reserve fund is established year on year to allow for predicted major expenditure such as resurfacing the car park or replacing play equipment in years to come.

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, Solihull MBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator 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.

During the year, much work has been carried out on areas around the Recreation Ground with new landscaping and re-planting works completed including the area around the new boules pitches.

The play equipment at the children's playground has been re-painted with the help of Solihull MBC's Environmental Champions including volunteers. Building works at George Fentham School has meant that we have temporarily fenced off the playground's main access for safety reasons and hope that you understand that this was to secure the safety of the children whilst on the playground.

We are working hard to improve the appearance of the village. The installation of two new bus shelters by the village green has received a favourable response and blends well into the surrounding area. These were paid for by monies received from a Section 106 Agreement when the Engine Mews was developed. A number of open areas in the village are also seeing the benefit of the autumn bulb planting supported by the Environmental Champions and the Gardening Club are kindly helping with a new Hampton in Bloom initiative for summer planting.

In addition to routine maintenance the Solihull footpath officer is planning improvements to our footpaths particularly the one that passes around the old cricket pitch; a firmer surface will allow children to walk to school year round away from the main road. Catherine de Barnes Common has seen some significant conservation and access work funded by Solihull MBC. The footpath has been improved with a board walk and the wet areas around it have been cleared to allow introduction of some meadowland species this summer. We would encourage you to make the

short journey to the Common to enjoy the natural wildlife habitat and beauty, just on our doorstep and still within our ancient parish.

Finally we are hoping to lease some land in the village to develop additional allotments to meet popular demand. Please contact the clerk if you wish to express an early interest in leasing an allotment if and when they become available.

Malcolm James

Communications Working Group

The communications group has been busy since the last annual meeting putting together a new website for the village. It was felt that the old site was too difficult to navigate and was not focussed enough on the needs of the parish. As a result, we have contracted a new web designer who has experience in the needs of parish councils to assist with the new design. We are very excited with the result which we think is an asset to the village. The new website, which will be demonstrated at the annual parish meeting, has drop down menus for local organisations, useful contact numbers, the parish plan and lots of information about the ongoing work of the parish council. We hope that you will all take the time to have a browse at your leisure, tell your friends and then notify us of all your forthcoming village events so that the website is a useful tool to everyone.

We are now holding regular monthly surgeries in the village alongside the police surgeries to assist in keeping communication open between the parish council and villagers and we hope that those of you who have attended the surgeries have found them useful.

Our next project is to produce a regular newsletter to keep you all updated and we have asked those with the facility, to register their email address with us, in order that you can be sent a copy electronically.

Please do visit the website at www.hamptoninarden.org.uk and let us know what you think.

Alison Rolf

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 30 planning applications in 2009/10. This number is down significantly on previous years which possibly reflect the financial uncertainty at the moment. The applications received have ranged from tree works to demolition of older houses to build new ones, but there has been nothing of major significance this year. The parish council remains opposed to any plans which could encroach on the surrounding Green Belt or the replacement of older houses with blocks of flats which we deem inappropriate within the Inset area of the village.

Graham Juniper

Other Parish Council Activities

1 Remembrance Day Village ceremony

Each Remembrance Day Sunday in November, for the past three years, the parish council has successfully organized (with the approval of both the Solihull Borough Council and the Local Police Authority) their own parade and service at the Village War Memorial. Appropriate village roads were closed to traffic to allow for the peaceful and respectful operation of this important morning in the village year. This ceremony will be similarly organized for the next Remembrance Day on Sunday 14 November 2010.

2 Birmingham International Airport

Each regular meeting of the Birmingham Airport's Consultative Committee is attended and represented by a Hampton-in-Arden Parish Councillor (currently Councillor Clive Bowen); he represents the interests and concerns of the Parish in relation to the Airport's changing operations, in particular its ongoing expansion plans.

Airspace Change Focus Group

This important offshoot of the main Consultative Committee (on which your Parish Councillor is also a member) is concerned with the proposed airspace changes necessitated by the agreed runway extension.

Your Parish Council is determined to ensure the continuation of the 'Hampton Turn', as far as is practically possible. There is a requirement by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), for the Birmingham International Airport to hold a public consultation process some 12-15 months before the proposed operation of runway extension, in 2013.

Clive Bowen