

Hampton-in-Arden

Annual Report

2010/11

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

Introduction by the Chair.

Welcome to our annual report detailing work carried out by your Parish Council during the past twelve months.

On May 5th 2011 the four yearly election of parish councillors should have taken place, nominations for the seven positions having closed on 4th April. As it happened just seven nominations were received which means that voting will not have to take place. Your new council will therefore consist of councillors Clive Bowen, Mike Blomer, John Doidge, Martin Dove, Malcolm James, Gill Lewis and Alison Rolf, they will elect officers and sub committee members from their number at the first meeting on Tuesday 17th May. I hope the new council will be full of enthusiasm and that we will be able to take appropriate action in support of the views of the community.

During the latter part of 2010 Helen Wood, who had been parish clerk for four years, decided to vacate the post and spend more time with her family. The parish council were sad to lose Helen who had ruled us with a rod of iron and had steered the council through many achievements most notably the production of the parish plan, the new web site and quality status. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the village, to thank Helen for her tremendous contribution.

The advertisement of the clerk's job resulted in over 20 applications, and a rigorous selection process led to the appointment of Julie Richardson, a resident of Meriden Road. I would like to welcome Julie and hope that she has a long and happy relationship with the parish council and village.

In November a parish council vacancy arose due to the resignation of Roger Smith. I would like to thank Roger for his contribution to the work of the council over several years. Following the advertisement and consideration by the council, Mike Blomer, of High Street, was co-opted. Mike has spent his working life involved with housing issues and is currently representing the parish council on the SMBC conservation advisory committee.

It is a year since the Parish Plan was published and the steering group have reviewed progress towards the objectives. Some have already been met, for instance the new website and newsletter; some we are still working on, such as widening the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The plan forms a framework for the future of the village and details from it were used to add weight to our submission towards Solihull MBC Local Development Framework. Outside agencies do appear to be looking at it to guide planning and development of services.

The refurbished village web site is up and running and the communication group is continually working to improve it's content and appearance. It contains the monthly 'Parish Council News' from the Village Chronicle and up to date minutes of parish council meetings. Photographs are regularly refreshed to reflect the seasons and events in the village. We are aware that not everyone has email and the first quarterly parish council newsletter was recently distributed to each house, it is also available to download from the website.

In April a meeting was held with village youngsters to find out what facilities they would like. The aim is to give them a voice in village affairs and move towards creating a Youth Council. They perceived the first step be the provision of a web page linked to the parish council web site which would publicise activities already taking place and we hope that this is about to happen. When the new parish council meets I hope it will consider forming a youth sub committee in order to accelerate the pace of achievement in this area of our work.

Despite representation to the police authorities, we have lost our specific neighbourhood police officer. We are still supported by the neighbourhood police team and parish council surgeries continue to take place on a monthly basis with community police officers and Solihull Council neighbourhood coordinator present. Please come and air any concerns you have. Parish council meetings are also open to the public, you can come and listen to proceedings and there is opportunity for members of the public to address the council about issues of concern.

The Recreation Ground has settled down following the major tennis and cricket development and the new boules pitches were very well used last summer. We are very grateful to the conservation group who work throughout the year to tend the Spinney and wild flower meadow; together with the new woodland and arboretum this is a fabulous facility enjoyed by many walkers and dogs each day. There are now picnic benches scattered about waiting for summer visitors.

The flashing speed visors and community speed watch volunteers appear to be having a beneficial effect on traffic speed. The scheme to improve the safety of Fentham Road for pedestrians has been approved and we are keeping our fingers crossed that the funding isn't affected by the spending review.

Despite the recent railway station car park expansion, relocation of the Severn Trent Water offices to Coventry in October has led to overflow parking. The situation with parked cars in Old Station Road and Meriden Road has been dangerous for other road users and residents have presented two petitions to Solihull MBC requesting residents parking permits and traffic restriction orders (TRO), yellow lines. The parish council met with residents and representatives of SMBC and agreed to request TROs to address the safety issues, the scheme is ranked 7th in the area so we are hopeful that it will soon be implemented. Once again funding might be a problem. Our second strategy is to encourage passengers to use alternative stations and we are working with Severn Trent and Centro to this end.

The parish council recently submitted a strongly worded letter to London Midland who propose cutting the opening hours of the railway station booking office from 128 to 15 hours a week. An urgent meeting has been requested with the company management to describe the difficulty this will cause for passengers using the station.

Finally, I would like to thank the many people who give their time in various ways to the many community organisations that flourish in Hampton-in-Arden making the village such a great place in which to live.

**Gill Lewis
Chairman.**

Your Council.

The Parish Council for 2010 - 2011 was as follows:

Councillor Clive Bowen, 23 Lapwing Drive, B92 0BQ	443935
Councillor Mike Blomer, 19 High Street, B92 0AE	443370
Councillor Martin Dove, 336 Kenilworth Road, CV7 7ER (from 20/3/10)	0773 4531845
Councillor Malcolm James, 10 Elm Lodge, B92 0BG	443710
Councillor Graham 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	Resigned Sept 2010

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Julie Richardson,
The Parish Office, Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane,
Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH
01675 442017
Email: clerk@hamptoninarden.org.uk

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th May 2010, the following officers were elected:-

Chair	Councillor Gill Lewis
Vice Chair	Councillor Malcolm James

The following sub-committees and representatives were appointed:

Planning Sub Committee:	Councillor G. Juniper (Chair) Councillor G Lewis Councillor M James Councillor C. Bowen Councillor R. Smith
Maintenance Committee:	Councillor M James (Chair) Councillor G Lewis Councillor C. Bowen Councillor R. Smith
Communications Working Group:	Councillor G Lewis Councillor M James Councillor A Rolf Councillor C Bowen

Parish Plan Steering Group: Councillor G Lewis
Councillor M James
Councillor C. Bowen

Warwickshire and West Midlands Assoc. 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
(from Jan 1011) Councillor M Blomer

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 G Holloway

Meetings:

During the year 8 meetings of the full Council were held and attendance was as follows:

Councillor M Blomer	1 (co-opted Nov 2010)
Councillor C. Bowen	8
Councillor M Dove	4
Councillor M James	8
Councillor G Juniper	7
Councillor Dr G Lewis	8
Councillor A. Rolf	7
Councillor R. Smith	2 (resigned Sept 2010)

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 2010/11 are presented in this report. The precept is the major form by which the Parish Council raises funds to carry out its work during the year. For 2011 - 2012 the Parish Council has set a precept of approximately £26.60 per Category D band household.

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council			
Income and Expenditure			
	Budget 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Budget 2011/12
	£	£	£
Income			
Precept	22150.00	22150.00	24300.00
Sports Club Rental	2400.00	2400.00	2400.00
Recreation Trust Rental	500.00	500.00	500.00
Allotment Rental	100.00	80.00	90.00
Scout and Guide Headquarters Rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bank Interest	0	16.14	10.00
Other Income	0	3698.39	500.00
VAT refund from Customs and Excise		2285.07	
Total Income	25200.00	31179.60	27850.00
	Budget 2010/11	Actual 2010/11	Budget 2011/12
Expenditure			
Section 137 Expenditure	0	0	0
Grass Cutting Parish Land	3700.00	3980.00	4430.00
Grass Cutting Catherine de Barnes Common	200.00	116.00	230.00
Grass Cutting Church Yard	1030.00	920.00	1080.00
Parish owned land Maintenance	3600.00	3241.35	5000.00
Clerk's salary and expenses	5270.00	5509.85	4690.00
Donations and subscriptions	600.00	578.00	600.00
Office Expenses	500.00	527.09	200.00
Web site	700.00	402.60	300.00
Insurance	1400.00	1289.95	1470.00
Improvement to land adj. sports club	0	2440.00	0
Sundries	200.00	693.52	250.00
Audit and Legal Fees	400.00	285.00	300.00
Room Hire	300.00	344.00	300.00
Village in Bloom	0	0	0
Parish Newsletter	0	0	200.00
Training	300.00	132.00	300.00
Telephone	0	0	500.00
Transfer to Allocated Reserves	7000.00	7000.00	7000.00
VAT paid out		1806.70	
Excess Receipts over payments		1913.54	
Contingency	0	0	1000.00
Total Expenditure	25200.00	31179.60	27850.00

Notes:

Actual Income/Expenditure 2010/11.

Income.

Other income included payments from Happy Plaice for using the Sports Club car park, and also a contribution to improvements to land adjoining the Sports Club.

Expenditure.

There was an increase in sundries due to the necessary requirement to advertise the clerk vacancy.

Reserves as at 31 March 2011.

General Fund.

	£
Reserves 1/4/10	27752.52
Plus contribution to reserves 10/11	7000.00

Total Reserves.

34752.52

The reserve fund is established year on year to allow for future, predicted, major expenditure such as resurfacing the car park and replacing play equipment and, additionally, any unforeseen financial liability.

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.

The Recreation Ground has settled down very nicely and is in good condition following the new drainage and re-seeding programme in 2008/9. The Cricket square has proved a great success and we have allowed a practice net to be erected in the area between the Spinney and the Astroturf. It is good to see it used and enjoyed by our younger residents.

We have had several requests for additional seating in and around the grounds and spinney and we are looking into various ways of funding this. If you feel you would like to subscribe to a seat, perhaps in memory of someone, please contact our clerk for details.

The spinney itself is looking really good at the moment, thanks to the tremendous effort that the conservation group puts into it. We know that the many people that daily walk through it really appreciate their work. There is some essential tree work to be done this year and some tidying up around the borders of the field.

We are pleased to inform you that at long last, two new lighting columns have been installed at the far end of Fentham Road in front of Arden Court. This has been a worrying black spot ever since the Engine development was finished. We have also worked with the footpath officer to create an all weather path from Lapwing Drive to Fentham Road which has become a pedestrian destination in its own right.

This winter has been particularly harsh on the Victorian drainage system in the village and we have had several instances of flooding; particularly in Shadowbrook Lane by the entrance to the Recreation Ground.

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.

Malcolm James.

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 52 planning applications in 2010/11. 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.

Communications Working Group

At the Annual meeting last year we officially launched the new website on www.hamptoninarden.org.uk and we think that it is an asset to the Village! It is clear and has many useful sections which are designed to provide information about village organisations to the user and does not just cover the business of the Parish Council. We would, however, ask that more residents let us know when they are holding events so that these can be put on the village diary for more publicity for your event at no cost to you! If you have an event coming up and want it put onto the village diary, please contact the Clerk, Julie Richardson on clerk@hamptoninarden.org.uk or 01675 442017. Please keep using the website which is updated regularly.

Our most recent project as a working group, has been the newsletter. You will all have had the Winter edition posted through your door during February and we hope that you all enjoyed the articles. The aim of the newsletter is to ensure that all of the village is kept up to date with the work being done by the Parish Council and to properly communicate information to the village - we are aware that not everyone takes the Chronicle or has access to the website so by producing a quarterly newsletter, we hope that you all feel updated and included. Look out for the next editions and please let us know if you want to see specific articles in the future.

Finally, our next project is to turn the old telephone box into a communication point. The Scouts are assisting with this and we hope to repaint the box and then use it to display useful leaflets etc for the benefit of everyone. The telephone box has been redundant for a while but we are upgrading it and soon it will be an exciting addition to the communication available within the village again!

Alison Rolf.

Speedwatch.

In the last fourteen months Hampton in Arden Speedwatch has completed 37 operations in five locations during which we have monitored 5,441 vehicles. 441 were over the 30mph speed limit (range 38 to 69mph), all received written warnings from the Police, three motorists were issued with a second warning for a repeat offence.

For a number of operations after the scheme started in February 2010, an average of 25% of offenders were village residents, more recently the number of residents offending has dropped to about 1%.

Meriden Road / Diddington Lane	10 operations	247 offenders
Diddington Lane	7 operations	33 offenders
Old Station Road	4 operations	21 offenders
Marsh lane	3 operations	5 offenders
Meriden Road / Railway bridge	10 operations	135 offenders.

We hope to have two new sites approved on 6th April so beware!

When the weather is good we aim to mount one operation a week and are very grateful to the 17 residents who have given their time to this worthwhile scheme, it does appear to be changing driving habits.

Gary Wood.
Speedwatch Co-Ordinator.

High Speed 2.

The parish council have closely scrutinised the HS2 plans which were released over a year ago and nominated councillor Lewis to liaise with the Heart of England High Speed Rail Action Group (HHAG) to provide information for the village. Two public meetings and an exhibition have taken place following which a survey, delivered to every household, showed that 94% of respondents were opposed to the scheme, 5 residents supported it.

As a result the parish council determined to oppose the plan on the grounds that the suggested economic and environmental benefits were unsubstantiated and did not justify the permanent damage to the village environment. The government were urged to undertake a thorough review of the proposal.

Solihull MBC remain in support of HS2 'in principle'. Councillor Lewis requested the opportunity to address a full council meeting to represent the concerns of parishioners, to seek assurances that no council tax would be used on the scheme and that a thorough investigation of economic and environmental issues would take place during the public consultation period.

Despite several meetings to convey the opinion of villagers Caroline Spelman, our MP, continues to support HS2 but has stated that she will act to secure mitigation and to preserve the Meriden Gap south of the A45.

The official consultation period has now begun, comments must be made by 29th July and the official HS2 Ltd road show will come in a trailer to the Recreation Ground car park in Hampton on Wednesday 15th June from 08.00 – 20.00. Please attend to find out more and express your views, you can see the plans and answer the consultation questions at www.highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk. but beware some are phrased as double negatives.

The parish council will be working with the Hampton in Arden Society on a rigorous response opposing the plans and we will also be submitting demands for necessary mitigation if it goes ahead.

Gill Lewis.

Remembrance Day Village ceremony

Each Remembrance Day Sunday in November, for the past four 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 13th November 2011.**

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.

An Introduction from Mike Blomer.

I was co-opted to the Parish Council in November 2010 to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of another Councillor.

My professional career has been in social housing and in 2006 I was awarded an MBE for services to social housing in the community in the south midlands. I have a continuing interest in social and affordable housing in general, and in Hampton-in-Arden in particular where the provision of suitable housing for younger residents, both single and with families, is sadly lacking. I am interested in development matters and currently represent the Parish Council on the Conservation Advisory Committee of Solihull MBC. As a member of the Hampton Society Executive Committee I form an effective link between the parish council and Hampton Society.

Conservation Advisory Committee.

The Conservation Advisory Committee of Solihull MBC considers any planning application within a conservation area, this is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance is worthy of preservation or enhancement. Their 'specialness' is judged against local and regional criteria and a large part of the centre of Hampton in Arden is in a conservation area, one of 17 in Solihull. The committee is purely advisory, it has no statutory powers to make decisions on applications, but it's comments are taken into account by the planning officers and the Planning Committee when applications are considered. Membership of the committee is very wide comprising Solihull MBC district councillors, parish councillors, local societies like the Hampton Society, residents associations and special interest groups such as the Victorian Society.

Mike Blomer.