

Hampton-in-Arden

Annual Report

2011/12

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

Introduction by the Chair.

Welcome to the 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 took place resulting in a council of Clive Bowen, Mike Blomer, John Doidge, Martin Dove, Malcolm James, Gill Lewis and Alison Rolf. Subsequent internal elections resulted in Gill Lewis being reappointed as chair and Malcolm James as vice chair. I would like to thank Martin Dove for the contribution he has made to the councils work over 18 months or so. Unfortunately Martin's work commitment became such that he felt it necessary to resign from the council and Bonita Bagnall has since been co-opted in his place.

Julie Richardson became our new parish clerk in January 2011; during the last year she has made herself indispensable to the parish and I would like to thank her for the efficient way in which she has assumed the reigns of control and for her quiet but firm support of myself and the council as a whole.

Our communication group, under the chair of Alison Rolf, has continued to try and make the work of the parish council more evident to parishioners. The quarterly Newsletter has been so well received that we felt confident enough to produce the last edition in colour. The website is being revised regularly and Parish Surgeries with SMBC and Neighbourhood police continue. Over the next 3 months surgeries will be held from 11-12, some will be on a Saturday to give working people the chance to attend.

Since becoming chair of the parish council I have realised that it takes many months to achieve even small objectives within local government but we have seen some results in the past year.

At last some new Neighbourhood Watch schemes have been established in the village, notably one along the whole of Meriden Road. We would like the whole village to be covered so if you want to form a group where you live please contact Julie, it is a simple procedure and email updates keep you in touch with what is happening locally.

Some of the planned road safety scheme has been implemented in Fentham Road. A School Crossing Patrol, to see parents and children safely across Marsh Lane from the Beeches car park into Fentham Road, has been approved by the council and awaits local funding. We hope to reduce the traffic on Fentham Road at school time so making walking a more attractive option. The barriers at the top of the High Street have eventually been replaced many months after the serious collision with the cottages. We have been working with SMBC highway safety officers on measures to prevent a recurrence but it seems no barriers are strong enough to take head on impact. It is possible that a flashing speed activated sign will be installed to warn motorists of the sharp corner.

Although, on the whole, the problem of overflow parking from the railway station has improved we have been working with residents to address associated road safety issues. Funding has been identified by SMBC for some Traffic Restriction Orders (yellow lines). Following public consultation we await implementation around the Village Green and into the start of both Old Station Road and Fentham Road.

Residents of Old Station Road requested more extensive restrictions than on the original plan, the revised scheme will go for further public consultation.

We now meet with CENTRO on a 6 monthly basis to discuss travel issues. Twelve months ago the parish council submitted a strongly worded letter to London Midland opposing the planned reduction of the opening hours of the railway station booking office from 128 to 15 hours a week. An urgent meeting was requested with the company management to describe the difficulty this will cause for passengers using the station. Unfortunately we have heard no more concerning the result of the public consultation, the office continues to be closed regularly, on an ad hoc basis, causing difficulty to travellers. I have written on several occasions reporting individual problems of travellers. We have the support of CENTRO who strongly oppose the planned closures.

It is interesting that whilst the Government proclaim localism and community right to choose, there are issues that affect us in a major way about which we seem to have little say. One such is Network Rail's insistence on felling trees along the railway line within the village, they have taken absolutely no notice of remonstrations from the parish council, individuals and our MP for moderation and will not allow replanting with non shedding species. Secondly HS2; despite a resounding NO response to the public consultation the go ahead has been given. The parish council continue to fight against the whole scheme and recently approved, in principle, a donation of up to £1000 towards a judicial review if it considered that there was a good chance of success. The basis for this decision being that the railway would fundamentally change the village for ever. Meanwhile we continue to be involved in HS2's own Community Forum, in discussions with Caroline Spelman, and our own local HS2 Consultative Committee to fight for the best mitigation measures if it goes ahead.

We hope that SMBC will take more notice of our response to the draft LDF. We understand the need for housing, especially affordable homes for our young and elderly residents but the suggested 110 homes adjacent to the ammunition dump would be far too intense for a small village to absorb and we have strongly suggested a much smaller number.

Progress with our youth agenda has been dogged by time constraints; however our new vicar is keen to work in a collaborative way and we hope to be making some progress in the not too distant future.

We are very grateful to the conservation group who work throughout the year to tend the Spinney and wild flower meadow. This year the parish council has identified funding for tools and some major tree work to enable a new management plan to proceed. Together with the new woodland and arboretum this is a fabulous facility enjoyed by many walkers and dogs each day.

Whilst most dog owners are responsible some continue to leave their dog mess behind them. We have now gone to the expense of providing 3 dog bag dispensers and bins; there is no excuse...so why the new menace of filled bags hanging from trees? Please be considerate to others and you and your dog will be welcome anywhere in the village.

Some months ago I was approached by someone wishing to organise events in the village to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The response to a call for help and

ideas has been overwhelming and plans for three days packed with action are well advanced, culminating in lighting a beacon provided by the parish council and a firework display funded by local businesses. This highlights what a fantastic village community we have and I really hope that everyone comes to as many of the events as possible, bring your friends and family and make it a celebration to remember in the history of our village.

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
Chair.**

Your Council

The Parish Council for 2011 - 2012 was as follows:

Councillor Clive Bowen

23 Lapwing Drive, B92 0BQ 443935

Councillor Mike Blomer

19 High Street, B92 0AE 443370

Councillor Bonita Bagnall

26 Marsh Lane, B92 0AJ 446212

Councillor Malcolm James

10 Elm Lodge, B92 0BG 443710

Councillor Dr Gill Lewis

69 Meriden Road, B92 0BS 443517

Councillor Alison Rolf

5 BelleVue Terrace, B92 0AR 442841

Councillor John Doidge

20 Diddington Lane, B920BZ 443579

Clerk to the Council: **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 17th May 2011, 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 J Doidge (Chair)

Councillor G Lewis

Councillor M James
Councillor M Blomer

Maintenance Committee: Councillor M James (Chair)
Councillor G Lewis
Councillor C. Bowen
Councillor M Blomer

Communications Working Group: Councillor G Lewis
Councillor M James
Councillor A Rolf (Chair)
Councillor C Bowen

Warwickshire and West Midlands Assoc. of Local Councils (Solihull Area):
Councillor G. Lewis
Councillor A. Rolf

Footpaths and Rights of Way Representative: Councillor G. Lewis

Airport Consultative Committee: Councillor C. Bowen

Conservation Advisory Committee: Councillor M Blomer

Local Strategic Partnership Forum: Councillor G. Lewis

The Parish Council also appoint trustees to:

The Charity of George Fentham: Mr N Pettman, Mr 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	7
Councillor C. Bowen	7
Councillor M Dove	2
Councillor M James	8
Councillor Dr G Lewis	7
Councillor A. Rolf	7
Councillor J Doidge	7

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 2011/12 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 2012-2013 the Parish Council has set a precept of approximately £26.97 per Category D band household.

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council			
Income and Expenditure			
	Budget 2011/12	Actual 2011/12	Budget 2012/13
	£	£	£
Income			
Precept	24300.00	24300.00	25272.00
Sports Club Rental	2400.00	2400.00	2400.00
Recreation Trust Rental	500.00	500.00	500.00
Allotment Rental	90.00	85.00	90.00
Scout and Guide Headquarters Rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bank Interest	10.00	19.32	450.00
Other Income	500.00	2885.00	300.00
VAT refund from Customs and Excise		647.67	
Total Income	27850.00	30886.99	29062.00
	Budget 2011/12	Actual 2011/12	Budget 2012/13
Expenditure			
Section 137 Expenditure	0	0	0
Grass Cutting Parish Land	4430.00	3435.00	4500.00
Grass Cutting Catherine de Barnes Common	230.00	195.00	250.00
Grass Cutting Church Yard	1080.00	920.00	1080.00
Parish owned land Maintenance	5000.00	4738.06	6000.00
Clerk's salary and expenses	4690.00	4738.00	4982.00
Donations and subscriptions	600.00	484.00	600.00
Office Expenses/Telephone	700.00	386.82	1500.00
Web site	300.00	316.54	500.00
Insurance	1470.00	1294.04	1400.00
Parish Newsletter	200.00	782.50	1000.00
Sundries	250.00	120.00	250.00
Audit and Legal Fees	300.00	285.00	300.00
Room Hire	300.00	217.00	300.00
Training	300.00	450.15	400.00
Contingency	1000.00	1000.00	0
Transfer to Allocated Reserves	7000.00	7000.00	6000.00
VAT paid out		1514.44	
Excess Receipts over payments		3010.44	
Total Expenditure	27850.00	30886.99	29062.00

Notes:

Actual Income/Expenditure 2011/12.

Income.

Other income included a contribution towards repair of the war memorial wall from the haulage company, and a £2000 donation from Solihull MBC towards youth work in the village.

Expenditure.

Annual rent for the Parish Office of £1000 was allocated from the contingency figure, this amount has been included in office expenses in the 2012/13 budget.

Reserves as at 31 March 2012.

General Fund.

	£
Reserves 1/4/11	36664.83
Plus contribution to reserves 11/12	7000.00

Total Reserves.

43664.83

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 all property under the Parish Council's control, 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 land as in the case of the recreation ground and 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.

We have had quite a bit of disruption throughout the village with the renewal of gas mains and burst water mains. This has meant the road surfaces on some of our roads have had to be patched. We have also seen a new surface laid at the junction of Fentham Road and High Street to indicate that the whole of Fentham road is now a 20mph speed limit.

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 Spinney itself is looking really good at the moment, thanks to the tremendous effort of the Conservation Group. We know that the many people who walk through it really appreciate their work. Some essential tree work was done this year along with some tidying up around the borders of the field.

The cricket square continues to be a great success and it is good to see our younger residents enjoying its use during the summer months.

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 maintenance of the common on the boundary with Catherine De Barnes revolves around maintaining the paths and making an annual cut of grass. During the past year we have been fortunate to have had the help from volunteer groups together with the assistance of the Catherine De Barnes Residents Association, and the common is now looking better than it ever has been. Take a walk across it one day – you will be pleasantly surprised!

Malcolm James.

Communications Working Group

The main project undertaken by the Communications Group this year has been the newsletter. You will hopefully all be enjoying this quarterly communication which is hand-delivered through your doors by the Parish Council. We are very pleased with how the Newsletter has been received and we have even had requests for copies of it from residents outside the village! I would like to thank the whole Communication Group for their work on the Newsletter, but particularly Cllr Clive Bowen who decides on the content and edits it. He also ensures that it looks beautiful and is printed on time - so Thank you Clive! We hope that you will continue to benefit from the newsletter and if you have any articles you would like to have covered, please contact either myself or Clive at the Parish Office.

The website continues to be something that I am proud to have been involved in. The home page is updated every 2 months and we are constantly ensuring that the information on the site is current and relevant. We have recently added a new drop down menu setting out the events on in the village over the Jubilee weekend and we hope that you will take the time to have another look at the website - www.hamptoninarden.org.uk We continue to ask that if you have events on, you let us know the details so that they can be placed on the village diary which gives you additional free publicity and helps to prevent double booking.

You may recall that the Communication Group was also looking to turn the old telephone box into an information point for the village. This has now been passed to the Maintenance Committee and we hope that this will be in place very soon.

Finally, the Communication Group are working to try and concentrate on youth issues in the village, to ensure that there are suitable activities for our younger people to enjoy. They have their own youth section of the website, this is very much a project in progress which we hope will move forward rapidly during the next 12 months and will be my main item in my report next year.

As usual, if you have any issues which you think would be best resolved by the Communication Group, please do contact me.

Alison Rolf.

High Speed 2.

During the year we have continued to lobby against the Governments HS2 proposals and to bring to parishioners attention details of the route through the village and the likely effect on the community and environment. In July the Parish Council made detailed submissions to HS2's consultation process and to Solihull Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Although the Government announced in January that HS2 will go ahead with a Bill to be presented to Parliament in 2014/15, the Parish Council will continue to oppose the plans whilst seeking to ensure the best possible mitigation measures during the construction phase and thereafter should it finally go ahead. Over the next 12 months we will be seeking assurances which protect the village and the fragile ecosystem of the Blythe valley, and will be participating in the Hampton/Berkswell/Balsall Common Community Forum, the Solihull High Speed Rail Consultative Committee and continuing discussions with Solihull Council officers and elected members.

Recently we have welcomed an approach from Caroline Spelman, MP for Meriden, to support our campaign for these mitigations. Our concerns include road and footpath closures, suspensions, diversions or temporary restrictions and maintaining safe access for all properties, businesses, farms and farmland, animals and environmental sites; the effect of extra traffic, noise, the 500 metre long 4-track viaduct along the Blythe valley, the lack of any environmental impact assessment (yet to start with a report in 2013), compensation for householders and local businesses including assistance with relocation, and damage to environmentally sensitive areas from run-off, waste and compaction of soil etc. Not least of our concerns is the effect of the new Interchange Station on the Green Belt and pressure to develop the Meriden Gap. Recent comment by the Chief Engineer HS2 on a 'new city' twixt Coventry and Birmingham have been unfortunate, causing extra concern over ideas for infill development extending East beyond the A446. However, the Leader of Solihull Council, Ken Meeson, and Caroline Spelman have both denounced the comment as both irresponsible and without foundation.

Detailed maps and statements from the Government and opposition groups are available on the websites <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk>. and www.hhag.org.uk.

John Doidge

Planning Sub Committee

The Parish Council receives all planning applications affecting the village so that it may comment on matters of concern or support. These range from tree works to major development. Over 50 applications were received in 2011/12.

Major issues upon which the Council has responded include Meriden Road depot (Arden Wood Shavings site), Arden Brickworks developments, applications for housing development at No 1 Meriden Road and the continuing uncertainty over the future of the Travellers Site in Shadowbrook Lane. We understand that a final decision on Shadowbrook Lane and other travellers' sites in the Borough will be made in 2012.

The Parish Council will always deal with applications constructively and sensitively, be they large or small, with the best interests of the village at heart.

The Localism Act, Neighbourhood Planning and Housing

The new Localism Act places a legal duty on local planning authorities to support and advise parish councils in drawing up Neighbourhood Plans. Councillors have attended meetings organised by the National Association of Local Councils and with Solihull Council to ensure that village residents have a say over local developments. Solihull announced its draft Local Development Framework which identified several development sites in the Borough to meet its Government-set target of 11,000 new homes by 2028. In Hampton, the Meriden Road depot is the only site identified for new housing in the village, with plans for 110 homes (including 40% affordable homes). This is not planned to start before 2023 however and half of the site would be added to the adjacent wildlife area. Whilst generally welcoming the proposal the Parish Council considers this an over-intensive use of the site and has called for a significant reduction in the number of planned homes and density, whilst retaining the principle of affordable homes being available to Hampton residents and family members.

During 2012 The Parish Council will be working closely with Solihull Council to develop a Hampton Neighbourhood Plan which meets the requirements of the Localism Act and identifies sites which we would wish to protect from inappropriate housing or commercial development. Neighbourhood Plans are subject to full consultation within the community and we shall keep you fully informed as we progress.

The Parish Council, in close cooperation with The George Fentham Trust, is committed to the provision of affordable homes for local people and suitable sites and funding for both families and single persons homes are being actively pursued. The intention is that these homes should be available, in perpetuity, for local people with a proven housing need. One site identified as being suitable for five houses for rent or low cost home ownership is the under-used lock up garage area off Peel Close owned by Solihull Council. However it has not been possible to agree terms and the land is likely to be developed by Solihull Community Housing with homes for rent to families from the Councils general housing waiting list.

John Doidge and Mike Blomer

Remembrance Day Village Ceremony

Last year's Remembrance Day Sunday (November 13 2011) was the fifth year in which your Parish Council successfully organised their own parade and service at the Village War Memorial.

With appropriate village roads closed to traffic this continued to allow for the peaceful and respectful operation of this important village morning, with even more villagers attending (young and old).

The next Remembrance Day service will be held on Sunday 11 November 2012.

War Memorial

This is looking somewhat tired and worn and is in need of some real professional attention; your Parish Council is in the process of securing quotes and necessary funding to carry out such work as:

- cleaning
- repointing and repair of the stonework,
- and re-engraving of all lettering

Birmingham International Airport

Airport development continued on a number of fronts in 2011 including a new Travelodge Hotel, a new air traffic control tower, a new Eurojet hangar and a radar replacement installation (wef March 2012).

The total passenger numbers for 2011 were 8,621,571 (slightly down compared with 2010) but at the end of February 2012 Birmingham Airport's shareholders approved the business case for the runway extension project. The realignment of the A45 will commence first (2012), followed by construction of the runway itself commencing this year with the expectation that it will be operational in the **Summer of 2014**.

Airspace change process

Consequent on the runway extension a public consultation process is required by the Civil Aviation Authority to consider the proposed changes to the flight paths.

This process is quite extensive, including briefings with the Civil Aviation Authority, Birmingham Airport and the Air Traffic Control Organisation (NATS). Stage 2 'Development of the Airspace Change proposal', covering proposed flight path alternatives, includes a 'DO NOTHING' OPTION. This, of course, would ensure that the 'Hampton Turn' will continue to be operated.

A new series of Focus Groups (an offshoot of the main Consultative Committee on which your Parish Council is also a member) is to commence in May 2012 when the exact nature of the public consultation process will be outlined amongst other detail of any flight path changes.

Clive Bowen.

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.

Speedwatch Annual Report

In the past twelve months the Hampton-in-Arden Speedwatch team have carried out 27 operations. Ten fewer than the previous twelve months due to the extensive road works around the village.

During these operations we monitored 3,091 vehicles of which 379 were exceeding the speed limit. Speeds of the offending vehicles varied from 38 to 59 mph.

We gained a new site during the past twelve months which means we now have 6 sites, although one site, Marsh Lane, was only used twice due to the small number of offenders.

The sites monitored were;

Meriden Road at Diddington Lane	8 operations	147 offenders
Diddington Lane	4 operations	21 offenders
Old Station Road	4 operations	22 offenders
Marsh Lane	4 operations	4 offenders
Meriden Road at Railway bridge	7 operations	111 offenders
Meriden Road outside No. 36	4 operations	74 offenders

As can be seen from the above figures the majority of offenders are on Meriden Road.

We are in need of more volunteers because the number has dropped meaning that the current volunteers are having to do more operations. If you feel that you could help please contact Gary Wood (01675.442976) The training only takes two hours and then you may be called upon once or twice a month for an hour each time.

The volunteers that are currently working for us do a sterling job and are to be thanked for helping to keep our roads safe.

Gary R Wood
Speedwatch co-ordinator.