

Parish News - Winter 2012

HELLO AGAIN

Winter wears on with a first village coating of snow - your Parish Council have important news to impart on the new Localism Act, High Speed 2, Village Parking Restrictions, Network Rail and its tree felling onslaught, the Village Website, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations (Hampton-in-Arden's festivities - do take a special look), Village Maintenance and the loss of our Christmas lights.

We would also draw your attention to the urgent need to fill the Parish Council vacancy, as well as the need for volunteers for the important Speed Watch service.

Meanwhile, I know we all very much look forward to Spring and Summer in this year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic Games.

Our Spring edition will include current news and information on changes to rural Post Office services and on the role of our Sports Club.



LOCALISM ACT - Does it affect me? - you bet it does!

This new Act sets out plans which will give communities and Local Councils greater powers, and freedom, from Whitehall; Neighbourhood Planning has become central to the Government's localism, de-centralisation and 'Big Society' agenda.

It will give local people more control over the future shaping of their community by influencing the policies and plans which affect their area. Once in place, this will be the framework for change over the subsequent ten years.

This will help local communities to play a greater role in finding creative and imaginative ways to overcome the many pressures which such development inevitably creates for:

- conservation, and
- local services and amenities

This Act should also help to ensure that such development takes place in line with local needs.

Your Parish Council is now working closely with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to agree a Neighbourhood Plan for Hampton-in-Arden; this will allow Villagers to:

- decide what new houses, businesses and shops should be built
- hold a referendum, where necessary, to approve small developments of up to **20 homes** without the need to go through the normal planning process, known as the 'Community Right to Build' - this could be used to provide much needed affordable homes (for rent/purchase) by young local people and the more elderly looking to downsize

This new Act also requires developers to consult with the local community before making certain planning applications.

A Plain English guide to the Localism Act can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localismplainenglishupdate

HIGH SPEED RAIL

The Government endorsement of the scheme has now revealed its revised plans for local road layouts and, for Hampton-in-Arden:

- Meriden Road would now be diverted, via a new roundabout at the junction of Lapwing Drive and Meriden Road, across land at the rear of Diddington Lane to another new roundabout on the Kenilworth Road; the proposed 50 foot high Meriden Road flyover has been axed; Diddington Lane would be closed to through traffic; major road works are planned on the A45 Stonebridge junction.
- There is a Central Government commitment to an extensive period of consultation, with both local representatives and residents, on the local impact and necessary mitigation measures - a most welcome move! We are now pressing for early indication as to **how and when** this will be done.

- For HS2 to go ahead a Bill must be presented and approved by Parliament (probably in 2014/2015); there is still some real doubt as to whether this would be approved; meanwhile, your Parish Council will continue to press for the best outcome for the Village Community and the local environment; this, as well as continuing to voice our opposition on both economic and environmental grounds.

NB: detailed maps and statements are available on the website:
<http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/>



Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

PARKING RESTRICTIONS (double yellow lines)

For some fourteen months now, your Parish Council have been working with both villagers, and Solihull Borough Council, on a traffic restriction scheme to ensure that the overflow parking from the railway station does not pose a safety hazard to road users.

Throughout December, 2011, public consultation took place and on 17 January the following consensus was reached:

- parking restrictions will be implemented, as proposed.
- these will be on the corner of Fentham Road/High Street, around the War Memorial and on the entrance to Old Station Road.

The restrictions further along Old Station Road will be **amended** in the light of residents comments – these amendments will have to be the subject of a further round of public consultation.

NETWORK RAIL – tree felling

Before Christmas, without any prior warning, Network Rail arrived in the Village intending to fell a large number of sycamore and ash trees, along our railway line.

To remonstrate at this perceived vandalism, some village residents and Parish Councillors met with Network Rail officials; whilst understanding the need for safety, we insisted that a more moderate course of action may have been to pollard the trees – after all, the trees do form the boundary of the village conservation area.

Our own Member of Parliament and some Borough Councillors were involved but, we are very sad to say, the felling of some **hundreds of trees** seems to be going ahead resulting in a 'bare scar' throughout the village.

So much for the 'Big Society' and the local right to choose!

VILLAGE MAINTENANCE

One of the Parish Councils main responsibilities is the general maintenance of the Village.

This is overseen by a Maintenance Committee which includes:

- three Parish Councillors
- villagers representing various sections of the local community
- a representative from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

We meet for some three formal sessions per year interspersed with many informal meetings; our areas of responsibility cover, inter alia:

- the Churchyard
- allotments
- the children's Play Area
- war memorial/village green
- bus shelters and flower troughs
- the spinney
- grass cutting, hedge and tree works
- recreation field – rear of The Primary School

All this is to ensure that all the above is in good order and that your Village is a pleasant place in which to live.

If you see anything you are unhappy about do please let us know

HAMPTON-IN-ARDEN WEBSITE

As most of you are now aware, Hampton-in-Arden has its own website run by your Parish Council; via its revamping, some two years ago, we feel that it is now: ● more user friendly ● simpler for both villagers and outsiders to access information ● more attractive with some quite beautiful village photographs. **There are drop down menus, including:** ● current planning applications, and ● a Village Diary

The Village Diary can be used for you to publish details of forthcoming events, **free of charge**, so please contact either our Parish Clerk (Mrs Julie Richardson) or Councillor Alison Rolf if you have an interest in this area.

If you do not have a computer at home you can access the internet at ● all Solihull Libraries, and of course, at our own Hampton-in-Arden Library

If you have not already done so, we urge you to take a look at our website as this always contains detail for you to keep up-to-date on village issues this could even replace the village 'gossip network' – "maybe not, perish the thought" we hear some of you say... but please do take a look, you will find us at: **www.hamptoninarden.org.uk** - **THANKYOU!**

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (2-4 JUNE 2012)

Hampton-in-Arden plan to join the rest of the Country in celebrating the 60th anniversary of our Queen's accession to the Throne; our programme, based around a marquee on the Recreation Field, is to include:

- a Fete on Saturday 2 June, and ● an evening concert
- an open-air Church Service, followed by ● a 'Big Lunch' on Sunday 3rd June

If you are planning to have your own street party why not come to the Sports Club to join up with the rest of the Village ?

On Bank Holiday Monday 4 June there will be: ● a Sports Festival and, in the evening: ● a Hog Roast and the MYJO Jazz Band

We shall also be lighting a Beacon to coincide with the Queen lighting the Royal Beacon. **Please put these dates in your diary and refuse all invitations to go elsewhere!**

VACANCIES (Parish Council and Speed Watch)

Parish Council. Do please take a moment to consider whether you would like to join our current team of six Councillors as we are looking for someone with time and commitment to contribute to supporting and developing our Village Community for both the short and long term future. We are particularly anxious to develop facilities for, and links with, the young people of the Village. If you have expertise in this area and would

like to help, please contact our Parish Council Clerk (Mrs. Julie Richardson) to arrange to come in for an informal chat – **you will be most welcome!**

Speed Watch. We are looking for additional volunteers in this important area: ● training will be provided (next session Monday 12 March 2012 6-8 pm, Shirley Police Station) ● commitment: 1 / 2 hours each month ● contact Gary Wood on 01675 442976 (grwsagamore@aol.com)

POSTSCRIPT

If you know who 'removed' the Parish Council's twinkling solar lights from the Village Green, on the evening of Monday 9 January last, do please let us know – the village stocks will be prepared to receive them with rotting fruit and vegetables at the ready!

SPEAK TO YOU IN THE SPRING

Our contributors this edition were Councillors Gill Lewis, Malcolm James, Alison Rolf, Clive Bowen (editor), John Doidge and Mike Blomer
- Many thanks to you all...