

Hampton-in-Arden

Annual Report

2013/14

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council

Introduction by the Chair.

Welcome to the annual report detailing work carried out by the Parish Council during the last year.

During 2013 the composition of the council changed following the resignation of Bonita Bryant because of time constraints. We would like to thank Bonita for her contribution to the work of the council and we are pleased to announce that she continues to serve as an ex officio member of the Communication Sub Committee in relation to youth issues. The vacant post was advertised and we were very gratified to receive applications from 5 excellent candidates wishing to be co-opted. We would have liked to appoint each of the 5 parishioners but following careful consideration Cat Sellars was selected having specialist knowledge of ecology in relation to planning issues which will be of considerable benefit to the village.

At the Annual meeting on May 8th internal elections resulted in Gill Lewis being reappointed as chair supported by Mike Blomer as vice chair. Many thanks also to Julie Richardson, our parish clerk, who manages the business of the parish in a quietly efficient manner offering firm support of myself and other councillors when needed.

Many will remember 2013-14 as a year of traffic misery endured during construction of a new water main throughout the village, usually by 2 valiant workmen representing Severn Trent Water! A quick trip to the village now became an expedition requiring major planning. The project dragged on and on, suffered several major hiccoughs as contractors went into liquidation, and finally the lights and trenches disappeared overnight. Although we were all pleased to see the traffic lights go, sadly, the job remains unfinished with no hint of what, if anything will happen next.

Spurred on by our success in the Royal Horticultural Society Neighbourhood Awards Competition 2012, we made the decision not to enter the local 'Best Kept Village Competition' in 2013 but rather the village as a whole for the inaugural year of 'Solihull Neighbourhood in Bloom'. We were heartened by the judge's response to a tour of the village in June, which happened to coincide with the pensioners Day Club, cinema organ recital and a working party in the arboretum. The organisers encouraged us to attend the presentation of awards and we were overjoyed to be recognised as the 'Best Village'. It was inspiring to see many Silhillians receiving awards for wonderful displays in their allotments, gardens and premises and I hope that the village will see many more entries by individuals in 2014.

Our communication group, under the chair of Alison Rolf, has continued to make the work of the parish council more evident to parishioners. The quarterly Newsletter, edited by Clive Bowen, is very well received and the website is being revised regularly. For some years a parish councillor has attended each monthly Parish Surgery organised by the police Neighbourhood Team at the Village Bakery. It remains rare for any members of the public to attend and as the parish clerk is now present in the parish office most mornings to deal with any enquiries we will no longer be attending the surgeries which the police will continue to schedule for their own use.

Neighbourhood Watch continues in some areas of the village and it is reassuring to receive emails from the police with warnings of any unusual activity. It would be great if the whole village was included, if you want to form a group where you live please contact Julie.

For the last year the parish council and a community representative have been attending quarterly liaison meetings with Meriden Village and representatives of the quarries at Cornetts End Lane. We certainly now have a better understanding of the issues surrounding heavy goods vehicles from the quarries using the B4102 and we feel that the posting of signs at each entry to the village has helped reduce HGV traffic. However it is a constant battle for the quarry operators to monitor traffic and apply fines for transgression of planning conditions, we will continue to try and improve the situation.

The War Memorial, which provides a focal point for those passing through the village, looks magnificent following it's restoration and the Church Wall, damaged by a large lorry, was finally repaired after many months of negotiation with the Highways Authority to agree placement of traffic lights.

We continue to meet with CENTRO on a 6 monthly basis to discuss travel issues. Two years 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. Unfortunately, despite overwhelming support for maintenance of the service, the Secretary of State for Transport allowed the hours to be severely reduced. The ticket office is now closed for much of the day exacerbating access problems for rail users. I have written on several occasions reporting individual problems and also to the Chief Executive of London Midland, requesting urgent improvement of access. At our last meeting CENTRO and London Midland were hopeful that they might find funding to allow the bridge to remain open when the office is closed. Apparently a lift would be needed to improve access to each platform at a cost of £2 million; I think that this will need to be a major campaign beginning in 2014.

Despite widespread opposition many trees were felled by Network Rail along the railway embankment bordering Old Station Road last year leaving an ugly mess. In November 2013 the parish council were approached by a contractor wishing to fell many of the remaining trees along the line within the village. Despite repeated requests to meet and discuss the planned work and consider mitigation it was scheduled for March with no community consultation. With the help of our MP we have now managed to have the work postponed while the effect on the village is considered and hopefully a date is fixed for a meeting.

The parish council continue to oppose HS2 and are represented in several groups to try and achieve the best mitigation measures if it goes ahead. We submitted a detailed response to both the compensation consultation and the Environmental Statement. With invaluable guidance from a retired railway engineer living in the village we were very pleased that, in line with our suggestion, the plans were amended to allow retention of Diddington Lane and Meriden Road. The parish council and Hampton Society have drawn up a list of additional major concerns and will be prepared to petition the Parliamentary Select Committee on these issues later this year if necessary.

Much time was also spent in formulating a response to the proposed flight path change consequent upon the runway extension. We have been very grateful for the help of pilots living in the village to understand the issues but it seems that our suggestion of a turn away from the village based on aircraft height, also supported by our MP, has been ignored. In the meantime trials of the other proposed routings are taking place.

The SMBC Local Plan has now been approved but is being contested in court by developers elsewhere in the borough where it fails to agree with their building plans. This has created uncertainty concerning certain requirements contained in the plan, for instance that 40% of new development should be affordable housing. From the early analysis of our Neighbourhood Plan we are aware that there is a need for affordable homes in the village and the parish council would like to work with any developers to ensure that any affordable housing which is built is available principally for people with village connections.

We continue to work towards achieving funding to create a sizable under 7s play area at the Recreation Ground, adjacent to the Scout Hut, which will also be used by preschool children. The Fentham Trust have generously agreed to provide major funding and Hampton Gym and the Lillie Johnson Trust have also donated considerable sums of money for which we are very grateful. We currently await the result of 2 more grant applications, we would be very pleased if the facility could be ready for this summer.

We are very grateful to the conservation group who work throughout the year to tend the Spinney and wild flower meadow. Also to SMBC Neighbourhood Team who organised an away day, supplying wood bark and labour to restore some of the pathways and bulbs to plant in public spaces for the spring. Together with the new woodland and arboretum this is a fabulous facility enjoyed by many walkers and dogs each day. We are also grateful to the SMBC footpath team, who have managed to complete the all-weather footpath around the 'Old Cricket Pitch' providing a pleasant traffic free pathway from the bottom of the village. We are currently working on creating a signed route between the railway stations of Hampton and Berkswell, to be entitled the 'Packhorse Way'.

Following the magnificent Jubilee festival in 2012 the scaled down Hampton Festival of 2013 was a similar success enjoying much better weather. Once again it was wonderful to see so many village organisations working together to create a wonderful weekend for all to enjoy. The current committee are organising one further Festival on the 31st May and 1st June 2014 but are suffering from 'festival fatigue' and fervently hope that some new volunteers will come forward to continue the tradition of the Festival into the future. Funding derived from the Festival was used to plant the Jubilee Oak Tree by the boules pitches which looks lovely encircled by it's wooden bench.

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 2013 - 2014 was as follows:

Councillor Mike Blomer MBE

19 High Street, B92 0AE 443370

Councillor Clive Bowen

23 Lapwing Drive, B92 0BQ 443935

Councillor Cat Sellars

19 Meadow Drive, B92 0BD 442491

Councillor John Doidge

20 Diddington Lane, B920BZ 443579

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

Clerk to the Council:

Julie Richardson

The Parish Office, Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH
01675 442017

clerk@hamptoninarden.org.uk

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8th May 2013, the following officers were elected:-

Chair	Councillor Gill Lewis
Vice Chair	Councillor Mike Blomer

The following sub-committees and representatives were appointed:

(The Chair and Vice-Chair are ex-officio members of all committees).

Planning Sub Committee:	Councillor J Doidge (Chair) Councillor M Blomer
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Maintenance Committee:	Councillor M James (Chair) Councillor C. Bowen Councillor M Blomer
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Communications Working Group:	Councillor A Rolf (Chair) B Bryant Councillor C Bowen
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Warwickshire and West Midlands Assoc. of Local Councils (Solihull Area):	Councillor G. Lewis Councillor A. Rolf
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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
Neighbourhood Plan Working Group:	Councillor M Blomer Councillor J Doidge
Remembrance Day	Councillor Bowen

The Parish Council also appoint trustees to:

The Charity of George Fentham:	Mrs C Eley 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	7
Councillor C. Bowen	6
Councillor M James	8
Councillor Dr G Lewis	7
Councillor A. Rolf	7
Councillor J Doidge	6
Councillor C Sellars (co-opted March 2014)	1
Councillor B Bryant	1

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 2013/14 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.

Although the overall precept has increased slightly for 2014/15, it remains the same for each household, and therefore the cost per Category D band household remains at approximately £27.53.

Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council			
Income and Expenditure			
	Budget 2013/14	Actual(Est) 2013/14	Budget 2014/15
	£	£	£
Income			
Precept	25272.00	25272.00	25423.00
Sports Club Rental	2760.00	2760.00	2760.00
Recreation Trust Rental	500.00	500.00	500.00
Allotment Rental	90.00	50.00	90.00
Scout and Guide Headquarters Rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Bank Interest	277.00	496.68	200.00
Other Income	300.00		300.00
Other – Neighbourhood Plan		3799.00	
Other – Donation to War Memorial		500.00	
Other – Donation towards benches		1488.00	
Other- Donation to Under &'s Play Area		1000.00	
VAT refund from Customs and Excise		4749.18	
Total Income	29249.00	40664.86	29323.00
	Budget 2013/14	Actual(Est) 2013/14	Budget 2014/15
Expenditure			
Section 137 Expenditure	0	0	0
Grass Cutting Parish Land	4500.00	2864.20	4500.00
Grass Cutting Catherine de Barnes Common	250.00	175.00	250.00
Grass Cutting Church Yard	1080.00	840.00	1080.00
Parish owned land Maintenance	6000.00	5435.12	6000.00
Clerk's salary and expenses	5169.00	5220.72	5433.00
Donations and subscriptions	600.00	531.00	660.00
Office Expenses	1500.00	1404.29	1500.00
Web site	500.00	259.55	500.00
Insurance	1400.00	1165.82	1600.00
Parish Newsletter	1000.00	908.00	1500.00
Sundries	250.00	191.40	250.00
Audit and Legal Fees	300.00	300.00	350.00
Room Hire	300.00	230.00	300.00
Training	400.00	124.40	400.00
Neighbourhood Plan	1000.00	2205.72	0
Transfer to Allocated Reserves	5000.00	5000.00	5000.00
Other – War Memorial		6165.00	
VAT paid out		3081.86	
Excess Receipts over payments		4562.78	
Total Expenditure	29249.00	40664.86	29323.00

Notes:

Actual Income/Expenditure 2013/14.

Income.

Other income included a contribution towards restoration of the war memorial, a grant payment from Solihull MBC towards the Neighbourhood Plan, a donation towards the Under 7's Play Area and donations towards benches in the village.

Expenditure.

Other expenditure includes the payment for the restoration of the War Memorial.

Reserves as at 31 March 2014.

General Fund.

Reserves 01/04/13	£ 52855.22
Plus contribution to reserves 13/14	5000.00

Total Reserves.

57855.22

The excess receipts over payments in 2013/14 will also be added to the overall reserves held by the parish council.

These reserves are held in the parish council bank accounts, £30,000 of it being in a fixed term account to achieve a higher rate of interest.

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, the common 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.

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, especially with the improvements to the footpaths, thanks to the tremendous effort of the Conservation Group. We know that the many people who walk through it greatly appreciate their work. We have had several requests for additional seating in and around the Recreation grounds 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 Communication Group continues to ensure that the Village are kept up to date with all that the Parish Council is trying to achieve through the website, newsletter and telephone box information point. The website continues to be updated regularly to ensure that the information contained therein is as up to date as possible and is helpful to those in the village and beyond.

We hope that you continue to enjoy the newsletter which is published quarterly and delivered by hand to every home in the Parish. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Cllr Clive Bowen who edits and organises the newsletter and whose hard work has made it as successful as it is. We would love to hear from you if there are any particular topics that you would like to see covered in future newsletters.

We keep the telephone box filled with leaflets of interest and are delighted that the telephone box continues to have a use in the village, giving a focal point for information.

Last year I advised that the Communication Group's next project was youth issues. I am delighted that the Youth Bus continues to go from strength to strength and is enjoyed by a variety of ages of children within the village. We continue to strive to provide facilities for the youth of the village and are aware that there is not enough for the older young people and this is something we are looking at working on in the future.

Alison Rolf.

High Speed 2.

We continue to oppose plans for HS2 in principle but have campaigned tirelessly to secure mitigation to minimise the possible effects on the village and its environment and to secure compensation for those residents most affected.

In the autumn we responded to the re-run of the Compensation consultation and have objected to the proposals which limit compensation to owners of property within

120 metres of the line. In the spring we responded to the consultation on the Environmental Statement (ES) and identified 15 issues upon which we are seeking changes or effective mitigation. In particular we are seeking reassurance on the effect of the long embankment along the Blythe valley which the ES has acknowledged will exacerbate flood risk. We have asked for a compromise arrangement lengthening the viaduct over the Blythe so that the natural flow of the river is not impeded. This will also allow wildlife to migrate along the banks. We have also asked for the tunnel bridge over the B4102 at Patricks Farm to be re-designed so that the open Arden landscape and vista is not completely obscured. Our other major concerns include haulage routes through the village, the placing of spoil heaps adjacent to the rear of properties in Diddington Lane, and the location of two work encampments close to the Blythe. On these and other matters we continue to lobby HS2 and attend the fortnightly meetings of the Solihull Council Members Working Party. The most constructive meetings continue to be those held within the village with Solihull Councillors and officers. Residents will note that the proposed realignment of the Meriden Road behind houses in Diddington Lane has been dropped.

The Government has now presented a 'Hybrid Bill' to Parliament which contains full details of its proposals and associated construction works. We have the opportunity to petition on issues affecting the Parish and which have not been resolved by negotiation. This is through the Select Committee process in the spring and summer. Although we may be able to join Solihull Council or our colleagues in Berkswell and Balsall Common in this process we are nevertheless likely to need to petition on Parish specific issues ourselves. This is an expensive process if using licensed Parliamentary agents and we therefore are investigating how this might be managed. We shall continue to keep you up to date on developments through the Parish Newsletter and Website. Full details of the HS2 proposals are available from www.hs2.gov.uk or www.hhag.org.uk. and maps are available in the Parish office. An extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council may be called in the spring to confirm the issues upon which we shall be Petitioning.

John Doidge

Planning Sub Committee

The Parish Council receives notice of all planning applications affecting the village so that it may comment on all matters of concern or support. These range from tree works to major developments.

We responded to Solihull Council's draft Local Development Plan which has now received the Secretary of State's approval and adoption. This sets out detailed development plans for the Borough over the next 15 years. Some 11000 additional homes are planned within the Borough to meet national targets. For Hampton, the plans include a housing development of 120 homes on land between the Arden Shavings site and Lapwing Drive with compensatory reinstatement of the Shavings site to nature reserve. This is listed as development after 2023. The Parish Council has objected to the proposed densities of housing and will continue to press for appropriate scale.

Major developments have been planned for land along Catherine de Barnes Lane within the Parish and close to Catney village. We have worked closely with Catherine de Barnes residents association to monitor and respond to applications but were unable to prevent approval for the relocation of Birmingham Dogs Home. However the application for a 4000 plot Muslim cemetery has been withdrawn after protest at its inappropriate scale, design and location.

We continue to monitor and respond to matters affecting the Travellers site in Shadowbrook Lane. Solihull Council served eviction notices in the Autumn after the expiry of temporary permissions and the incumbents have now appealed this notice to the Secretary of State for determination. This site is not included in Solihull's approved list of Traveller and Gypsy sites.

John Doidge

Neighbourhood Plan

Your Parish Council firmly believes that the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan which will steer decisions on planning applications and development and which must have the support of a majority of residents, is essential to retain the identity and character of our area.

The first stage in the preparation of our Neighbourhood Plan was achieved in June of last year when Solihull Council approved the designation of the whole of the parish as a Neighbourhood Area. It should always be remembered that a small part of Catherine-de-Barnes, with some 40 homes on the Hampton side of the canal is within the parish and will, therefore, be included in the Plan. We were also successful in being able to secure a small Government grant to assist with the cost of preparing the Plan.

We now have a Working Party of the Parish Council which has responsibility for preparation of the draft Plan and which includes representation from a variety of village organisations. Its main task to date has been to arrange and organise the recent survey of residents and businesses which took place in December and January and was carried out by way of questionnaires being sent to all households and businesses in the Parish. The response from residents was encouraging with a return rate of 40% although from the business sector it was less so with a return rate of only 25%. The work of analysing the results of the surveys is well underway and the intention now is to prepare a further draft of the Neighbourhood Plan and to consult widely with all residents, businesses and community groups for comment on the proposals. The Parish Council also has a duty to consult and co-operate with neighbouring parish councils, residents groups and statutory bodies. Following this extensive consultation process a final draft version will be submitted to Solihull Council for examination. Subject to approval by residents in a local referendum, the Plan then becomes part of the development plan for the parish until the year 2028.

Mike Blomer

Remembrance Day Village Ceremony

The **2013** Village Ceremony, with roads closed to traffic for the seventh year in succession, was successfully held on Sunday 10 November.

Last year, we were accompanied (as welcome guests), by members of Solihull Fire Service together with two of their resplendent tenders; with our blessing Fire Service representatives will be in attendance in November 2014, also a big thank you to Reverend Duncan Ballard, members of the Church, Parish Councillors and, of course, to the many Marshalls for their considerable help in ensuring the success and safe operation of this ceremony.

The next Remembrance Day Service will be held on Sunday 9 November 2014

War Memorial

The total refurbishment was completed in the Summer of 2013, which involved:

- machine cleaning of the whole monument
- repair and re-pointing of the extensive damaged areas of stonework, and
- the hand re-engraving of some **400** individual letters, matching the original style

Your Parish Council is pleased with the result having also received approval of the finished work from very many villagers.

This important village asset, since its erection in 1921, will now be subject to a planned maintenance programme with a modest sum being set aside within the Parish Council's Annual Maintenance Budget, for this purpose.

Postscript from the Reverend Duncan Ballard

"The village is very proud of its War Memorial which is a focal point of the village, forming a very important landmark for residents and visitors; it is symbolic of the sacrifices made by those who gave their lives in the cause of freedom and, of course, their families" 'LEST WE FORGET'.

Birmingham International Airport

Your Parish Council has been mainly concerned with the effect on the Village and its' environs, resulting from the proposed **airspace changes** necessitated by the operation of the new runway extension.

The runway extension, planned to be operational this month (April 2014), will be followed by Birmingham Airport carrying out a series of trials for both **Option 5** and **Option 6** flight path changes over the next seven months. These trials will help the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Birmingham Airport, Solihull Council and local Parish Councils to understand the actual impact rather than rely on theoretical modelling; the CAA will come to a balanced decision in the Spring of 2015.

The overall concern with the adoption of either of these options is the abandonment of the current 'Hampton Turn' (ie a 20 degree right turn at one mile from the end of the runway) – cancelling the Hampton Turn would mean that departing aircraft would pass closer to the Village.

Reasons for these changes (from Paul Kehoe, CEO of Birmingham Airport, Jan 2013)

"by extending our runway, we will improve the region's connectivity by enabling direct, non stop services, to long haul destinations in emerging markets..."

Option 5 being trialled

Birmingham Airport report that they chose this option due to the fact that its centreline avoids the village of Barston and flies mostly over open countryside; the route is positioned closer to Balsall Street East (but the aircraft will be higher at this point); they have also reported that "this route avoids the most populated areas including Hampton-in-Arden, Catherine-de-Barnes and Knowle".

Option 6 being trialled

Under this option aircraft will turn at 2.2 nautical miles (a safety factor); this would mean a flight path closer to, but not over Hampton-in-Arden - at its right hand side.

Option 6a

This option was rejected by the CAA; it would have meant that aircraft would turn right to the new waypoint at Temple Balsall which would also have meant that all flight paths would miss all villages.

Airport expansion forecasts

The current passenger throughput (9m for 2013) has been forecasted to increase to some 18m by 2030; Jo Kelly (Deputy CEO of Birmingham Airport) feels that the rate of passenger increase will be less than 1 million per year for each of the next 17 years.

Finally, the Airports Commission (chaired by Sir Howard Davies) challenged airports to deliver a long-term vision for UK aviation. Response by Paul Kehoe on behalf of Birmingham Airport: “the 2003 white paper safeguarded a second runway for Birmingham Airport to the West of the current runway – our proposal is to shift that location to the East so that it can be aligned with HS2 which would mean we could handle up to 70 million passengers per year; this is a VISION and we are talking about 20, 30, 40 years from now”.

Clive Bowen.