

Village of the the Year - Hambleton, Hants

Part A - About Our Village

1. Village Name - Hambleton
2. Postcode PO7 4..
3. Website www.hambleton-hants.com
4. Why do people love our village?

Hambleton is nestled in the South Downs National Park and has something for everyone. Visitors love our beautiful chalk down land setting, the 69 listed buildings and the Grade 1 listed Church dating from Saxon times, in a village of only 950 souls. They love the fact that Hambleton is the cradle of cricket, with the Laws of the game written in the world famous Bat and Ball pub on Broadhalfpenny Down. They love the many walks in the downland hangars and cyclists love the swooping slopes and stopping for tea and a bacon roll at Lott's tearoom. They love the dark skies in the village and the wonderful stars you can see, since we have no street lights. They also love the traditional pub, the Vine, with its ancient well, and great beer .

We are very proud of our outstanding primary school, and vibrant Church congregations. Residents love the fantastic community spirit, most acutely felt during the groundwater floods of 2014; where one estimate was a donation of over 100,000 hours of volunteer time keeping vulnerable people and properties safe over a 3-month period. Villagers love the very wide range of community groups: Saturday tennis coaching for youngsters, drama, cricket (of course), badminton, dancing, history group, music, poetry, painting, flower-arranging, folk club, scouts-guides and brownies, WI, young farmers, walking, horticultural, lunch clubs, community bus, bell-ringing, book groups, community films, knitting circles - even the Old Gits who meet in the pub on Thursday evenings! Newcomers always talk about the warm welcome they experience. We love the fact that we have the oldest operating vineyard in the country, now producing amongst the best sparkling wines in Europe.

The Hambletonian magazine keeps us in touch with what is going on, so everyone knows how to join in. We are fortunate to have a spacious, modern village hall, kept up to date by a dynamic group. We are proud of our vibrant village shop, where you can buy Hambleton bubbly, or a wide range of other produce.

We are a very welcoming and open village community - come and experience our Annual Show and torchlight procession in August (with dance and BBQ), the Spring Show, the Hambleton Hilly race in June, the fireworks in November and Christmas Carols in the High Street.

We are a very resilient community having recently survived a major flooding event and the 18 month repair programme afterwards, looking after the vulnerable. We had people wading through a foot of fast running water to help out, go to choir practices and put our Spring Arts Show on.

OH yes - and it's a very beautiful place to live and featured in the Sunday Times best 10 places to live in the South East.

5. Appearance

Hambleton is a quiet rural linear village, located around the junction of two chalk valleys. The surrounding land rises steeply providing a spectacular backdrop, marked by hangars of deciduous trees along the skyline. The three approaches to the village are very dramatic and contribute to the sense of drama as the village is reached. The centre of the village consists of informal rows of cottages or smaller houses with steeply pitched roofs, with the Parish Church church raised above

the village, accessed from a very old High Street; has a large Saxon knave and many later developments. The oldest house in the village, Manor Farm, dates from 1200. There are 69 listed buildings, an exceptional number for a small village - which led to the establishment of Hambleton as a Conservation Area. The surrounding land is predominantly to arable with some sheep/cattle/dairy - the large vineyard dominates the northern approach to the village. The village was taken into the South Down National Park during its recent establishment.

History and Heritage

Hambleton has a long and rich history, accessible in a book written by John Goldsmith. The name is thought to date from 956 CE, but with evidence of Iron Age settlement and a Roman Villa on the southern edge of the village. There is a rich history, with the Saxon Church and probably one before; Domesday Book details, a significant local market, a major village fire, King Charles' spending a fugitive night, the murder stone that commemorates a drunken murder in 1782. A proud record of the village's role in the First and Second World Wars are commemorated.

But it is as the cradle of cricket that Hambleton is known in the civilised world. Thousands came to watch Hambleton cricket club at Broadhalfpenny Down and later Windmill Down. Founded in 1750 (or perhaps earlier) the Laws of Cricket were written then, which are remarkably similar to today's Laws. Hambleton even played the England side on many occasions with a proud record of victories. A monument on Broadhalfpenny Down opposite the Bat and Ball attracts many cricket lovers.

Village Events

The main events are the Spring Show in April, the Summer Show on August Bank Holiday weekend, the Hambleton Hilly run in September, November fireworks. The Arts Society events are just before Christmas and Easter, with the village choir performing, individual musical performances, poetry etc. The History Group holds evenings in the Pub. The Folk Club evening is monthly with regular spots by villagers before the guest performer. The Annual Parish meeting will be held on 6 June.

Activities to do in this village

The walking around the village is superb with loads of well marked footpaths including the South Downs Way - so great place to take the dog out. Cyclists are very frequent visitors with the swooping hills and safe roads great for enjoying the spectacular scenery. The Vine is the central hub of the village with lots of evening events and chance to meet.

The many activities have been detailed in the summary, but it is commonly said that you can do something every day of the week in the village! The very vibrant Arts Society and its sub groups and the exceptionally active Horticultural Society provide the core of village life.

Visitor experience

Visitors talk about the warm welcome the village gives, the beautiful setting and the interesting historical houses and cottages that form the centre of the village. A visit to the lovely Church is a must with a peaceful churchyard with rare 'table' tombs and an ancient Yew. The church itself has an intact Saxon knave and a later Norman Knave.

The highlight will be coming down from the hangars on a Sunday or Thursday summer evening and hearing the Church Bells ringing before a pint of well kept beer in the pub.

Motorcyclist and cyclists welcome Lotts tea room which appears in many cycling guides - so their experience may well be catching a breath before Well Hill!

Other may enjoy visiting Hambleton Vineyard and finding out that the best English sparkling wine now rivals the best Champagnes.

What would the village do with the prize money?

This is easy....

2014 saw severe groundwater flooding that was reported nationally
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-26194506>

The villagers really pulled together and received much praise from Hampshire County Council for their community spirit, with the leader of the Flood Action Group awarded a BEM. HCC has subsequently conducted £4.5 million works to put a 1.5m pipe through the village to divert flood waters. This meant 18 months of extremely disruptive works, done with great sensitivity by Mildren PLC. As you might imagine the village is a bit battered and tired after all that; and the Parish Council has commissioned a Village regeneration Group to see what we can do to smarten up the village. So, the prize money would be used to kick start that process and - if the rules allow - to contribute some of it to a village party to celebrate the end of the flood and works, which should be about the time of the Village Show in August.

Entry Part 2

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5. 02392632946
6. I am over 18, in fact 64 on Monday!
7. As Chair of the Parish Council I was contacted directly by Andy Cook to ask if I would apply.