

# Annual Parish Meeting - 28 April 21 - Chair's address



Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting of 2021 our first for 2 years due to the First Lockdown of the COVID pandemic. A reminder that this is a meeting of the village of Hambleton and not the Parish Council. The meeting can propose motions, vote and pass a resolution - but they are not binding on the Parish, District or County Councils.

I regret the necessity that this meeting is held by Zoom this year - we fully recognise that this disenfranchises those who are not on-line and those with poor broadband connectivity. The fact is that if we are to have one this year it must be held before 1 June and a face to face meeting would be limited by the capacity of the village hall and at most 30 attendees. We also recognise that with many villagers shielding for almost 13 months that a mass gathering in the very short term would be a problem for many to attend. We still want you to have a voice, so please ask your questions on the chat function (bottom of the screen) and either you can ask direct or Alasdair can do it for you.

I would like to start by inviting us all to recall all those who have passed away in the last 2 years and the contribution that so many of them made to our village community - also I would ask for your thoughts and prayers for those struggling with illness - for the PC that would include Cllr Tony Higham who cannot be with us for health reasons.

Well, St Patrick's Day last year saw an emergency meeting of the PC to put in place the necessary legalities to see us through the first weeks of the pandemic, our first properly socially-distanced meeting with good COVID precautions. The meeting kicked off the Hambleton Action Plan or HAP and I am so grateful that Mrs Sam Meeson and our Clerk Mrs Jo Tester both volunteered to help run it. At its height we had 130 volunteers supporting 110 households with 160+ shielding persons as well as Dr Jo Walker and her team of prescription pick up and medicine drop off working closely with Denmead Health Centre. It might interest you to know that I have over 1,00 emails in my HAP folder. The People's Market quickly put a delivery service together which became FoC with the new owners. Thanks to the volunteers who helped support the People's Market run in a COVID safe way - as we all got used to the new way of operating. Also a huge thanks to St Peter and St Pauls for providing a safe COVID place to enjoy in the Churchyard and their help of the vulnerable. I really appreciated the way that we were still able to commemorate VE and VJ Day in the village and Remembrance Sunday.

A shout out for Pizza and Crepes at the Village Hall Car Park and cake at the Old Forge Tea Rooms - morale boosting to say the least,

Communications rapidly improved with the PC village wide email, briefings in the Hambletonian, and various Whatsapp and Facebook groups starting up - many continuing to this day. Also hard copy briefings were hand-distributed to all houses so those not on-line could be kept informed. When Winchester City Council asked for COVID heroes the HAP team were unable to single out individuals because wherever there was an issue we found villagers helping neighbours without recognition or thought of reward. So I am delighted to day that the whole village was recognised as a COVID hero - so thanks to the many folk that helped the village through this traumatic time. I hope the Village Hall will put the certificate up for us.

During the lockdown with recycling centres closed we noticed a very significant increase in fly tipping which has continued to be a nuisance, especially in Chidden. WCC has mostly

done a sterling job in removing rubbish quickly. We are endeavouring to establish with WCC the hotspots and what might be done to monitor them more closely. Remember that WCC cannot remove fly tipping from private land. Fly-tipping and pot-holes have to be reported by individuals and not through the PC - at WCC direction and to keep load on Clerk down.

Another fine innovation during COVID has been Hambledon businesses getting together for self help and mutual support. Renamed as Hambledon Connected they have sent each village household a Christmas Card. We have over 50 businesses in the village ranging from the Vineyard to sole traders. Please support them during the recovery from COVID. The PC has a policy of 'local first' where possible. It was great to see the Vineyard at our 'virtual summer show' and sharing their wonderful produce.

I'll now move to a series of issues that have arisen over the period:

- **Bus shelter.** The Bus shelter was demolished by a D1 bus and broken into a hundred bits. After a long period of negotiation (not helped by COVID) we have an insurance agreement to replace and we have just agreed to let the Contact with Manor Farm Joinery to replace with a green oak structure with cedar shingles, in the same place.
- Our thanks to **Hambledon School** for their work on the School travel plan which has seen an improvement in the issues during drop off and pick up. I understand the school is seeking to go for the Gold award.
- I get a number of questions about when we are going to get improved **mobile coverage** in the village. The PC supported and agreed the location of a mast, but despite chasing on a number of occasions all remains silent on that line.
- **Play Equipment.** The PC were pleased to re-open the play areas - when we could - and after a deep clean. But we are aware that the equipment at the village hall and Stewarts Green are way past their sell by date. Replacement is likely to cost at least £50,000, which is way beyond the means of the PC. So we are looking for helpers, fundraising experts and donations to get this project kicked off. We have tried a number of grant options, with one iron in that fire. If you want to help please let Jo Tester know. This could be a great project to celebrate the end of COVID.
- **Greening Campaign.** COVID has underlined for many of us the critical issue of climate change and the PC are very happy to help Sue Crossley and the Greening Campaign to start to inspire the whole village to reduce our carbon footprint. Please lend your support and most importantly do what you can to reduce your energy needs or choose sustainable sources of energy. A joint enterprise with the GC and PC will be tacked in May with a litter pick over the whole parish with Bella Birdwood and Melissa Thistlethwaite lead
- **Aquid Interconnector.** I have spend many happy hours in zoom meetings about this topic. We have now finished the investigations phase of the national planning process and inspectors report to the SofS in June and he has 3 months to decide. Main impact for us is a visual one of the Converter building from 2 footpaths and the disruption to traffic on the Hambledon Road from Waterlooville to Denmead over 2 years.
- **Defib.** One of our lovely villagers made their contribution to the most exciting PC meeting in 100 years and the action use of the VH Defib. The PC is about to debate whether we need a second or third Defib and where it should be located (if at all). The PC would be pleased to hear your views.

I'd now like to move to our various sub-committees and working groups and review them or introduce a later segment:

- **Planning.** The Planning sub committee has been busy with many applications through the year. The most controversial being a development of the visitors' centre at the Vineyard initiated by SDNP planning team. The proposal was recently withdrawn.

- Although not part of this formal group the **Village Design Statement** has now completed consultation by SDNP, with many positive comments. A huge thanks to Dr John Thornton and his team for putting together a superb document. Once adopted it will provide a vital context-sensitive set of additional planning guidance for our beautiful village.
- **Flooding Action Group.** Thanks to Jan Jarvie for leading on this important issue. It looks as if the Pipe and the gravel matrix that it sits in, is reducing the groundwater in the valley bottom where the winterbourne runs. There has been a big build up of silt at the head wall by the OFTR, but thanks to Jan's efforts that is now part of routine clearance and has been done recently. Jan will take you through the rest.
- **Finance.** John Thornton will take you through the money in Cllr Higham's absence. Conscious of the pressure on household and business finances due to COVID the PC has taken a pruning knife to this year budget leaving us very little additional or flexibility. Therefore seeing a slight reduction in the Parish Council share of the precept. We will have to restore next year, hopefully when things are on the up.
- **Better Streets.** Used to be called the Village Improvement WG. Huge thanks to the group for their work, John will cover, but I have had many positive comments about the new street signs, Bollards and planters and the George, Church School sign, Oak Bollards at the Cams Hill junction. John will update you. We'd love to hear what you think we ought to do next to improve our village environment. I know that WCC has plans afoot for the Gardens.
- **Traffic Survey.** Traffic speed and size of HGV in the village are amongst the most controversial issues the village faces. The PC has conducted a very successful consultation exercise and Cllr Chris Silcock will take us through first impression and next steps. We have over a third of households make a response.

So some final thanks from me:

Firstly to Jo Tester our wonderful Clerk who does a great job

Sam Messon for her HAP work and being a GDPR ninja

HAP volunteers

Unsung heroes

Tony Higham for HAP work, tennis, MoW

The medicine team, Jo Walker, John Thornton and Lucy Messon

Hambledonian for flexibility and support.

Tony Coates for organising commemoration events

Both Church teams

Meals on Wheels Team

Hortsoc and friends for keeping our beds lovely and a virtual summer show and plant sales.

Our District Councillors Frank Pearson and Vicki Weston who have been stars

Our County Councillor Mr Roger Huxstep who is standing down at this election for his COVID info and always attending our PC meetings!

Art Soc and the many many ways our lives are enriched as a result

VH hall team

I am sure that I have left many out, and for that I apologise.

I'll now take questions.