

# **Hail Weston Annual Parish Assembly**

**March 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 7.30pm**

Jill Gooch welcomed Fourteen residents and speakers to the meeting.

Apologies received prior to the meeting from Dawn Isaac, Cllr. P Martin and Cllr. M Lobo.

## **Report from Hail Weston Parish Council Chairman, Jill Gooch**

Good evening and thank you all for attending the Hail Weston Parish Assembly for 2019.

For those of you that do not know us, I would just like to introduce you to the members of the Hail Weston Parish Council. My name is Jill Gooch and I have been Parish Chair since last July. We also have Jane Sugars, Peter Mailer, Jeff Hubble, Nick Farnden and also Philip Martin and Matthew Lobo who can't be here this evening. Phil and Jeff joined in May 2018 after an uncontested Election and Nick joined in August. This means that the Parish Council reached full capacity of seven. Darren Tysoe, our HDC Ward Councillor was also elected in May 2018.

The work of the Hail Weston Parish Council falls into two main areas –

Firstly, representing you on issues affecting the community such as planning applications – we saw 9 applications in the last year (Mar 18-Mar 19) 8 extensions or alterations to existing properties and 1 new detached property in the village.

On the 29th May 2018, as you may know, the Parish Council were approached by the St Nicolas Church Restoration Group to make representation at the Development Management Committee meeting at HDC to support the church restoration plans. That evening saw mass residential support, by way of a double decker bus! Outgoing Chairman, Tony Baker, Reverend Nicki Bland and HDC Ward Councillor Darren Tysoe spoke influentially enough to disturb the planning committee's thinking!

Other Consultation Engagement Events have included East West Railway, A1 and Black Cat proposals, Policing, Solar Farm and Local Plan 2036.

Secondly, maintaining our open spaces – the allotments, playing field, the new cemetery and the Garden of Rest.

As you will be aware, the council strategy has largely been shaped by the Community Plan 2016/2020. A Summary of Actions were adopted by the Parish Council and, all have been completed except for 2: - Youth Group' & 'Create pathway watch and plan spring clean of footpaths. The Community Plan was completed by 77% of village residents and was managed and led by village volunteers with Barry Easom as Chair.

The Parish Council have taken advice from various channels to understand the best way forward in continuing a plan that will continue to meet the needs of Hail Weston's residents. The Parish Council have confidence in the imminent publication of the Huntingdonshire District Council Local Plan 2036, following several years of consultation.

The decision to complete another Community Plan, to run following 2020, or to commence with a Neighbourhood Plan has been much discussed over the last 12 months and is due for Resolving by the Parish Council in the next couple of months. If you have a view, please do share it, either tonight or following this meeting.

Other areas worthy of mentioning are:-

- The Garden of Rest – There is planned planting of plug plants to, hopefully, make the area more colourful to sit in, alongside the maturing fruit trees.
- Highways – The application to reduce the speed on the B645 is finally completed, along with improved signage. The Parish Council submitted another Local Highways Initiative request to CCC in December 2018. This was to reduce the speed limit to 20mph through the village, with the support of moveable flashing signage to reflect drivers' speeds for use both on the B645 and in the village. We have just heard that Hail Weston has been successful with its bid and in light of recent events this weekend, this could prove to be a very useful tool in reminding drivers to check their speeds. Many thanks to Ian Gardener with his help and advice with this process.

In February, we saw the annual litter pick completed, with volunteers collecting 15 bags of rubbish. Thanks to those who enjoyed the sunshine on this morning and to those other volunteers who clear rubbish regularly as they go around the village.

The precept for 2019/2020 was approved in November, reflecting a small increase of 5%. Advice from both HDC and CCC is consistent with previous years – in that funding remains tight and undoubtedly services will be affected, requiring the Parish Council to do more.

District Councillor Darren Tysoe and County Councillor Ian Gardener do a fab job at keeping Hail Weston Parish Council informed of opportunities to shape consultations and wider county news. I would like to thank them both.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors, and of course our wonderful Parish Clerk who have supported me in my first year as Parish Council Chair. And, thanks to all the volunteers who continue to help this village to become a more attractive and nicer place to live. There are too many to thank individually but many are here tonight and will have a chance to speak.

Finally, I would like to remind all residents that the Parish Council meet monthly, except in December. The public are always welcome and may address the council on current matters or issues of concern in the Open Forum, which is always at the start of the meeting. Any matters raised for decision would become a future agenda item.

### **Report by Richard Braddick, PCSO 7101**

First mobile rural watch led by police and volunteers (11) along B645 corridor commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> March! Hoped to build confidence and form regular event. 5

unmarked & marked police cars. Crimes reported in Hail Weston over the last 6 months have been relatively 'low': - 1 house burglary, 4 road traffic accidents, 1 rowdy nuisance and 1 rogue trader. RB encouraged all crimes to be reported - citing issues on Ford Road, including deposits of small silver cans to suspicious vehicles. 101 for urgent calls, 999 for urgent response. RB stated the challenge of increasing public confidence with limited resources: - 3.5 PCSO's, 1 Sargent, Response team from Huntingdon. RB enquired if residents were signed up to E-cops and encouraged use of Neighbourhood watch scheme. Register here <https://member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/108/Join>  
St Neots Safer Neighbourhood Team

St. Neots Police Station, Dovehouse Close, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 1DS  
Mobile: 07921-094801, Call: 101.Richard.braddick@cambs.pnn.police.uk **RB took resident questions on hare coursing, engaging with young people, private security firms, CCTV usage, frequency of B645 rural watch and St Neots Police Station rumours of it closing.**

### **Report by Anne-Marie Hamilton, St Nicolas Church Restoration Group**

Grateful thanks expressed to the Parish Council and Tony Baker for the presentation at HDC last year. The Restoration Group had recently heard that planning permission had been granted and ready for next steps of engaging with Victorian Society and Chancellor of Ely. Following that larger Grants could then be used as a way of funding. This figure raised stands at £36,000. A fundraising event 29th November planned at St Nicolas Church.

### **Report by Rev'd. Nicki Bland, St Nicolas Church**

Outlined that the Church is very well supported. The 9am congregation has approximately 10-12 worshippers. Afternoon services tend to have very good attendance. 120 attended Christingle. Plough Sunday also well attended. There is a Young people activity band recently in operation and uses the village hall as a youth club. Treasurer outlined the challenges to run the Church and shortfall each month. The forthcoming fete may be an opportunity to enhance extra giving.

### **Report by Cllr. Ian Gardener, County Councillor for Alconbury & Kimbolton**

Outlined below are some of the main areas of my work on the County Council. I am always available to discuss County Council issues with residents and to try and assist with issues. I can be contacted on 07970 613498 or by email at [Ian.Gardener@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Gardener@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

The makeup of the County Council remains the same following the By-Election in Soham North & Isleham, the Conservatives hold 36 seats, Liberal Democrat 15, Labour 7 and the Independents 3 giving the Conservatives a majority of 11 over all other parties.

The Alconbury & Kimbolton Seat covers 30 villages and 24 Parish Councils. From Hail Weston in the South, to Great Gidding in the North and out to the County Boundary in the west and the A1 to the east, excluding the villages of Southoe & Grafham.

I sit on the Highways & Infrastructure Committee, the Pensions Committee and the Planning Committee of which I am the Vice Chairman. I also sit on the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, where I am Vice Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cambridgeshire County Council are relocating from Shire Hall in Cambridge to a Hub and spoke model, with locations across the County and a new purpose built building at Alconbury Weald.

The County Council will ensure free public access is maintained to Castle Hill and the Civil War earthworks.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 the £1 parking charge at all Cambridge Park & Ride Sites was removed as promised in the Conservative Manifesto. This has resulted in a significant increase in the use of the park and ride sites. The Babraham Park & ride site is the third site to have a solar & battery storage project planned to support the electrification of transport. Smart Energy Grids will provide renewable energy to facilitate charging for buses, cars and freight and allow for the selling of energy to local customers via Power Purchase Agreements. The other sites where this is being implemented are St Ives & Trumpington.

To protect services within Cambridgeshire the County Council agreed at its budget meeting in February to an increase its proportion of Council Tax by 2.99 % ,plus an additional 2% Adult Social Care Precept. This increase is partly due to inflation and demand lead pressures across service areas in particular Adult & Children's Social care funding.

Ofsted undertook an unannounced two week inspection of Children's Services in Cambridgeshire in January. Ofsted's report highlighted the fact that the County Council has put the foundations in place that will deliver positive change and a much improved service, following the changes to Children's services implemented last year. Ofsted was impressed by the CC's Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Hub which makes sure that any young person who has been missing from home or care has the opportunity to speak to an independent person about the issues troubling them.

Bus services across the County will be protected, whilst the Combined Authorities Bus Review continues. The Combined Authority ie is taking over Bus Transportation from the County Council.

A Cambridgeshire village is one step closer to a Community Heat scheme. The scheme at Swaffham Prior would allow the village to move away from relying on oil and onto renewable energy through heat extracted from ground water. (Ground source heat pumps) The proposed project will be retrofitted, one of the first of its kind in the country and as such will act as a pilot for both government and similar villages looking to convert to sustainable heat systems. Monies for progressing the scheme are being provided by government, the Combined Authority (Mayor), Cambridgeshire County Council will be providing the land for the Proposed Energy Centre.

The County Council is also looking at a pilot project where plastic waste is used to create a material to repair potholes/roads. A further trial is to be undertaken to look at the depth the material can be installed at, traditional surfacing depths and to look at the generation of microplastics that could enter the road pavement drainage system from normal wear of the asphalt pavement surface.

The County Council also today ratified its Plastics Strategy Policy, which will allow the Council and its sphere of influence to Reduce and reuse plastics before recycling, Eliminate the use of single use Plastic, Zero plastic packing sent to landfill or escapes into the Natural Environment. Influence and inspire partners, employees and the wider community to reduce its use of plastics.

On completion of the A14 work is expected to commence on the duelling of the A428 between the Black Cat Roundabout and the Caxton Gibbet. The preferred route for the new A428 is the Orange Route, which has a junction for St Neots and the preferred junction at the Black Cat is option C

At the end of 2018 Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service was named as one of the best two performing Fire & Rescue Services of the 14 inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & rescue Services. The Inspectorate found that the service was GOOD across the entire inspection process and is now held as an example to other authorities. The Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service sent a letter of congratulations in which he stated "providing this level of performance is a testament to your drive and focus on delivering an effective and efficient fire and rescue service to the public and to ensuring the wellbeing of your staff. "

Across the division I have had meetings with PC's regarding Local Highways Initiatives, repairing potholes and working with Hail Weston PC regarding improved signage at the Ford. I am pleased to report that Hail Weston has again been successful in its LHI Bid for Speed Reduction

I attend the East-West rail exhibition at The Priory Centre in St Neots the County Council at its Economy & Environment Committee supported Route A, which is via Sandy & Bassingbourn.

Which is east west Rails preferred route so that it does not conflict with the Mayor (Combined Authority's Cam Metro which is coming out to Cambourne & St Neots.

As your County Councillor I continue to work with Parents to ensure Post 16 Transport for their Children, as there is no viable Bus Service from our villages to get children to school.

I look forward to working with the Parish Council and residents over the next year. **A resident enquired about the status of the A1 upgrades.**

#### **Sue Lee - Neighbourhood Café**

Neighbourhood Café has been in operation since 2016 and numbers were great, attracting approximately 20 visits on a Wednesday and circa 30 on a Sunday. Special

thanks to Village Hall Management Committee for allowing the Café to operate Free of Charge, which has resulted in supported Charities receiving more donations! Of which over £3,000 raised for many charities both locally and within the County. Much thanks expressed for the volunteer cake makers (10 strong) and for those who set up & clear away.

***A resident thanked Maurice & Sue for their efforts which began from being involved with one of the community Groups on the Community Plan. He praised them for the contribution which resulted in this benefit to the village.***

### **Hail Weston Wildlife Gardening Group (read out by Peter Mailer)**

HWWGG was established in 2016, it is a group for adults which offers a varied programme including: presentations on gardening and wildlife related topics and visits to places of gardening, horticultural, wildlife and conservation interest. The group meets 10 times per year at the village but also off site for trips. The last yearly AGM held in September 2018 reported that the average attendance per meeting is 24 and membership was announced as 44. Attendees from October 2018 to March 2019 also average at 24 per meeting with 33 paid memberships to date.

The group is run by a dedicated volunteer committee many who have been on the committee since the start of the group. We are always looking for new volunteers to take on roles. In order to make the group sustainable the group raises funds through raffles, plant sales and appeals for donations.

### **Hail Weston Village Hall Committee (Read by Jane Sugars on behalf of Dawn)**

For those of you who may not know, the Village Hall Committee has responsibility for the upkeep of the Village Hall and this continues to be totally reliant on hall hire, fund raising and donations for its income.

The Village Hall is a much used venue for clubs and meeting including the Hail Weston Wildlife and Gardening Group, Bridge Cub, Wednesday night yoga group and monthly Parish Council meetings. More recently we have also seen a youth band group start up. In addition the hall has plays host to the regular Neighbourhood cafes and of course we are the venue for Hail Weston Pre-School during term time. And if anyone is interested in booking the hall for any regular classes or meetings do speak to Dawn about availability. We keep weekends as free as possible - and Friday evenings - to allow for people to hold parties and events in the hall. So again so get in touch if you would like to book. Given rising costs we have recently had to put up hall rental rates to £12 an hour but villagers can enjoy a reduced rate of £10 per hour. This is an old building - which causes various maintenance issues and means we need to have a certain amount in reserve in case of a major project. We have also faced some rising costs especially in terms of oil and electricity.

However, the good news is we have a healthy balance sheet and so we are investing in the structure over the next few months. We have already bought new curtains and installed new fencing around the rear car park plus a new street door will be fitted at the end of this month.

We are also looking at grant applications for bigger projects. The Pre-School are leading one to hopefully fund a new kitchen, and the village hall committee are hoping to get funding to convert our expensive oil based heating system to a more environmentally friendly and cost effective air source heat pump system. We also hope to have the hall redecorated before the end of the year, refit the toilets and invest in some new chairs.

We are lucky to have 10 very active committee members to help with this work and also in the two fundraising events for the Village Hall this year. Firstly a Stand Up Comedy Night, taking place here next Saturday night (just 16 tickets left - get yours before they all go!) and, then on June 29th, the Village Fete. This is not only a fundraiser but also an important community event which we hope many of you will attend and support. If you would like to help run a game, serve refreshments or even have your own stall on the day, do get in touch with Dawn. **A resident asked if the Annual set of Accounts were made available for inspection, Clerk confirmed a copy had recently been received.**

### **Tony Larkins (MD) Reporting on behalf of the Royal Oak Public House**

The Royal Oak will celebrate its 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019, and its fair to say that it has not always been an easy ride. As with any new business, there have been teething problems and the inevitable staff changes. However, after such a huge renovation at the start by a great many of the villages, to which we are eternally grateful. The practicalities of actually running the pub threw up things that we had not foreseen, which has meant a considerable further sum having to be invested in January this year.

The Royal Oak was brought back to life to help add to the community feel of the village and whilst we want to see more locals in there, we believe that goal is being achieved. With Connie in charge of front house and Alan in the kitchen, both with great support staff and a pro-active board, we welcome positive feedback. There will always be more to do, and the more it gets used the more we can achieve for the community.

Finally, on behalf of the Royal Oak we would again like to thank all of those whom have helped in our journey from creation until today. We are committed in maintaining the pub as a hub of the community. After all, given there isn't any, we certainly are not doing it for the money. **A resident thanked the Pub Group for keeping it going. Questions were asked about the pub garden and the plans for the next 12 months.**

### **Report from District Councillor Darren Tysoe Great Staughton Ward**

One of the highlights for me last year was working with representatives from the Church restoration project to assist with gaining planning permission. The planning meeting was less than a month after I was elected, so I had some catching up to do! The amount of support from the village was overwhelming – over 100 letters, and a great turn out on the day of the planning meeting. As you all know, permission was granted, and I look forward to the future when the changes to St Nicolas Church are completed and benefiting residents and visitors for future generations.

## New Great Staughton Ward

As a result of boundary changes and re-organisation in an attempt to balance the size of District Council Wards, Hail Weston became part of the new Great Staughton Ward – along with Great Staughton, Perry, Grafham, and Ellington. The other main change was all-out elections, rather than elections in thirds, so all 52 Council seats were contested in 2018, and the next scheduled District Council election is May 2022. Cabinet

After the election on 3 May 2018, the political composition of the council was:

- Conservative – 30
- HDC Independent Group - 10
- Liberal Democrats - 7
- Independent - 1
- Labour – 4

The Conservative Group are the majority group. 6 Councillors form the Executive, including Leader, Deputy Leader and 4 Executive Councillors. I am the Executive Councillor for Digital and Customer Services. One of the main initiatives this year has been the Digital Portal.

### Digital Portal

The District Council has launched a customer portal ([my.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://my.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)). This will grow into a one-stop site for residents to access personalised information about benefits, council tax, bin dates, Frequently Asked Questions, etc. The Council is busy converting its forms to an online format, which means that residents can complete forms directly on the portal, rather than having to send forms through the post (which then need to be manually keyed into a computer system). The site is available 24/7, which is clearly of benefit to residents who may otherwise have to take time off to visit the Council during working hours. The portal is evolving weekly, with new forms and functions added on a regular basis.

### Report from the February Cabinet Meeting - Car Parking Investment

The funding to implement 'Pay for What You Use' parking charges in Huntingdonshire's Off-Street Car Parks, and the first stage of a major programme of improvements in our off-street car parks was unanimously approved by the District Council's Cabinet at its February meeting. The move to 'Pay for What You Use' charging will, it is hoped, benefit local businesses and our market towns, by

encouraging visitors to stay for longer, and not need to rush back to their cars in time for an expiring ticket.

In addition to the move to pay for what you Use, which will see payments being made when you return to the car to the nearest 15 minutes, rather than having to pay in advance in hour blocks, the improvements will see contactless payments enabled in all our off-street car parks as part of a refresh of all parking machines, and the roll out of a parking app for mobile phones, making payment more convenient and quick. The commitment to delivering 'value for money' remains; with charges kept lower than those in comparative areas.

The approval at the February Cabinet Meeting follows a thorough and far ranging review of car parking which included a major public consultation, engagement with local stakeholders and mapping of the future demand on the service driven by planned housing growth and anticipated changes in car park demand.

Proposals will be brought forward in the future to offer further enhancements to our off-street car parks. Proposals for wider bays where possible are currently being developed, as well trebling the number of car charging points, and improving lighting. We remain committed to exploring other technologies to further improve the visitor experience.

#### Council Tax 2019/20

Council Tax levels for Huntingdonshire District Council will remain one of the lowest in the country. Councillors considered the budget at the February Meeting and supported an increase of just 2.6% for 2019/20. A Council Tax increase of 2.6% will mean that an average Band D property will pay £142.16 per year.

Due to the current economic climate, the council is faced with reduced government funding levels for 2019/20 compared to previous years, followed by further significant reductions in 2020/21. This means that further efficiencies will need to be found over the next 12 months in preparation for the challenge ahead.

The Council's ruling Group have committed to a policy that any Council Tax increase will be lower than both the most recent State Pension increases and the average increase in local earnings." In the last Financial Year, average wage growth to April 2018 was 3.5% in Huntingdonshire, 4.8% in Cambridgeshire, and 2.7% Nationally. Additionally, the minimum increase in State Pensions was 2.6%, due to the government's Triple Lock Policy. A 2.6% increase equates to £3.60 per year for a Band D property, and for most residents it will be less than this.

In due course the Council will be issuing Council Tax bills to all its residents and an average Band D property will total £1,855.38 of which this Council's charge is only 7.7%. However, we do continue to face some tough challenges ahead with Central Government reducing our grant next year, with some grant disappearing altogether the year after. Our priority is to maintain the high quality essential services that our residents expect and we are well placed to do this, despite the reductions in funding. We continue to work hard to maximise every opportunity to save money without compromising quality, in order to ensure that we are fully prepared for reduced funding levels in future years.

Key measures proposed include:

- Investment in the front line staff who continue to tackle homelessness across the District.
- Commitment to encourage the active participation of our residents in a wide range of high quality sports and leisure services. This means the continued investment in supporting healthy lifestyles across the district.
- Additional support to ensure the effective

delivery of front-line services, including significant investment in waste collection services and transforming a range of other council services.

- Investment in regeneration projects in our market towns and further support for our local economy.

This will help to ensure that the Council continues to support jobs and services, the District remains somewhere people choose to live and that our towns thrive and continue to attract both shoppers and visitors.

It has been a pleasure to serve as your District Councillor for the past 10 months. If you need to contact me, please do get in touch:

Councillor Darren Tysoe Great Staughton Ward (Great Staughton, Perry, Grafham, Hail Weston and Ellington) Executive Councillor for Digital and Customer Huntingdonshire District Council

Follow me on Twitter @darrentysoe and [twitter.com/darrentysoe](https://twitter.com/darrentysoe) Receive my updates on Facebook - [www.facebook.com/cllrdmtysoe](https://www.facebook.com/cllrdmtysoe) Email: [darren.tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:darren.tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) Phone: 01480 388310 Address: Grove Cottage, Malting Lane, Ellington, PE28 0AA . **A resident asked about car parking along the Market Square side streets which made making the flow of town traffic, challenging. Also, a resident enquired why the Police could be thinking of removing the police station in the fastest growing town which was the largest in the County.**

**A resident asked if the PC could remove some playing field material from outbuilding. Also, a resident asked why recent EOM Minutes stated that monies to be donated to the Village hall given it had only 10 years left on lease. A discussion ensued. Cllr. Hubble & Sugars clarified the extra monies requested from the Community Benefit fund from the Solar Farm ear marked had been rejected.**

**The meeting closed at 9.15pm. Refreshments were served.**