

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF MEETING

The **Annual Parish Assembly** took place immediately after the Parish Council AGM at **7.35pm** on **Friday 9th May 2014**.

Present: Mr R Buchanan-Dunlop (Chairman), Mrs S Eldridge (Vice Chair), Mr D Bicknell, Mr C Dean, Mr R Miller, Lady Walker, Mrs J Barnwell (Clerk)

Plus eight members of the public

1. **Apologies**
Councillor S Wheeler, WPC T Herbert, Mrs E Riley
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held Friday 17th May 2013**
These were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising**
None
4. **Address by the Chairman Mr Buchan-Dunlop**
The Chairman thanked his Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their support and energy and went on to outline those events, which had affected the village over the last 12 months. He spoke in particular about the doubling of the Parish Precept over the next two years, which would enable the agreed extension of the 30mph limit. He also touched on the effect one of the wettest winters on record had on Ham and summed up the main planning issues tackled by the Council in the last year. He paid tribute to all those members of the Parish, who regularly put so much effort into organising and supporting village projects and events.
(The full Parish Council Report by the Chairman is attached).
5. **Annual Police Report – Police Support Community Officer M Camilleri**
PSCO Camilleri read out WPC Herbert's report to the assembly. **(Report attached)**. She reminded Parishioners that in the light of several burglaries and attempted break-ins to outbuildings in the area, they should always phone 101 to report any suspicious vehicles. She also alerted those present to the recent spate of thefts of working breed dogs, advising dog owners to be vigilant. In relation to the village's Speedwatch campaign, she volunteered to help take part in a shift with them. Speaking on behalf of Speedwatch Councillor Eldridge thanked her and welcomed her assistance.
6. **Neighbourhood Watch Report – Mr S Byatt, NHW Co-ordinator**
Mr Byatt reported that the Ham Neighbourhood Watch network was very active and had had some success in recent months. He told the

meeting that thanks to a keen eyed and quick-thinking parishioner and a speedy response from Wiltshire Police, a thief, who had stolen a large amount of hedging plants from Ham Spray, had been successfully apprehended and since charged. Mr Byatt said that he had received a supply of NHW stickers from Wiltshire Police, which home-owners could display in their windows and that he would shortly be distributing them amongst his Area Co-ordinators.

7. Ham Relief Fund – Mr N Baring

Mr Baring explained that the Ham Relief Fund is a charity, which exists to make grants to individuals within the village in cases of need. He said that the current fund stood at £2,000; its trustees being Mr Baring and Mrs B Stevens, with Mrs L Holford as treasurer. In the last 12 months they had made two donations. Mr Baring said that if anyone knew a Parishioner, to whom a donation of between £50-£100, would make a difference, they should let him know.

8. Village Hall Committee Report

The Chair of the Village Hall Committee Mrs Riley sent her apologies. Village Hall Committee Member Lady Walker read out Mrs Riley's report in her absence. (Report attached.)

9. Broadband

The Chairman explained that Broadband speeds or lack of them were a hot topic in the village. He had recently had correspondence from an anxious villager who felt that Ham would be in danger of 'falling between the cracks' of the County's campaign to 'roll out Superfast Broadband' in light of the fact that despite being located in Wiltshire, the majority of Ham residents' phones were in fact served by the Inkpen exchange in West Berkshire. The Chairman explained that Wiltshire Council were currently undergoing a survey to determine which parts of the County would be in line for Fibre Optic Broadband and that he was in contact with them and awaiting an update on results, which would determine which 91% of the county should be in line for an upgrade. However, the Clerk pointed out that, having spoken first hand to a BT Openreach Engineer, he had assured her that the only chance of receiving Fibre Optic Broadband would be if the imminent conversion to fibre-optic broadband at the Inkpen Exchange could be extended out to Ham. Councillor Dean explained that the connection between Ham's 'green telecommunications cabin' (known as a PCP no 3) would only be possible if the phone wires had been ducted when laid in the ground between the Inkpen Exchange and Ham. If there were no existing ducting, then the upgrade to Fibre-optic Broadband would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. A parishioner from the Floor said that the effect of slow and unsatisfactory Broadband service to the village shouldn't be underestimated, as it was certainly already affecting residents' ability to work from home and might well impact on house prices.

10. First World War Exhibition

The Chairman confirmed that there would be a First World War Exhibition in the village hall over the weekend of July 26-27th. He explained that the idea for an exhibition began because the Council thought it would be appropriate to commemorate the six members of Ham who lost their lives in the Great War. However it has been extended to include memories, memorabilia and stories of Ham's present day residents' ancestors, no matter in which part of the country they had lived.

Councillor Eldridge, who is co-ordinating events with Mr Buchanan-Dunlop, said she had leafleted everyone and hoped that they would come forward with information so that she could assess the size and scale of the exhibition. She said that she would be hoping for help from villagers and would like to hear from volunteers willing to spare their time, especially over the weekend in question. The Parish Council agreed to make a contribution of £50 towards the cost of photocopying and the purchase of display boards etc to facilitate the exhibits. The planned exhibition is also being supported by the Village Hall Committee.

10. Open Forum

There were no questions from the Floor.

The meeting closed at 8pm