

**Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Lower Heyford Parish Council held on
22nd April 2014 at 7 pm in the Church**

Present: Mr MacNamara (Chair), Mrs. Ball (Vice Chair), Mr Dare, Mr. Mortimore, Mrs Turner, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Eggeling, Mr. & Mrs Humberstone, Roger Bowen, William Shepherd, Tom Clayton, Eric Ball, Mr. Hendry, Mrs Corrie, Mr. Boxall

In attendance: Cathy Fleet (Clerk)

Minutes of the last meeting held on 25th April 2013 were read, proposed by Mr. Macnamara and seconded by Mrs Ball as a true record and it was **RESOLVED** to accept these as a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chair.

Public Participation : Member of the public were welcomed by Mr. Macnamara and invited to participate at any time.

Mr. MacNamara introduced Gavin, Sarah McCready and Paul Silver representing Dorchester Living who gave a short presentation on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for the development of the site at Upper Heyford which they own. It was explained that Dorchester Living are planning to build 1075 new houses on the site and associated facilities, e.g. shops. pub. sports facilities could also be built. Their proposal is to form a Neighbourhood Plan which would include most villages who are willing to be included in the surrounding area. This would have the effect of fulfilling the government's housing requirement, but all at Upper Heyford thus preventing the development of existing villages. Representatives from many villages have attended meetings recently with Dorchester Living and some have expressed considerable interest in becoming involved with the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the public at the meeting expressed concern at the inevitable increase in traffic and the resulting effects on existing roads, particularly the B4030. It was explained that it is anticipated that most increase in traffic would be towards Bicester and the motorway and that traffic surveys are being undertaken. The purpose of inviting Dorchester Living to the meeting was to give residents the opportunity to form an opinion and provide feedback to the Parish Council.

Chairmans Report

Introduction. I have served as Chairman of the Parish Council for the past year so it's my duty to account to you, who elected us, for both our activities over the past twelve months and the money we precepted from you and spent on your behalf. Afterwards, there will be a time for questions and comments. As we are all unpaid volunteers doing our best for the parish with little money and less power, I hope your comments will be positive, either to encourage us to greater things or to offer your help to do better.

Clerkship. Almost everything we do manage is through the hard work of our Learned Clerk, Cathy Fleet, the PC's sole, part time, officer, to whom the Parish owes a great debt of thanks. These thanks are not only for our public achievements but also for all her work behind the scenes that keeps us legal, solvent, audited and law-compliant, with up to date Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct to comply with best practice. Since we switched to monthly meetings, this means clerking ten PC meetings a year, minutes of which are on noticeboards and the website (for the operation of which we owe thanks to Graham Wilson), and which are all open to every parishioner.

Councillors. In all this, the parish should again thank Denise Ball for serving as Deputy Chairman (I note the meeting she chaired when I was tied up in Court went more smoothly than anything I've managed!) and David Dare, Carl Mortimore, Bruce Eggeling and Leigh Thompson for serving as councillors throughout the year. Tracy Hawkins sadly resigned during the year – we are most grateful for her service to the council – and we were grateful for those who stepped forward, from whom we were delighted to coopt Petra Turner, especially as she links us closely to the ambitious Play Area renewal project. So, what have we done?

Highway safety is a priority as always. The SID continues to be effective in reducing dangerous speeding and thanks go to those who have undertaken the laborious and dangerous task of repositioning it. We've allowed in this year's budget for a second one which, provided Highways approve, will make it possible to spread the benefits equitably around the parish with less work – though constraints of siting and land ownership do unfortunately prevent us covering all the dangerous stretches of road that we'd like to.

Leigh Thompson continues to pursue road safety at the Neighbourhood Action Group and we have explored options to reduce the danger at the crossroads at the top of Freehold Street with the County Council, spurred on by the terrible damage to No 134 and eloquent representations from residents at PC meetings. Unfortunately, almost all our suggestions were refused as too expensive or incompatible with regulations, though the altered road markings we did obtain have, I think, made a small positive improvement in visibility and thus safety.

The issue of lighting on Station Road was raised after a tree fell across the road and, subject to the opinion of parishioners, is still open for discussion.

Highway maintenance issues are a never-ending campaign. With the support of our County Councillor, Mrs Catherine Fulljames, we have at last had the footpath to the Long Bridge restored and enhanced, making it high and wide enough to protect parents with children from lorries. We are less happy that repairs to the collapsing Station Road surface were mere patching and will continue pressure on this but are cautiously optimistic that a solution to the flooding outside the boatyard entrance may be in sight. Meanwhile, we are monitoring routing agreements restricting lorry movements to Heyford Park and Ardley landfill/incinerator, will plug away for an eventual weight limit on the bridge and continue the never-ending reporting of potholes to OCC's website, which we encourage everyone to join in!

Footpaths bring me to replacement of the Rifle Plank Bridge where we've been battling away alongside Steeple Aston and Upper Heyford PC's and are now told it is in the

budget and second on the list of priority projects: we will see what happens when the valley is dry enough to support heavy equipment.

Nuisance: we have pursued Network Rail over their activity at the Station Yard and Thames Water about the continuous pumping required in Caulcott – so far without success, but we continue.

Winter was too mild to see our snow plough called out but we shouldn't forget to thank David Dare for storing our tons of salt and, with others, for filling our grit bins. A few degrees colder and we would have been very much in need of this.

Charity matters have also occupied us. The PC appoints all the trustees of the Lower Heyford Relief in Need Charity and we were delighted to fill two vacancies that occurred during the year with Sue Watson and Alan Humberstone, who combine a wealth of experience and local knowledge. We completed a new lease for the Reading Room to the LHRINC and, after many years, achieved a lease for the playing fields to the Kings George's Field Trust: hopefully that will be the last of solicitors for the PC for years to come!

We would like to congratulate the Play Area group on winning a Viridor grant of £45,000 to modernise this much-used facility and will continue our practical and financial support for their work, for example by insuring the equipment, while they manage the area itself, including regular safety inspections and maintenance.

The Village Hall trust is supporting this work and has also helped, along with another large Viridor grant, to fund the improvements you can see to the church. As requested by the Parish Plan survey, this will provide a meeting area with kitchen and toilets and I hope village organisations will make use of the new facilities. Meanwhile, big village services – Christmas and Easter, weddings and funerals – can now seat a couple of dozen more people than could previously squeeze into the pews, raising the church's capacity to over 160.

We also support the Friends of Lower Heyford Station who keep our station and its surroundings looking so attractive by their unending labours.

Planning was looking uncontroversial until a few weeks ago. In Caulcott, there is the application for five Romani Gypsy pitches, which the PC has opposed, following a very well attended debate, on a series of detailed planning grounds. The application has since been deferred month after month awaiting assessments of highway access and flood risk. Meanwhile for all of us there is Dorchester's proposal that we band together with a wide swathe of parishes to draft a Neighbourhood Plan. This could help us dictate the amount and location of any future village housing and secure our fair share of improvements to roads, schools and the like – but at a price: Dorchester are

completely open about their commercial interest in permission for more housing. I suspect both these will keep us busy in the coming year.

Financially, we have again reduced the precept, helped by the ending of legal work, the success of the Play Area group and by funding any new SID out of built up reserves. Our main outlays are staff costs and insurance, as you'd expect when we operate principally by volunteer labour and by getting larger authorities to do what the parish wants. Full details have been minuted and all our expenditure is audited and publicly available to everyone.

Looking forward, we are reviewing the recommendations of the Parish Plan 2010/11. While many of these have been achieved, there's more to be done and some can be added to, to keep it a live document and ensure that what parishioners said they wanted is happening. In that and all else we do, please wish us luck and give us your support.

There followed a discussion regarding the possibility of installing street lighting along Heyford Road near the Station and the conclusion was that most people would support the installation of some low level safety lighting, sympathetic with the surroundings in order to assist pedestrians travelling to and from the station. This will be further discussed at the PC meeting.

Willy Shepherd representing the **church**, reported that in this last year both the team rector and the vicar have left, with the team rector having been replaced and interviews taking place soon for a new vicar. Despite this, services have continued every Sunday and there have been 7 weddings and 4 baptisms and celebrations of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Work is continuing on the alterations to the Church which are nearing completion with an opening ceremony planned in mid May. Funds for this have been achieved by a grant from Viridor of £63K, £30K from the Village Hall Trust, £25K from Church funds and £9K from the Oxford Historical Trust.

Dr Clayton reported on the work of the **LHRINC** and his report is attached.

Roger Bowen reported that the **Events Committee** May Day Fete was the best ever and made a profit of £1360, however, the Fireworks in November made a loss due to bad weather. The Carol Concert will not be staged this year due to poor attendance.

Roger Bowen reported that the **Bowls Club** is still struggling for membership and have no fixtures planned this year due to insufficient players. The green will be opened on 31st May and it is hoped that people will attend and experience a taster session with a view to joining the club.

Alan Humberstone reported on the work of **Friends of Heyford Station** and was particularly pleased to report that entry into a photo competition resulted in 4th place. The 'ramping' of the box bush display is earning compliments from passengers. increasing passenger numbers is resulting in problems in the car park, particularly as it is also being used by contractors and boaters.

Lynne Humberstone reported on the **WI** and her report is attached.

Petra Turner reported on the recent success of the Friends of Lower Heyford Playground in securing a grant of £44,000 for the refurbishment of the playground which will commence soon.

Appendices
LOWER HEYFORD RELIEF IN NEED CHARITY
Charity No 237768

Chairman: E Read

Clerk: Dr T Clayton

Trustees: E. Read, Dr T. Clayton, L. Thompson, Dr S. Watson, A. Humberstone

**ANNUAL
STATEMENT and
ACCOUNTS
APRIL 2013 – MARCH
2014**

SIGNED BY TRUSTEES

E. Read.....

Dr T. Clayton.....

L Thompson.....

Dr S Watson.....

A Humberstone.....

DATE.....

HIGHLIGHTS & SUMMARY

1. **2013/2014** saw several changes to our nominated Trustees notably the death of **Mrs Hepworth** who had been a Trustee and Chairperson since **1976** and a great supporter of the Charity.

2. A move to a new Parish meant the resignation of **Rev E Green**. Three new Trustees have been welcomed – **L. Thompson, Dr S Watson and A Humberstone**
3. The main activity of the Charity during 2013 was the modernisation and refurbishment of the **Reading Room**.
4. A comprehensive programme of improvement (carried out by local builders) was completed in July at a cost of ~ **£29,000** – Reading Room Accounts attached. This essential work reduced the Charity's financial resources to a low base
5. **A new lease for the Reading Room** has been agreed with the Parish Council.
6. A new **12 month Assured Tenancy Lease for the Reading Room** was entered into in October 2013 and the new tenants have settled in well. A 6-monthly inspection of the property was satisfactory.
7. The Charity's income continues to be derived from rental of the **Reading Room** and the **Poor's Land** and forward cash projections are attached in the **Accounts and Financial Summary**
8. The main ongoing costs of the Charity are maintenance and running costs of the Reading Room
9. Recent surveys of the Reading Room thatch have confirmed that it is in excellent condition and that the ridge will not need any attention for at least 5-8 years. The projected reserves of the Charity will cover any such work.
10. Through representation by **Trumans Solicitors, Bicester** the Charity has successfully renegotiated with the **Charity Commission** its approach to letting the Reading Room (at a realistic market rent). At the same time the use of available funds will be broadened to encompass appropriate issues which "benefit the village as a whole"

11. **Charitable donations** and requests for help remain low – only Sanctuary Housing Alarms

12. The **income** of the Charity for the year ending 31 March 2014 was **£12140.37**. **Outgoings** were **£32189.05**. Available funds at this date are **£2365.74**

13. The financial records of LHRNC for 2013-2014 have been **audited by TDAS** and found to be a true and accurate account.

The Heyfords WI annual report for the Lower Heyford Parish Meeting 2014

The Heyfords WI is a small group of ladies enjoying monthly talks and other events arranged by the Oxfordshire Federation which have approximately 4,500 members spread across nearly 150 WIs

During the past year The Heyfords have had various speakers as reported in the Valley News, also have made teas for the Postgraduates at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital, and had a cake and flower stall at the Upper Heyford flower show. The members enjoyed outings to the Wychwood Brewery and a day trip on the canal, including two evening local walks.

2015 is the centenary year of the WI. At present a baton is travelling throughout the 69 federations of England, Wales and the islands to celebrate the links of friendship and community developed through the WI. Its trip will finish at the Annual Meeting in June 2015 at the Royal Albert Hall.

It is all part of the WI ethos, which is to offer opportunities for enjoyable learning for life. As part of those learning opportunities, we are lucky to have the WI's own residential college, Denman College, within our County for members to take full advantage of the beautiful surroundings.

We look forward to the coming year and will celebrate The Heyfords WI 80th birthday in January.

Lynn Humberstone
President The Heyfords WI

