

Minutes of WAPPENHAM VILLAGE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2016
Held on Wednesday 4th May 2016 at 7:30pm
in Wappenham Village Hall

Approximately 60 members of the public attended the meeting.

1. Parish Council Welcome and Opening of Annual Assembly

Cllr Hilary Wickham welcomed those present to the meeting, including parishioners, representatives of local organisations and Cllr Peter Davies, Cllr Ian Morris, Adam Jeskins PSCO Graham Suppiah.

2. Approval of minutes of Annual Assembly held on 28th April 2015

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 28th April 2015.

3. Matters Arising from minutes of the Annual Assembly on 28th April 2015

None.

4. Parish Council Chair Annual Report – Cllr Hilary Wickham

I would first like to welcome our three newest Councillors, Shelley Stewart and Mark Wilkinson who were co-opted in August last year and Alan Lauren co-opted at our meeting last month. It is a very long time since we managed a full house and long may it last.

As we have a particularly long agenda this year I am going to be brief in my report. It's been very busy indeed as regards masses of local council material to sift through, but not so regarding planning applications. I hope most of you here tonight keep in touch with your Council through our minutes, the newsletter and WIZ.

The Speed Radar System, first mentioned at the Annual Assembly last year, is here tonight in all its glory. Just waiting now for the two main posts before being able to switch on the lights. Thank you Paul and Liz for seeing this new project through.

There is in process a Local Plan 2A and I attended a very interesting meeting last month at SNC - however I believe Peter Davies is much better placed to explain to you how you can help us formulate some feed back from Wappenham.

You may be aware of the introduction of the new Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL, which will be payable on new planning applications. Again I believe our District Councillor will be talking about in his report.

I imagine all of us are only too aware of the condition of our minor roads and you may have questions to address to our CC Councillor Ian Morris.

Has anyone noticed the great job the 'mowers' have done this year? Let's hope the same driver comes round for the next 'cut'.

I don't want to take any more of your time and I'd like we can go through the agenda items and reports as quickly as reasonable.

Thank you to everyone who is involved with the smooth running of our village but I must always especially mention Jane Harries, Clive Watt, Brian Peart and Dianne Walsh for all they do.

5. Benefits of a Village Defibrillator

Adam Jeskins, introduced his a role Community responder as East Midlands Ambulance Service, Heart Foundation and instructor trainer for Heart Foundation. He highlighted how using a defibrillator can save life and mitigate injuries when a parishioner suffers cardiac arrest. A central location on an external wall in a

secure cabinet is recommended. No training is required but free training is available. The units cost approximately £1500 and are serviced by EMAS. Paul Featherstone suggested suitable locations might be either the telephone box or the Baptist chapel. Funding sources might include Northampton Community Foundation, SNC and/or NCC funding.

There were several general comments of support for a project for a village defibrillator and a show of hands gave the proposal **unanimous support**.

6. Report from Police – Brackley Rural

Graham Suppiah PCSOs Brackley Safer Community Team.

For Year ending 31/03/16 there were 2 crimes recorded both theft (undetected) . The need to safeguard against complacency was emphasised. He asked residents to be extra vigilant regarding vehicles and report any suspicious activity to 101. Social networking sites are increasingly important intelligence sources and he encouraged Neighbourhood Watch to work alongside this. There had been thefts of purses and handbags in Brackley; it was emphasised not to leave PIN numbers in bags, to shield card entry at ATMs and at tills. Organised groups with maps are distract car owners returning to their cars. There are groups selling fake gold on the side of the roads, across borders into Northampton etc.

Colin Watts noted how useful WIZ is to get the message out. A member of the public noted attempted theft had occurred, a police car attended, there was a great response and a suspect was caught. There have been landline calls reportedly from Microsoft targeting certain vulnerable groups; it was recommended call blocking from BT.

7. Observations from the County Councillor –Cllr Ian Morris

The county is undergoing the biggest change that has been seen in many years. As part of this change we need look at some sort of combined / Unitary Authorities for the County. At the moment we have nine separate authorities including District, Town and borough Councils as well as the County .There is definitely some confusion amongst the public as to which authority does what. Significant Savings could be made by combining all these authorities and working together. The county have now commissioned a study on the options for a unitary model in Northamptonshire. At the same time South Northamptonshire Council are looking into their options. Until recently the only option they were looking at was a combined authority with Cherwell in Oxfordshire .I understand that they are now looking at options within the County as well. Even though this is at an early stage I do not support a combined Authority with Cherwell as this would effectively remove South Northamptonshire from the County. I have always believed that we need to look at all options but that these options must be within Northamptonshire's borders. There are going to be a number of options to look at the first are a single unitary authority for the whole county. The second is a two unitary authority and the third would be a three or four unitary option. The first would achieve the greatest savings but might not be the best option for the democracy and governance of the County and I personally favour a two unitary authority roughly split between the north and the south of the county. Until we have further details and figures we can only speculate and all of the Authorities need to work together to deliver a successful outcome. I would be very interested in hearing what people think about this.

In the meantime at the same time as we look at reorganising the structures within the County you are no doubt aware that the County is under continuing financial pressure and having to make further and deeper cuts to its budgets. This has so far been achieved without effecting front line services but this cannot continue going forward and therefore the Council has had to re-think how it delivers its services .This will include the setting up of separate companies to run services and deliver essential cuts going forward without damaging them. LGSS is a good example of such a company and this allows for savings and profits to be generated by working for other organisations.

In connection with the continuing financial pressure the County finds itself under it has been decided to raise the Council Tax for the first time in many years . This increase will be for 4% and will include 2% for Adult Social Care specifically . This will help fund services going forward and prevent any erosion of services .

The first of these delivery vehicles, First for Wellbeing official launched on the 1st April 2016. First for Wellbeing . Operating as an enterprise in its own right, this Community Interest Company will ultimately be able to secure additional income and new business to help increase the Council's and partners' financial security.

Northamptonshire is a growing county, and we have seen the growth in population as a strong trend over the last decade. Over the next 5 year we expect to see an increase of over 50,000 in the numbers of people living in Northamptonshire, with the most pronounced increase being in the numbers of people aged 70 and over. These levels of growth have a significant impact on all services.

Our schools are a particularly pressurised area, with four new schools opened since September 2015 to accommodate the additional demand. Between 2008 and 2017, the Council would have added 14,000 additional primary school places. Since the start of the current school year there have been almost 900 children arriving in the county needing a school place. Currently we require 31 new schools by the end of this cycle.

Fire and Rescue

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have reduced its call-outs to false alarms by 66 per cent over the past seven years. In 2008/09, the county's fire service responded to 2,741 unwanted fire signals, which happen when an automatic fire detection system is activated even though a fire has not occurred. Following a thorough risk assessment, a policy which sets out when the fire service will respond to automatic fire alarms bringing the level of unnecessary call-outs below 1,000 a year for the first time.

Our specialist boat rescue team from Northamptonshire supported the flood rescue efforts in Cumbria as part of the fire and rescue service's national resilience arrangements.

Support for Dementia Suffers

In Northamptonshire it is believed that some 8,000 people suffer from dementia; by 2030, this figure is expected to nearly double. More people with dementia are returning to their own homes after a hospital admission thanks to a new initiative between health and social care.

Our Older Persons Mental Health Pathway project, led by Northamptonshire County Council and NHS Nene Clinical Commissioning Group, has resulted in 57% of dementia patients being discharged back to their own home, compared with 11% in December 2013

England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

England's Economic Heartland seeks devolved powers to boost economic growth in a ground-breaking alliance between Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. The three counties share much common ground and form the heart of science and technology innovation in the UK with sector markets having a global reach.

The growing devolution agenda nationally has provided the platform for this new approach and England's Economic Heartland wants Government to provide the area with a five-year Growth Deal, unifying the various funding streams available for strategic projects and economic growth. This certainty would give confidence for businesses to invest in the area and give England's Economic Heartland a competitive advantage on the world stage. Already with a £46.6bn economy, England's Economic Heartland, seeks to swell growth by a further £9bn each year, creating at least 135,000 new jobs by 2020.

Creating better road and rail links and easier inter-county travel in a £2.8bn infrastructure investment are the focus of an innovative transport proposition England's Economic Heartland is presenting to government. The Alliance's transport proposal advocates the importance of investment in five strategic transport corridors to

realising ambitions for growth locally and nationally – including the A34/43/45 artery, and the A428/A421 Expressway corridor.

The proposal sets out ambitions for how public transport providers could work more cohesively across the three counties and how emerging internet and Smartphone technology could empower travellers in their choices. Although some of the proposals, such as smart-ticketing, may have already been implemented in global cities it is believed that this is the first time they would be applied to shire counties.

Race to the Top

Northamptonshire County Council has awarded schools a share of a £1million fund for projects to improve young people's aspirations. The cash has been made available as part of the county council's innovative Race To The Top strategy, which aims to make Northamptonshire one of the highest performing counties for education by 2020.

A total of 22 bids have been successful and these will now work with the University of Northampton, businesses and voluntary organisations in a variety of projects to improve standards and these got underway in September.

The projects include:

- Ferrers School is running master classes and transition projects with pupils at Higham Ferrers Junior School, South End Junior School and Whitefriars Junior School to improve English, math's and science skills and ease their transition to secondary school
- The Hospital and Outreach Education pupil referral unit is working to encourage young people with autism and anxiety to re-engage with learning and bring them back into education through The Bridge project
- Geddington CofE Primary School has launched the Geddington University, working with Kettering Buccleuch Academy and voluntary sector partners, to provide a series of after-school sessions involving a sporting activity, a homework club, workshops and talks, with the aim of raising aspirations and improving pupil participation
- Clipston Endowed VC Primary School is training its lunchtime supervisors to lead positive play activities during break times to engage pupils
- Wren Spinney is working with Isebrook and Maplefields Academy to offer work-related learning opportunities for students with learning difficulties at The Studio in Kettering

Also forming part of the Race to the Top strategy is the new Place to teach campaign, led by Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership, which aims to recruit talented teachers to work in Northamptonshire schools.

Women's Tour

World-class cyclists were cheered on by thousands of spectators for the return of the Aviva Women's Tour to Northamptonshire in June. The county hosted stage three of the five-day cycling event today, which began in Oundle where hundreds of people lined the streets to watch the riders set off on the 139km route. Independent reports showed a massive 67,500 people turned out to watch the Aviva Women's Tour this summer – 12,500 more than last year – and the event saw a £1 million boost to the local economy, with spectators, cyclists and media personnel spending on things like accommodation, food and drink, and merchandise.

Of the 67,500 people who watched the race, more than half (53%) came from outside of the county, resulting in a boost for local tourism, while 65% of people said the Aviva Women's Tour has inspired them to cycle more often.

Northamptonshire County Council has now agreed with event organisers SweetSpot that a stage of the five-day event will be held in the county next year and in 2017. Northamptonshire will host the final stage of the

2016 Aviva Women's Tour, with the proposed route starting in Northampton town centre and finishing in Kettering.

The last stage of the five-day international women's cycling event will take place in the county on Sunday 19th June and attract some of the world's best female riders. As part of the agreement, SweetSpot will also hold a mass-participation cycle event in the county each year to encourage people, in particular women and families to become more active and get cycling.

A45 Development

Work on the A45 Daventry development link road has officially started with a sod-cutting ceremony officially launching construction work. A45 development link is vital for long-term growth in the Daventry area and improve access between Daventry and the M1 motorway.

The £32million single carriageway which would also effectively provide a by-pass for the villages of Flore, Upper Heyford and Weedon has been made possible through an innovative county council-led funding scheme.

The project has been paid for through an innovative finance arrangement known as the Northamptonshire revolving infrastructure fund, which unites funding streams and sees local authorities, developers and contractors working together to put the money in place. This approach has been possible because of the county council funding the design, planning and implementation costs upfront.

Designed and constructed by KierWSP and Balfour Beatty, the link road will start at a new roundabout on the existing A45 between the settlements of Dodford and Weedon, to the east of Globe Farm. It will then pass to the north of the villages of Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford before rejoining the A45 at a new roundabout between Upper Heyford and the M1 motorway at junction 16.

Superfast Northamptonshire broadband

The County Council's Superfast Northamptonshire project, which has an ambitious target to see superfast broadband available countywide by the end of 2017, has completed its £12.9 million first stage three months ahead of schedule. Since stage one began in March 2013, fibre broadband infrastructure has been installed as part of a network which serves over 61,300 premises in the county, of which more than 57,500 now have access to superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbps).

Working with BT, superfast broadband (download speeds above 24Mbps) has also been made available to more premises than originally expected, helping Northamptonshire remain one of the top performing broadband projects in the country.

Across the county, more than 53,900 homes and businesses which otherwise wouldn't be served – many of them in rural areas - are now able to take up superfast broadband services. In addition, thousands more have seen an increase in speed and can now benefit from faster fibre broadband.

With the original contract due to run until March 2016, it means the work has been delivered more than three months earlier than planned, and under budget.

Work is already underway on a second Superfast Northamptonshire contract that was awarded to BT by the county council in November 2014. This will extend the availability of superfast broadband to an additional 20,450 homes and businesses by December 2017.

Around 90 per cent of households and businesses in Northamptonshire can now take up a fibre broadband service. Superfast Northamptonshire is a multi-million pound project, which has already involved the installation of more than 300 new green roadside fibre broadband cabinets and structures and the laying of more than 490 kilometres of underground cable.

The county council has secured £16.2 million of public funds committed through two contracts with BT, including contributions from Government, the county council and local partners. BT are investing £6.9m. The high-speed network installed by BT's local network business, Openreach, is available on an open, wholesale

basis to all internet service providers (ISPs), therefore offering Northamptonshire households and businesses the benefit of real choice from a highly competitive market.

The county council has ambitions to see the whole of Northamptonshire benefit and has already secured plans for 96 per cent of the county to be able to access superfast broadband by December 2017 (when combined with existing and planned commercial coverage).

Together, the first two stages of the project will see more than 73,850 premises benefit from access to superfast broadband by December 2017, involving a £16.2m public commitment and £6.9m from BT. Stage One has come in under budget and these savings will help to support the next stage of the project which is now being progressed by the county council following cabinet backing in October 2015.

All the above is great but until each of my villages has near 100% coverage I do not think we can say that the project has been 100% successful. I hope that the second phase of the work will resolve the many issues in the villages I represent. I will be keeping up the pressure on both the County and BT to deliver this.

Angel Street

Work on Northamptonshire County Council's new headquarters is progressing well as the £53million complex starts to take shape. The work is being carried out by contractor Galliford Try and it is expected that the building will be formally handed over to the county council after completion by the end of October 2016 with full occupation by December of that year.

The project will see county council staff moved out of 12 buildings in Northampton, including County Hall, into one purpose-built headquarters in the town centre.

Roads

The state of our roads continues to be of concern to us all and I know there are a number of issues within this village that need attention. There is not enough money for all the repairs that need to be carried out within the county and my division is no exception. The best way to get repairs done is to report and keep reporting any poor roads / pot holes to street doctor at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/transport/roads/streetdoctor/pages/step1.aspx

The more a problem is reported the higher up the priority list it goes and the more likely that it will get repaired in time. I am also more than happy to arrange a site visit to the village to walk through the problems with Helen Howard who is the highways local liaison for the area and more often than not a solution can be found eventually even if there is no specific budget for repair.

As we speak I can tell you that £14 million of extra funding is being provided by the Government to NCC for road repairs and maintenance over the next two years. Each Councillor will be allocated 25k for a footway and 25k for a road although we can allocate the full 50k to a road if we need too. I am expecting that I will be able to pick an area / Road by the end of April / Early May.

This money is likely to be keenly sought by lots of my villages so please do contact me ASAP if you have any thoughts on how this might be spent in your Village.

Councillors Empowerment fund

This has benefitted many of my villages over the years. The good news is that we still have a fund for this year. The bad news is that it has been cut to £5000.00 and that all of this has already been allocated to projects within my division. If you do have any projects in mind that I can help you with please get in early for next years allocation.

Police and Crime Commissioner Elections

You may be aware that the police and Crime commissioner Elections for Northamptonshire take place on the 5th of May. Adam Simmons has done a great job as our PCC for the last four years and is not standing again

this year. I would urge you all to take time to consider all the candidates and get out and vote. This is a very important role within the community and could have a profound effect.

I am happy to be contacted by phone or e-mail on I.Morris@northamptonshire.gov.uk or 07710198272. I am also on Twitter 'Cllr Ian Morris @aussielover100.

8. Observations from the District Councillor – Cllr Peter Davies

Finance

The past year has seen further pressures on South Northants finances, as central government strives to reduce its budget deficit. The Council managed to produce a balanced Budget last year, without any increase in Council Tax. But this year core funding from central government has been reduced by a further £600,000. Clearly the shortfall has to be made up somehow.

Joint working

One way is through intensified joint working with Cherwell District Council . An attempt was made to include Stratford DC but they could not agree so SNC has pressed ahead with Cherwell to have all services joined up by the middle of the year. Since we began joint working, SNC and Cherwell have saved over £3 million from their budgets. As well as the senior management team, all back office services are now shared. Further savings have been made through joint procurement of ICT, for example an upgraded finance system and also in areas such as waste collection, which now operates on a 4 day collection system

The Council is currently implementing a shared customer service team . In the current year a joint revenues and benefits service with Cherwell is also being introduced, predicted to save in excess of £250,000 once the service has been established

CIL

I should mention the new Community Infrastructure Levy, CIL, which came into effect in South Northants on 1 April. It is a charge that Local Authorities can make on new developments in their area and was introduced by the Government in 2010. It is intended to be used towards road schemes, schools and community facilities. A proportion of CIL income will go directly to Parish and Town Councils who will be entitled up to 15% of CIL collected in their area. In rural areas CIL will be levied at up to £200 per square metre of new development, with exceptions for affordable housing, care homes etc .

Council Tax

Council Tax has remained unchanged in South Northants since 2010. Budgetary pressures mean an increase this year of 2.95%, which equates to £5 on Band D property up from £170 to £175 a month. Nearly all the increase is due to the increased impost by the County Council and Police .

New Homes Bonus

New Homes Bonus is under review by Government. They intend to reduce the scheme from 6 years to 4, not pay any bonus on new homes won on appeal, and not pay any new homes bonus where there is not a local plan in place. Clearly South Northants will have to review its approach once the government has finalised its plans.

Meanwhile Wappenham has a NHB allocation of £2,525 for the current year, plus what is unspent amounts to £3,134 This can be used for any scheme benefiting the local community. I know that you have used NHB for village hall storage and the speed sign

The Local Plan

South Northants Local Plan Part 2 will reconsider all the villages and confines . There will be consultations back to the parishes at various stages. Despite my best efforts, a deserving application in Wappenham supported by the PC to convert a garage into a dwelling was refused because it is outside the village confines.

You do need to reconsider the boundaries. The government requires all councils to have a 5 year land supply, failing which a planning inspector can allow any development on appeal. The formula means 330 houses a year must be built, excluding the areas closest to Northampton. South Northants currently has a 7 year land supply.

Waste Recycling

South Northants recycled 59.9% of all waste last year, thanks to the blue and green bin schemes and the cooperation of residents . This was the best in all East Midlands and 11th overall in the country.

Infrastructure

In the past year, South Northants moved to its new building The Forum in Towcester. This also houses adult learning, the Library and Registrar services for births, marriages and deaths. The Tove long term car park on Northampton Road will open shortly and will be extended when roadworks at the Saracens Head junction are completed.

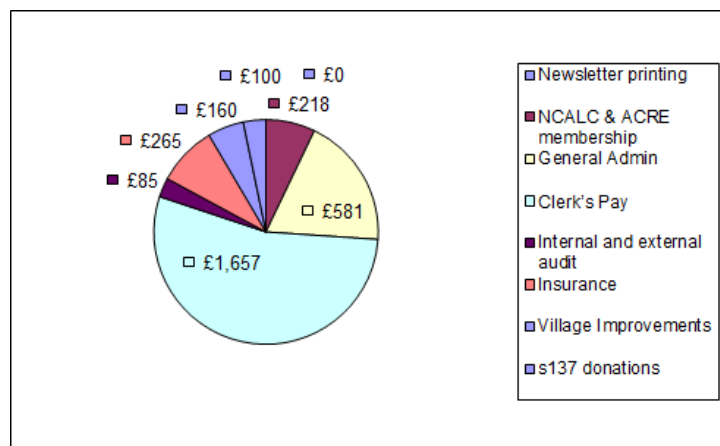
Improvements are to be made to the leisure centres at both Brackley (new swimming pool) and Towcester.

Improvements have been completed to the A43 Tove roundabout at Towcester. Work has begun on the A43 Abthorpe roundabout and will continue to late 2017

9. Parish Council Financial Statement for y/e 2016 and budget for y/e 2017 PC – Cllr Paul Featherstone (PC financial internal control officer)

- We closed this year with £5337 in the bank accounts; this compares with last year’s £2842 closing figure. The increase is due to having received £2077 transferred from the Parish Plan account and £500 from Cllr Ian Morris due to be spent when we are invoiced for the Speed Radar Project.
- Total expenditure was £3160; this compares with £2443 the previous year. The increase is due to Northants CALC subs rising from £113 to £192, and £373 on a laptop financed by a grant from the Transparency Code fund plus tree works.
- There were no newsletter printing costs incurred due to significant advertisers’ contributions.
- The precept for 2015-16 is £2,773, up £168 from £2,605 in 2015; the Parish Council is taking £150 from reserves this year to meet the budgeted expenditure of £2926.
- £100 of this year’s budget is set aside for donations to village groups and organisations.

How Wappenham Parish Council spent your money in y/e 2016



Budgeted v actual expenditure by area and predictions for next year

	Budget 2015/16	Actual 2015/16	Comment	Budget 2016/17
Newsletter printing	50	0	Budget set after consultation with Jane H	0
NCALC membership	218	218		220
General Admin	308	581	Laptop purchased from grant received	268
Clerk's Pay	1657	1657	Increased from 3 to 3.5 hours per week on NorthantsCALC advice	1918
Internal and external audit	85	85		85
Insurance	291	265		265
Village improvements	70	160	Work done to two trees	70
s137 donations	100	100		100

10. To receive the accounts of the Parochial Charities, comments of the Trustees, Parochial Church Council:

Wappenham Thomastide Charity

Date	Details	Withdrawn	Paid In	Balance (£)
2 Nov 2015	Balance brought forward			1,319.72
12 Dec 2015	Received from Trustees		700.00	2,019.72
12 Feb 2016	Withdrawn to cover payments for St Thomastide Grants	313.98		1,705.74

Details of the recipients are confidential but are available to any person – in confidence – nominated by the Parish Council. The Chairman confirms that all awards and gifts were safely received.

Rupert Fordham continued as Chairman of the Trustees for the distribution of the awards, and Phyllis King, Philip King, Rev Carole Peters and Hilary Wickham continued as Trustees. The Trustees were delighted that Jenny Szczerbowski also agreed to become a Trustee, as a representative of the Village Hall Committee.

Over the course of the year no special requests for financial assistance were received.

The sum made available for distribution for the St Thomastide Grants by the Trustees was £700. Two cash awards were made.

As last year, we also made small gifts to a number of residents who it was felt had suffered a period of distress for whatever cause, (perhaps illness, losing a job or family issues). 18 gifts of this nature were delivered, and as before, these were well received.

Again, the Trustees decided not to distribute all the money received, but rather to save some. As a consequence, the charity now has over £1,700 in reserve. The purpose of the charity is to help people in Wappenham who find themselves distressed for whatever reason, and the Trustees would therefore be happy to consider requests, perhaps of a practical nature, during the course of the year, as well as at Christmas time. They would welcome the help of the PCC and the Parish Council in this respect.

As ever the accounts of the charity can be made available to any independent Auditor nominated by the Annual Meeting should this be deemed desirable.

Rupert Fordham, Chairman

February 12th, 2016. .

Report from the Rector

It has been a year full of changes and I don't just mean the fact that I am now The Reverend Peters-King and a married lady! Over the past 12 months we haven't just settled in, we have moved forward embracing more change and growing as a result.

We have seen new faces join our congregations, we have been strong enough to accept what isn't working and look for new solutions and we have begun to work together far more closely as a Benefice.

What an amazing 12 months it has been!

Our now established pattern of regular and special services continues to provide varied worship that encompasses both traditional and contemporary styles. Our Communion congregations have expanded and we are bringing new worshippers through our doors. We are the only Church in the Benefice to have regular teenage worshippers and that along with our rise in numbers is a testament to the warm and welcoming atmosphere at St Mary the Virgin. We also now have a range of banners advertising what's on each week and these have already become a talking point and hopefully will raise our presence in the community.

Sadly our Monthly "fresh expressions" - Messy Church does not reflect the growth we have seen elsewhere and sadly I feel I can no longer take on full responsibility for this service, without anyone else to take on the organisational role. It is felt that instead of a regular monthly session, we should undertake a few "special" Messy Churches during the year that the whole PCC can come behind and support would work better.

However, this does leave Wappenham without a second Sunday service and various options are being discussed for a family friendly replacement, everything from café to "Breakfast "church.

My Wedding and Honeymoon meant I was absent from the parishes for the whole of September and the Benefice worshipped together, although this started at the beginning of the month with our successful Feast Day service and BBQ! As well as the special Benefice Services, our Festival Services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance proved as popular as ever and this year.

Looking ahead, as well as continuing to build on our pattern of worship and ministry, reviewing my workload with the churchwardens and ministry team we have decided that including a number of Benefice Services into the pattern will not only ease my workload but also encourage the churches to work more closely together as a Benefice. This is working and a new collaborative style of service has a more inclusive feel.

We also hope to expand our Mission, our Lent course has expanded into a monthly bible study and based on the success of Breakfast and the Bible Saturday morning breakfast initiative, we shall be holding some more.

We also are planning a special service for the Queen's 90th birthday in June that will link with a Village tea party.

This year we have truly built on our foundations and we not only continue to sustain our sacred space we are growing it. We continue to make a difference with our weekly Hope Centre Food run. I am still immensely proud that this small rural Benefice has answered a call for help from our local homeless shelter and now collect donated food from a distribution centre in Milton Keynes and transport to the Hope Centre in Northampton. My grateful thanks go out to everyone involved and congratulations again that it all started here!

In terms of our Occasional Offices, we are keeping up with the tradition of holding at least one wedding at St Mary the Virgin each year, with a Wedding back in May 2015 and another planned for July 2016. We also held a baptism during our regular Sunday morning service back in February, whilst we have been lucky not to hold a funeral this year, there has been a Chapel burial.

We have continued to build on our relationship with St Loys School, where many of our Village children go.

As a Church we work together to make our church a warm and friendly welcoming space for families and young people, but we haven't quite got the formula right for reaching out to them in our service pattern.

God opens his arms to us – we open ours to community, so as a Church we also reach out through our hospitality – We do this through social events such as the Plant Sale and of course our monthly Coffee Mornings, As a PCC we are still looking at other possible fund raising and mission opportunities or as we like to call them - fun events.

And speaking of fun events, this year Wappenham hosted two our main Benefice events: the Rogation Celebration at Rectory Farm and our Nativity in the Barn was at Manor Farm.

The Future

Over the twelve months we have seen such an improvement at St Mary's and I am so proud to say that Wappenham has shown more growth than any other Parish in our Benefice. As I said last year, while we may

be small, we can be mighty, we are already leaving old models of ministry and mission behind us and working collaboratively, not just in the Parish, but in the wider Benefice.

11. Queen's Birthday Celebration

Sheena Warren informed the meeting that the celebration would take place on Sunday 12th June with an organisational meeting planned for the following Thursday. Edwin King would open the event with a toast to the queen. It was planned to be an informal tea with people being asked to bring a plate. A TEN would need to be applied for from SNC. It is to be a child orientated event.

Paul Featherstone thanked Sheena and the other organisers for their efforts.

12. Reports from Parish Council Officers and Village Organisations' representatives

Footpaths Report

Our footpaths, to a great extent, are in good order and there are very few stiles and gates to worry about as so many paths lead from field to field through gaps in old hedgerows. Hence a slight shortage of livestock about!

I am hoping that the Wilson's article in the last newsletter regarding Dog Mess has improved the situation on their land, but I would like to remind people that the same respect should be given to SC30, leading off from the end of Pittams Lane - I can think of a not very savoury name for it. The Parish Council is putting together a leaflet of hints and tips for happy dog walkers. Landowners and walkers have specifically said to me that the thing they hate most is 'used' poo bags being left in the fields and often flung into hedges - this is disgraceful. The Parish Council is putting together a leaflet of hints and tips for happy dog walkers.

On behalf of the village I would like to thank David Wilson for the excellent marking of the footpaths on Rectory Farm in the last few weeks.

I would like to step down from the position of Footpath Warden and ask if anyone here, or anyone here would know, of someone happy to take on the mantle. It is surely one of the most pleasant and least onerous tasks in the village - walking the footpaths in this wonderful spring weather. Perhaps one of the newer dog owning members of the village might be willing to take over. There is no requirement to be a member of the Parish Council. Please contact me to find out more 860236.

Hilary Wickham

The Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham. Charity No. 1116889

Introduction

The Friends continued to raise funds during 2015 whilst awaiting information on the likely cost of our major project, repairing the church tower steps.

Treasurers' Report

The Friends' funds stand at £10,710, (£7,394 in 2014) of which £750 is earmarked for the WC. Income in 2015 was £4,616 and outgoings were £300, for the servicing of the clock. There is also outstanding Gift Aid awaited of £1,500.

Works and Faculties

Tower Steps and north porch roof

Following the Quinquennial Review of 2014, the decision was made to focus primarily on repairs to the tower steps and then tackle the north porch roof. The cost was estimated to be £20,000, approximately £300 a step.

Whilst expert professional advice was sought the Friends began raising money, inviting residents to 'sponsor a step' in memory of a loved one, to be commemorated on a plaque in the Church. Several such donations have been received. A Faculty is now being sought and once received, applications will be made to likely charitable sources.

It was agreed to appoint an architect from the Diocese's approved list to advise on repairs to the north porch roof. Several ideas were being considered for dealing with the drop at the back of the pulpit.

Kitchen and WC

Progress was previously reported in that we have, thanks to the Tove Valley Broadband works, now got a water pipe which runs from the stand pipe at the gate up into the boiler room. The next stage is to bring water into and drain it out of the Church possibly via a soak away.

Fund-raising events

The Plant Sale took place in May 2015 and raised £300. Many thanks to Di Watts and Hilary Wickham for their plants and to Anthony Tucker for his vegetable seedlings and perennials.

The Church/Friends participated in the second Wappenham Beer Festival on Saturday 27 June, sharing the proceeds with the Village Hall. This was our major fund-raising event of the year and raised over £1,500.

Thanks also to Di for the continuing sales of Wappenham themed tea towels.

May I thank all the hard working and enthusiastic members of the Friends and our supporters!

Jane Mordue

Friends of St Mary the Virgin Wappenham

WRA

no one has stepped forward to take on Chairmanship which I would like to hand on as I have been in charge for 15 years. I am happy to carry on with committee as I generally do all the mowing and weed killing and arrange the maintenance.

The playground is now owned by Mr Tomkinson. We had been behind in our payments but I understand this is now all up to date.

Insurance is now covered by the village hall with us paying a contribution to the VH that benefits both of us.

Committee are helping out with the Beer festival this year in an official capacity to raise funds. Only planned fundraising event. We did the Halloween last year as normal and will do again this year otherwise my children will not speak to me.

The ROSPA report done last year noted the basketball hoop was a hanging hazard and as it was not used was removed. We have dealt with all the key points raised. This year's inspection is booked for some time in June. They do not give you a date.

Top up bark was put down last year and the timber equipment treated (Justin requires credit for this). The new fence with Lesley and Mark has been completed last year. Some of the timber equipment is looking old and

will need to be taken out as it comes to the end of its life. There are no funds to pay for replacement and realistically if there was money you would want to earmark it for next to the VH.

Long term plan would still be to move to a space behind the VH but unless there is a champion who comes forward to drive it through I think this is very unlikely. Mr Tomkinson, I believe would be supportive of this. I think the only opportunity would be to lease the land as part of The VH off the David/Anette as a sub lease? We have tried to speak to the church directly but find it impossible to get past their agents.

Dene Ayres

Wappenham Short Mat Bowls Club

Wappenham Short Mat Bowls Club is celebrating its Silver Anniversary this year having been formed 25 years ago by Maud Peart in February 1991.

Recent retirements and maternity leave have seen the number of available players rise a little over the beginning of this year, although more new players are always welcome, even if you cannot commit to every week.

A good sense of humour helps and the club can provide everything else. So if you want an enjoyable couple of hours on a Thursday, please come along to the village hall at 2.00 pm and you will be most welcome.

Also, a big thank you to the PC for the small grant to purchase further equipment which has proved very useful

Anthony Tucker

Wappenham Village Hall

The year has seen the village hall committee go from strength to strength. Becky Martin has now joined us which gives a healthy number of 8 members. Jane Reid continues as Chair and Julie Long Treasurer with yours truly as the Secretary. We are fortunate to have Ant Reid on the committee who is happy to maintain and upgrade the fabric of the building, plus Jane Harries our grant expert. The £400 we received from the New Homes Bonus Scheme allowed for new cupboards and decorating in the vestibule, a cupboard for the table tennis table in the main hall and a refurbished serving hatch. We were also able to have extra electrical sockets installed plus an overhaul of the toilet heaters. With money raised we have been able to purchase upholstered seats and new tablecloths.

The past year has seen three successful quizzes – hosted with considerable expertise by Frank and Fiona Kinner and two visits from the Pantaloons theatre group. All these events have been well supported and turned a profit for the hall. The committee also ventured into new ground and ran a Bingo evening for families which again resulted in a handsome profit. We are also co-organising the Queen's celebratory 90th Tea Party to be held on the gravelled area at the back. As usual there was another Christmas lunch for senior citizens who live or have lived in the village. This was held at the Old Barn Restaurant, Stowe and again proved very successful. However as the years pass this event is becoming ever more expensive to fund so in order to continue we have asked the Parish Council for a £100 grant – we are awaiting a reply.

Our latest project is the refurbishment of the rose window. An open meeting 2 weeks ago elicited a good turnout and plenty of suggestions for possible ways forward.

An improvement in the building has also seen an upturn in lettings. We are grateful to our regular users, namely the short mat bowls, table tennis and upholstery groups plus the monthly coffee mornings. In addition it is used for meetings, parties, the now annual beer festival; and this year sees two wedding receptions held in and behind the hall. We really have joined the 21st century.

Jenny Szczerbowski – Secretary Wappenham Village Hall Committee

Slapton and Wappenham Evangelical Church

Our most exciting news this year is that after looking for 6 years we have finally been able to appoint Trevor Thomas as our new full time pastor. It is amazing that such a small church can appoint a full time pastor and we are truly blest that we can. Trevor has been a pastor before in Palma in Spain. His wife is from Spain too (but speaks perfect English and works as house master at Rugby School). They currently live in Rugby and if they settle in and feel comfortable here then they more look to move closer in the future. Trevor and his wife Manuela have 3 boys.

Trevor has been visiting the chapels in Wappenham and Slapton and preaching fairly regularly over recent years and he has an amazing gift of being able to present passages from the bible in very clear pictures which are just so relevant to modern life. We have been privileged over that last few years to have such good ministry from visiting pastors and preachers, but it really was the ideal time to have a full time pastor. Trevor is a very good people person and relates well to everyone so if you do meet him around the village, you will find him not only very friendly, but I am sure he would be able to help with any pastoral support you might need. I think it is a great privilege for South Northamptonshire to have such an able and gifted preacher and we are sure our chapel will grow. The Lord has blessed us with the resource to fund a full time pastor and He will surely bless the work. A few people from the village have come in and heard Trevor preach recently and they said they have never had the bible opened up to them in such a way before.

Our membership is around 12 people but our regular congregation is around 20 people and we are sure that this will grow with Trevor coming.

We have our Sunday school on a Sunday morning from 10:45 till 12:00 and a weekly bible Study which Trevor will lead on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 in the school room.

If you have not been to church before but feel like you are a Christian or you have some belief in God but not quite sure, now is the time to come along and listen. You will be most welcome.

Richard Kennett

Clive Watt – WIZ

Nothing notable to report

Stats

- In its 14th year.
- Distributed to approx. 150 addresses via two mailing lists using blind copy (BCC).
- Circulation around 250 bulletins / annum.
- Email & Internet access provided by Tove Valley Broadband (wiznews@wappenham.net)
- Mozilla Thunderbird desktop client used for email management.
- PDF management – Foxit Reader.
- Pictures (JPEG's etc) editing - MS Office Picture Manager.
- Other documents – MS & Libre Office.

Clive

Clive was thanked by Hilary Wickham and Paul Featherstone for his work.

Newsletter

The newsletter has been continuing as usual this year. Thanks to all our contributors, who are the ones who make it a good magazine, and to all who deliver it (and picks it up from the printer) and who pass it on to others. Thanks also to John Wickham for designing our new village logo and designing for me a slightly different one to go with the newsletter format.

Advertising continues to be good this year; I would like to thank our local businesses who place ads and in doing so sponsor the newsletter.

Please carry on letting me know your news and ideas. I would like to include photos from villagers for the cover, so please send them in.

Jane Harries

Wappenham website – Dianne Walsh

Hosting

The website is still hosted by Northampton school for boys (NSB) (since 2003.2004). I believe there have been discussions about moving the website to another host (see PC minutes 6 April 2016).

PC documents

Katherine Hart is now uploading PC minutes and Agenda onto the web in line with government good practice. The draft minutes of all Council, Committee and Sub-committee meetings should be published no more than 1 month after the relevant meeting. Agendas and full working papers for all Council, Committee and Sub-committee meetings should be published at least 3 clear days before the relevant meeting.

Future

The website needs a total revamp. This should be done every 2 years and is very much overdue.

A Responsive web design approach needs to be taken to provide an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of device. Smartphones, tablets, etc. This is no longer a design option. Most people view websites on their portable devices as well as desktop computers. The PC will need to find a person/organisation who has the know-how and can design a robust website with engaging and usable web interface.

The current website no longer conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium guidance and good practice. Coding / style for e.g. CSS (cascading style sheets) version used is outdated. I expect that some visitors may not even be able to scroll or view the website properly.

I no longer have the capacity to post contributions, update, modify or redesign, the website. The website is slowly turning into a repository for various community documents. The PC / Village needs to find a new webmaster who can carry out all of these tasks or split the tasks between a web designer and a web content administrator/manager.

13. Update on Poplars Farm Wind Turbine

Paul Featherstone summarised to the meeting the proposal which Aidan Jones had presented recently to the Parish Council and all related correspondence which had been received since that point.

A debate followed and points raised by those present included

- a discussion as to whether the issue should be discussed per se at the Annual Assembly as it could be held to be a matter of national Government policy and not a parish issue,
- whether the Parish Council should get involved

- why the village would want to be involved
- whether a referendum should take place
- more information was needed to make an informed decision
- the precedent which would be set, were the action to be successful
- how the monetary incentive would be spent
- there was no historical evidence of a tariff being re-negotiated

Mr Jones addressed the meeting and stated that he felt the village had missed the point of his proposal as the turbine would be built regardless and this gave the opportunity for the village to receive 20k per year. He emphasised that the proposal was not a bribe but a way for the feed in tariff to benefit the village.

Paul Featherstone confirmed that the Parish Council would obtain more information regarding the details of the offer and that a meeting or public meeting as appropriate would then be called.

14. Refurbishment of the Rose Window

The central rose is to be repaired; it is not decided if this is to be plain or decorated. It was confirmed that the brickwork is original and would not be removed.

15. Open Forum

The possibility of having Andrea Leadsom speak in the village regarding Brexit was mooted; it was suggested it would also be appropriate to have someone with a different view to speak.

Hilary Wickham thanked everyone for attending and contributing to an interesting debate.

The meeting closed at 22.13pm.