

**Minutes of WAPPENHAM VILLAGE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2018**  
**Held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 7:30pm**  
**in Wappenham Village Hall**

*Approximately 15 members of the public attended the meeting.*

**1. Parish Council Welcome, apologies and Opening of Annual Assembly**

Cllr Lauren welcomed those present to the meeting, including parishioners, representatives of local organisations, Cllr Peter Davies [Cllr Morris arrived half way through the meeting due to having to attend another meeting in Helmdon]. Apologies had been received from Charlotte Supple, Rupert Fordham, Jane Harries, Jenny Szczerbowski, Antony Tucker, Ashleigh Robbins, Pippa Geddes, Revd Carole Peters, Brackley Rural Police (Jen Harrison).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte Supple who has recently left the council, for her contribution and hard work over the last few years, and of course, Hilary Wickham, who retired as Chairman last year, but remains on the council as one of our most valuable and knowledgeable members.

**2. Approval of minutes of Annual Assembly held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

**3. Matters Arising from minutes of the Annual Assembly on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

None.

**4. Parish Council Chair Annual Report – Cllr Alan Lauren**

I would like to start my update of the last year by putting into context what I think the Parish Council brings to the village. When I joined the council, I wondered what they did - now that I am Chairman I realise that one of the most important functions is to be the focal point to ensure that the integrity of the village is protected and enhanced. The council is made up of volunteers who are essentially unpaid Local Authority representatives and they do the job with remarkable patience, goodwill and dedication I am not saying this to give ourselves a pat on the back, but I will be leaving the village soon and I would like to think that those who are staying would consider joining the team, not only to take my place, but compete for the privilege of serving the community.

It is true that there are lots of statutory procedures to follow, we are a local authority after all, but beyond that we try and be the conduit that puts life into the village, to be the organisation that helps the community to function as a whole and allow interested groups to have a means of communicating. In short it is much more than just a talking shop, but something that is dynamic, fun and important!

*So what have we been doing this year?*

- Maintained the speed camera and I would particularly like to thank Nigel Woolcott, who is not a councillor, along with Paul and Mark for diligently changing the battery and ensuring it keeps working for the majority of the time
- We also maintain the defibrillator to ensure the potential safety of the parishioners
- We organised a litter pick last November in memory of Brian Peart, which reminds me, the next one is due in the next few weeks and Ashleigh will once again be in charge of that However I must thank the lady who is regularly patrolling the village and keeping it tidy for all her efforts: Pippa Geddes.
- The village green spaces and verges are also now being tended by a number of the villagers which is keeping the place very tidy and well cared for. Special mention to those houses around the Knob, who have clubbed together to pay for its maintenance on a regular basis.

- We have looked after the footpaths and liaised with the Landowners where appropriate, to maintain access and condition.
- We have introduced and progressed the Freedom of the Village initiative and have welcomed our first 2 nominees on to the scroll of honour for outstanding service to the village.
- We are in the process of re issuing our welcome book which lists all the vital services we can use in the village for newcomers and established residents alike.
- We are about to introduce the first edition of the village directory which will allow us to know our neighbours and will be updated and re-issued every year.
- We have launched a new website to help us keep in touch with what's going
- We have continued to support Jane Harries with the quarterly Newsletter, many thanks to Jane
- And of course thanks to Clive Watt with our invaluable Wiz digital publication

All of the above is in addition to our more prosaic responsibilities of Budget, Public Office transparency and Planning responses. Therefore, I would like to invite you to please join us, even if it's just to sit in the public gallery to start with, but get involved and bring your talents and skills to the table and build on a tradition that has served us well in the past and is essential for our future.

It only remains for me to thank sincerely all my fellow councillors for their support and good humour through this last 12 months, with particular mention to our Clerk Liz, for keeping us in order and on track.

## **5. Report from Police – Brackley Rural**

Over the last 6 months there has been a marked increase in thefts of tools from vans. This has been a national trend and not unique to South Northants. Officers from South Northants Neighbourhood Teams have spent some considerable time investigating this recent series of offending and identified a number of persons linked to a local Travellers site just on the Northants/Bucks border. On 19th February 2018 officers from Northamptonshire Police undertook several warrants within the site and arrested a number of persons. Searches yielded a large quantity of tools, mobile phones and number plates. In total 12 persons have been interviewed in relation to offences including; theft from vehicles, shoplifting and theft of fuel. Several other people are still sought for interview and those already interviewed have been bailed pending further investigation and forensic work being undertaken.

As previous stated this is a national trend and although South Northants theft crimes have significantly reduced since 19th February people should not be complacent in terms of their vehicle security and reporting of unusual and suspicious behaviour.

We recommend that you visit [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) to access up to date crime statistics for your area. Fortunately South Northants has no other significant crime trends and the Team are always happy to discuss any individual concerns.

Northants Police support local social networks such as 'Brackley Burglary Crime & Prevention', 'Newbottle & Charlton Crime Prevention Group', 'Northamptonshire Street Watch' (all Facebook) and other village networks by providing information and advice for circulation. We recognise the value of these pages for keeping a two-way flow of information between the police and the public. The above sites have provided very popular and all communicate with each other to increase their effectiveness.

We are still keen to expand virtual networks for the sharing of information to prevent, disrupt and deter crime, so if you would like more information on how to develop a similar Facebook site for your area please contact Sergeant Michaela SIMONS. These sites have enormous potential in assisting to make the area less attractive for criminals. Please take a look at the above mentioned pages for examples of content and rules.

Below are the reported occurrences for Wappenham from the last year:

Burglary Dwelling = 1

Criminal damage to Motor Vehicle = 1

## **Graham Suppiah PCSO Brackley Safer Community Team.**

### **6. Observations from the County Councillor –Cllr Ian Morris**

#### **NCC Budget and Inspection**

The County Council underwent a Best Value Inspection examining the financial management arrangements in place at the request of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Right Honourable Sajid Javid. The Government's Inspector, Max Caller, identified a number of areas that required improvement and found the County Council to be failing in its Best Value Duty.

The County Council has for a long time been under severe pressure from the growth in population and the costs of social care that have been increasing year on year. Northamptonshire has one of the lowest Council Tax Rates of any county and an historically low level of reserves.

As a Council, we have always ensured that the most vulnerable in society are protected. Almost two-thirds of what we spend each year goes on social care to support vulnerable children and adults. This is a national issue but, with the county council having historically low reserves and income, the transformation and savings that were required to deliver a sustainable budget position in many ways overtook us. The National Audit Office has recently backed up our view that social care is underfunded, with estimates of £2bn being cited. The Government has recently announced its intention to publish a Green Paper on the future of social care by the summer. It will be interesting to see if they set out any intention to address this significant national issue.

The previous Leader Councillor Heather Smith has resigned and Councillor Matt Golby has been elected as the new Leader. Cllr Golby has acted quickly to acknowledge our failures to provide Best Value and has written to the Secretary of State setting out our intention to comply fully with the Commissioners he is minded to appoint to oversee the governance and decision making at the County Council. Matt has also announced a new Cabinet and as a leadership group Cabinet is committed to exploring every avenue available to protect our services and stabilise our budget position.

#### **Unitary Council**

The recent inspection of NCC had a key recommendation, which is reorganisation of local government into two unitary authorities. What this means is in effect all 8 councils in the county being dissolved and replaced with two new councils which would provide all services currently split across county council and district and borough councils responsibility. The vital role of parish councils will continue, but you would only be dealing with one tier council above rather than two.

The County Council wants to be a willing partner in the discussions that will ultimately lead to a proposal submitted to the Secretary of State. We want local communities to have their voice heard and be able to feed into the work on unitary councils. We believe that residents and central government alike want to see efficient and cost effective services. Local Government Re-organisation can help deliver these outcomes and help safeguard local public services in the county for the future.

#### **Libraries**

The response to our latest budget consultation was phenomenal, the largest ever. It is fair to say that the majority of feedback was provided on the various proposals for the library service. In running any business one must look at all areas if reducing expenditure is required. What was clear was the high regard and value our residents place on these facilities. The traditional model of libraries as a place to borrow books or read the newspaper is long gone. There are so many other important services provided from our libraries that it was easy to understand why the public were so concerned. Cabinet and Members shared that view and rejected the option to close all but 8 libraries.

We announced plans for a Libraries Strategy. The strategy will be developed over the next three months, with all libraries in the county remaining open until August 31st 2018. Community groups and parishes who wish to establish an independent library will have until the end of May to submit a formal expression of interest to purchase or take on the leasehold for their local library. Individual project plans, including timetables for implementation and business plans to demonstrate affordability, will be worked up for each proposed independent library.

For viable project plans, libraries will continue to be staffed until September 30th 2018, enabling the sale or transfer of lease for the building to be completed. In cases where no formal expression of interest is received, staffing would be removed by August 31st. We encourage any parish with an interest in finding out more or helping to support a local library develop a proposal to contact us.

### **Positive News**

With all the headlines on our budget position, we often forget all the vital work that goes on in the County. Our staff are fully committed to providing the best possible services to communities and residents, a feature noted by the Inspector.

### **Shared Lives**

Despite our adult social care service being highly pressurised, the Council Council's Shared Lives service has recently won national recognition as best practice. The Care Quality Commission found the service which provides long and short-term support in a family home environment for adults with disabilities to be 'outstanding' in January this year.

Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, wrote to the County Council to express his thanks. Mr Hunt said "From visiting organisations throughout the country, I know that the immense amount of hard work that will have been behind this outcome cannot be underestimated. It is greatly appreciated, not just by me, but by all who will be benefiting as a result. It should be particularly pleasing to you to have been recognised for your outstanding safety, care and leadership".

### **Women's Tour**

After hosting the Grand Depart of the 2017 Women's Tour, the race returns to the county for the fifth time. This year will see Daventry host a finish for the first time, with the stage also including a spectator friendly finishing circuit for the first time, while Rushden makes its debut on the route of the UCI Women's World Tour event.

The world's top female cyclists, potentially including Northamptonshire sisters Hannah and Alice Barnes of the Canyon//SRAM team will be there. The new route will take in the south of the county, passing through Wollaston, Salcey Forest, Silverstone and Weedon Bec. We see attendance growing every year and it is always a huge boost for the local economy and people taking to their bikes.

### **Fostering**

We are on target to exceed last year's record 379 children in care being successfully placed with foster parents. The role foster parents play in providing a safe and secure home and family environment for some of the most vulnerable children in our county is invaluable. The positive effect this has on the personal and emotional wellbeing of children in care is profound. We thank all our foster parents and encourage anyone thinking about becoming a foster carer to contact our Fostering and Adoption Service.

### **Agency Social Workers**

Northamptonshire County Council has reduced its numbers of agency staff from 45% to 29% in the past 12 months, saving a substantial amount of money spent on higher cost social workers.

Agency staff can play a vital role in filling vacant social worker posts, but the authority has been working hard to increase its proportion of permanent staff in order to provide better continuity of care for vulnerable children and families. Since January last year, the number of permanent social work staff has increased from 202 to

248 in December, while the number of agency staff in social work roles has fallen from 210 to 144 over the same period.

This has been achieved through ongoing recruitment campaigns, including an overseas recruitment programme, as well as a scheme to encourage costly agency staff to convert to permanent social workers. The conversion scheme has seen 34 agency staff become permanent.

The council's Social Work Academy is also having a positive impact on the permanence of the children's services workforce, and is now working with its sixth intake of students. The academy, which launched in October 2014 to recruit the best-quality social workers from universities, offers graduates reduced caseloads, hands-on learning, high levels of support and mentoring, and extensive training and qualification opportunities.

## **Economy**

We have seen the Government announce support for the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge growth corridor and associated road and rail links, which would be the focus of new housing and economic expansion. The blueprint for the proposal by the National Infrastructure Commission incorporates parts of Northamptonshire. The investment in the roads and rail will help improve journey times and increase capacity, but we also want to make sure Northamptonshire is fully included in this initiative that could see significant inward investment. We have a strong local economy with historically the highest employment rate in the East Midlands. This is a hardworking county and we want to ensure it continues to be so in the future.

We have seen great success of the Northamptonshire Growth Hub – which has so far helped more than 4,000 businesses and the County Council's Superfast Northamptonshire programme has so far brought superfast broadband to 68,800 homes and businesses.

## **A45 Development Link Road**

Work on the A45 Daventry Development Link Road, which started in 2016, is progressing well. The road will form a new 3.5mile long single carriageway which will improve transport links between the towns of Northampton and Daventry, and improve access between Daventry and the M1 motorway.

The project will also relieve communities in Flore, Weedon and Upper Heyford of through traffic as well as supporting future growth in the Daventry district. Construction of the scheme is due for completion in Summer 2018.

## **Teach Northants**

Our Teach Northants campaign has been a huge success in attracting new teachers to the county. This year we have seen 5,000 applications and 2,300 jobs advertised across our 357 schools. There are currently 237 vacancies available in schools across the county. We encourage any promotion of the benefits of a career in teaching in the county that parishes can provide.

## **Winter service**

We saw significant snow fall this winter across Northamptonshire. The gritting teams, totalling 125 staff from Northamptonshire Highways and Kier WSP, worked around the clock to keep key routes open.

The council will be working hard to repair road surfaces damaged by this particularly hard and wet winter. Nationally, local government estimates it would cost £9BN to bring all carriageways up to standard. We will need to continue to prioritise ad hoc repairs to the criteria we specify, but anyone who needs to report a pothole should continue to do so via the Council's Street Doctor website.

*There was much discussion and questioning of Ian Morris regarding the impact of a unitary authority and how it might work. A consultation was due on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018.*

*There were also issues raised with damage caused by potholes; Ian is trying to investigate the insurance position.*

## 7. Observations from the District Councillor – Cllr Peter Davies

### Comments by Cllr Peter Davies, South Northants Council at Wappenham Parish Council AGM 25 April 2018

1. As you will have read, Northants. County Council has been in the news recently, for all the wrong reasons. Basically it has gone bust and has been put in special measures. A central government Inspector has produced a report which says:

- NCC lost budgetary control and abandoned effective budget setting scrutiny
- Capital receipts were used as a way to support revenue spending
- A new start is required. This can best be achieved by the creation of two new Unitary Councils,

1. South Northants, Daventry and Northampton
2. Corby, East Northants, Kettering and Wellingborough

These unitaries should be established following elections to be held in May 2020

- Meanwhile Commissioners could take over the running of NCC.
- The debts of NCC would be put into a residuary body

The proposals cut across the successful joint working for all services which SNC now has with Cherwell DC (which saves SNC £1 million a year). There will have to be much further discussion on future arrangements

2. SNC continues to produce a balanced budget, despite further cuts in central government funding, thanks to growing housing numbers and growing business rates income
3. Total community awards to date for Wappenham come to £4,396. The current funding amount available for the parish this year is £5,661
4. The Local Plan Part 2 for SNC is being drafted, to replace the 1997 policy. Some changes in parish boundaries may be made. The Revisions will go out for public consultation in late Spring
5. National planning policy requires each Council to have a 5 year bank of planning permissions. Without it, planning restraints are relaxed in favour of development. For SNC this amounts to 1,680 sites needed. In fact SNC's land supply is 3,296 sites
6. Leisure centres. The council has invested £4 million in Brackley leisure centre, with a new 6 lane pool to be ready by the summer. There have also

been improvements at the Towcester leisure centre.

The A5 through Towcester is often congested. Work has started opposite the racecourse entrance for what will be a relief road to link up with the A43, hopefully by 2020

6. SNC has loaned £3 million to Silverstone Heritage Limited for a motorsport centre opening in 2019 which should bring in 1000s of extra visitors to boost the local economy

7. Broadband. The target 95% of SNC to be covered by super fast broadband has now been achieved

8. Finally Homesafe. SNC has set up a partnership with Care and Repair Northamptonshire Ltd. This offers help for the vulnerable, disabled and elderly with small home improvements, such as fitting grab and stair rails, assistance with plumbing, electrics etc.

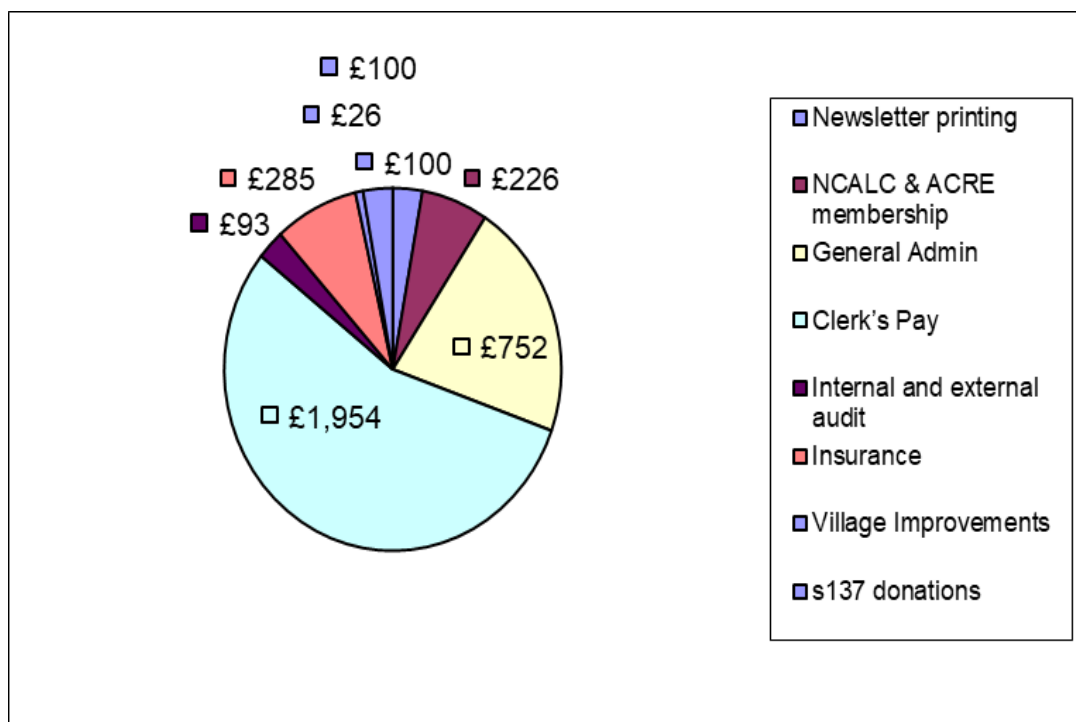
For more information call 01604 782250 or visit the Care and Repair website

*There was much discussion at the meeting regarding the prospect of a unitary Council and how this might affect finances, waste disposal and the SNC/CDC partnership.*

#### **8. Parish Council Financial Statement for y/e 2018 and budget for y/e 2019 PC – Cllr Paul Featherstone (PC financial internal control officer)**

- We closed this year with £3460 in the bank accounts; this compares with last year's £2835 closing figure. The increase is due to receipt of a £761 VAT reclaim, mostly resulting from the purchase of the defibrillator and the Speed Indicator Device. Total expenditure was £3784; this compares with £7549 the previous year. The previous year was unusually high due to two projects being completed: the Speed Radar Device and the defibrillator.
- We spent £485 on the design, domain and web hosting of the new website; this was funded entirely from Transparency Code funding from Northants CALC.
- There were newsletter costs of £100 incurred this year.
- The precept for 2018-19 is £2,872, slightly down from £2,878 last year; the Parish Council is taking £150 from reserves to meet the budgeted expenditure of £3112.
- This year the Parish Council has not set any money aside for donations to village groups/ organisations as the SNC New Homes Bonus has monies ringfenced for the parish which groups can apply for.

## How Wappenham Parish Council spent your money in y/e 2018



### Budgeted v actual expenditure by area and predictions for next year

	Budget 2017/18	Actual 2017/18	Comment	Budget 2018/19
<b>Newsletter printing</b>	0	100	A proportion of 2017/18 will cover 2018/9	50
<b>NCALC membership</b>	225	226		232
<b>General Admin</b>	404	752	Website costs (met by grant)	299
<b>Clerk's Pay</b>	1954	1954	Expected 2% rise	1994
<b>Internal and external audit</b>	93	93	As per NorthsCALC fees	96
<b>Insurance</b>	285	280		287
<b>Village improvements</b>	70	26	Speed Radar Device battery	75
<b>s137 donations</b>	100	100	See comment in written summary	0

Cllr Featherstone highlighted the recent good audit the Parish Council had received and noted the forthcoming impact of the GDPR.

## 9. The Wappenham Thomastide Charity (formerly known as the Wappenham Pools and Church Charities)- Statement of Accounts for Year 2017/18



<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Received</b>	<b>Balance (£)</b>
<b>Feb 2017</b>	<b>Balance brought forward</b>			<b>2,143.95</b>
<b>Jan 2018</b>	<b>Received from Trustees</b>		<b>800.00</b>	<b>2,943.95</b>
<b>Jan 2018</b>	<b>Withdrawn to cover Thomastide Grants</b>	<b>307.73</b>		<b>2,636.22</b>

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, Jenny Szczerbowski and Hilary Wickham continued as Trustees.

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 £800. 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). 9 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 £2,600 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

## **10. Report from the Rector**

2017 was a momentous year for our churches.

We began 2017 as we had begun the year before, unable, as a Benefice, to meet the whole amount levied on us by the Diocese for Ministry, struggling to find officers and members for our Parish parochial councils.

Our struggle was not dissimilar to that facing rural Churches everywhere, but what was different here, was that in January the members of our 4 PCCs (Helmdon with Radstone, Lois Weedon with Weston, Syresham with Whitfield and Wappenham) met together to try and find a way forward.

The meeting saw us celebrating what we had in common - a love of our Church buildings with a concern for their maintenance and preservation as places of worship, to sustain our sacred space, but also a desire to grow the kingdom, increase our congregations and reach out further into our communities. There was also an acknowledgement that we needed to look to biblical teaching for answers, particularly St Paul's insistence that work together as the body of Christ, complementing and helping each other through our individual gifts.

The result was a joint Benefice Working Party of PCC Representatives tasks with looking at the various options open to us. In June the four PCCs met again, to consider the proposal of the Working Party, recommended by Archdeacon Richard, that we embark on a three year trial that would see us pioneering new style of Parish governance in 2018. This was agreed almost unanimously, with just one single abstention out of all the 46 PCC members in the room.

The 3-year Trial sees the caretakership of our buildings separated from the Mission and Ministry. Maintenance of the buildings will be overseen within each Parish via local fundraising, gift aid and donations, while the mission and ministry will now be shared via a Benefice PCC (BPCC) representing every Church and Community.

A new Benefice PCC made up by a representative and Churchwarden from each Parish, elected by those on their Parish electoral role, these members along with the Benefice PCC officers will work alongside the incumbent organise and oversee all Ministry and Mission in the Astwell Benefice.

They will also be responsible through allocated parish income and fundraising for the payment of Benefice Share to the Diocese as well as oversight and payment of all expenditure incurred in the provision of the day-to-day Ministry and Mission in the Parishes.

In practice this means that through its Committees (Worship with Mission Outreach; Finance; Social and Fundraising; Pastoral Care), it will organise and oversee all worship and mission, pastoral care and outreach both at a Parish and Benefice level, it will organise Benefice fundraising and social activities and the setting and management of the Benefice Budget.

Each Parish will now have its own Buildings Repairs Insurance and Contents Committee (BRICC). Edwin, as Wappenham BRICC Chair will be able to talk to you further about their work.

This pioneering, ground-breaking Trial would not have been possible without the variety of lay leadership and commitment to serve that encompasses this Benefice. I offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who is working so hard to make this Trial the success it deserves to be.

As with all democratic decisions, this new approach may not appeal to everyone, but it is something that has been backed by those you elected to represent you and as such we truly ask that you give it your prayerful support.

I am also very proud that this small Benefice is pioneering a new way working together that would allow us to sustain our sacred spaces while freeing up our worshipping communities to seek growth and new mission opportunities.

My prayers, (and I hope yours too), are with us all for success in the future.

Here in the Parish, as always our wide range of Christmas Services, from Carols and Christingles to Nativities and Communions proved as popular as ever with our communities, quadrupling our normal attendance at most churches. As such we are following the pattern emerging across the country.

And that same pattern shows our traditional congregations remaining frustratingly static, dipping further during holiday time. But, I am delighted to say that we have bucked the trend by seeing a steady increase in those in our congregations who travel to worship together at our Benefice wide services and events.

The feedback is that these are hugely enjoyable, especially for the smaller churches, who love worshipping with larger congregations, but that the 11am time is too late at start for many. There has been a great deal of concern raised, that by hosting Benefice Patronal festivals, our Parishes lose regular services for much of the summer months and that the irregular nature month by month of our service pattern is confusing our congregations. And so from May we begin a new Service pattern, which we hope will address these issues.

I want to thank here all those in Wappenham who help to prepare the church for services, those who lead our fabulous Praise and Prayer and everyone who contributes to our amazing Breakfast Church. But none of it works without those who attend and worship with us, so whether you come regularly, occasionally or only at Christmas – Thank you!

Whilst we don't want this to be just about raising money, it is of course central to our success. And this depends on your support and commitment to regular giving, as without this we cannot hope to continue to support all our churches and our Ministry and Mission and be capable of supporting full time ministry here.

And we need your physical presence, at services and at fund raising events, as well as inviting neighbours and friends to swell numbers.

But we also need Parishes to commit to supporting those who serve on the BRICCs as well as their Representatives to the BPC. Our Trial will only succeed if those in our congregations support those who have stepped forward to offer their governance and commitment to a new better future.

Reverend Carole Peters

The Rector of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham in The Astwell Benefice

## **11. Reports from Parish Council Officers and Village Organisations' representatives**

### **The Friends of St Mary the Virgin Wappenham**

#### Introduction

The Friends were delighted to have enough funds to enable the repairs to the church tower steps to go ahead. These works are now complete and the steps are all splendidly back in order, making the tower safe for those who need to access it, for the first time in many years. We are very grateful to all involved in this, our biggest project to date.

Tower Steps and north porch roofs - following the Quinquennial Review of 2014, the decision was made to focus primarily on repairs to the tower steps and then tackle the Church porch roofs. The cost of the former was estimated to be £20,000, approximately £300 a step.

Following professional advice and a Faculty being obtained in 2016, the Friends invited residents to 'sponsor a step' in memory of a loved one, to be commemorated on a plaque in the Church. 22 steps out of a possible 61 (9 further steps needed no repair) have been funded in this way with a further 5 promised. Other funds came from events, individual donations and grants. The work took place in January and February 2018 and is now complete. A service of dedication is being planned to mark this very happy occasion. The option to sponsor a step will still be available as a way to raise further funds for the maintenance and repair of the church building.

It was agreed to appoint an architect from the Diocese's approved list to advise on repairs to the north porch roof.

Clock - Following the work on the steps, one of the auto-wind motors on the clock has been replaced. Due to the potential dust issue, this had been in abeyance since early 2017, pending the completion of the steps. Unfortunately, with the clock not running for a long time, the resident bees behind the clock face have managed to 'glue' the shaft driving the hand. For the moment, the hand has been disconnected, constantly displaying 11:00. After a week or two of settling down, the clock should now be striking within tolerance, (+/- 5 mins/week). (The best to be expected from a 350+ year old mechanism!) The hand issue is to be resolved at a later date.

Kitchen and WC - Progress was previously reported in that we have, thanks to the Tove Valley Broadband works, got a water pipe which reaches the Church although the standpipe is still currently in use.

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

Jane Mordue

Chairman, Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham

### **St Mary the Virgin Wappenham - Coffee morning report 2018**

Set up to provide a regular community get together following the closure of the shop, the coffee morning, held on the first Wednesday of each month, has continued throughout 2017/18 with a continued average

attendance between 16 and 30 people. Although set up by Rev Will Adams and facilitated by St Mary's PCC, the Coffee Morning is nominally a secular event for the village.

Although not intended to generate a profit, funds continue to be raised, and these are normally divided between our hosts, the Village Hall committee charity and the Northampton Hope centre. As per 2016, the October event was styled as part of the 'Worlds Biggest Coffee Morning' with the proceeds of the day going to Macmillan Cancer Support. The monies raised in 2017 were £168 for Macmillan and £150 each to the Hope Centre and the Village Hall Committee.

Very many thanks to all the cake bakers and helpers who have worked their magic over the last year. There is always room more helpers, so if you can spare a couple of hours on the first Wednesday of each month or can provide a cake or two, please to not hesitate to contact me or come along and talk to the servers on the day.

Anthony Tucker

### **Wappenham Short Mat Bowls Club**

Wappenham Short Mat Bowls Club is now in its 28th year having been formed by Maud Peart in February 1991. The Club has played most (44) Thursday's last year as holidays and available numbers permitted.

There are usually six to eight players available each week, however 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.

For any further information please contact Judy King, or myself.

Anthony Tucker

### **Wappenham Village Hall**

Over the past year the village hall has continued to be well used both by villagers and those from outside Wappenham. This has been despite the ongoing concerns regarding the hall's structure. Our insurance company has been monitoring both the cracking between the toilets and the main building and the internal cracking of the gable end and above the interior entrance. The movement around the toilet extension has two causes. Namely trees around our perimeter drying the clay soil and incorrectly designed foundations. The first issue can be easily dealt with by David Wilson who is responsible for the trees on his land close to the hall the second issue is more difficult. The building was signed off by SNC and it seems pretty unlikely that they would agree to financing a re-build of the toilets. As far as the internal cracking is concerned we are still awaiting a report from our insurance company.

Continuing on a building theme, finance for the revamped rose window is almost in place so we hope that work will be starting this Spring. As already mentioned the hall continues to be well used. We value our regular user groups such as the short mat bowls club, the coffee mornings, church breakfasts, upholstery classes and the monthly pub nights. We also thank the Parish Council for its ongoing use of the building. We also host twice yearly quiz nights, cycling events, private parties and we've even been known to have the occasional wedding reception. We must also give credit to the beer festival, that has now become a regular event, and contributes handsomely to the annual Christmas lunch for the senior citizens.

The committee has seven members. It is ably chaired by Ant Reid with Julie Long as our treasurer and Jenny Szczerbowski secretary. On a final note thanks must go to everyone who contributes to the Tote – the money generated really does make a difference.

Ant Reid – Chairman

*There was discussion on whether the building control department of SNC would be liable for necessary repairs – this would depend on the outcome of the insurance report.*

## **12. Open Forum**

It was highlighted that flood protection work on the River Tove was being undertaken to reinforce the banks after crayfish damage.

It was noted that there had been no issues of vandalism with the speed radar and that the battery used is the maximum size possible.

Donations which previously went to the Hope Centre from the church now go to the Air Ambulance.

*Cllr Lauren thanked everyone for attending and contributing to an interesting debate.*

***The meeting closed at 21.28pm***