

Upper Hardres Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting

Tuesday 14 May 2024, 7.30pm at Bossingham Village Hall

Minutes

1. Chairman welcomed those present and recorded attendance and apologies

Attending: Chairman Nick Waldron, Cllrs Simon Warner, Angela Waldron, Robert Richardson, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, John Pitcher *tree officer*, KCC Cllr Mike Sole, Vicky Thwaites *History Group* and one member of the public.
Apologies: CCC Ward Cllrs Mike Bland & Alister Brady, Gabby Fisher BVH

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 06 June 2023 were accepted and signed

3. Chairman's Report

see Reports

4. Presentation

A Kent Association of Local Councils Community Awards 2024 certificate will be delivered to Mr Mike Swain in thanks for his invaluable help in dealing with South East Water during the long-running water leak affecting Rectory Lane/Bursted Hill.

5. Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

see Reports

6. Reports from County and City Councillors

see Reports

7. Public participation session

Vicky Thwaites from Stelling Minnis & Upper Hardres History Group summarised their report. It was commented on the success of the Heritage Safari and the hard work by all involved was acknowledged and thanked.

8. Any other information

SignedNick Waldron *Chairman*, May 2025

Chairman Nick Waldron

Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton | uhpc.clerk@gmail.com | www.upperhardrespc.co.uk

REPORTS

Chairmans Report 2024

Welcome to the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting.

At our Annual Meeting of the Council held earlier this evening, I was elected as Chair for a second year.

After four years, Mick Broughton stood down which means we have a vacancy for a councillor. We thank Mick for his work as a councillor, particularly on exploring the Neighbourhood Plan.

In March we welcomed Rob Richardson to the Council.

City & County Councillors

Mike Sole is our KCC Councillor and we are very grateful for his assistance with the Rectory lane flooding issue. He is always very generous with his time.

Our CCC Ward Councillors Mike Bland and Alister Brady kindly donated £400 towards safety surfacing that needs replacing at the playing field.

Cllr Mike Bland has been supportive in arranging an on-site meeting with Rebecca Booth, CCC Environment Officer, who was very impressed with our location and equipment. Rebecca provided us with advice on further improvements to safety surfacing and goal posts.

Planning

Since April last year we have commented on 14 planning applications. We have the right to comment on applications and consider all of them. Do please make us aware if you have any concerns.

Poor water quality issues continue to stall applications and a long-promised solution is yet to materialise.

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy

We received £30,000 from CCC and some has been spent on the village hall. We have a balance of £21,681.95. We did ask parishioners for suggestions of projects but received a disappointing response.

Village Hall

The village hall has continued to develop and looks very different this year to last. Many thanks to the committee for their hard work. As ever, they need more members.

Roads

Rectory Lane was a big time waster with South East Water dragging their heels over the leak. We hope it is now fixed. Thanks to a gentleman from Chartham for his hard work in consistently contacting them.

I think this issue shows that KCC do not have a very robust system in place with some committed staff members excelling themselves whilst the senior management proved themselves lacking.

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

If we don't have road improvements registered on a HIP they won't be considered, so thanks to Cllr Simon Warner for driving this forward.

Playing Field

We need to move a piece of equipment and are looking at an improved goal. Engagement from people who use the goals would be appreciated and we will use Facebook to raise this.

Parish Grants

This year, £250 has been donated to Stelling Minnis School PTA for playground equipment. Also, £250 to Air Ambulance, following a life-saving call out for a parishioner last year.

Funds remain for just one more year of grants.

War memorial and garden

Thanks as ever to John Pitcher for his work in maintaining this. If anyone wishes to assist John, I know he will be very grateful.

Email list

There is an email list where Clare sends out updates, do request to join if you haven't already. Clare now also posts on Facebook.

Clare

A big vote of thanks to Clare, our parish clerk, without her the parish council would not operate and her hard work is much appreciated.

Recruitment

We really do need some new faces. We have 6 meetings a year so the time commitment is not onerous. Do feel free to have a chat with one of us and have a look at our website for meeting dates and Minutes to keep aware on local matters.

We are lucky to live in this fantastic area so let's keep a community voice on issues.

Nick Waldron, Chairman, Upper Hardres Parish Council, 14 May 2024

Parish Clerk/RFO's report 2024

The end of year figure for 2023/24 was **£33,443.31**. This is thanks to the receipt from Canterbury City Council of a second payment of £15,147 which is the 'Neighbourhood Portion' of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL for short) following the development of the houses at The Street.

The Precept covers the costs of running the parish council and is funded by a small charge on each household's Council Tax bill. It increases each year to meet our ever increasing costs.

We received annual **Concurrent Functions Funding** of £1,925 from Canterbury City Council; this goes towards the cost of Grounds Maintenance for the Playing Field and the Village Hall, and the annual playing field safety inspection. (This payment was due in April and I've queried the delay with CCC – there seems to be an administrative backlog!)

Our **Reserves Policy** includes Restricted funds for - emergency repairs to the village hall and the car park; long-term maintenance of the playing field equipment; and the annual Parish Grants Fund. We aim to keep a healthy amount in Reserves to meet any unexpected expenditure.

If you are not already on the **Parish Email List** and would like to be included, please email me and ask to be added.

Clare Hamilton, Clerk & RFO, Upper Hardres Parish Council, 14 May 2024

Upper Hardres Parish Council balance sheet for year ended 31 March 2024

	£	£	Budget 23.24	note
RECEIPTS				
CCC: Precept	6,566.00		6,566.00	
CCC: Concurrent Functions Funding	1,925.00		1,925.00	
CCC: CIL Neighbourhood Portion	15,147.00		15,147.00	
CCC: Opportunities Fund donation	400.00			1
HMRC: VAT repayment	1724.81			2
Bank: Interest	359.85			
Total receipts	26,122.66			
PAYMENTS				
<i>from Precept:</i>				
Clerk's salary	4,374.00		4,000.00	3
Clerk's annual expenses	324.52		370.00	4
Insurance premium	429.60		390.00	
Subscription to KALC	231.10		250.00	
Audit fees	252.00		200.00	
Election expenses	56.70		100.00	
Training/literature	0.00		25.00	
Website annual domain name renewal	14.39		16.00	
Website hosting	71.94		0.00	
Defibrillator aftercare, parts, contr. to running costs	338.13		240.00	
PCC donation (s.137)	150.00		150.00	
Meeting costs	22.10		30.00	
Contingency Fund	134.59		50.00	5
	6,399.07			
<i>from Concurrent Functions Funding:</i>				
Grounds maintenance	3,921.60			6
Playing Field annual inspection	186.00		165.00	
	4,107.60			
<i>from Reserves:</i>				
Parish Grant Fund Awards 2023 (s.137)	500.00			7
Donation to VH Coronation Big Lunch (s.137)	150.00			
Playing Field materials	63.70			8
VH insurance valuation	75.00			
	788.70			
<i>from CIL:</i>				
VH plumbing work	3,826.50			
VH electrical work	3600.00			
Contribution to planting	100.00			
	7,526.50			
Total payments	18,821.87			
Balance brought forward	26,142.52			
Receipts less payments	7,300.79			
Balance carried forward	33,443.31			

Bossingham Village Hall May 2024 Update

With the completion of the work to upgrade the facilities in the Village Hall over the last couple of years, the focus is now moving to getting new people to join the Committee, promote the Hall within the local community and continue to fundraise to help with running costs.

Nicky Gordon is in the process of setting up a '100 Club' which will run monthly prize drawers. The aim is to sell all one hundred tickets and the first drawer to take place on 1st August 2024. It will cost £5 per month to enter and the more tickets sold, the better the cash prizes will be. This should mean the hall will receive regular funds, particularly if people buy twelve tickets to cover the year in one payment, without the need for organising and running lots of fundraising events.

Following the success of the last community event in August 2023, the Committee are looking to run a monthly get together on the first Friday of each month, to encourage everyone to come along to the hall for a hot supper and a

chance to meet new and old friends. Tickets are £5. Drink will be BYO. The first Bossingham Village Hall Social Night will be on Friday 7th June 2024 at 7.00p.m.

The A.G.M will be held on Wednesday 26th June at 7.30pm and all users of the hall will be invited to attend or submit a report. There will be changes in the Committee at that time and we will need some more people to join to keep the momentum going. There are 4 meetings a year. It does involve some time commitment to help with fundraising and general day to day running of the hall, but the current Committee share these duties out and it really is not too onerous.

As always, the Committee would like to extend our thanks to the Parish Council for their continued support.

Gabby Fisher, Bossingham Village Hall Committee

Tree officer

It has been hedgerow planting week (6th to 12th May) initiated by The Woodland Trust and locally The Kent Tree and Pond partnership. It is all in the interest of the National rewilding Government strategy to create more areas for wildlife to thrive. Farmers are being encouraged to plant hedges and trees wherever possible across their land with this in mind.

I note that there is a growing number of areas being planted with grapevines nearby .(latest at Street End, Lower Hardres) and I note some hedging on the perimeters of these projects.

The Oak tree in the centre of the village does not look too healthy but time will tell if it recovers after the previous indications that it was dying. I will keep an eye on it.

So nice to see all the fresh greenery of the trees at this time as well as hedges and the wild flowers.

John Pitcher, Tree Officer

KCC Councillor Mike Sole

In May I attended Annual Parish Meetings in Wickhambreaux, Bishopsbourne, Bekesbourne, Upper Hardres, Womenswold & Kingston. With three others attended last month I was able to get to 9 out of the 16 parish councils in my KCC division and send a written report to the others.

Following on from a site visit at Out Elmstead Lane, I had a meeting with highway officers to push the case for a permanent solution to the bridge/ford issue. As a result of that it was agreed to improve signage on the A2 when the Nailbourne is flowing, and to push for National Highways to improve the junction and visibility, but KCC unfortunately stated that they do not have the funding to make infrastructure improvements at the Nailbourne.

At the annual meeting of Canterbury City Council I became the leader of the Liberal Democrat group and am now deputy leader of Canterbury City Council. Having visited the junction of Cherville Lane and the A257 in Ickham and have asked KCC to review what can be done to improve safety. I also attended a meeting of the A257 Group to update them on local issues. With the news that the A257 will be closed for three months near St Martin's Hospital, I am pushing for amendments to this as it will push so much traffic down unsuitable rural roads. I am also discussing with Stagecoach their plans during this closure.

At KCC I questioned the cabinet member for the environment on how KCC is holding Southern Water to account on its ever-worsening environmental performance. I also attended the Growth & Economic Development Cabinet Committee.

After 18 months and lots of chasing and lobbying, I was pleased to see improvements being made to allow wheelchair access to a Kingston bus stop. I continue to push for further improvements to others.

Finally, I was pleased to see that the KCC pothole blitz did fill a number of potholes recently, but there are still many more out there, so please keep reporting to KCC and let me know if any are not repaired within a reasonable timescale.

Cllr Mike Sole, (KCC) mike.sole@kent.gov.uk, (CCC) mike.sole@councillor.canterbury.gov.uk

The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul Upper Hardres May 2024

The church in Upper Hardres continues to thrive, largely based on the hard work of a few key members of the parish, particularly Anne Barlow, the church warden, Ginny Hall, the church secretary, and Angela Hirst, who assists with many initiatives at the church. Attendance is static at around 23 regular churchgoers who all contribute their time and efforts to keep the church running.

The interim priest, Louise Vincer, has recently stepped down from her role as incumbent for the churches of Upper Hardres, Stelling and Chartham and the benefice has been reorganised with Upper Hardres rejoining the Stone Street group of churches, along with Stelling, Hastingleigh, Waltham, Petham and Elmsted.

The church group is a part of the Wye benefice, headed by Rev. Ravi Holy. We are pleased to welcome a new vicar to the parish, the Rev. Dawn Stamper, and we very much look forward to working with her over the coming years to grow the church in the local community.

We have held a number of fundraising events over the course of the year: a performance by John Hursey and Michael Mathers in February; the Heritage Day in May, kindly organised by Paul Markland; Open Church at Upper Hardres in June; a contribution to the Windmill Fete in September; participation in the Ride and Stride in September; another recital led by John Hursey in September; and a stall at the East Kent Ploughing Match, also in September. This year we look forward to our Open Church on Saturday 29th June, to which all are very welcome.

We are sorry to say goodbye to Jo and David Chapman later this month. David has played the organ at Upper Hardres for the last 15 years and we have been lucky to enjoy some wonderful music: in recent months work has been completed on the organ and the sound has been truly wonderful. We will also miss Jo who has done such great work with the choir: she will also be very much missed. We thank them for all they have done for the church and wish them well in their ongoing endeavours.

We have signed up to the Eco-Church initiative and Dominic Schoen has led on a number of projects at Upper Hardres. We are currently joining in 'No Mow May' by leaving an area of the churchyard near to the front porch uncut for the full month; we have had a speaker from Rocha UK to talk about environmental issues and we have enjoyed a 'Seed Swap' after church with members of the congregation. We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labours later in the year. Other Eco projects are planned. Watch this space!

Despite all our efforts, we are seeing an ageing congregation and all jobs are undertaken, and events attended, by the same few. Everyone in the village and beyond are welcome to our services and events: all details are available in the parish magazine. We look forward to seeing you at a service or get together very soon!

Hardes & Stelling News report for 2024 APMs

Firstly, a big thank you to all who have written articles for inclusion in the Villages Community Magazine for without you there would not be a magazine. I know that many readers look forward to the regular contributions and the occasional letters from readers. Contributions regularly include community news from County, District/City, and Parish Councils together with the two Parish Churches and a message from the Parish Priest; as well as those from SM Primary School Headteacher's, Bossingham Pre-School, History Group, Gardening Society, both Village Hall, Johns Haffenden's Farmers notebook, Minnis Managers, thoughts from Steve Hardman, a brief weather report as well as information on the mobile library dates, Windmill & Museum together with the tea & natter afternoon. With occasional articles from other clubs, societies and individuals these all go to make what I hope is an interesting and informative Community Magazine with something for everybody.

The magazine was entered again into the National Parish Magazine of the Year competition and gained 15th place out of 450 entries in the A5 category for 2023.

A big thank you to Bruce & Margaret Crawford and their band of delivery agents for getting the magazine to you; to Ann Day for handling the finances and selling all the advertising spaces, not forgetting Xinyang and Sijia at Stelling Minnis Stores for willingly continuing to allow some readers to collect their magazine from the shop. Advertising spaces remain at 23 pages to allow for the increasing demands of the regular contributors and a limitation on magazine size placed by the printer of a total of 64 pages because of machinery capacity. Any photos for the front cover should be in Portrait format, please.

Nick Smith - Editor

Stelling Minnis and Upper Hardres History Group Chair's report for 2024 AGM

This year, 2023/early 2024 has been a busy one for the Society. In addition to hosting two talks and going on a trip, we have been especially active in planning, delivering, and recording the Stelling Minnis History Safari. Most recently, members have been leading the Villages' response to the KCC Kent Heritage Conservation Strategy consultation on the future ownership and management of the eight windmills, including Davidson's Mill in Stelling Minnis, which are currently owned and maintained by KCC.

In more detail:

Talks

We have organised and hosted two talks this year. Firstly, Neil Coombs came along in April to the Village Hall and spoke about 'Ancient Woodland and the Minnis'. Then in September it was our own Barry Thwaites who gave a talk about the 'History of Milling'. Both talks were well attended and enjoyed by the audience.

Hertiage Safari

Early in 2023 we started to work with Paul Markland and members of the community on a fundraising event for the two Parish Churches. This event evolved into the Stelling Minnis Hertiage Safari, held on 21st May which featured seven venues', including the Minnis, offering a range of talks from over twenty speakers. Overall, some two hundred people attended some of the events, but to ensure that all the talks, walks and visits were captured for posterity, Canterbury Camera Club kindly arranged to video all the sessions, which they then edited and made available to the community. The Society has purchased two copies of the full set of these recordings.

The range of the talks was amazing and included the history of the school and churches, the ownership and ecology of the Minnis. The Society supplied some of the speakers and materials for the Safari and mounted a display of the history of Stelling Minnis Village Hall in the Hall for visitors to look at. This was a truly wonderful community event which also raised a good sum for the Church funds.

Trip

In June we took up a long-standing invitation from Jacob Scott to visit Rochester Cathedral to look at the medieval graffiti. Members were treated to a fascinating tour of the cathedral and marvelled at the most intricate graffiti of the Last Supper in the Crypt. Jacob also showed us the other types of graffiti including medieval and Tudor ships, the Masons Marks, and personal inscriptions. A great trip which was enjoyed by all those who went along.

Waltham History Day

The Society were pleased to support Waltham villagers as they mounted their first local history exhibition. We leant them our display boards and a couple of members attended the exhibition which was well done and very interesting.

KCC Windmill Consultation

Late in 2023 KCC announced that it was to consult on the future ownership and management of the eight windmills that it owns. The consultation was required as any change in the ownership of the mills would be a change to its Hertiage Strategy. With our strong links to the Stelling Minnis Winmill Trust and concern as to the consequences of any possible changes, members of the Society were at the forefront of a campaign to stay any changes by getting as many villagers as possible to complete the consultation survey. The Society completed its own response clearly stating that it wishes KCC to retain the current arrangements due to concerns as to the future preservation and maintenance of the windmills should a change in ownership take place.

The Society

I would like to thank the officers of the Society, Cara Cooper and Vicki Thwaites for their ongoing support and administrative work, and all the members for their help and support which had enabled us to achieve a great deal in 2023, and to continue our work in 2024.

Maxine Blades, Chair, 22/02/2024