Minutes of Nether Wallop Annual Parish Meeting

**held on Monday 8 May 2017 at Nether Wallop Village Hall**

**Attendance:** The Chairman welcomed all and reported that this meeting would be looking back over the past year. The meeting was attended by Cllrs Cotterell, James, Mrs James, MacDonald-Smith and Souter, HCC Cllr Gibson, TVBC Cllr Boulton, the Footpaths Officer, PCSO Williams, PCSO Whelan, the clerk and one member of the public.

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr Carpenter. Cllr Curry has resigned from the council due to family commitments and would be much missed. The process of looking for a new councillor had already begun.

**Review of councillors’ interests:** Both Cllrs Cotterell and Souter wish to complete new declaration of interests forms due to a change in employment (**Action: Parish Clerk**). Other councillors reported on no changes.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 9 May 2016:** These were proposed to be adopted and were unanimously agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

**Neighbourhood Watch:**  PCSO Williams reported on the following:- Nether Wallop and surrounding Villages have seen a variety of incidents over the past 12 months, slight spikes in certain crime types but this appears to be a common occurrence throughout the area. Andover Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team have seen many changes over the past year with many staff retiring or transferring to different departments. They will be growing in numbers again so please watch out for new faces.

There continues to be a large number of thefts from motor vehicles in the area, this often occurs during the day time when vehicles are left parked unattended at a local beauty spot car park. She urged users of these areas to ensure nothing is left in their vehicle, and said you may think you have hidden items but you can’t be sure whether you’ve been watched.

She continued her report as follows: please continue to report suspicious incidents, these reports are very useful as we can build a picture of who are about and what’s could be getting targeted. You may not get contact back from me but it is much appreciated.

Thefts and non-dwelling burglaries continue in the area, outbuildings and sheds are targeted and often gardening tools or bikes are stolen. Burglaries are one of the areas community priorities and there were 12 reported burglaries in the Andover South area between March 2016 – April 2017, none of which occurred in Nether Wallop. A nearby burglary occurred during the day in January on Chattis Hill. It is believed two males gained entry by forcing rear ground floor French windows and subsequently stole items such as jewellery and currency. This is very low number but we continue to urge residents to ensure their security is reviewed. With the summer months on the way it is important to keep doors and windows locked when houses are vacant.

The other Community Priority are Road Related Matters, this includes speeding and anti-social driving etc. If there any specific concerns relating to this please contact me.

[www.hampshirealert.co.uk](http://www.hampshirealert.co.uk) will be used to pass information about crimes, please visit the website to join the mailing list. As with every year I am happy to be contacted to come to community events or talk with groups about local issues. Please contact me via 101 or email Catherine.williams@hampshire.pnn.police.uk

Crime prevention advice from PCSO 16502 Whelan regarding outbuilding security:-

* Place all tools and garden equipment in locked sheds and garages.
* Secure more expensive items, e.g. mowers, bikes to an anchor point within the shed or garage.
* Mark all items with postcode and record serial numbers. e.g. UV pens or forensic marking kits. Register the details for free on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com/)
* Take photographs of items such as statues and garden furniture if they are unusual, for easy identification at a later date.
* Fit a shed alarm.
* Keep the structure in good repair.
* Consider covering windows with curtains to obscure the view of the contents.
* Consider external lighting.
* Ensure the garden fences are in good repair between neighbours to prevent unlawful access.
* Ensure side gates are locked to prevent access to the rear of the property.

Cllr Cotterell raised concerns about traffic crossing the double white lines at Jacks Bush. PCSO Williams agreed to discuss this with the Road Policing Unit. The Chairman was concerned about the increase in dwelling burglaries by the criminal fraternity and reported that communication with the police was sometimes a problem. Hants Alerts did not report all incidents in the village. Both PCSOs left to attend a hedge fire on the playing fields.

**HCC Report:**  HCC Cllr Gibson reported that he had won the HCC election with a large majority. The consultation on whether Salisbury Lane would be closed is still continuing. There is massive resistance from residents in Station Road and massive support from residents in Salisbury Lane! The proposal at the junction at Grateley is also being considered. Cllr Cotterell reported that the verges along the A343 needed cutting. Cllr Mrs James expressed her appreciation of the work done by HCC in clearing some of the rights of way.

**TVBC Report:** TVBC Cllr Boulton reported on the following:- **TVBC:**  Band D customers will have an increase this year of £5, this is a reluctant rise after a £5 rise last year, following a number of years of no increases. The reduced Government grant this year, after years of the similar reductions, is pushing Borough and District Councils towards increasing self sufficiency. The Borough Council’s response to these cutbacks is, every year, to ask each department to constantly scrutinise costs, and to come up with efficiency savings. This gets increasingly difficult. The other approach is to partake in prudent property investments and pursue business initiatives. An example; only recently the leisure management provider contract has been awarded to a new provider, who has undertaken to provide a rebuilt facility at the Andover Sports Centre and a refreshed premises at Romsey Rapids and Valley Park, (at no capital cost to TVBC) all of which will make significant savings on Leisure provision, in fact will make a financial return. **Housing and Leisure:** The Councils Housing Strategy is continuing to help local people to access decent homes, in both Andover and Romsey. It is not just building houses but also building communities with first class facilities, such as community halls, leisure park areas, sports pavilions, and dozens of sport pitches. In the south Romsey’s sporting infrastructure will shortly benefit from a considerable increase in facilities and will be home to a consortium of local sports clubs and will provide floodlit astro pitches, grass pitches and other vital sporting accommodation, as well as more new homes, all at Ganger Farm. This massive building programme delivers not only homes but also enables us to benefit from Govt funded New Homes bonus, which together with the Community Asset Fund, directly benefits community projects. Parishes can also benefit from the new Test Valley Community Toolkit, a valuable aid to those embarking on a Neighbourhood Plan and thereby identifying your future local needs. Test Valley BC is also very active in supporting the Future Skills and Technical centre at Cricklade College, this with its programme of supporting small business has resulted the council receiving two prestigious Wessex Area awards; Best All Round Business Friendly Council and a special award for outstanding commitment to support small businesses. As I have tried to indicate this should give a small flavour of how enterprise orientated the Council has become and is developing constantly innovative new ways of generating new income streams. It is interesting to note the return on completed Borough Council projects is forecast to be 7.8%, and delivers £1.3Mililion **more** than had that capital employed remained in reserves. **Hampshire County Council Tax:**

HCC Cllr Gibson will be happy to bring you up to speed. **The Future:** What is coming? An exciting new wetlands area at Fishlake Meadows, just north of Romsey. A park, which will be open to the public for ecological pursuits and informal recreation. There are to be more enhancements to Romsey town centre. The waste collection depot at Portway is to be clad in solar panels. Also, there will be increasing use of Beech Hurst Headquarters by sharing some of the space for functions with Hampshire County Council. **Ward Boundaries:** The Boundary Commission has required the Council to reduce the number of members from 48 to 43, losing 5 councillors; each councillor in Test Valley will now be expected to represent around 2400 electors. In order to achieve these aims the large rural area between Andover and Romsey will be required to lose 2 Councillors. These changes are to be implemented by 2019. In this area, presently represented by 5 Councillors in 4 Wards, there are several proposed Ward boundary changes, to meet the above criteria required by the Boundary Commission. They are significant, and not universally welcomed, in this rural Test Valley area. The first suggested proposal for this area was for 2 Wards; a 1 Member Ward and a 2 Member Ward; but locally we have argued for one 3 member Ward to cover the whole area - any other decision, to make the numbers of electors equal, would have resulted in divisions between adjoined communities ie Stockbridge and Longstock, or the splitting apart of neighbouring communities who currently work well together i.e. Broughton and Mottisfont, Broughton and Houghton, the Wallops. The new Ward, possibly to be named Mid-Test, will now include Stockbridge, Longstock, Broughton, Houghton, Kings Somborne, Lockerley, the Wallops, Mottisfont and the Tytherleys. This proposal will result in an increased workload for the 3 elected members in 2019; each of whom will be expected to be responsible for 6 parishes. Currently 5 members cover this large area with 1900 electors each, but the change will result in each Councillor having the required 2400 electors! There will be 3 Councillors working closely together in this large rural Ward. You, as a Parish Council, will be consulted on these changes, but your existing 5 members for this area are willing to accept this proposal. **Locally:** As Councillors we have done our bit to encourage local enterprise initiatives, either with modest grants from our individual Community Grant Fund, or by steering entrepreneurs towards the right advice and expertise that we have within the Council.

Test valley BC provided significant financial support towards the much admired re-build of this Village Hall, a really good example of community enterprise. We have had a request recently to help with some start up finance from one of our local businesses: The River Test Trout Smokery. Other appeals for help we have received recently - Stockbridge, for example have sought our help for Trout’n About. We supported Stockbridge Christmas at the end of last year. We are also committed to help with High St enhancements in front of the Town Hall. We have also helped numerous other small projects throughout our Ward. **Planning:** We both try to help when there are difficult planning proposals to be resolved. We can help with problems connected with Neighbourhood Plans. We both sit on four planning committees. Cllr Busk is Chairman of Northern Area Planning Committee. Finally, the big change for us as Councillors is the fact that our current leader Cllr Ian Carr, responsible over the last 20 years for successfully guiding the Council through many difficult changes, and promoting many of the new initiatives, has decided to step down from the role, and his leadership will be much missed. I get to as many Parish Council meetings as I can but there is often a clash of dates with TVBC meetings and other Parish Councils.

I would like to thank the Nether Wallop Parish Councillors, and particularly the Clerk, for all that they do, and for keeping us informed. I understand Mrs Grob and Mr Shoesmith are both stepping down after many years of service to this council.

Cllr Cotterell enquired whether the saving on the pv panels at Portway is yet known and whether air quality is poor. TVBC Cllr Boulton replied that there are no indications on either yet.

**Wallop Primary School:** The School had produced a comprehensive booklet giving various facts and figures about its structure and make up of staff and pupils. This would be scanned to the parish council website (**Action: Cllr Souter**). Pupil numbers comprise 120 to include some from the army base. There are 41% boys and 59% girls.

**Footpaths:** The Chairman read the Footpaths Officer’s report as follows and congratulated him on all his hard work. The year saw our Parish Rights of Way remaining broadly passable, with no major issues, benefiting from work carried out in previous years by both Parish volunteers and the HCC Contract Maintenance Team. Waymarking maintenance and improvements have been carried out. Purchase of a new hedge cutting machine, part funded by HCC. **Path Maintenance:** The most popular paths were kept clear through the season using volunteer work by the NWPC Rights of Way officer (Iain James), supported by Simon Tilling (paths adjacent to School Lane) and Mark Lovell (Jacks Bush area). HCC Contractors carried out the annual major clearance of the Parish’s six nominated Rights of Way (primarily the large Restricted Byways west of the B3084 Romsey Road) as planned in September, and to a high standard. **Signage:** The RoW Officer replaced a number of fingerboard posts and markers where these had been damaged or destroyed (one had been hit and flattened by a car), and similarly checked and replaced waymarkers. **Funding and Equipment:** HCC provided a grant of £500 to be used by the Parish Council for ad hoc RoW expenditure. A new Stihl 2 stroke handheld hedge cutter has been purchased, with the cost of £199 being more than 50% match funded through the HCC Small Grant Scheme. This will significantly improve our ability to keep side growth in check. Thanks must go to Andover Garden Machinery for supplying the machine at a generous discount. **Webpage:** An initial input of webpage content giving an overview of RoW issues, responsibilities, and Points of Content, has been uploaded to the Parish website. This will be further expanded in the coming year. **Modification to an Established Right of Way:** Shortly before the Parish APM, NWPC was informed through HCC that Andover Ramblers Association has submitted an application to HCC to establish a Restricted Byway level Public Right of Way on what is currently listed as a private track. NWPC will seek further information as to the justification and reasoning behind this application as the applicant would appear not to have consulted NWPC prior to its submission, and no local demand, either current or historical, has been identified at time of writing.

**Finance:** The Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer reported the council’s financial affairs were in a healthy state. Draft accounts for the year to 31st March 2016 had been prepared by Mr Shoesmith and were due to be approved at the next meeting. The accounts would be audited by the internal auditor this week.

The accounts for the year to 31 March 2016 show an excess of income over expenditure of £4,106, of this £2,504 relates to the Village Fund which is funds raised from the May Fair. The General Fund has risen by £2,424. The changes are largely due owing to various grants received and the decline in the amount of S137 payments paid this year.

Once again, she wished to express her thanks to Mr Shoesmith for voluntarily carrying out all the Parish Council’s bookkeeping, monthly financial reports and preparation of the accounts. He will be retiring after 22 years as the new Clerk/RFO takes on the job.

**Highways:** Cllr James reported on the continuing economic austerity, cuts to local Government budgets have continued to impact on the monies available to maintain the Counties roads. We have been fortunate to have had two relatively mild successive winters, and thanks to a combination of surface redressing, namely sections of Five Bells Lane, Farley/Heathman Street and Airfield Road, and repairing of potholes, the Parish roads are in a reasonable condition. HCC have recently announced the contract award with a new supplier deliver highways maintenance services in Hampshire, and the procurement of new vehicles for repairing potholes, and we look forward to significant improvements in both the quality and time it takes to repair potholes. We continue to encourage residents to report potholes through the HCC Highways website.

The Parish Council has continued to work with Hampshire County Council Highways department to resolve the issues arising from the redesign of the junction between the A343, Station Road and Farley Street, and have supported local residents in discussions with HCC over traffic calming schemes for Salisbury Lane and Station Road.

The Parish Council have been contacted by a number of residents throughout the year raising concerns over speeding in the village and Jack’s Bush, which have been followed up with both the Police and HCC. The advice received was that in the absence of evidence

**Village Green:** Cllr Souter read Cllr Carpenter’s report to say that significant work had been undertaken to repair the river bank. The HCC £1,000 grant was gratefully received going towards the cost of this which was approximately £2,500. Village tents well used and continue to be a much appreciated village asset.

**Playing Fields:** Cllr Carpenter had sent in a report as follows:- **Sports field:** Football teams from Andover and Broughton continue to use the pitch and new nets were purchased last year.

He awaits further information from Broughton young players football team re the possibility of marking out a small pitch (alongside the large one). He wished to thank Mr Richardson who continues to manage the football pitch and liaison with the football teams. Contractor cutting grass and hedges continued to maintain area well. **Tennis court:** The court is well used and remains in very good condition. **Children's play area:** also well used and is due ROSPA inspection this month. Bark was purchased early last year, though some extra bark will be required this year to maintain safety depth. New young children's swings were purchased and replaced the existing damaged ones. **Parking area:** Scalpings were purchased and laid to stop cars slipping in mud. **Pavilion:** Broken toilet removed and replaced. Minor plumbing work undertaken. Electrical survey on all equipment and power sockets undertaken and safety certificate being issued. Survey to be undertaken and a list of maintenance/decorating tasks to be agreed. Cllr Souter added that some work needed to be done on the tennis nets and also the hedge.

**Nether Wallop Village Hall:** Cllr Souter reported that this time last year the hall was in the process of being demolished. The process of the re-building project has been successfully completed within 4 weeks of the timings and on budget. He thanked and congratulated those on the Nether Wallop Village Hall Trust particularly the Chairman Major General Toyne Sewell and the instigator of the Trust some years back, Mr Rogers. Grants from Veolia Environmental Trust, HCC and TVBC had been forthcoming but 50% of the funds necessary were raised by the village itself. The vigorous project management resulted in the excellent hall now in use.

**Chairman’s Address:** The Chairman reported that he wished to thank all councillors for their help and activity during the past year. It had been a good time. In addition to Cllr Curry the Clerk has also tendered her resignation and the process of recruiting a replacement is well underway with the interview of three applicants. He further reported on a vibrant and supportive village although it would be nice if attendance at meetings was improved! He thanked both HCC and TVBC for their fantastic support and congratulated HCC Cllr Gibson on his re-election.

**Points from the floor:**

There being no further points, the Chairman concluded the meeting at 8.45pm. Refreshments were served after the next usual May meeting.