

HUNSBURY MEADOWS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 7.30pm at the Pineham Barns School, Hunsbury Meadows. NN4 9FF

Present: Cllr. Mandy Caunt (Chair), Cllr. Debbie Hammond, Cllr. Alexis Tomlin, Cllr. Stuart Faulds

Clerk: Lalitkumar Patel

In attendance: WNC Cllr. Brian Sargeant and 1 resident.


1. Invitation: The Chair invited the members of the public and the Councillors to the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting of the Hunsbury Meadows.
2. Apologies: The Council received apology from Cllr. John Kwijuka, Cllr. Nathan Stewart and WNC Cllr. Nick Sturges-Alex
3. The Council confirmed the approved minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 3rd May 2022 (Circulated).
4. Public Participation: A provision of a play area for children of Pineham Village was Raised and discussed extensively.
5. Chair's review of the past year: The Chair thanked fellow Councillors, members of the public and the Clerk for their support and contribution during the year. A Chair's report was presented (circulated) and covered the following aspects:

The Chair began with the fact that 22-23 was busier than expected after a very busy 2021-22 and that a lot was accomplished, and expressed disappointment at the responses from West Northants Council in respect of *Freedom of Information Request*.

Resignation of Cllr. Sharon Blom and Sandy Hudson was regretted but Cllr. Imran Chowdhury, Cllr. Nathan Stewart and Cllr. Stuart Faulds were welcomed.

The report covered the following achievements:

- Installation of 8 flower planters during summer and refilled with bulbs ready for the spring.
- Creation of a wild flower meadow near the hum- bridge on Banbury Lane.

Signature:  Chair

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- Installation of 3 sided-30mph speed limit signs throughout the parish and similar wheelie bin stickers
- Approval of purchase and installation of 2 new litter/dog waste bins in Pineham Village.
- Approval of a replacement bench on Banbury Lane.
- A very successful Party in the Park on 16th July 2022.
- Establishment of a *Community Cohesion Project* which morphed into successful *Good Neighbour Project* of willing volunteers.
- Successful *Don't be a Tosser* campaign to encourage use of litter bins provided.
- *Removal of Graffiti* from *various* locations round the Parish.
- Initiating a project for a football field to be created within the parish.
- Upgrade of the Canal Tow Path undertaken by IWA Volunteers and funded by Cummins Power Systems.
- Erection of safety barriers on Upton Valley Way Easy between Hunsbury Meadows and the school in Pineham Village by West Northants Council.

The Chair thanked the Councillors and the Clerk for their contribution.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

Signature.......... Chair

Date: 7th June 2023



Chair's Review 2022-2023

After the busy year to April 2021 catching up after Covid, 2022 – 2023 was expected to be quieter. In fact, looking back over the year, it seems to have been equally busy, though this year has been tinged with more frustrations and disappointments amongst the positives.

Whilst we have accomplished much of a positive nature once again, such things as the failure to be able to resolve the safe football area for the older children of Pineham Village, or even get the information we need from West Northants Council under *Freedom of Information* requests for land south of Pineham Lock for possible community use, has put back our major project proposals.

At the end of last year, we also had the disappointment of losing two valued Councillors, Sharon Blom in October and Sandy Hudson who was a founder member of the Parish Council back in 2013. We were left working with only 5 out of 8 Councillors and often less due to other Councillor commitments and absences for quite a few months of the year. This made it difficult to progress projects. The situation has now been happily resolved with the co-option of three new Councillors, Cllrs Imran Chowdhury, Nathan Stewart and Stuart Faulds. Imran joined us in October last year and it is pleasing that Nathan and Stuart came forward because of our appeal to the Parish in our December Newsletter and were Co Opted in April.

We look forward to being able to move forward with both new and existing projects over the next 12 months with their help and input.

Highlights of our work this last twelve months have been as follows:

1. The installation of eight three tier planters across the Parish and the wonderful summer bedding displays they produced throughout the summer. These were very well received by not only residents but also non-residents simply passing through Banbury Lane in particular. These will be installed again for this next summer.
2. In the autumn we used the empty planters for spring bulbs. Again, these have brightened up the Parish this spring. Sadly, it is frustrating to note that due to a contractor error, our plans to recycle these bulbs across the Parish has been dashed for this year, the planters having been removed too early, though we are promised replacement bulbs.
3. We also established wildflower strips in what is now named "*Wildflower Meadow*" on Banbury Lane following our summer competition to "*Name that Park,*" The wildflower strips were slow to start due to the very dry spring and summer last year – but following reseeding, did give us a wonderful colourful display in the late summer and well into the autumn. These are currently in the process of being revitalised for this coming year with new seed being laid to boost the wildflowers that undoubtedly remain. At the same time, we have recently seen that cowslips and primroses planted last year have flowered this spring. A new name board will shortly be installed for Wildflower Meadow too.
4. Having been unable to resolve the speed limit issue in Pineham Village in any other way, the Parish Council purchased some three-sided lamp post signs to try and focus drivers on watching their speed. It is sad to note that many of these have however been vandalised.
5. The Parish Council has approved the purchase of two new litter / dog waste bins for Pineham Village at the request of a Pineham Village resident. Subject to consultation and approval by

WNC, these are to be placed on the footpath that runs across the village from Upton Valley Way East to Upton Valley Way North.

6. A replacement bench for Banbury Lane has also been approved to replace one which is broken.
7. Party in the Park took place on 16th July last year. Children's face painting, clowns, and various stalls along with a bar and food stalls aligned with wonderful weather to give us an excellent day on the Banbury Lane play area with family groups getting together to enjoy the event. My thanks go to the entire Parish Council, who, in the last few days rallied round to replace promised stalls or activities which cancelled at the last minute. Special thanks are however due to Sandy Hudson, who had to coordinate the and plan the event along with coordination of the last-minute changes. **The day was a success – thank you Sandy one last time.**
8. In our *Spring Newsletter* last year, we attempted to progress what we called "*community cohesion*," sending a questionnaire to find out what activities' residents would like in the Parish, along with seeking to establish both people who may need assistance and those who are willing to help them. Sadly, we had only eight replies. Amongst these, four people offered assistance to the Parish if needed. Whilst the response meant that we were unable to move forward with the *Good Neighbour Project* originally envisaged, we have been able to add those who responded to a list of people across the Parish who have advised that they are willing to help us out with various things and who have given their permission for us to contact them if needed. We have thus established an informal *Good Neighbour Project Group*. **I would therefore thank all those residents who have offered their help as part of this, in any way.**
9. As a direct result of the *Good Neighbour Project Group*, we now have a new resident *Litter Picking Scheme* which will be fully launched to the entire Parish in our next Newsletter. Disappointingly, we have found that Parish group Litter Picks have not been well supported with only Councillors turning up on the last two occasions. Since we know that individuals do take it upon themselves to pick up litter, and keeping the Parish as clear of litter is so important to all of us who live here, we have decided to directly support those individuals by providing them with kit including Litter Pickers, yellow high viz jackets, Health and Safety Guidance, gloves and most valuable of all, "purple" bin bags which can be now be left with our street litter bins by our volunteers, to be collected by WNC with the usual bin round without anyone being accused of fly tipping! It has taken some time to achieve this as WNC prefer group collections. **My thanks to our current volunteer litter pickers, you make such a difference to the appearance of our Parish and make it a pleasant place to walk and live.**
10. As part of our campaign against litter, we have also commissioned "*Don't be a Tosser*" signs over the last year like those used at Tesco in Mereway. These have been variously received, but by and large, the message seems to be appreciated. Again though, it is frustrating that some people seem prone to removing the signs and / or continuing to ignore them (and the many bins), especially along Upton Valley Way East and Bly Lane!
11. Regarding antisocial behaviour, we have noted increasing graffiti across the Parish. Like litter, this undermines and undervalues the ambiance of the Parish. A project of ongoing removal is now in process so that any found on bins, street furniture or telephone boxes or the like, has and will now, be removed as soon as it appears. In this we are to be assisted by the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) volunteers who will remove some of the unwanted graffiti from our canal bridges over the summer.
12. The Parish Council has been in initial discussions with Pro Logis concerning the use of the field next to the School at Pineham Village for a football area. Unfortunately, we are finding the cost challenges of both protecting against, and potential removal of, trespassing Travellers on any land for which we take legal responsibility, a huge barrier to progress. We shall however continue to seek ways around this challenge if we can.

13. Over the last year the IWA Volunteers financed by *Cummins Power Systems* have been upgrading and surfacing the Canal Tow Path from Pineham Lock towards the Motorway. Phase three of this has just been completed and the final 100m to the motorway will be done by the end of this year. **I would therefore like to thank the local IWA on behalf of the Parish Council for both this and indeed their ongoing general maintenance work on the Northampton Arm of the Grand Union Canal. Our residents benefit greatly - perhaps more than canal users.**
14. I am pleased to report that another Parish Council initiative which came to fruition successfully this year and with the help of Ward Councillor Brian Sargeant, was the erecting of barriers on the Upton Valley Way East bridge over the canal between the road and the cycleway / footpath. The safety of this stretch of road had been of great concern to parents taking young children to Pineham Barns School due to the adverse camber on the cycleway / footpath, and the proximity and speed of vehicles on Upton Valley Way East. Parents report being much happier with them there for the entire length of the curve over the bridge.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank firstly, my fellow Parish Councillors for giving of their time but also our Clerk, Lalit.

Being a Parish Councillor is often a thankless job – but if we want to keep the area in which we live looking and feeling good to live in, our work is important. There are no funds to clear up litter, provide bins or push forward projects to help the community environment. It can only be done by a viable hard working and unpaid Parish Councillors willing to take out some time from their own busy lives to help and support Parish initiatives. **Thank you to you all.**

There is one final thank you I must make on behalf of all the Parish Council and that is to our Clerk Lalit.

This too is a thankless job, quietly working in the background supporting and guiding the Parish Council, making sure we do things in the right way. Lalit has announced that he wishes to step down when we find a new Clerk. I would therefore take this opportunity to thank him for all his work on our behalf, not only this year, but since he joined us some years ago. Thank you, Lalit, your boots are large and will take some filling we think.