

# **HEMINGFORD ABBOTS PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Report to the Hemingford Abbots Annual Parish Meeting on the activities of the Parish Council in the year May 2017 to May 2018**

### **Councillors and Clerk**

The Parish Council for 2017/2018 comprised Erika Brown, Chairman, Bridget Flanagan, Vice Chairman, Alun Jones, Pearl Muspratt, Chris Nichol, John Peters and Marcus Whewell. Carole Pollock was Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Council. My sincere thanks to my fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their dedication, support and hard work throughout the year.

The Council was elected in 2016 and would normally serve a four year term. A Local Government Boundary Commission review was carried out in late 2016 and concluded that Hemingford Abbots would be disconnected electorally from Hemingford Grey and Houghton & Wyton parishes and join instead with Godmanchester and The Offords. Hemingford Abbots Parish Council strongly resisted this and formally objected to the proposal but the decision was upheld. The new warding arrangement comes into effect in May 2018 with a newly elected Parish Council and District Councillors. Five nominations for Parish Council were made and Councillors Flanagan, Jones, Nichol, Peters and Whewell were elected unopposed. I would like to note very special thanks to Pearl Muspratt - a councillor for 25 years and who did not seek re-election this year - for her contribution to the Parish Council. Currently there are two vacancies which the new Parish Council will seek to fill at the earliest opportunity.

Carole Pollock announced her retirement as Clerk to the Council in March 2017 following six years dedicated service. I would thank Carole on behalf of all the Council for her hard work, support and diligence during her time in post. The Parish Council will seek to appoint a replacement in May 2018.

With a new warding arrangement, Councillors and Clerk, the Council is entering a period of change it hasn't seen the likes of in my memory but I know that the new team will embrace this new phase and will continue to serve the community with professionalism and dedication.

Contact details for the 2018/19 Council are provided at the end of this report.

### **Overview**

The Council held 10 scheduled monthly meetings and two extra-ordinary meetings to carry out the routine business of the Council. Members of the public were invited to attend meetings along with its two Huntingdonshire District Council representatives and one Cambridgeshire County Council representative. The Council holds an open surgery 15 minutes prior to each scheduled meeting to provide an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues with the Council that are not agenda items. The public are invited to speak on agenda items during the meeting's public participation session.

## **Finance**

The Precept that had been agreed by the Council for the year was £17,500 – no change to the precept agreed for the previous financial year. Additional income of £79.93 was received from interest on reserves and from the clothing recycling bank.

A large portion of the Council's budget is spent on running costs including the Clerk's salary and expenses, audit fees, meeting room hire, training, insurance, electricity and maintenance costs for street lighting. Provision is also made for general village maintenance and projects, playing field and equipment maintenance, grants and election costs. The Council regularly reviews its balance sheet and will transfer funds from its main account to reserve accounts for street lighting and playing field equipment to ensure that sufficient funds are available for maintenance and, potentially, new projects.

The precept for the coming year 2018/19 was set at £18,250 an increase of £750 compared to the previous financial year. This gives a Band D tax rate of £54.97 per annum.

## **Planning**

### **Planning Applications**

During the reporting period the Parish Council was a consultee on all planning applications directly affecting the Parish. 12 full applications were discussed by the Council. Four applications were for new builds and the remaining were for extensions or modifications. Six applications for works to trees were submitted to the Council for consideration but thirty five applications appear on Huntingdonshire District Council's website.

### **HDC Local Plan to 2036**

The Parish Council submitted its response to Huntingdonshire District Council's consultation on the Local Plan to 2036. This plan has been in the making for some years and continues to promote considerable expansion of the district. The Council expressed its concerns about the already stretched transport and amenity infrastructure and commented that further extensive development would create enormous challenges on systems already seemingly at capacity.

### **Village Projects and Maintenance**

The Council approved the purchase of two new benches which were sited in the High Street opposite the Village Hall. Other general maintenance issues included hedge trimming, clearing of vegetation, repainting the village map frame, refurbishment of the bench in the playing field and repairs to the kissing gate into the Regatta field from the High Street. Issues outside the remit of the Council such as problems with the highways and pavements have been reported through the council to the accountable organisation.

For a number of years the village has been blighted by fly tipping at two particular sites off Rideaway – one being the entrance to the old Shell Garage and the other where the bottle banks originally and clothing banks latterly were positioned. The Parish Council has considered all options to secure these sites in order to deter future episodes of fly tipping. The Council hopes that a solution will be implemented in the very near future.

This year's annual village litter pick was very well supported by residents and their friends and family. My thanks to everyone who turned out on a very cold and blustery Sunday morning in February to collect over 20 sacks of rubbish.

### **Hemingford Abbots Playing Field**

As the Administrative Trustee of the Playing Field the Council organises the maintenance of the grass and hedges. An independent annual safety inspection of the play equipment is commissioned to identify maintenance works required. Weekly visual inspections of the field and equipment are carried out by a Councillor.

### **Council Representatives**

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank those who represent or support various interests, activities and venues which affect the village. Whilst we will receive reports from a number of individuals updating us on the sterling work being done within the community I am mindful that there are many other supporters and helpers in the wings who equally give their time and energy to help ensure the smooth running of village life. Thank you to all for your support and diligence.

### **Farewell**

This is my last meeting as a Parish Councillor. I am proud to have served on this Council for 16 years during which time I hope I've made a small difference to this community which I value and respect hugely. I wish the new Council and the team which provides support in so many ways all the very best for the future. I believe that we are incredibly fortunate to live in the beautiful village of Hemingford Abbots and the community needs to remain steadfast to protect and preserve the setting in which it lies.

Erika Brown  
Chairman, Hemingford Abbots Parish Council

### **Appendix**

#### **Hemingford Abbots Parish Council – Contact details 2018-2019**

##### **Clerk to the Council:**

To whom any correspondence for the attention of the Council should be addressed

Mrs Carole Pollock  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
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**Parish Councillors** may be contacted as follows:

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Marcus Whewell	01480 464293
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