

Annual Village Meeting 2025 – PC Chair’s Report

In 2024/25 the PC continued to meet every 2 months – plus an extra meeting to discuss a planning application – in total 7 meetings.

- At this time last year we were at full strength, we then lost a Cllr to pressures of work and replaced him in January by co-opting Jonathan Allmark, we welcome him and his family to Hankerton.
- We had the local election and all councillors nominated themselves (7 names for 7 seats) therefore all have been re-elected unopposed with no vote needed.
- Precept was set at £5800 to meet planned expenditure of £6074 which means a 20% increase in householder payments but in cash terms that is only £6.11 for the year (at Band D). The account has been through its internal audit by Peter Wyman (for which many thanks)
- Planning applications
 - A quiet year – only 3 applications in the PC year. 2 remain undecided, Plot 11 Follyfield, to which the PC objected, and Bambury Hill farm for Listed Building Consent for replacement windows and door.
 - This list of current and recent applications is on the PC website and we encourage all residents to look at it to keep up with the latest applications.

We are always on the lookout for comments posted on the Wiltshire Council planning portal for any planning application and will always consider any objections when taking a decision. If residents have objections you can inform the PC but best of all is to submit them to Wiltshire Council.

- Flooding –
 - There were 3 areas most affected – the sewage pumping station, outside the Holt, and then this past year the Storm Bert flooding in Chapel Lane and at Cloatley Grange.
 - Storm Bert flooding was a most traumatic event for those households flooded by the extreme weather conditions. To feel and be so powerless to stop water heading for your property is shocking and dreadful. I know that many

neighbours helped each other in this hour of need so aren't we fortunate to live amongst such a community.

- In the light of this happening the PC has been looking at what would most help this situation.
- What has happened:
 - Ditch walk in the appropriately pouring rain by David Pynn and PC, assessing the state of the ditches and where clearance might be most effective. Many of the ditches had been cleared by Thomas Law and were in a good clear condition, we marked where further work was needed.
 - David Pynn, myself and affected residents met with Jonathan Clark and Nick Self of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWLT) on 24 Apr, with the aim to highlight parts of the ditch and drainage system which could be improved to aid water flow away from vulnerable properties. WWLT has called in a land levels advisor to ensure next actions are effective and they have started cutting back vegetation in some ditches.
 - Along Chapel Lane – landowner clearance of the Chapel Lane east ditch has been completed.
 - It was observed that water poured over Cloatley road towards the southern end of Chapel Lane so we have liaised with the landowner and called in Wilts Council Land Drainage Engineer to advise on the next action.(date awaited).
 - Flooding has been occurring more frequently outside the Holt and having contacted Wiltshire Highways we are advised that they will clear the drain running under the road ...
 - The sewage pumping station overflows in heavy rain and after a meeting with Wessex Water we have followed their request to cut back undergrowth around the bridge and they cleared the ditches between the station and the brook. We think this will make no difference at all but by adhering to their requests we will have more leverage if it happens again ...

- Speeding on the village lanes –
 - A village survey last year resulted in a 73%-27% majority against trying for a speed limit. We walked the roads to assess where road signs might be usefully placed to slow traffic down passing on these ideas to LHFIG ... in discussion with Highways our choice of signs were turned down as not being in accordance with the rules. Highways then made their own proposal for signs. The PC launched a consultation with village – the result from a small number of responses was 70%-30% against having signs. We have abandoned further attempts.
- Footpaths – The PC has sought to improve part of the footpath through to Hillwell by some hardcore laid by Nick Durnford, and we plan to keep on top of the nettles this year. We realise we may have to lay more hardcore ... Some minor diversions around Hankerton Field Farm were agreed following an application by the landowner to direct walkers away from the house. Signage has been made clearer on some routes.
- Verges – again we will cut the verges, within the village signs, once the cow-parsley season is over (ie sometime in June/July).
- Flagpole – The flag needs fairly regular replacement due to damage by the elements and we are looking to buy better quality with anti-fray edging, sometime this year. We fly the union flag all the year round with Home Nation flags on Saint's Days.
- Wildflowers – This was Dai's very good idea. And the verges are about to burst into bloom. We are so lucky to have his support here and the verges are a welcome addition to the wildflower meadows at Cloatley.
- Festivals. Looking ahead to the weekends of 22-25 May there will be Shindig and 12-15 June will be Existance and Gem festivals.at Charlton Park. I had a word with the Chair of Charlton PC who has gone to considerable trouble to make sure as far as is possible that Charlton residents are not plagued by drum and bass into the early hours Hankerton will be offered free tickets to Gem festival due to the Clerk's request, so thank you to him. I think it is a 'wait and see' moment as to the impact.
- Best Kept Village

- After the success of last year the PC held a celebration party on 1st June. The sun shone and it was a great party.
- This year we enter what they call the Lawrence Kitching Winner of Winners competition – for the winners of the 3 size categories of last year and the year before – ie we are in it for 2 years now. The judging is in July (not mid-May to mid-Jun) so please make all efforts to keep the village in mint condition.
- Some thanks:
 - Shayne Smith is the Hankerton rep at the Malmesbury Primary Care Centre meetings, and she provides regular reports back to PC and through Grapevine to all residents.
 - David Pynn is Flooding Advisor to the PC. And litter picker extraordinaire, he is an invaluable member of our community.
 - Lindy organises Café Church, a time and place for coffee and a chat.
 - Defibrillator – The roster for checking is run by Simon Kearsley, thank you too for the volunteers who do the checking.
 - And those who mow around the bus shelter and flagpole, and indeed the residents of Hillwell who continue to make it look so well with planting. Also a big thank you for those who mow along Cloatley Road from Coopers Garage to Chapel Lane, It does make walking much easier.

I look at the village website and the very active village Whatsapp and see Pizza night, café Church, ice cream vans, advice and information sharing, help in an hour of need, bargains to be bought, recycling, eggs and more. This is a great place to live.