



HENSTRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

Henstridge Parish Council held at the Village Hall, Ash Walk, Henstridge
on 15 May 2024 at 7.00pm.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the open meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Present: Cllr Smith, Cllr Courtenay, Cllr Gaymer, Cllr J Graham, Cllr E Graham, Cllr Thompson, Cllr Howlett, Cllr Steel, Cllr Petheram, Cllr Cowles, Cllr Finch

In attendance: Cllr Nicola Clerk and 68 residents of the Parish

Apologies: Cllr Scard, Cllr Rose

A) Parish Council Report

1. Welcome Cllr Smith welcomed everyone to the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting and introduced guests from the Air Ambulance Charity as well as those representing local organisations.

Cllr Smith explained that this meeting was not the AGM of the Parish Council and should not be confused with the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, which was recently held on 7 May. She verified that the meeting is required to comply with the Local Government Act 1972 and is not a Parish Council meeting but an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the contribution that all groups make to enrich the experiences for those living within the Parish.

2. Thank You Cllr Smith stated that it has been a great privilege and honour to preside as Chairperson and expressed her gratitude that there have been no changes to membership or responsibilities within the Parish Council. She explained that there are 13 active Cllr colleagues who are all volunteers. She reported that the year had not been without challenges and thanked all the members of the Parish Council for their unwavering support, dedicated commitment, and enthusiasm, commending everyone for their contribution emphasising her appreciation for all the help all volunteers have given throughout the year.

She stated that none of this would be possible without the diverse skills afforded by everyone to support the community and wider work of the Council across the community. She particularly acknowledged Frazer Cooke and Linda Jones for their work for the benefit of parishioners as footpath and dog wardens.

She thanked all volunteers for their time to keep the Parish looking attractive and well kept, either litter picking, maintaining verges, planting bulbs or taking time creatively running events ; campaigning to maintain services or dedicating their hours of personal care and support for others to avoid social isolation, as well as those making time for younger people in an attempt to combat unsocial behaviour and teach life skills, energising and promoting their wellbeing.

3. Our Staff Cllr Smith recognised all work achieved by the maintenance and groundsmen who tirelessly continue to maintain the recreation area, our precious open spaces, playground, skate park, church yard, memorial site and parish cemetery in such good order despite the inclement weather we have experienced.

She was pleased to report that during the year the Parish Council has successfully appointed a new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. She stated that Ann Lee and Julie Furgeson are both enjoying their respective roles and appreciate the welcome the community has shown them both.

4. Events since last year. Cllr Smith identified that the: -

- **Unitary Council Financial Crisis:** the Unitary Councils financial circumstances is serious but the impact locally is still not clear, other than an expectation that Council services are likely to be reduced over in the next 12 months.
- **Financial position for the Parish Council:** As a Parish Council, we are thankfully in a healthy position. The net position at the end of the year was over £100,000.
- **Precept allocation:** The Parish Council set the precept at £73,470. This was only an increase of 0.12% with provision to provide contingency for anticipated service cuts by the Unitary Authority as well as provision to provide grants to support local needs.
- **Local Community Network South East** has now seen three meetings and is beginning to focus on a number of issues relevant to the Parishes within it. All minutes of these meetings are published on the Parish Council website pages. Cllrs have consistently attended.
- **Number of Planning Applications:** 33 planning applications have been considered over the year including tree applications. The outstanding major concern being the Barratt development on the southern end of the village for 130 new homes and the problem this imposes to pedestrian safety in the High Street. This has been consistently opposed by the Parish Council since 2018 and latterly by the Unitary Authority.
- **Open Spaces: The Parish Council has entered the Southwest in Bloom Competition:** The Parish will enjoy the benefit of the Southwest in Bloom Competition this year.

Jubilee Border progress update (Cllr Steel). Cllr Steel explained that extensive work has taken place to rectify the problem with weeds overcrowding shrubs and trees in the Jubilee Boarder border. The weeds had stunted shrub and tree maturity, and the cost of maintenance was considerably increasing. A contractor has now fitted a wooden edging strip to the length of the Border and a membrane has been put in position with bark on top to suppress weed growth. The bark topping will enable weeds to be easily lifted. Cllrs noted that will also protect the fencing from wet tall grass and weeds rotting lower fence panels. The protection rectifies the issues of heavy maintenance previously incurred and represents value for money. It also provides a cutting edge for maintenance staff to use, and this will enable the border to be contained and kept neat keep and tidy.

Parish Cemetery Provision has been made to ensure grass cutting in the cemetery is now regularly attended to. Prices for grave slots have not increased and priority is given to residents and families living or with a link to the Parish,

Oak Vale wood scheme of work: Work has started in Oak Vale wood to rectify the risk of flooding. Volunteers have worked hard to clear routes to the ditch and replant samplings. It is hoped that more work will occur in the autumn.

Litter Picking: Litter picking activity has successfully occurred on two occasions during the year. The next one will take place on the 13th of July at 10am.

5. Special Commendation and the opportunity to Celebrate:

The High Sherrif commended Terry Pulling for his contribution to the Parish. Cllr Smith reported that he had served the Parish with unwavering dedication for an impressive 40 years as Groundsman and continues to be an exemplary member of the maintenance team, consistently demonstrating a commitment to excellence in all aspects of his work. His tireless efforts and attention to detail have been instrumental in ensuring that our Parish's assets, particularly the open spaces that residents can enjoy. All areas he works on are maintained to the very highest of standards.

6.Football:

We are pleased to host the Gryphon football club on the recreation ground. We are pleased that they will come for another season.

7.Defibrillator:

Cllr Smith stated that she was pleased to report the provision of an additional defibrillator sponsored by local businesses located on the trading estate site.

8.Future activity: Cllr Smith concluded by stating that the Parish Council will be:

- Supporting the team facilitating the Village Fete on June the 15th at the recreation ground
- Working in close partnership with the PCC
- Increasing the provision of Community events to enhance community cohesion
- Developing and improving the Website to create a Community Hub
- Continuing to serve the community to improve the quality of life for all residents

B) Youth Connect South West

Cllr Smith welcomed Mr Sam Plumber from Youth Connect South West to speak explaining that the Henstridge Parish Council now has a contract with Youth Connect South West and that the youth team will deliver a 2 hour weekly session on Fridays from 6pm to 8pm over 44 weeks during the forth coming year for young people in the parish. This is the first year that the Parish Council has stated to fund this initiative.

Mr Plumber explained the value of investing in this provision and explained that Milbourne Port Parish Council have also taken this approach. The team are also working in Castle Carey, Bruton and Wincanton.

The team provides a safe place where young people can meet to have fun, build relationships, explore life issues, access support and improve skills. Connect Youth is led by an experienced team of youth workers who are passionate about ensuring young people make the best of what they have to realise their potential. They follow a curriculum and offer support to young people aged between 10 and 18 years of age.

There are 56 young people who are registered, and attendance varies from week to week. They undertake cooking, playing table tennis, and many other activities. It's a safe place to talk and offer each other peer support, emotional wellbeing and fun. They work with local schools and policing services to reduce violence and anti-social behaviour and address young people's issues.

Mr Plumber explained that the team are ambitious and hope to apply for grant funding to support one to one support for individuals.

Mr Plumber signposted the audience to read the flyers supplied and welcomed anyone who may wish to volunteer to contact the team.

A member of the audience asked if there would be an opportunity for Henstridge to encourage a Youth Parliament in the future. Mr Plumber responded by stating "that would be wonderful, they work well providing they are properly resourced with people who are committed to the task and who have the skill and understanding to work with young people in a participative way". He explained that the most effective way is where Parish Councils bring a specific piece of work that they would like young people's help with and work alongside them. He emphasised that young people want to see a result and that framing the scope of a project or area of interest was critical.

Cllr Smith thanked Mr Plumber for attending and the audience spontaneously applauded.

C) Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance

Cllr Smith welcomed the charity CEO Mr Charles Hackett, Dr Phil Hyde Medical Lead, and Mr Mario Carretta Chief Pilot to talk about the critical care service they deliver from their base at the Airfield in Henstridge.

The team gave a 30-minute presentation. A summary of their presentation is detailed below.

Mr Hackett outlined the history of the charity which does not receive any NHS funding and is solely dependent on the generosity of donations.

History: The CEO explained they had been a going concern for 24 years and were registered as a charity in December 1999 as a joint venture with trustees from Dorset and Somerset Ambulance Service. Initial seed funding was received from the Government and the Automobile Association.

Space at the airbase was established at Henstridge. The charity operated from a broom cupboard in Taunton Ambulance Station with one fundraiser and one volunteer, eventually moving to a portacabin on this site. The clinical service was launched at 8.00am on the 21st of March 2000 and within 52 minutes the team were airborne and tasked with their first mission. Ten years ago, the team responded to 500 calls and year and now the service is delivering over 2,600 missions. To date this has been its busiest year, delivering 0.5% of what ambulance service delivers. But it's the most complicated and acute cases that the charity is called for.

Mr Hackett stated that today they operate 19 hours a day (7.00am – 2.00am) providing a critical care service, using our [AgustaWestland 169](#) (AW169) helicopter.

They own the yellow AW169 helicopter 'Pegasus' which entered service on Monday 12 June 2017. The aircraft was the first AW169 to enter air ambulance operational service in the UK and is the culmination of years of planning and development. It was selected following an extensive evaluation process, and has outstanding characteristics, superior capabilities and safety standards that ensure unprecedented levels of mission effectiveness and provide an enhanced life-saving service for the people of Dorset and Somerset.

Activity: Last year they have completed 2,424 missions, 56 people receiving blood and there were 22 critical interhospital transfers for critical care patients in need of specialist services

Medical Equipment: Dr Hyde explained that the service is part of the chain of survival and carry [medical equipment](#) and medication that matches what would be expected in a critical care unit and surprisingly there is plenty of space inside the cabin. This allows the Critical Care Team to have complete access to a patient, head to toe – a significant benefit if a patient needs further intervention or treatment en-route to hospital. The helicopter has the largest cabin in its class and is designed around patient needs. The flexible design can accommodate stretchers with a full suite of life-support equipment. Sliding doors allow easy access, while the large cabin always ensures full access to the patient. He explained that this method of transport reduces delays for the sickest of people who often need to be anaesthetised, intubated and given blood. He gave a case example.

Mr Carretta explained that the night flying capabilities of the AW169 mean that his team of pilots can provide full night HEMS (Helicopter Emergency Medical Service) missions with the capability to fly directly to the patient. He explained that the glass cockpit provides exceptional external visibility. This increases situational awareness and minimises pilot workload during operations, and this increases safety. He stated that pilots operate at 15,000 feet when in transit and follow the civil aviation authority regulations with at least 500 feet clearance from habitation, livestock and personnel. He gave a typical flight path route.

The airbase is situated at [Henstridge Airfield](#) on the Dorset/Somerset border. From there, pilots can be at any point in the two counties in less than 20 minutes. More importantly, the helicopter can, if required, then take a patient to the nearest [Major Trauma Centre](#) in the South West within a further 20 minutes.

Providing a rapid transfer to the 'right' facility is a key factor in a patient's survival and recovery rates. The team often fly regularly to many local hospitals, however there is often a case to transfer a patient to a specialist unit or one of the Major Trauma Centres in the Southwest to improve a person's chance of survival. The hospitals regularly visited include four major trauma centres all with helicopter pads or the specialist burns hospital in Wales. Similarly local hospitals are also used, but not all can accommodate the helicopter on site.

Major Trauma Centres:

- Southmead Hospital - Bristol*
- University Hospital - Southampton*
- Derriford Hospital - Plymouth*
- Bristol Children's Hospital*

Specialist Burns Unit:

- Morriston Hospital - Swansea

Local Hospitals

- Bristol Royal Infirmary*
- Dorset County Hospital - Dorchester*
- Musgrove Park Hospital - Taunton*
- Poole Hospital
- Royal Bournemouth General Hospital*
- Royal Devon & Exeter - Exeter*
- Royal United Hospital - Bath*
- Salisbury District Hospital
- Yeovil District Hospital
- Weston General Hospital*

* These hospitals have a helicopter landing site adjacent to the Emergency Department. Others require a transfer from the hospital landing site.

Dr Hyde proceeded to outline the role of a cohort of clinicians that include a mixture of senior emergency physicians, intensive care consultants and anaesthetists, critical care nurses and specialist practitioners in critical care who are employed by the charity. He explained that when responding to incidents by air, his crew include a critical care team, consisting of at least a doctor, specialist practitioner and a pilot for each mission. The doctors are predominately drawn from NHS Hospital Trusts across the region and the practitioners are from the Southwestern Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT). Some clinicians have joined us from further afield, broadening the skills and experience of the team.

Our patient and family liaison nurses provide support to patients who have been treated by our team and can answer questions they might have about their pre-hospital care. They also provide links with patient support services and other charities aligned with the patient's condition, whilst encouraging peer support links with other similarly injured patients. This is a very important role as many patients have experienced life changing injuries.

Mr Carretta explained that pilots are provided by Gama Aviation, who operate our aircraft. They are carefully selected because air ambulance flights are more challenging than regular non-emergency flight services. They have a great deal of experience in low-level operations and instrument flying.

Mr Hackett explained that the team are tasked as part of the '999' emergency process by a dedicated Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) desk located at Ambulance Control (paid for by the Southwest Air Ambulance Charities). The air ambulance charities in the Southwest work closely together to ensure that collectively they can provide mutual aid. When a patient's life is in danger,

boundaries are not important. He emphasised that no matter who or where lifesaving help is needed, the most appropriate air ambulance will be dispatched, ensuring people receive urgent pre-hospital care, and that every minute counted in the rescue process.

Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance is tasked by a dedicated Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) desk, located at the Southwestern Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust clinical hub in Exeter. This is paid for by the five air ambulance charities it serves Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance, [Devon Air Ambulance](#), [Cornwall Air Ambulance](#), [Great Western Air Ambulance Charity](#) and [Wiltshire Air Ambulance](#). The HEMS desk is staffed by specific dispatchers who understand the capabilities of air ambulances and the regulations that govern our deployment. These individuals play a crucial role in deciding where and when our helicopter is deployed. They can also call on support from the [Coastguard](#), Police and Search and Rescue should the need arise.

Mr Hackett and Mr Carretta explained that there are a number of factors that are taken into account before an air ambulance is deployed. Once these have been made, the aircrew are notified.

A mapping system on one of the dispatcher's screens allows them to identify the location of the incident down to house level. This enables them to appraise landing conditions and give the aircrew an idea of how close they may be able to get to the incident. Ultimately however, the pilot will decide of a safe landing location, once overhead.

It is often the case that a land crew arrive at the scene first, however there are times when the air ambulance is first on scene. The HEMS desk dispatchers coordinate and update each unit with respective timings together with an update on the patient's status.

At all times flying behaviour or manoeuvres are always based on our pilots prioritising: 1) flying safely and within legal regulations (including legally required checks), 2) patient care, and 3) considerate flying where safety and patient care are not affected.

Members of the audience applauded the work of the team. Residents found the case example of a child who had sustained head and abdominal injuries who was lifeless at the scene of a serious road traffic accident as a powerful reason why the service is so vital and described Dr Hyde's account as very moving.

Mr Hackett concluded that the service costs £5m a year to operate due to fuel and medical costs. It is c£4,500 a mission. He explained that this includes test flights which are kept to a minimum but required for safety reasons and he thanked residents for all their continued support.

Cllr Smith thanked them all for attending.

D) The A357 Group Dr Gaymer started by thanking all the residents of the parish for writing in via the Unitary Council planning portal to object to the planning application. 226 people had objected to the latest planning application. On the 22 April the Council upheld the decision to object to suggested changes to the conditions. He reported that David Wilson Homes part of Barrett Developments application expires on the 19 May 2024. He stated that he anticipated that a complete legal appeal would now ensue between Barrett's and the Unitary Authority. He acknowledged that work by developers on site. He stressed that this may not be deemed commencement work and that this was a matter for the authorities to determine. He explained that this is now out of the hands of the Parish Council and in the hands of enforcement officers and lawyers.

Drains He outlined issues relating to various drains blocked across the parish. He explained that all matters in February, April and May had been reported but drains remain blocked. The Parish Council are doing all they can to resolve these issues, but the Unitary Authority has not passed this responsibility to the Parish Council. He acknowledged that this was frustrating. If required, the Parish Council will consider the options next year to increase the precept to hire contractors to rectify these problems but at this stage Cllrs were pushing the Unitary Authority to resolve this via County Cllr

Nicola Clark who was helpfully doing all she could to bring pressure on the respective departments to resolve these matters.

20mph speed restrictions: He reminded residents that the Parish Council had asked for a 20mph limit throughout the village in 2020. Highways indicated that a traffic survey was required. In December 2022, Highways were asked again to complete the survey. In 2023, Highways announced that they would allow villages to have 20mph speed limits if they paid for it themselves at a cost of £15k. They limit numbers each year.

Bypass: The Landshire Lane idea for a bypass has been discussed but is not acceptable to Highways and they have no further plans to enter discussions on this. However National Highways have been considering how traffic can move from the Dorset Coast up to the M4. They estimate the cost to be c£2.4 M to revamp the A350 that goes from Blandford to Shaftesbury as the ideal solution. This would be ideal if satellite navigation routes were pre-programmed for HGVs to avoid Henstridge. Research continues and the PC will keep residents informed.

Cllr Smith thanked Dr Gaymer for all the work undertaken by the A357 group on behalf of the community.

E) Cllr Nicola Clark: Cllr Smith introduced Cllr Clark who is one of three councillors for the Balckmore Vale area. Cllr Clark explained her role and that she spends a lot of time on representing the Parish on planning matters. She explained she had read through all 422 comments made by residents relating to the Barratt Homes development application. She explained that she represents the views of residents and not her own views at the Unitary Authority planning meetings. She outlined the role of the LNC (Local Network Committee) and that it is now focused on identifying wider community shared issues.

She complimented the community and stated that residents had mobilised themselves effectively to articulate their concerns and that she was proud to represent them.

Cllr Clark can be contacted by email and phone. Her contact details are on the Unitary Authorities website.

Cllr Smith thanked Cllr Clark for her continued commitment and support on behalf of the community.

F) Bird in Hand Public House: Cllr Smith welcomed Judith Rabone who explained that 119 households had expressed an interest to protect the Bird in Hand. The Committee wish to register the Pub as a Community asset of value and are in the process of making an application for shared benefit. More information will follow in the forthcoming weeks

F) The Fete: Mr Ashley Shirlin explained that the fete will take place on the 15 June from midday and will close at 5pm. If the weather in inclement stall holders will be moved into the Village Hall. The objective is to keep the cost low for families and to this end there are no entrance fees. There will be a dog show, a magician, a car show, circus activity, live music, a paddling pool, line dancing, competitions including a tug of war, wellie throwing, face painting, second hand book stalls, a bar serving soft drinks and beer (No spirits). There will be a gazebo and the car park will be accessible for disabled, classic car and emergency services access.

All under 16-year-olds must be accompanied by an adult.

He thanked the Parish Council and AJN steel for their sponsorship along with 21 volunteers. Profits will go towards seed funding next years venture. The fete website details the event: www.henstridgefete.org where residents can find a list of stall holders and the sight map.

Cllr Smith thanked Mr Shirlin for all his work together with committee members and volunteers.

G) The Lions President Mr Peter Oswick

Cllr Smith welcomed Peter who stated that the Lions are completing their 45th year and will be celebrating this with their Charter Anniversary Lunch at The Green Man on Saturday 10th June. They have been heavily involved in a range of fundraising activities. The annual Blackmore Vale Lions Half Marathon was run on Sunday 4th February and attracted 329 runners and 22 Fun runners. The main beneficiary was Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. Last Christmas they held a successful bucket collection at various venues. They plan to rebuild their Christmas float but need manpower to help. Peter encourages people to step forward to help get this magical float back on the road.

He stated that the Lions placed some 26 Easter eggs in local pubs and local business. Which raised over £1500 and that they will hold another bingo evening later this year. They continue to distribute Message in a Bottle through the various surgeries and medical centres across the area.

They have given many donations to help the needy, examples are the local food banks, a wheelchair to Future Roots, helping the homeless, helping people with medical issues and Ukraine.

They also planted three cherry trees supported by Dikes in locations in Henstridge, Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton in celebration of our King's Coronation.

Watch out for their bright yellow gazebo at Henstridge Fete, Sturminster Big Lunch and The Henstridge Airport Wings and Wheels and the Cheese Festival.

Peter encourages anyone to join the Lions to have fun at the same time as helping to continue with good work in the area.

Please have a look at their website you will be surprised at the variety of events and the social occasions they have. They are all fun and very rewarding.

If you feel that you would like to help those less fortunate than yourselves, please contact Peter.

The monies raised from our activities will continue to help us support local good causes and individual people in need of support – He stated this is why their motto is **WE SERVE. More information on the Club can be found on our website: www.bvlions@yolasite.com**

H) General discussion: Cllr Smith thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting and concluded by asking those present to consider what they felt were the priorities for the Parish Council for the next 12 months. She noted that the Clerk had distributed pens and paper to the assembled audience and asked that before people retired from the meeting to take time to write their ideas down so that the Parish Council could consider their views.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Ann Lee

Parish Clerk 2 June 2024.