

**Minutes
of Sulhamstead Annual Parish Assembly
held at Sulhamstead Village Hall on Thursday 16th May 2013 at 7.30pm**

Declarations of Interest: members are reminded that declarations of interest should be made where appropriate.

Present: Mr Bill. Jones (Chairman). Parish Councillors: Mr. Chris Souden, Ms Teresa Sosna & Mrs. Rosemary Sanders-Rose, Mr Ivan Wise, Mr. Gary Newell, Mr. Richard Smith, Mr. Roger Ashfield,.
District Councillor Keith Chopping

In attendance: Mrs M. Marsland (Clerk)

Apologies received from Mrs Margaret Baxter, Mr David Brown

Burghfield & Mortimer First Responders were welcomed to the meeting and offered their thanks to the Parish Council for their contribution. They operate on a charitable basis and are grateful for all donations received. They are now in a position to operate for the next 5 years and members of the council were given the opportunity to see the vehicle.

1. Approval of minutes of 2011-12 Annual Parish Assembly

The minutes from 2011-12 Assembly were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2. Chairman's report

Mr Jones presented a report on the Council's activities for the past year.

Chairman's Annual report to the Sulhamstead Parish Council for 2012/13

After the hiatus of activity associated with the Firlands proposal, this parish year has been considerably quieter but not without significant activity and incident.

- 1) The Firlands application was withdrawn over land ownership issues and the Developer HDDL has challenged the Core Strategy of WBC, claiming that the number of houses to be built between 2006 and 2026 should be increased from 10,500 to 15,000 plus. A hearing in the High Court this summer should produce clarity.
- 2) The Sulhamstead Hill rail bridge closure caused major delays and erosion to alternative routes used but eventually it was opened in August after delays. The new bridge is functionally better, higher and wider but needs to blend in more with the conservation area of Tyle Mill. It is somewhat over bright in construction.
- 3) We have new road signs thanks to the sustained efforts of Councillor Ashfield who liaised persistently with WBC to get these organised. Generally they have been welcomed but we note with regret that two have had accidents or been vandalised.

- 4) West Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service produced a new plan that has caused great consternation. Essentially, this indicates that the HQ will be moved from Dee Road to Theale and Mortimer Fire Station could be phased out. This parish Council objects strongly to these proposals as fire tenders cannot use the bridges over the Kennet and Avon canal/river. We await conclusion of their deliberations.
- 5) We attended a good meeting held by WBC on the next steps relating to housing development in the area. The Core Strategy states Sulhamstead has been designated as a “smaller village” where development will be carefully controlled, focusing on addressing local needs and supporting a strong local economy. The SHLAA is being updated and WBC will be consulting with this Parish Council regarding any possible development in Sulhamstead, including Firlands should another planning application be made.
- 6) Potholes: no report would be complete without mention of the deteriorating state of parish roads. It would seem that we are witnessing a losing battle where repairs last a very short time and other holes appear with increasing depth causing potential damage to cyclists and cars.

I am grateful for the continued efforts of our Parish Clerk to cope with the increased number of tasks that confront her particularly connected with Auditors, Public open space maintenance tenders, play parks ROSPA inspections, Financial Regulations, and the PCSO contract all of which fall within her remit. I am also grateful to those who have served on the various sub committees during the year, produced and distributed the Newsletter and to Mr David Smith for helping us with his expertise on the WBFERS strategy submission identified above.

I look forward to the year ahead but fear that as ever matters will continue to become even more bureaucratic

H C C Jones

Chairman, Sulhamstead Parish Council

3. Report from West Berkshire Council Representative

Cllr Chopping informed the parish council that the developer associated with the planning application have withdrawn their challenge of West Berkshire Councils Core Strategy

Cllr Chopping presented a report on West Berkshire Council’s activities for the past year.

District Councillors Report to the Annual Parish Assembly Of Sulhamstead 16th May 2013

Thank you Chairman

This is my Report to you as your Councillor on West Berkshire Council.

Firstly

SCHOOLS

As I am pleased to report to you annually the majority of our schools across the District continue to return good, and sometimes excellent results. To remind you we actually have 80 schools in the District - 10 secondary schools, 68 primary and infant schools and 2 special schools.

However, some schools do not make the grade and we pay a good deal of attention to these - after all it is our aspiration to make all schools good or outstanding; overall we are making acceptable progress towards bringing them up to standard but it is an ongoing issue in education.

In my Ward I am fortunate to have 3 lovely Primary Schools namely Beenham, Englefield and Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet (which is nearly in my Ward!) plus Willink Secondary School.

I attended the Standards & Effectiveness Panel meeting at Beenham School a few days ago and it all seemed to go very well.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

To remind you, adult social care covers Older People, people with Mental Health issues, people over 18 with Physical Disabilities, and people over 18 with Learning Disabilities. Expenditure in Adult Social Care accounts for over 30% of our net budget but it is an area where we can encounter considerable financial uncertainty. The main thrust of expenditure in Adult Social Care is to enable those people for whom the Authority has a responsibility to stay in their own homes where appropriate. This makes good sense for the individual and is also helpful in budget terms. However, some have to go into care and some clients can cost up to £180,000 per year and although small in numbers and you will appreciate that any extra clients can have a serious effect on the budgets.

The new 51 bed extra care home at Thatcham, Alice Bye Court, opened a short while ago, and is achieving considerable financial advantages for us. Also a similar facility at Hungerford, to be known as Redwood Court, in recognition of a tree in the grounds, is due to open in the Autumn. This will have 46 units of accommodation. Our facility at Walnut Close near Thatcham has been increased from 19 units to 30.

PLANNING & HOUSING etc.

Again the housing numbers across the District still continue to increase although at a slower rate than previously (for the time being) with the inevitable demands on our schools, roads and other infrastructure. The Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework document (LDF) duly went in front of Inspector during 2012, who pronounced it sound. This was a major step forward for the Authority and although a legal challenge by a developer was lodged it has now been withdrawn and so the Core Strategy is well and truly in place. Housing proposals at Sandleford to the south of Newbury for 2,000 houses and at the Institute of Animal Health at Compton can now make progress. The Call for Sites exercise across the District has just been completed and Officers will work through the many proposals to decide which ones are worthy of consideration for development into the future. The Core Strategy stated that West Berkshire will provide 'at least 10,500 additional houses' by 2026; in reality about two thirds of this number have already been built or permissions granted and so, as you can see, we are well on the way to achieving our numbers. The important matter for Parishes is that, in the Localism Act, there is a provision to give Parishes the right to say where they would prefer any new houses (according to the Local Plan/LDF) that are scheduled to be built in that Parish.

We have given a number of presentations across the District to parishes about this matter which were well attended. Liaison with Parishes as to where development can go in their Parish is important to us. On another matter, I told you previously that the Government had decided that Authorities can set their

planning fees to a self-funding level. As I said this was a proposal I welcomed; it has always seemed wrong to me that the general Council tax payer should effectively subsidise planning applications. Unfortunately the Government suddenly got cold feet and only allowed us to increase our fees by 15%, the first increase for a number of years, which was hardly more than the rate of inflation. Therefore we still have a budget shortfall in the cost of the Planning department of about £600,000 which is being subsidised by you - the Council tax payers.

Our wonderfully successful Developers contribution programme (Section 106) has collected in about £37,000,000 for the Authority since 2004 but we are having to stop it in April next year, 2014, and adopt a Government developed scheme called Community Infrastructure Levy which will only bring us in about two thirds of what we can achieve with 106's. This is a major blow to us and although we have strongly lobbied the Government to continue with our 106 process they do not seem to want to listen. The result will be that the shortfall in contributions to infrastructure projects will have to be covered by borrowing which of course has to be paid back and the repayments come out of the Council tax income.

HIGHWAYS

Again, to remind you, we have a considerable amount of highway to look after in West Berkshire; around 1200 kilometres (or 800 miles) and maintaining and improving the roads costs us significant sums in revenue and capital expenditure. Overall I believe we continue to make good steady progress in the maintaining and renewing of our highways. However, following the severe winter we have just experienced a great deal of damage has been done to our roads and although we have a capital budget of £4.2 million to deal with road improvements in 2013/14 we have made a decision to call forward an additional £1.2 million of the planned expenditure from the next 3 years and put it into repairing our network this year. This work has already started.

WASTE SERVICES

The Padworth site is now up and running well and is well worth a visit if you want to go down and take some of your recycling items.

All the Districts waste is now processed through Padworth where it is either composted or recycled and the remainder goes to Energy from Waste plants (incinerators) or landfill. As there is a landfill tax the emphasis of the project is to reduce the proportion going down that route.

Household kerbside recycling across the District continues to be a success story with the percentage now up to in excess of 50% and is great compliment to all the residents of the District - your efforts in achieving this figure are well above what we had hoped would be possible.

FINANCE

On the matter of the finances it appears as though the Authority will end up the financial year around £600,000 under budget (our net budget was £122,500,000) which is a considerable achievement in view of the financial events which have occurred over the last couple of years. This under spend will be put into a Economic Volatility Reserve which will be used to cover any redundancy costs which we may encounter during the next couple of years. Our General Reserve remains unaffected at around £7 million.

GENERALLY

During the last couple of years we have deleted around 300 posts which meant making around 200 staff redundant. Most went voluntarily but some redundancies were compulsory. We still have substantial savings to make over the next couple of years and this will, I believe, lead to more posts being deleted with

some additional redundancies - but this lies in the future.

PERSONAL COMMENTS

Once again it has been a privilege to represent Beenham, Englefield and Sulhamstead as your Councillor and again I like to think I have at least been helpful to some extent whenever residents have brought their issues or concerns to me. I may not have been completely successful on their behalf but I do try and help if I possibly can. However, I can assure you that I and my colleagues spend a great deal of time considering the effect any of our actions have on the wellbeing of the residents of West Berkshire. I have enjoyed being the Executive Member for Planning, Highways & Transport and Property - quite a large portfolio - but now I am honoured to be able to tell you that I have once again been elected Chairman of the Authority for this coming municipal year and my wife and I look forward very much to carrying out our civic duties representing West Berkshire across the region.

Keith Chopping

4. Report from Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet Primary School

Mr Brown provided a report on the activities of SUN School for the past year. (Please see attached).

Annual report from the SUN school Governors to the Sulhamstead Parish Council – 2012/13

Firstly my apologies for not being there in person to deliver this report. And a big thanks you to whoever does read it out.

During this year the school has had 2 full inspections, one from OFSTED and one from SIAS (Diocesan equivalent to Ofsted). I am pleased to announce under both reports the school was judged as GOOD. With no recommendations, which pays tribute to all the hard work put in by the staff?

Statutory Targets (targets for the attainment of level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 in National Tests)

	2008 (achieved)	2009 (achieved)	2010 (achieved)	2011 (achieved)	2012 (achieved)	2013 (achieved)
English	38% (43%)	50% (29%)	40% (53%)	50% (25%)	47% (33%)	58%
Mathematics	31% (36%)	36% (43%)	33% (27%)	44% (38%)	40% (40%)	71%
Science	44% (43%)	57% (57%)	60% (NA)	(sample school) 50%	School target 47% (33% TA)	NA

Acorns Class: (4/5 year olds) Mrs Evans

There topics have been 'All about us', traditional fairy stories, Autumn, Harvest, Christmas, Food glorious food, Birds on the wing, on the move by air and looking forward to all things Easter.

As usual this class is never in; they are always in the surrounding countryside having a very hand on experience in all weathers.

Oak Class: (6/7 year olds) Mrs Webb

This class has been working on basic literacy skills through lists, labels and captions, stories from different cultures, information texts, silly stuff, also numeracy work with number, shape & measurement, problem solving, and visiting the local community looking at different types of building materials, Milestone

museum looking at the history of households, studying famous people, this time to include Samuel Pepys. Looking at the Great Fire of London.

Ash Class: (8/9 year olds) Mrs Crooks

This class has looked at WW2, the difference between Great Britain, UK & the British Isles, how WW2 affected children and encouraged to speak to relatives involved, and the effect WW2 had on Judaism across Europe, then and now. The class also learnt to play recorders. A visit to the local canal, not only to see the Pill boxes but to understand the way transport has progressed, through river, road and rail.

Sycamore Class: (10/11 Year olds) Miss Moore

Studying all things food, where it comes from, how to make it, the effect of bacteria, good and bad, some cooking, making ketchup, and visiting a farm and a supermarket. They also look at the topic of Journeys, through the life of plants and humans. The class also invented their own vehicles. As part of RE the class visited Christchurch in Oxford, and while they were there had a look at the Dining Hall that was used in the Harry Potter films. In Literacy they looked at instructions manuals especially around IT and wrote their own.

The whole school held a Green Week, where they looked at how to recycle, reuse and reduce. Oaks looked at water; Ash looked at paper & plastics with Sycamore looking at electricity. The topic was run in conjunction with Changing with the climate and the school was twinned with a school in Spain to study the different challenges faced by each school to be green.

Another large project undertaken was the levelling of the playing field which was becoming increasingly difficult for the pupils to run across without tripping in a hole etc. A Governor took up the task and half of the field was levelled and reseeded, with the other half being tackled over the Easter break this year. The project was funded, partly from school funds and monies raised by the Friends. But as the project was managed by the Governors, it has been done at a fraction of the cost.

There are all the usual classes that take place in school, English, Maths, Science, RE, PE etc. but I thought it best to mention all the extra activities they get up to.

I think you will agree that the pupils at SUN school have a very busy and well filled school life. None of which could not be achieved without the dedication and hard work of all the staff involved. Well done.

Dave Brown

5. Report of the Parochial Charities

A report had been supplied by the Hon. Treasurer, Mr Peter Newell and this was presented by the Chairman.

Report to the Parish Councils of Ufton Nervet and Sulhamstead for the year 2011

1. **Trustees of the charity are:**

2. **Trustees of the charity are:**

K R. McDiarmid Esq. (Chairman), The Rev'd Gill Lovell, D Hannington Esq.,
Mr G Godwin, Mr. Richard Smith.

Mr P H Newall continued as Secretary and Treasurer.

The Rev'd Peter Dewey and Dr Roger Willoughby stepped down as Trustees. A Pewter tankard was given to each of them to mark their years of service to the Charity.

During the year the following activities have taken place:

2. St Peter's Church Ufton Nervet.

The freehold of St Peter's redundant church building and adjacent ground was finally secured in November 2012. The property was transferred to the Charity Commission Official Custodian so that changes to the Trustee structure could be made without incurring legal expenses.

An Architect has been appointed to project manage the conversion of St Peters to a Cultural Community Centre

3. **Grants** towards fuel and water expenses to deserving cases in the area amounted to **£ 15,525.00** (£14,850 in 2011). Grants were made to: **The Rev'd William Bishop Charity** for educational purposes of **£ 1,200** (payable in £300 quarterly tranches). **The Good Companions** £ **1,200**, and **£30,502 draw down towards St Peter's.**
4. The wealth of the Charity at the end of 2012 was **£977,289.67** (£901,088.57 2011) an increase of 8.45%
5. Mr Hannington continued as Warden during the year to oversee the restoration and use of the Poor's allotment.

P H NEWALL
Treasurer & Secretary

6. Report from Police Community Support Officer

Sulhamstead Annual Parish Council Meeting PCSO Area Report

Of the 9 parishes that the Burghfield Common and Mortimer Neighbourhood Police Team cover, Sulhamstead by far has the lowest crime.

Sulhamstead did see a small spike in burglaries and attempted burglaries during the end of 2012/beginning of 2013. This appeared to be related to some similar criminal activity occurring in the Burghfield and Mortimer neighbourhoods at that time. A number of arrests were made and Sulhamstead has not suffered a burglary since. In part this excellent result is thanks to members of the Sulhamstead community that contacted Thames Valley Police reporting suspect vehicles etc.

A crime prevention leaflet drop was completed by the Neighbourhood Policing Team to a large number of homes in the area on Christmas Eve.

Historically Sulhamstead has suffered occasional vehicle crime such as theft from motor vehicles but this last year there has not been a single offence of this nature in the area.

A number of Police Operations have been executed in the Sulhamstead area. These operations have taken various forms and utilised different specialist units from Thames Valley Police which have led to arrests and valuable stop-checks.

The two PCSOs attended the Sulhamstead fete with a marked Police Vehicle and received a great response from the public. We look forward to the 2013 fete.

By PCSO Patrick Baker-Jones

7. Report from the Village Hall Management Committee

Trustees

Mr. Peter Sanders-Rose Chairman
Dr. Roger Willoughby
Mr. Gareth Price

Management Committee

Mr. David Hannington Chairman
Mrs. Linda Hannington Hall Manager
Mr. Alan Bridge Treasurer
Mrs. Catriona Marshall Secretary

Hall Users

There are a number of regular users, i.e. the W.I., Good Companions, Scouts and Under Fives. The Hall is also used by the Church for various functions and is hired by Calcot Children's Services on occasions. It is also hired on a one-off basis for children's parties, etc.

Hire Charges

To cover rising heating and lighting costs it is proposed to increase hire charges from 1 October, 2013 to £10.00 an hour for regular Hall users, £15 an hour for all one-off bookings (for a minimum of 3 hours) and £25 an hour for those using both halls. Discussions are currently being held about the possibility of introducing an additional charge for evening events from 1 October to 1 April to help cover the greater use of heating and lighting during this period. A deposit of £200 is taken for one-off bookings. In addition to the Hall insurance users are encouraged to take out their own insurance. It is likely that the Performing Rights Society and Phonographic Performance Licences will no longer be required as currently no-one is using music to earn a living in the Hall.

Maintenance Costs

Utility and maintenance costs have risen still further over the last 12 months. A new contract has been successfully negotiated with Eon who is still the most competitive electricity supplier. However the four heaters in the main Hall have had to be replaced and also the microwave and hot water boiler in the kitchen. Grant-aided improvements to the car park have been completed and garden maintenance is now carried out by a local person. All electrical equipment is due to be PAT and IPM4 tested this year.

Fund Raising

Fund raising events are held each year to supplement the Hall's income. The funds raised last year were used to help defray the increased service charges. Two events have already been arranged for the current year, i.e. Cream Teas at Island Farm on Sunday, 14 July and a Gourmet Gamble at the Village Fête on Saturday, 7 September. It is hoped that funds raised from these two events can be used to replace the Village Hall crockery.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet Village Hall on Thursday, 30 May, 2013 at 7.30 pm. for 7.45 pm.

Sulhamstead Parish Council

The Committee wish to thank Sulhamstead Parish Council for their continued support and donation to the Village Hall.

1 May, 2013.

8. **Any other business**

The meeting closed there being no further business.