

Minutes
of Sulhamstead Annual Parish Assembly
held at Sulhamstead Village Hall on Thursday 15^h May 2014 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. Richard Smith, Mr. Roger Ashfield,.

In attendance: Mrs. Elisabeth. Shaw-Brookman (Clerk)

1. Apologies received from Mrs. Margaret Baxter, Mr. Gary Newell and Mr. Keith Chopping.

2. Approval of minutes of 2012-13 Annual Parish Assembly

The minutes from 2012-2013 Assembly were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Mr. Wise and seconded by Ms. Sosna.

3. 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 2013-2014

2013/14 has been a year of positive developments for the Parish Council and the following represents the key issues that we have addressed during the 12 month period.

Flooding

By far the biggest issue in this year has been the deluge followed by flooding. Access to the A4 has been closed on a number of occasions even via the Reading Road at the Cuning Man in Burghfield. The area around Hose Hill Lake was swamped for several weeks and the canals, sailing club lake and electricity switching station were unable to cope with the excess water. We hope for no repeat in the years to come.

New Sulhamstead Community Website

Thanks to the Clerk and Councillors efforts combined with Steve Hounsome, our website developer, we now have an attractive user friendly website that the Clerk through Steve keeps up to date. This was particularly beneficial during the flooding and hits per month were averaging 3000 , a testament to its usefulness. Currently news includes road repairs, NHS public meetings and scouts chosen to attend the 23rd International Jamboree in Japan. It also provides a means whereby our parishioners can contact us on The Parish Council.

Planning

Councillors attended two full sessions examining the options put forward by Developers regarding the need to build approximately 260 houses in the East Kennet Valley. This includes Sulhamstead, Burghfield and Mortimer. The Strategic Housing Land Availability assessment was considered and recommendations made by councillors. We await the decision of West Berkshire with great interest.

Online Banking

A topic in last year's report, on line banking would enable Councillors to authorise payments without having to drive around in cars to obtain signatures on cheques. The way ahead has to be direct transfer and we are as keen as ever to work with Lloyds Bank or others to achieve this. Currently, we are progressing at last and we are hopeful that next year's report will advise significant success.

War Memorial Renovation

With the Great War very much in everyone's mind at present, Mr. Tony Holden approached the council for a grant to help him achieve the £5,000 needed to renovate the War Memorials of Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet. Mrs. Sanders-Rose has agreed to hold a fundraising event and the council donated £200 towards renovation costs. Currently over £4,000 has been collected.

Donations

We are always mindful of our responsibility of ensuring that every penny counts, and this year the Council on behalf of all Parishioners has donated sums to the Parochial Church Council for St. Michael's Graveyard, Sulhamstead Village Hall, the Burghfield and Sulhamstead Scouts, the Chiltern Air Ambulance, the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (for our wreath to lay on the War Memorial), the Burghfield and Sulhamstead Scout Group and the SUN War Memorial Restoration Fund.

Sir William Benyon.

As you are no doubt aware Sir William Benyon passed away this month and his funeral was held this afternoon at Englefield Three Parish Councillors joined with well over 500 others, to pay tribute for the valuable contribution that he made to us all in Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet. His generosity in sharing his land with so many for recreation and the stewardship of the Fuel Allotment Charity are much appreciated and we extend our sincere condolences to all members of the Benyon family at this difficult time.

Our New Clerk

Councillors wish to record their sincere thanks to our Parish Clerk. Mrs. Elisabeth Shaw-Brookman, for all the hours she has devoted to a job that never seems to lessen in urgent tasks that need to be addressed. Her contribution to the development of the new website was acknowledged in January and her excellent finance and spreadsheet knowledge has been recorded by our internal auditors. Altogether she made a really great start in her first year in the role.

H C C JONES
Chairman, Sulhamstead Parish Council

4. District Councillor's Report to the Annual Parish Assembly Of Sulhamstead 15th May 2014

Thank you Chairman

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

Schools

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

We have 8 Academies in West Berkshire.

However, as always, 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 splendid Primary Schools namely Beenham, Englefield and Sulhamstead & Ufton Nervet (which is nearly in my Ward!) plus Willink Secondary School.

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 possible. This makes good sense for the individual and is also helpful in budget terms. However, some have to go into care and some clients cost up to £180,000 per year. Although small in number you will appreciate that any extra clients can have a serious effect on the budgets.

Should staying at home not be suitable for the individual concerned we have Alice Bye Court in Thatcham, which is running successfully, and now we also have Redwood Court (named after a tree not an MP), in Hungerford, at which, incidentally, I played a part at its opening on an exceptionally hot afternoon last summer. This has 46 units of accommodation. We are still seeking a suitable site in the east of the District.

Planning & Housing etc.

The Local Development Framework document (LDF) is now up and running. The Call for Sites exercise across the District has been completed (although further suggested sites are coming in all the time) and Officers are working through the many, mainly housing, proposals, in collaboration with the affected Parishes to decide which sites are worthy of consideration for development in the future.

Liaison with Parishes as to where development can go within their Parish is important to us.

The issue of planning fees being subsidised by the Council Tax payers has not been resolved in spite of our efforts to obtain agreement from the Government to be able to charge the going rate for applications. Therefore we still have a budget shortfall in the cost of the Planning Department of about £600,000 which is being subsidised, as I said, by you – the Council Tax payers.

Our extraordinarily successful Developers contribution programme (Section 106) has collected in about £40,000,000 for the District since 2004 but we are having to stop it in April next year, 2015, 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 the District as a whole. However, we took the opportunity to discuss the issue with Richard Benyon, the MP for Newbury, who took it to Parliament and secured what is known as a Westminster Hall debate.

This duly took place in early February (it was all fully recorded in Hansard and shown on television) which culminated in an offer by the Minister of a meeting with his officials to discuss our concerns and wishes. This took place on Tuesday 13th May.

So – some sort of success at last – and the talking continues!

Highways

As you know, we have a considerable amount of highway to look after in West Berkshire; around 800 miles (1200kms) and maintaining and improving the roads costs us significant sums in revenue and capital expenditure. Overall I believe we had continued to make good, steady progress in the maintenance and renewal of our highways until, of course, the onset of the winter with its very heavy rainfall and consequent flooding – not only the rivers but also overflowing drains, runoff from high ground and saturated ground and excessive ground water. A great deal of damage was done to our roads which we are now setting about putting right.

During the flooding an Emergencies Operations Centre was set up in the Council Offices in Newbury staffed by Council staff and also assisted by police and army personnel. It performed a fine job, sometimes staying open 24hours a day; the staff who managed it should be complimented. Repairing the roads and flood damage will obviously take time but at least we have started. In Sulhamstead resurfacing Jacques Lane from Bottom Lane to Folly Lane is in this year's resurfacing programme.

We have budgeted to spend about £11.5 million on highways improvements throughout this coming year plus the recently announced grant of about £1.5 million to help towards repairing the roads after the floods.

Waste Services and Countryside

The Padworth site is working well and is contributing to the District's recycling figure which I believe is just over 50% - a great compliment to all householders across the District.

In the countryside the management and maintenance of our commons and wildlife centres have been taken over by BBOWT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust) under an agreement negotiated between us over the previous few months.

Finance

The financial affairs of the Authority continue to be well run. I believe the outcome of the year which has just finished is likely to be a small underspend, which bearing in mind the considerable cost of dealing with the floods, is an excellent result. The Authority still has to address a continuing reduction in Government grant. This has been done through what is called a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which is also looking to keep the Council Tax at the same level as it is for next year as well as this year.

Our General Reserve remains unaffected at around £6 million.

Personal Comments

As you know I have been Chairman of the Authority for the second time during this last year. This has entitled me to represent you at many functions and occasions both inside and outside the District. It has been a great pleasure and it is really rewarding to experience the good offices of the many people and organisation that my wife and I have attended; it has brought home to us just how talented, resourceful and willing the people of West Berkshire are in pursuing their many and varied activities. It is also rather tiring but this is greatly outweighed by the honour of holding the Office.

It has also been a privilege, once again, to represent the people of Sulhamstead as your Councillor.

Thank you for listening to me.

Keith Chopping – District Councillor

5. SPC APA REPORT 2014 – SUN School

The school continues to flourish and we have approximately 105 children on roll. All the places for the next academic year have been allocated and we have a large waiting list.

Mrs. Williams continues leading a dedicated, motivated, happy and enthusiastic team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank her and her staff for their commitment and dedication to the education and spiritual wellbeing of the children. This was reflected in our very good SAT results – see below. The children have enjoyed continuity and stability for the last 15 years under Mrs. Williams who has now decided to retire at the end of the summer term. The governors with input from the diocese and LA will be interviewing candidates.

I would also like to thank the Governing Body who takes an active part in school life with governors attending many meetings, courses, school events and visits to school in their voluntary role of monitoring and managing the school. We are pleased to welcome Giles Dereham and the returning Tess Watson Smith to the Governing Body.

I would also like to thank the Friends who organise social events and Fund Raise for equipment and luxuries throughout the school year.

Thank you also to a small yet dedicated team of parents who work hard to keep the school in good condition doing maintenance jobs around the school.

Explorers - the Christian based after school club run by Mrs. Williams and I, continues to thrive. After 14 years this is still a popular club with a constantly high uptake unlike other clubs which fluctuate.

This last year has seen the link between the school, church and wider community continuing with the children's work being displayed in the parish room and the church magazine for the parishioners to enjoy. The school continues to support the church fete.

We are continually looking for ways to broaden the links and would appreciate any input from parishioners. Later this term the school is hosting a joint evening with the PCC and Governors. The school has been involved in many services throughout the year, either here at St Mary's or in school: -
 July - saw the leavers Assembly attended by Anthony.

October - was the Harvest Festival at St Mary's.

November – saw the Remembrance service at St Peter's

December – saw the Christmas service the children's Nativity and the annual Carol service at Douai Abbey.

At the Ufton Dole Ceremony the children sang beautifully for the villagers and guests.

The school has a happy, friendly atmosphere where visitors are always welcome to join them for school events, assemblies and church services.

Year 6 SATs Test Results 2013

	Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	% at least Level 4
Reading	0	0	41	59	0	100
Writing (TA)	0	12	53	35	0	88
Maths	0	0	24	76	0	100
Science (TA)	0	0	47	53	0	100
GaPS	0	18	24	53	6	83

Gill Tallett

6. Report of Parochial Charities

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

REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCILS OF UFTON NERVET AND SULHAMSTEAD FOR THE YEAR 2013

1. Trustees of the charity are:

During the year the following changes took place:

K R. McDiarmid Esq. (Chairman) retired after 8 ½ years service. An engraved glass decanter was presented to him in recognition. **Mr Keith Chopping** was nominated as surrogate Chairman to the Lord of the Manor (Mr Richard Benyon MP) to be formally confirmed in April 2014.

The Rev'd Gill Lovell retired in October due to pressure of work. Her place has been taken by **The Reverend Dr Anthony Peabody** as ex officio Trustee.

Mr D Hannington, Mr G Godwin, & Mr. Richard Smith continue as Trustees.

Mr P H Newall continued as Secretary and Treasurer.

During the year the following activities have taken place:

2. St Peter's Church Ufton Nervet.

An Architect was appointed to design the conversion of St Peters to a **Cultural Community Centre**, and a Contractor chosen from four tenders received.

2. Grants

Towards fuel and water expenses to deserving cases in the area amounted to **£ 13,800** (£15,525 in 2012). Other Grants were made to: **The Rev'd William Bishop Charity** for educational purposes of **£ 1,200** (payable in £300 quarterly tranches). **The Good Companions** **£ 3,000**, and **£99,348 final draw down towards St Peter's**.

4. The wealth of the Charity at the end of 2013 was **£1,037,510** (£977,268 2012) an increase of 6.16%. The Income from the Investments amounted to **£ 45,348**. (4.37%)

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

7. Report from Police Community Support Officer

Sulhamstead Annual Parish Council Meeting PCSO Area Report 21/1/2014-25/3/2014

Sulhamstead

Burglary Dwelling	0
Burglary Non-Dwelling	0
Theft from Vehicle	0

Ufton Nervet

Burglary Dwelling	0
Burglary Non-Dwelling	0
Theft from vehicle	0

Mortimer

Burglary Dwelling	3
Burglary Non-Dwelling	2

Burghfield Common

Burglary Dwelling	0
Burglary Non-Dwelling	0
Theft from vehicle	0

A male has been arrested in relation to the robbery in Tesco, Burghfield Common. Investigations are ongoing.

We completed a Speeding operation and bike patrol in Burghfield Common and Mortimer on 16th March.

Areas of speed enforcement: outside the Horse and Groom Public House only one vehicle stopped and given words of advice.

Outside the Bakery in Burghfield: 5 vehicles were stopped and given tickets, speeds – 40,43,40,40,39.

For Mortimer, Burghfield and Sulhamstead we complete a plain clothes operation on the 20th March. This was to combat a rise in crime in the Mortimer area and to gather intelligence on rural crime in Sulhamstead – fly tipping etc.

The Street in Mortimer: we are looking at parking by the station on the other side of the roundabout.

(This report was presented at the March Parish Council Meeting)

8. SULHAMSTEAD & UFTON VILLAGE HALL CHARITY NO.236833 **Report to APA 2013-2014**

SULHAMSTEAD AND UFTON NERVET VILLAGE HALL

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

The Hall continues to provide an asset to the local community for club meetings and private functions. The Church also uses the Hall for various functions and it is hired by Calcot Children's Services on occasions. The regular users, i.e. the W.I, Good Companions, Burghfield Scouts, Under Fives and a children's dance group provide regular income and this is boosted by lettings for private functions. We are pleased that the newly formed 1st Ufton Nervet Scout Group will be using the Hall as this will obviously increase income.

However there are times when expenditure exceeds income. The main expense is the electric heating costs. At the suggestion of the Chairman of Trustees the Committee has been exploring the possibility of installing solar panels. This could help reduce costs but also supply extra income on the "Feed in Tariff", i.e. electricity sold back to the National Grid. Three estimates have been sourced and a possible supplier identified.

As part of this procedure it was necessary to have an Energy Performance Survey carried out. Unfortunately the Hall achieved a lowly 'E' rating, the main reasons for this being the ill-fitting front door (probably the original door when the Hall was built), an ill-fitting side door (fire exit) to the rear of the stage and lack of insulation in the main Hall roof. In addition the insulation in the newer part of the Hall could be improved. It was decided to obtain estimates to rectify these matters. Contractors have visited the Hall and we await their quotations.

Obviously funding will need to be obtained: the cost of solar panel installation and the survey is approximately £9,500. Funding is to be sought by the Hall Trustees. Through the West Berkshire Council Members' Bid programme, with the support of Keith Chopping (Sulhamstead Ward) and Mollie Lock (Mortimer Ward which includes Ufton Nervet), £2,000 has been allocated and at present is being drawn down to assist with preliminary costs. The Committee would like to express its thanks to both Members for their help.

Hire Charges

To cover rising heating and lighting costs hire charges have increased 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.

Maintenance Costs

Utility and maintenance costs have risen still further over the last 12 months. A renewed contract has been successfully negotiated with Eon which is still the most competitive electricity supplier. All electrical equipment has now been PAT and IPM4 tested and garden maintenance continues to be carried out by a local resident.

Fund Raising

Fund raising events are held each year to supplement the Hall's income. Two events have already been arranged for the current year, i.e. Cream Teas at Island Farm on Sunday, 20 July and a Gourmet Gamble at the Village Fête on Saturday, 30 August.

Village Hall Website

The Village Hall now has its own website. This has been set up and run by Tony Holden, a local resident, at no cost to the Hall. It will help promote the profile of the Hall and assist with the booking process. We wish to extend our grateful thanks to him.

Sulhamstead Parish Council

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

10 May, 2014.

9. Sun War Memorial Restoration Fund

How are we getting on?

May 2014 Report

The Sun War Memorial Restoration Fund is happy to announce that the War Memorials in St Peter's Churchyard and St Michael's Graveyard have been cleaned and are looking spick and span and ready for the World War 1 centenary commemorations this summer.

We are also pleased to report that the Restoration Fund has so far, collected £3750, with many thanks to the parishioners of Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet, but the fund raising must go on to reach the goal of £5000!

The Imperial War Museum has announced an online archive showing the people from Britain and the Commonwealth who served in World War One.

The Imperial War Museums are hoping that families will add their own photographs, stories and memories to build a "permanent digital memorial". The records of more than 4.5 million men and 40,000 women who served with the British army overseas are currently listed on www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org.

Cheques can be made out to "SUN War Memorial Restoration Fund" or donations can also be made online through the website **www.sunww1.com** via PayPal, enabling donors to use their debit or credit cards.

Please contact Tony Holden on (0118) 983 2459. "SUN War Memorial Restoration Fund", 21 Wises Firs, Ufton Nervet, RG7 4EH. **www.sunww1.com**

10. Any other business

The meeting closed there being no further business.