

## HITCHAM AND TAPLOW SOCIETY

### Minutes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Held at the Village Centre

Friday 8th December 2017 at 8pm

#### 1. **Welcome by Eva Lipman**

Thank you all for coming. It is good to see so many old friends as well as new faces. It has been an eventful year during which we lost some very dear friends amongst whom are Karl Lawrence, who came onto the committee in 2003 and was our hard-working Chair from our AGM in 2011 and, most recently, Tony Hickman, who was a past chairman, our Vice President since 2001, and served on our committee for 38 years. He cast his expert eye over the planning applications and gave us his invaluable advice. These gentlemen, and I use that word advisedly, will be extremely sadly missed and I would like to observe a minutes silence in memory of them.

#### 2. **Attendance and apologies for absence**

There was a full house of over 70 attendees. There were no apologies for absence.

#### 3. **Approval of the minutes of the 2016 AGM**

Proposed by Louise Symons, seconded by Jane Curry and unanimously approved.

#### 4. **Presidents address**

Covered in 1. Above and 5. Below

#### 5. **Chairman's report**

(Given by Eva Lipman)

In the spring we had another very successful Easter Egg Hunt ably run by Charlie and Toby Grieve in Sheila's lovely garden. Unlike last year the weather was kind and children both young and old enjoyed themselves. Thank you Charlie, Toby and Sheila.

For the first time we were able to buy our tickets on line for this and for our Village Green Party thanks to Zoe Hatch. It has been very successful and has proved extremely popular with our members. We are now close to being able to pay membership fees by on-line Direct Debiting. Not only has Zoe instituted on-line ticketing but she has made extremely good progress with our website and our new Facebook page thus bringing us into the 21st Century for which we thank her.

The Village Green Party is a huge event which I would think is unique. It requires a deal of organising, as I well know, and for the last number of years it has been done smoothly, and efficiently by Alastair Hill with his army of helpers, approximately 70 in number, without whom it would be impossible to put it on. I would like to thank each and every one of them. It was yet again a great success with everyone young and old enjoying themselves. It is an annual event which brings the village together and raises money for a local charity and your committee is very proud of it. Thank you again Alastair for

bringing so much happiness to so many.

Now to planning matters

Unfortunately our Local Plan is still delayed as is the decision about Unitary Authorities. There is nothing we can do about this and we are awaiting decisions to come down to us from on high. Both these things will have a profound effect on the future direction of Taplow and Hitcham.

You will all have noticed that the development of the Mill Lane site has been going on apace and we already have new residents whom we hope will become part of our community in due course. This also applies to the future residents of the Institute Road housing and near completion of the Rural Exception site at the Burnham end.

There will shortly be yet more residents in Mill Lane because the businesses on Heather Fenn's site now has planning permission for conversion to housing so we will be losing another employment site.

Sad to say the development in Ellington Gardens, which will adversely affect a number of residents, has been lost on appeal.

This brings us to the subject of the Green Belt. As you all know Taplow and Hitcham are in the Green Belt and there have been many pronouncements on relaxing the GB. We are fighting hard to protect its status around here because we have developers, as well as Slough, casting their greedy eyes upon it. If we lose this battle we will have continuous development from East of London to West of Maidenhead. Our bit of the GB should have special protection because of this. We currently have a problem with the GB to the south of the Station which is earmarked for development in the new Local Plan. We have been fighting to reserve some of this land for a proper station car park which will be badly needed when Crossrail becomes a reality.

Talking of the Station you may have noticed that our lovely old footbridge is no longer complete. You will be glad to hear that it is being repaired and brought back into service in due course.

I have left the Newsletter until last merely because that I wish to thank Nigel properly for his production of our first class Newsletter. He is a very worthy successor to Fred Russell who brought it up from an interesting but small publication to a full colour quality newsletter. Nigel has worked tirelessly and almost singlehandedly as Editor to produce this excellent publication twice yearly ever since. It is a real tribute to him that such a relatively small organisation as ours has such a quality publication and we owe him a great debt of gratitude. Andrew Findlay has been responsible for laying it out ready for the printers for many a long year. Thank you Andrew.

Nigel was most instrumental in setting up the Parish facilities for speed monitoring 'Police Support Volunteer' as well as working tirelessly behind the scenes on many other issues throughout the year. Thank you.

I would of course like to thank each and every one of your committee for the unsung work which they do behind the scenes so that HTS functions so well. Lastly an enormous thank you to your indefatigable Secretary Roger Worthington without whose support, advice and sheer hard work I would have found it impossible to have done the

role of hands on President/ virtual chair for the past few years.

## **6. Treasurer's report**

Robert Hanbury presented the 2017 report. This is presently unaudited as our internal auditor Claire Price has been away, but this will be done in due course. He also apologised for a mistake in the printed copy but this would be corrected in the published version (attached). The format of the report reflects the complexity of the handling of monies for the VGP. Both income and expenditure are a combination of cash and bank transfers. Net income was up, reflecting good attendance at the Easter Egg Hunt and the VGP. Acceptance of the report was proposed by Nigel Smales and carried unanimously.

## **7. Elections**

Comment from Eva Lipman:

The Hitcham and Taplow Society aims to cover all areas within our parishes and, ideally, we should have representatives on our committee covering the whole of Hitcham and Taplow. At the moment we have no-one from the far north of Taplow, nor from Cliveden Gages, Orkney Court, or from Marsh Lane. There may well be other areas not well represented. We would therefore be pleased to consider any nominations from those areas.

We will be losing Heather Fenn, an ex-Chairman, as she will be standing down after 20 years' service on your Committee. We would like to thank her for all her hard work, much of it over and above the call of duty over these many years and wish her and her partner Chris many happy years in pastures new (literally) in Devon.

- a. Re-election of Eva Lipman as president was proposed by Andrew Findlay and carried unanimously.
- b. Eva then proposed that all remaining re-election candidates should be elected en-bloc. Jane Curry proposed this and all officers were elected unanimously.

## **8. Motion to amend the constitution**

Roger Worthington explained the background to this motion.

SBDC make available modest sums of money to local charities and associations for projects. To be eligible, the constitution of any applicant society has to conform to best practice. A requirement that HTS does not fulfil is that there must be a provision for the winding up of the society. Although we are not in need of any such grant at this time, we think it sensible to amend our constitution accordingly.

Martin Knight raised a point that the wording only referred to Taplow and left out Hitcham. With this amendment he then proposed the adoption of the change, which was carried unanimously. The amended clause is attached.

## **9. Update on the A4 Cycleway proposal**

Roger Worthington reported at last year's AGM that we had raised objections to this proposal. The project was withdrawn in October 2016 for "re-evaluation". No such re-evaluation took place and the proposal returned in July this year essentially unchanged. From that point on there is a history of appalling behaviour by Bucks CC.

Cllr Shaw, the responsible cabinet member, met a few people at a coffee bar with no agenda. Realising (after 8 months of inaction) that the objections were very serious he made some hasty and incomplete changes, not worked through and not re-presented

publically.

Our South Bucks Cllr George Sandy, our Bucks CC Cllr Dev Dhillon, both opposed to the scheme, then met with Cllr Tett to protest this inadequate response and to agree a public meeting to clear matters. Cllr Tett then publicly denied that he had agreed to any such meeting and has stood by this despite representations from our MP Dominic Grieve. (Tett's response to Dominic was seen as misleading). A set of questions submitted to BCC were answered in formulaic terms that avoided the real concerns.

In summary, our objections are that:

- BCC has failed to make any case for benefit from the Cycleway to justify spending ~£1.5m of public money

- The implementation process has been incompetent, with no recognition of risk and dangers

- The handling of the affair by BCC has been an appalling affront to local democracy

Consequent to this situation, Taplow Parish Council made a FOI request to BCC. This revealed amongst other matters that:

- Cllr Shaw does not want evening meetings

- The £350k+ spend to date included fees for a road safety audit that did not expose the clear problems we identified

- The Project Manager described the proposed changes at Berry Hill as ESSENTIAL yet they were withdrawn without further analysis

- The general tone of communication clearly showed that the project was seen as a fait accompli and that the objections were just seen as a nuisance.

Most recently we took Dominic Grieve on a guided tour of the proposed route and meet with ourselves, Jamie Barnard (TPC chairman) George Sandy, Dev Dhillon and residents of affected houses in the Burnham section of the route. We believed we convinced Dominic of the absurdity of the project and hope that he may be able to influence BCC to come back to the table. We shall see.

We owe Nigel many thanks for his extensive and detailed work on this affair.

Robert Hanbury said that the Royal Borough had declined to participate in the scheme, judging it not cost effective and impracticable.

Nigel Smales itemised the specific objections we had raised:

- Banning right turns at Berry Hill. This has been withdrawn in unspecified fashion

- Danger under the railway bridge. BCC have decided to put up notices advising cyclists to dismount – a tacit admission of danger

- Danger of collisions between cars and cyclists outside the houses on the north side of the A4. No action has been taken.

Jackie Hughes questioned whether more use could be made of press coverage. HTS had written to the Advertiser but they had not seemed very interested in the story to date.

## **10. AOB**

The formal meeting closed at 8:45pm

Following refreshments, Nigel Smales reported that the long-awaited footbridge from Taplow's Glen Island to Maidenhead's Ray Mill Island would be installed in the next few days as a result of over 20 years of effort from Heather Fenn, George Sandy and many others including its architect, Taplovian Martin Knight, who then delivered his talk: "Bridge design and Taplow's new landmark".

His story began with how he, as an architect, seized the opportunity to design bridges because they could be landmarks with immense legacy value. His talk was infused with his passion for the importance of bridges and their context in daily human life, beautifully illustrated by photos of bridges around the world, including many he has designed, and given sharp local focus by his explanation of how, by designing flat instead of more conventional arches, Brunel created not only a graceful brick railway bridge but also reduced construction costs and ensured better energy efficiency of every train which has crossed his bridge in 180 years.

Brunel's bridge is Martin's favourite. It inspired his design of the new footbridge, which he believes will integrate our riverside visually and, by enabling circular walks, physically too. Perhaps his biggest challenge was overcoming viability and feasibility concerns to convince SBDC to make construction of the bridge a condition of the planning consent. His team used a 3D printer to help build models of bridge options, almost certainly a critical factor in helping Berkeley Homes to choose an elegant final design rather than the cheapest option.

Nigel added that it is hoped the footbridge will be open during daylight hours once construction of the residencies is sufficiently advanced in mid-2018, and closed proceedings by thanking Martin on behalf of all present for his entertaining and exciting talk.

## Hitcham & Taplow Society

### Profit & Loss 01.11.16 to 31.10.17

	2017	2016
Subscriptions	1530.10	1346.50
Other income		
Easter egg hunt	200.68	0.00
Ox roast	1297.52	528.00
Sundry	0.00	17.50
	1498.20	606.40
Total income	3028.30	1952.90
Expenses		
Hall hire etc	27.00	76.29
Insurance	259.52	258.56
Subscriptions	75.00	40.00
St J Ambulance	0.00	88.32
Newsletters(2)	610.00 (2)	960.00 (3)
Ox roast beef etc	491.13	327.69
Printing etc	87.00	7.00
Miscellaneous		0.00
Poppy wreath	15.00	
Linc's seat	1096.00	
Total	2660.65	1757.86
Excess of income over Expenses	367.65	195.04
Bank Reconcillation		
Barclays current account		
Opening balance	2809.39	
Surplus	367.65	
Unpresented cheques	85.00	
Closing balance	3262.04	
Barclays premium account		
Opening balance	1575.36	
Interest	0.40	
Closing balance	1575.76	
Cash in hand	60.00	
Village green Party		
Tickets sold in advance thru Eventbrite	314	
Expenses	2016	
Band	575.00	
Beef etc.	491.13	
Total expenses	1066.13	1288.11
Receipts	2049.52	1533.00
Surplus	983.39	244.49

Robert Hanbury  
Treasurer

**Approved additional clause to the HTS Constitution**

If an Executive Committee meeting decides that it is necessary to close down the Society it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to determine the dissolution of the Society. If it is agreed to dissolve the Society, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to another local group with concerns for Taplow and Hitcham, to be determined at the Special General Meeting.