

# Helions Bumpstead Parish Council

LUKE BROWN  
Clerk & RFO

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Tel: 07713 926 645

Minutes of the **HELIONS BUMPSTEAD ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY** held on **19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 AT 7:15 PM.**

NAME	POSITION	PRESENT
S. Kehr	Chair	Yes
N. Turner	Vice Chair	No
S. Cunningham	Parish Councillor	Yes
R. Etheridge	Parish Councillor	No
R. Kirkland	Parish Councillor	Yes
N. Nicholson	Parish Councillor	No
A. Parker	Parish Councillor	Yes
D. Garrod	District Councillor	Yes
P. Schwier	County Councillor	No
L. Brown	Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer	Yes

26 Members of public

## **APA/01 Chairman's Annual Report**

Chair opened the meeting thanking everyone in attendance.

As we have not had an APA for a number of years and this is my first one as Chair, I thought it may be useful to use this as an opportunity to provide an outline of what we do as a PC.

First in terms of the precept – the money we receive from residents which forms part of your council tax bill. What do we use your money for?

Our precept is approximately £14.5k and with this money:

- We power and maintain the streetlights
- We provide for regular mowing of the play area, safety inspections and maintenance of the play equipment
- We maintain village resources such as the bus shelters, bins, and notice boards, keeping public areas well maintained and tidy
- We pay for the emptying of the bins and cleaning of the bus shelters (thanks to Mark and Emma Istance for undertaking this work for us)
- We make grants to village organisations e.g. the Village Green Preservation Society for plants; the Church for support towards the maintenance of the grounds; the Cricket Club towards maintenance of the recreation ground and putting money aside for maintenance and eventual replacement of the mower
- In winter we pay for those roads to be gritted that are not gritted by Essex CC and put money aside for maintenance of the gritter (thanks to Malcolm Cox for undertaking this work)
- We pay for the cutting of the verges (thanks to Adam Haylock for carrying out this work)

- We cover the costs of printing the magazine (although much of this is offset by advertising income)
- Finally, we have a number of internal costs, such as maintenance of the website, the clerk's salary, and insurance and subscriptions.

We manage our budget carefully and were very pleased that, unlike the majority of local authorities, we were actually able to reduce our precept by 2.4% this year. It's important that we focus our spending on items that are of benefit to, and are wanted by, our residents so please do come and talk to us or get in touch if you can think of a project that needs undertaking in the village and that you think the PC should fund. I have talked about how we use the precept for repairs and maintenance around the village, so please do let us know if there are any areas of the village that you think could benefit from repair or maintenance

We pay for certain tasks to be undertaken as I have outlined, but we also are very lucky to have residents who undertake activities on a voluntary basis which we would otherwise have to fund ourselves – particular thanks here to the Ramseys for mowing the village green and to Malcolm Claydon who takes such good care of the Recreation Ground.

A lot of what we do as Councillors doesn't necessarily cost money just time. For example:

1. Footpaths and highways, though we do not have responsibility for these (this falls in the main to Essex CC) we work as hard as we can to identify any damage to paths or highways, co-ordinate the reporting of issues and attempting to ensure they are resolved. Please do let us know if you spot any issues with paths or roads and we will do our best to get these remedied. This could be potholes, missing or damaged road signs or obstructions to the highway such as overhanging or dangerous trees. I was pleased to see Essex Highways out this week marking up some of the more significant potholes.

The public requested that the Council check to make sure all the Footpath and highways issues have been submitted to the Highways portal – Clerk to investigate.

The bridge near Boblow's is damaged and is in need of repair. Edge markers are missing from Water Lane and need reinstating. – Clerk to forward these issues onto Highways and the County Cllr where necessary.

2. Flooding, I won't spend too long talking about this as Andy will be talking briefly about this in a minute, but a great deal of our time since the heavy rains last July has been spent trying to co-ordinate an action plan and gain professional advice on dealing with the flood risk in the village. My thanks to all involved in this but particularly to Andy Parker who has put in a great deal of time to the issue.
3. Planning. Whilst we do not have the power to grant or deny planning applications, we are able to make comments which will be considered by the decision-making authority at Braintree. We carefully consider every application put before us and the potential impact on the village. We now take particular care to look specifically at any potential flooding implications of new developments. We also keep a watching brief on planning developments in neighbouring authorities to ensure we are aware of any potential impact on the Parish (e.g., the recent proposals in Haverhill)
4. Helping raise matters of concern to residents, examples from the last year are the lorries that were coming through the village last summer and damaged the road or the incident when Thurlow Hunt caused damage to some properties. We are there to support individuals or groups of individuals in these circumstances.
5. Ensuring the village voice is heard on local matters affecting the village. This could be things like the closure of the surgery in Steeple, or our response to the Boundary Commission about the proposal to change our parliamentary constituency.
6. Supporting and co-ordinate local events for example the recent litter pick but also of course the Jubilee – we were pleased to have been able to provide money to support this great event. I hope you are all aware of

our plans - the beacon lighting on Thursday 2nd and the Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>.- food, drink, competitions, games...both events look like being a lot of fun and my thanks to Jane Slade, Christine Parker, Fiona Belcher and Diana Nicholson who are working hard with me to make these events a success. My thanks also to all the other residents who have volunteered time and donated money to bring these events together.

7. Before I hand over to Andy to talk about the flood report, there are a couple of important things to mention. Firstly, we have been pleased to welcome a new Parish Clerk, Luke Brown, last May. Luke has been with us a full year now and I hope you will agree he is doing a great job. And finally, I must of course acknowledge the biggest event for the village in this past year – the re-opening of our pub. I want to publicly thank everyone involved in making this happen, but most especially, Richard and Alison. We are all so very grateful for the immense work they put in bringing this about. Thank you.

#### **APA/02 Andy Parker – Flood Report**

Cllr Parker went through in detail the issues of flooding in the village and what the flood engineers had proposed the Village do to reduce the risks in the future. The full report is available on the Parish Council Website for the public to read through.

It was requested that the Council put out a message to the Village to let the residents know what their individual responsibilities are for maintaining the water course on their properties.

#### **APA/03 Annual Finance Report from the Clerk/RFO**

For the Year 2021-2022 the Council ended this period with a surplus of over £4,000. The main contributors of this surplus are budget set for Village Maintenance and Street Light Maintenance. The Street Light Maintenance is a standing balance which is in place for when the Street Lights need replacing or fixing. Recently the Council deliberated on whether to replace the current SOX lamps for LED's but after further investigation it was deemed unnecessary and would be more efficient to replace on failure.

The Village Maintenance budget has been used less recently due to the Handy Man grant awarded to the Council, which has been used to fund projects such as adding more play bark to the play area and weeding the Village Green path. There are more projects in progress, such as repairing the bus stop and rebuilding the wall on the recreation ground.

One of the larger spends the Council has made this past year was printing and distributing the Village Magazine, the majority of the spend has been subsidised via the income received through advertisements.

The Council has competently been looking after the finances and in October 2021 stringently started the process of preparing the budget for the April 2022 – March 2023 period, which was agreed in January this year.

#### **APA/04 District & County Cllr's Reports**

##### **District Councillor's Report May 2022 to Parish Councils** **(Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward)**

#### **Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders**

Intended closure of Water Lane, Helions Bumpstead due to commence on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022 for 6 hours, whilst Openreach undertakes pole testing.

#### **Update – Wethersfield Airbase Proposals: Ministry of Justice ( MoJ)**

There has been a great deal of interest in these proposals and I have therefore outlined an update.

**Public Consultation:** The MOJ undertook a public consultation exercise which began in September 2021. Braintree District Council has no power to require the MOJ to publish the results of this consultation, or to require them to carry out additional consultation. However it has passed on the concerns expressed by local Parishes and residents regarding the adequacy of that consultation.

**Planning Process:** As I am sure you are aware, Braintree District Council Planning Services encourages applicants to seek pre-application discussion/advice. BDC has been engaging in pre-application discussions with the MOJ and their consultants. They have been discussing a range of issues which will need to be considered should a planning application be submitted. The MOJ submitted a request for an Environmental Scoping Opinion in November 2021 and BDC's response was sent to the MOJ and published on BDC's website. This is a formal process under which the Council sets out the matters that should be covered within the Environmental Statement that would need to accompany a potential planning application. The information submitted by the MOJ, consultation responses and BDC's response can all be found on BDC's website.

**Next Steps:** If a planning application is submitted, then as a development required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES), the Council will have a statutory timescale of 16 weeks to determine the application. However the Council will be looking to agree an appropriate timescale for the determination of any planning application which reflects both the public interest and the likely volume and complexity of documents which would accompany it. This would be subject to the MoJ's agreement.

If a planning application is submitted all the information which came with it will be published on the Council's website and available to view. The Council will invite statutory consultees such as Essex County Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency to comment and it will also be subject to a period of public consultation. This is normally a 30 day period, but recognising the level of information which is likely to be published, the Council will do its best to be flexible on this point. In line with the Council's scheme of delegation, a development of this size and type will be determined by the Planning Committee in the usual way. If an application is submitted, more detail of how and when that committee would take place and how it would be managed will be agreed with the Chairman and published in due course. This will be a public meeting which would also be available to watch via the Council's committee Youtube Channel.

### **Energy Rebate**

BDC is working hard to issue a £150 energy rebate to households living in council tax bands A to D. Those who have been paying their Council Tax by Direct Debit from 1 April 2022 will have had their payment issued and should receive it no later than 9 May 2022. Residents who have been paying their Council Tax by Direct Debit from 1 May 2022 will receive their payment in May. Residents who do not pay by Direct Debit will be able to access our online form very soon and further details will be issued this month.

The BDC website updated with the latest information.

**Scam alert:** There are several scams in circulation using the £150 rebate to call or text people for their bank details or asking you to click on links. If you are worried about any potential council tax scams you have received, you can speak to the Revenues team by calling 01376 557755. For more information on how to recognise a scam or what to do if you have been the victim of one, please contact Citizen Advice.

### **Rural Verge Cutting**

Cllr Wendy Schmitt; Cabinet Member, Climate Change and The Environment has announced that Braintree District Council and Essex County Council have agreed to maintain a single full width cut (in the autumn) of the rural verges across the Braintree District for the next 3 years, recognising that there is balance to be obtained in promoting biodiversity, habitat creation and protecting wildlife, whilst ensuring the overall safety of all road users. BDC will also undertake ad-hoc safety cuts of the verges around junctions on request where visibility compromises road safety. This will not generally apply to linear lengths of the verges where the grass does not present a genuine safety issue to road users.

**Process for Requesting Safety Cuts:** Safety cuts can be requested either on-line at [www/braintree.gov.uk/contact](http://www/braintree.gov.uk/contact) or by contacting the Customer Services Team on 01376 552525. Following receipt of a request, a site inspection will be

made to verify the need for a cut and this will be added to the works programme as required and the person reporting it notified of the decision. (There is no need to contact Essex County Council, as BDC maintains the rural verges on their behalf).

Please note that other highways issues such as overhanging trees or highway signage that is obscured or requires cleaning/maintenance should be reported direct to Essex Highways at <https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us>

### **Policing the Parishes Update (Town & Parish Meeting)**

PC James Draper attended a recent meeting to provide a Police update and talk about the plans to engage with parishes over the summer period. Essex Police are hoping to visit all the parishes this summer to talk to local residents about any issues, work with local schools and community groups. The aim is for this to be a multi partner visit where possible and dates will be co-ordinated over the next month. PC Draper gave an update on Community Policing in the district and trends. Issues can now be reported using the online chat function on the Essex Police website <https://www.essex.police.uk/>

### **Ukraine Update**

Ukrainian guests have been arriving in our district and the community has come together to welcome and support them. BDC has been busy carrying out accommodation checks to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for guests, with the safeguarding checks being carried out by Essex County Council. BDC has also distributed the £200 payments that Ukrainian guests are entitled to in our district if sponsored through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Welcome packs have been produced to help sponsors and their guests understand and access the wide range of support available in the Braintree district. The packs are available in Ukrainian and Russian.

BDC will continue to work alongside partner agencies to ensure those who arrive into the district have the appropriate support. Any sponsors or guests who need support, please do get in touch with our Communities team at [communityhub@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:communityhub@braintree.gov.uk) or by calling 01376 552525 who are more than happy to help where they can.

### **Braintree District Council – New Chairman and Vice Chair**

I am delighted to advise you that I have been elected Vice-Chairman of Braintree District Council for 2022/23. Cllr. Andrew Hensman is elected Chairman. Andrew has been a District Councillor in the Braintree Central and Beckers Green ward since 2015. We are available for engagements via BDC's Civic Team: [civic@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:civic@braintree.gov.uk)

### **APA/05 Reports from Clubs and Groups in the Parish**

#### **Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society**

Our report is from the Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society Ltd. We have 167 members (otherwise known as shareholders). The Society has owned the village pub since March 2019 and until then, the pub had been closed since May 2014. The business model of the Society was to take the pub into community ownership, undertake renovation and find tenants to operate 'More than a Pub' – More than a Pub means the premises can provide a wider range of services, in turn further supporting the commercial viability of the tenant's business as well as promoting community cohesion.

It has been an important year for the Society. After many thousands of hours of volunteer labour and use of local tradesmen, the pub was ready to welcome its first tenants last autumn.

Putting the frustrations of Covid behind us, after a prolonged search entailing meetings with a range of applicants who were ambitious but ultimately unconvincing, we were delighted to hear back from the tenant couple who we had always hoped to attract.

Rob and Rhanny Carroll took on the pub tenancy just before Christmas and their business is now well established, although the employment of staff particularly for the kitchen continues to be a problem and constrains the growth of their business. However, the pub is very well-supported by locals and a loyal contingent from neighbouring villages are re-acquainting themselves with Rhanny's welcome and Rob's menu.

Meanwhile community activity has continued to develop as part of the More Than a Pub strategy. Services on Thursday mornings in the pub car park include a range of essential services including the mobile Post Office, Fruit & Veg stall, the Refill Barn as well as Radwinter Game. The Society has recently restarted a bi-monthly village walk and a pub quiz – our first quiz held over the last bank holiday had the pub bursting at the seams and the ‘pooled quiz tables’ were popular for those coming along alone or in a small group making it easy to meet new people.

The Society has retained occupancy of the old brewery, and this is intended to become the focus of additional community activity, hopefully some music and other creative groups. Future projects also include the renovation of the leaning timber barn to the rear of the property – current ideas are to use that as an anchor of local history but also for multiple purposes such as art film screenings with topical talks, as well as private function room for the pub tenants.

Meanwhile the future of the Three Horseshoes in community ownership is secure and looks set to re-establish its important and central role in village life. Our thanks and congratulations to all shareholders, the support of the Parish Council, as well as the grants and professional support provided from Braintree and Essex Council helping to make this all possible.

### **APA/05.1 Report from Jenny Beechy - Forest Roots & Village Choir**

#### **Forest Roots**

Forest Roots is an ad hoc acoustic music concert that runs every few months in the village hall. Besides booking professional artists it also gives a platform to local people to perform in the first part of the evening. The ethos of the event is that it is free and open entry so that anyone can come and experience live music. There is no entrance fee but we do have a whip-round at the end of the evening and people can pay what they feel they can afford. This is a non-profit making event with the proceeds of the whip round going to pay the professional artists and 10% of the profit going to the Woodland Trust. Anything left over goes towards booking artists for the next event

#### **The Village Choir**

The village choir is free and open to anyone. We sing for fun, and you don't need to read music. We meet on a Tuesday night in the village hall for a set number of weeks usually culminating in a performance at Forest Roots. There are currently around 18 women and men, and we are always looking for more members. The choir also performs at various village events and occasionally at local church services

### **APA/05.2 Report from Dave West – Village Green Preservation Society**

Village Green Preservation Society

Report to HBPC Annual Assembly 19/05/2022

A newly formed volunteer group in the village under the initial aspiration of the late Jane Catchesides who was passionate in re-energising the village green to return it to its former glory for the whole village to enjoy this facility in the heart of our village which has carried on in her memory

The group meet monthly from April through to October giving villagers who can spare an hour a chance for some camaraderie as well as getting out in the fresh air

Over the past years as well as tackling the wilderness of brambles, ivy that infiltrated the borders – an ongoing task, we have planted daffodils at both ends of the green to welcome in Spring as well as planting a number of fruit trees – all of which have survived

We are looking to have the VG spick & span in time for the jubilee celebrations including planting up the planters

A few “thank yous” – to the volunteers plus

PC for their grant support for new trees /shrubs

Malcom Cox for dealing with disposal of the not inconsiderable waste material

Richard Hatch for keeping the water butt topped up and supplying power for the xmas lights.

Mr. West also mentioned the Parish Council website and requested a page be set up for the Cricket Club – Clerk requested Mr. West contact them outside of this meeting to go through the details.

### **APA/05.3 Report from Malcolm Rowson – Village Hall**

#### **Village Hall Chair's Report Parish Meeting 19 May 2022**

This is my report for the past year and will be my last as Chair as I am retiring after eight years and have been replaced by Jackie Tyler who has taken over as Chair.

This year we have gained the services of Jackie Tyler and Edita Bocan.

Financially it has been an interesting period with the Government continuing to give out grants to cover loss of income due to Covid and whilst we needed support, we had no control over the amounts granted. We have used these grants to cover loss of income and to assist groups that are struggling to re-establish. We are in a strong financial position due to several legacies and

During the Covid shutdown we did lose some of our long-term hirers, but table tennis, Karate and Pilates class and Coffee morning continued and the Bowls have re-started on a monthly purely social basis. We have also had bookings for agricultural first-aid classes, Forest Roots concerts, harvest supper and a number of private functions. We have a new booking with the monthly Craft Market and the St Andrews Church soup lunch. Our thanks to Martin Catchesides who has ably handled the hassle.

We also had a highly successful combined Village fete, flower and vegetable show and dog show with the proceeds being donated to charity.

During this period, we have also purchased a new moveable stage, a large marquee and six gazebos, and 20 new chairs. We have also brought our crockery to a full set and got rid of the unmatched items.

The 100 Club has continued, and we currently have 84 members as people have moved or no longer contribute and new members don't quite cover the number we have lost, My thanks to Jo Rowson for dealing with the administration of the 100 Club.

The garden in the front wall has received a lot of attention this year and I would like to thank Martin and Kate Catchesides and Sue Kehr for their work on keeping it all tidy and colourful and to Nigel Turner for tidying the hall surrounds.

Finally my thanks go to all of the members of both the current and past Committees, the Parish Council, Essex County Council and RCCE for their help and support during my eight year tenure as Chair.

### **APA/05.4 Report from Juliet Corfield – Village Church**

Sunday services are now back to normal, and numbers have started to build up again after the pandemic with the Church nearly full for the service on Easter Day.

The decision to build an extension to the Church, which would include an accessible lavatory and some basic catering facilities, together with a storeroom and small meeting room, was made in 2016.

The planning process was unbelievably complicated, but building finally started in October of last year, and the project was expected to last for 5 months. However, not surprisingly, human remains from old, unmarked graves were found in the footprint of the new building, most of which dated from 100-200 years ago, but some at a deeper level were thought to be mediaeval.

Getting permission from the County Council Archaeologist, who had to oversee the excavation took many months, but the site was finally cleared, and the remains reburied with due ceremony a few weeks ago. It was noted that the archaeologists had been very respectful and had commented on what a nice change it made to see the remains being reburied as opposed to just digging them up.

We now hope that building will recommence without too much further delay, and we anticipate moving into the new facilities at some time in the late autumn.

As part of the village celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, there will be a special non-communion service at 10.30am on Sunday 5th June to which everyone is invited.

### **APA/05.5 Report from Diana Nicholson - Parish Property Trusts & Helions Handballers**

Helions Bumpstead has two village trusts both registered with the Charity Commission under the names of: 1, Helions Bumpstead and Baxter Charities and, 2, the Recreation Ground.

They both have the same trustees – the vicar, Jonathan Lowe, two Church Wardens, Jane Slade and Juliet Corfield and two representatives from the Village, Dave West and Denise Harris.

The Helions Bumpstead and Baxter’s Charities is based on the will of Rev’d Baxter dated 1906 which left £100 to be invested and the income applied for the relief of the poor of this Parish.

Cash of £2,500 has accumulated in the bank account and the trustees’ welcome confidential approaches to help identify villagers for whom a small financial handout would be helpful.

Hellions Handballers

The Helions Handballers were set up by Herbert Ramsey several decades ago. There are two sets of balls and Andy gage provides a secure room at Board Barn Farm where they are stored, and we can practise.

We are led by Vicky Fawkes, who started playing with Herbert and Joyce, and we are currently working towards a performance at the Swallows next week.

We meet on Thursday evenings – usually fortnightly. There are 8 in the group, and we welcome new people who would like to give it a try.

**APA/06 Meeting Close @ 9:30 PM**

Signed.....

Dated.....

Clerk to the Council: Luke Brown  
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