



H A D D E N H A M
P a r i s h C o u n c i l

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ANNUAL REPORT

2023/2024

The following reports are included:

[Planning Committee](#)

[Finance and General Purposes Committee](#)

[Climate Emergency Committee and Working Groups](#)

[Facilities Committee](#)

[Haddenham Village Hall Committee](#)

[Haddenham Parochial Charities](#)

[Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity](#)

[Haddenham Educational Charity](#)

[Haddenham Community Library](#)

Planning Committee

The Work of the Parish Council (PC) Planning Committee

- The PC is a statutory consultee on planning and listed building applications. We review all applications and submit comments to Buckinghamshire Council which determines them in its statutory role as the local planning authority. We must respond within set time limits and concentrate on “material” (ie relevant) planning matters.
- During 2023/24 we had 16 meetings and reviewed 65 planning and listed building applications. This is lower than recent years reflecting the national picture, but still a serious volume of work with briefings prepared by the Chair and Clerk for each application.
- The majority are householder extensions, but can still be controversial, for example because of overlooking, loss of daylight, inadequate parking provision, or inappropriate design or materials. We give informal advice to applicants and neighbours.
- On larger developments, the PC concentrates on the details of any assets to be transferred to the PC: open space, playgrounds, street lighting, and S106 obligations in respect of sport, leisure & recreation. We attend site meetings, particularly as handover approaches, and deal with the legal documentation of land transfers.
- The Planning Committee leads on major projects currently including last year Aston Road cricket pavilion and burial ground projects, the “Streetscape” project, and re-investment in the Village Hall complex.
- We have given small grants to encourage sympathetic repairs to public-facing wicket walls. We maintain a contact list of local contractors and consultants who may be able to help with heritage work and approvals. We have re-built a collapsed wicket wall using traditional materials and techniques in St Mary’s Churchyard.
- We support a team of Community Speedwatch volunteers who conducted 54 sessions during the year, concentrating on speeding hotspots like Stanbridge Rd (the biggest problem), Thame Rd, and Pegasus Way. 424 offenders were referred to Thames Valley Police for follow-up action.

Significant Planning Applications

- **Land east of Churchway** During the year two “hostile” applications were submitted on behalf of local landowners on sites **not** allocated for development in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. The first was “Land east of Churchway” (opposite Redrow) for 89 dwellings by Richborough Estates. This has been submitted before and refused on appeal. The PC attended Buckinghamshire Council’s Central Area Planning Committee on 10th January 2024 to object. The Committee agreed to overturn the officer’s recommendation to approve the application and refused planning permission. An appeal is likely.
- **Land south of Lower Road** The second hostile application was by Rectory Homes for 86 dwellings at “Land south of Lower Road” which extends east of Stanbridge Rd

from Lower Road as far as the Garden Centre. This application is pending consideration. The PC has strongly objected along with many residents.

- **The Rose & Thistle** The most dispiriting application during the year was the change of use of the Rose & Thistle pub to a residential house. The PC objected, enlisted support from CAMRA, and spoke at Bucks Council's Central Area Committee on 6th March 2024 giving 6 reasons for refusing. The Committee granted planning permission.
- **Bradmoor Farm** Several planning applications have been submitted for piecemeal development at Bradmoor Farm; some are retrospective; some development has taken place which is unauthorised. The PC has urged that a comprehensive planning application should be required for the entire site covering all present and future structures, safe access to and within the site, a pedestrian crossing, landscaping, drainage etc.
- A full list of all housing development in Haddenham since 2007 is available from the Parish Council.

Major Developments Update

- **Airfield site:** Cala Homes have finished development and transfer to the Parish Council of the remaining open space to the west is expected soon.
- **Aston Rd:** Dandara have completed the housing and are working on the last stages of open space which will all transfer to the PC in due course. Dandara are also due to construct a footpath on the south side of Aston Rd to St Mary's School's access.
- **Land west of Churchway/north of Rosemary Lane (aka HAD007):** The 2017 outline planning application was finally approved in October 2020 for 273 dwellings. In August 2022 Bucks Council granted conditional permission to Redrow for Phase 1 Reserved Matters for 153 homes. In the early months of 2023 Bucks Council served a Stop Notice followed by two Enforcement Notices withdrawn in March 2023. Development has proceeded during the year, although 3 of the 23 planning applications submitted to date are still pending consideration. The drainage arrangements are now in place which will hopefully deal with past flooding problems. A footpath along the eastern edge of Churchway to Rosemary Lane is due to be constructed, which will entail widening the carriageway over the western verge and culverting the existing drain. Details of Phase 2 are expected soon.
- **Land at Platers Rd off Dollicott:** Transfer of the open space to the PC has been delayed because of uncertainty about public access to the Redrow HAD007 site via the old farm gate. Bucks Council finally responded that the failure to ensure public access was not their responsibility. The PC disagrees but has agreed to honour acceptance of transfer.

Cricket and Burial Ground Projects

- Meetings have been held with the Cricket Club, ECB (English Cricket Board), Bucks Cricket and our architects to draw up an ECB-compliant pavilion next to the new cricket ground at Aston Road. Early proposals had to be scaled back because of escalating building costs. A revised scheme is being prepared for a planning application.
- The PC has commissioned and received from specialist consultants Cemetery Design Services a 230-page report on a full groundwater risk assessment to comply with

Environment Agency requirements which, along with other details, will be submitted as a planning application for a new burial ground at Aston Road.

“Streetscape” Project

- The Haddenham Neighbourhood Plan included a commitment to conduct a traffic impact assessment in the context of growth, wider mobility and access needs (particularly walking & cycling), safety, and environmental considerations. In December 2021 the PC appointed consultants Phil Jones Associates (PJA) to undertake a village wide appraisal and develop a design framework to influence future investment. Match funding for fees for the initial feasibility was agreed by the Community Board.
- Project milestones:
 - Jan 2022 Entire village tour and photographic survey. Stage 1 consultation goes live using bespoke on-line software @Bucks.place.
 - April 2022 1st stakeholder exhibition in Parish centre followed by 4-week consultation period.
 - July 2022 2nd stakeholder exhibition of concept ideas in Parish centre (has remained on display) followed by 4-week consultation period.
 - September 2022 Publication of 70-page feasibility report including design concepts at 8 specific locations and one village-wide proposal for a 20mph zone.
 - December 2022 Publication of 20mph feasibility report.
 - Feb 2023 Presentation to Bucks Council. BC requests further design work on Thame Road which the PC commissions.
 - March 2023 PC approves PJA quote for feasibility design work to undertake jointly with Cuddington PC a review of the Kings Cross junction (ie Churchway with A418) following history of accidents.
 - June 2023 PJA publishes Thame Rd design report for presentation to Bucks Council, whose response is still outstanding.
 - November 2023 PJA publishes Kings Cross junction report.

Big Picture Planning News

- In October 2023 the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (mainly about planning) received Royal Assent. In December 2023 a revised draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted.
- The Government continues to tinker with Permitted Development rules. The net effect is to remove some changes of use from planning control, particularly from commercial & offices to residential, as at Chiltern House, Waterslade House and Park House, leading to job losses, negating the intentions of Neighbourhood Plans like ours, and removing any obligation to contribute betterment (via S106 or CIL) to the local community.

Bucks Council Planning News

- **The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework** has been adopted by Buckinghamshire Council as a non-statutory document to inform future decisions

around planning, development and place-making. Haddenham is identified as one of the 10 largest towns.

- **Local Plan for Bucks.** Work continues on a Buckinghamshire-wide Local Plan for new development until 2040. Calls for potential brownfield and greenfield development sites have gone out to landowners and will be reviewed under the Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) due to be published later in 2024. Local landowners and their development partners have put forward 15 potential sites in and around Haddenham with a combined area of 230 hectares.
- **Buckinghamshire Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).** In February 2023 Bucks Council unveiled its Council-wide approach to infrastructure provision for cycling, walking and wheeling (ie wheelchair/mobility scooters etc) with potential projects identified by Community Board area. Projects in the Haddenham & Waddesdon Community Board include 2 “aspirations”: Haddenham to Aylesbury (via Stone, Dinton & Upton); and Haddenham (Station) to Thame. Both are described as “category 3” schemes defined as being “in early stages of development, needing significant investigation to proceed”. Villagers may recall we reported on feasibility studies by Sustrans back in 2015 for Haddenham-Aylesbury, and in 2016 for Haddenham-Thame. We are still waiting.

David Truesdale, Haddenham Parish Council, 17th April 2024

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Precept and budgets

We continue to work to a 5-year business plan and produce a detailed Action Plan to monitor its delivery. These were updated and adopted for 2024-25 during the budgeting process for setting the precept. We face the same challenges that everyone is currently facing of trying to balance the budgets in the face of escalating costs.

We consider the commuted sums that the Council receives to cover 10 years' maintenance costs of any new assets it adopts. As we are adopting a lot of amenity land in a relatively short space of time and don't want to set the residents up for a significant council tax increase in 10 years' time when the commuted sums are used up, so we are planning a gradual small increase in the precept each year and balancing the shortfall with utilisation of the commuted sums. We were pleased to see that the tax base set by Buckinghamshire Council for Haddenham had increased and appears to better reflect the increasing number of new homes, thus reducing the tax burden on residents.

New budgets have been added for 2023-24 to run the new Airfield pavilion and the youth club.

The Council continues to set aside ear-marked reserves in line with its pro-active asset management approach to ensure it can responsibly manage its growing portfolio of assets.

Youth Club

Following the winding up of Haddenham Youth and Community Centre Charity the Parish Council stepped in take on the responsibility of running the Youth Club in 2022. We fund a Youth Worker, David Rollins who has done an excellent job of getting the club back up and running and it continues to grow with an average of 40 young people attending each week. David has told us they have a solid team of volunteers, including three young local volunteers along and support from the Buckinghamshire Council team, especially Krissie. Regular activities include free food (Toasties and drinks), outdoor sports such as football, basketball, scooters and skateboard, and inside games including dancing (game), snooker, pool, table tennis, board games (chess). This year they have introduced new activities, including a bike workshop (repair) and a cycle in the holiday, as well as a new sweet shop initiative managed by young people. They are enjoying the good weather now and look to welcome more year 6 young people in July!

New Facilities

The new developments in the village all make S106 contributions to sport and leisure projects, which the Parish Council nominates. Having utilised just over £1.4M to build the pavilion at the Airfield site we have had to carefully review the balance of funding available to deliver the other major projects at Aston Road, Woodways and the Village Hall. It seems likely that the increase in building costs will impact on what can be delivered, and that a Publics Works Loan Board may be required to allow us to complete everything.

Work is progressing on designing the new pavilion to serve the new pitch on the Aston Road development. We have worked with Buckinghamshire Council and Dandara to amend the

S106 agreement to allow the contribution from Dandara to be allocated to this pavilion as it wasn't included originally.

Grants

We continue to support community groups with funding through our grant awards. This year the following groups have benefitted from funding: Haddenham Community Library, Haddenham Tennis Club, The Sixty Plus Club, Haddenham Village Society (Haddenham.net), Haddenham Youth Football Club and a donation to the Poppy Appeal.

The Parish Council has also set aside reserves to provide a contribution towards the cost of repairing public facing wicket walls, both to help preserve these unique historic features of the village, and to give a lead in ensuring that traditional materials and techniques are followed. There have been several applications approved this year, with one project completed and the grant paid and others still in progress.

Adoption of land

As the new housing developments at the Airfield and Aston Road near completion and the developers' maintenance responsibilities end, the transfer of the public open space on these developments to the Parish Council is progressing. The Country Park area of the Aston Road site and the phase 2 land on the western side of the Airfield have been inspected by Buckinghamshire Council and we are just waiting for some remedial work to be carried out before completing the transfer.

We have had no success in asking Buckinghamshire Council to investigate the possible breach of the S106 agreement and planning permission that has resulted in no public right of access over the unadopted section of Platers Road. It has therefore reluctantly been agreed to adopt the public open space as the Parish Council has no ability to resolve this alone, and we have asked Cala Homes to progress with the transfer.

After several delays, work to raise the ground level of the new burial ground site has been completed and a topographical survey has confirmed the levels are correct, this has allowed plans for the burial ground and pavilion to progress, with a view to transferring these areas to the Parish Council in the next phase.

The street lights on the Airfield site were adopted for a commuted sum in July 2023.

It has been very disappointing that despite requests Redrow Homes will not be transferring any of the public open spaces on the development on land at Churchway to the Parish Council, instead a residents' management committee will be set up to take on the responsibility for their maintenance. The Parish Council will however, be adopting the street lights.

Staffing

For 2023-24 the Council decided to carry out an independent staffing review as it was clear that with the growth of the village and increasing responsibilities of the Parish Council that the existing staffing level of two full-time staff, and two part-time staff is insufficient. After carrying out some research it was decided to appoint Local Council Consultancy to carry out the assessment for us. Dr Carlton Brand was the appointed consultant, his remit was to benchmark the existing roles, determine if the number of staffing hours needed to increase,

and if so to propose a staffing structure to accommodate the new roles. He met with each of the staff and the Chair individually, and assessed the current roles, skill sets and preferences, then came up with a draft proposal that was reviewed and slightly amended by the Clerk and the Chair. His final report was presented to the Council and it was agreed to proceed with all of the recommendations, which include the creation of four new roles over the next 2-3 years, a full time Finance Administrator, part-time Planning Officer, part-time Burial Administrator and part-time Caretaker. We are now working with the existing employees to review how their existing responsibilities can transition to the new roles.

David Truesdale
Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee

Climate Emergency Committee

Change of Chair

It was with sadness that the Chair of the Climate Emergency Committee, Cllr David O'Hanlon, resigned from the Council due to a re-location. David was an active member of the Committee and instrumental in producing the Council's climate emergency presentation, which not only highlighted the urgency of rapid climate action but set out a detailed road map for reducing Haddenham's overall Carbon Footprint. David was succeeded as Chair by Cllr Alan Thawley. Alan is passionate about the environment and tackling the current climate crisis. In addition to his work as a Councillor, Alan is active member of Zero Carbon Haddenham and chair of the Safe Walking and Cycling group.

Welcome a new Committee Member

The Committee was pleased to have new Councillor Graham Monger join the Committee. Graham immediately set to work on reinvigorating the Council's plans to minimise Food Waste in Haddenham.

Inaugural Energy Efficient Homes Fair – October 2023

The Parish Council worked in partnership with Buckinghamshire Community Energy to organise an inaugural Energy Efficient Homes Fair in October. An excellent line-up of guest speakers presented various means of improving insulation, cutting carbon emissions, installing renewable technologies and heating our homes more efficiently, whilst stallholders were on hand to answer questions and promote their services. With the onset of increased energy prices, this free, ticketed event was very well received by local residents and we were delighted to have so many attend. We will be running a second Fair in November 2024.

Village forums

It has been our goal to bring together likeminded people who have already invested in 'green' technologies with those who are keen to take the plunge. We commissioned our first Home Energy Survey where we asked homeowners in Haddenham questions regarding their use of renewable products and if they would be willing to communicate their experiences (good and bad!) with other residents.

Based on this survey, we will be holding informal events to facilitate information sharing, but we are also planning wider forums bringing together local organisations and businesses. The goal is to coordinate local action and maximise public awareness of not only the challenges we face but also the opportunities and solutions that exist.

Decarbonising village buildings

Our deputy clerk, Emma Marsden, has put a huge amount of work into the installation of renewable technology in our public buildings, from solar panels and battery storage at the Woodways Pavilion to working with the Village Hall Committee on their own impressive decarbonisation project. The new airfield pavilion boasts strong energy efficiency credentials as well as a sizeable solar array, and there are even more exciting plans developing for the new cricket pavilion. We are also about to embark on a detailed analysis of the Council's carbon footprint.

EVs

The Parish Council is working to increase the number of **public EV chargers** through the Village. The chargers at Banks Park are being used more often and we are pleased to see regular users. We hope soon to complete the installation of four additional electric car charging points in the Airfield Pavilion Car Park off Tibbs Road. These will be super-fast chargers so will minimise charging times. We are also looking to provide a **salary-sacrifice EV leasing scheme** that will help staff members to decarbonise their transport at no additional cost to the Council.

Electric Vehicle Car Club

It was a great disappointment that the Electric Car Club ceased operation in September. It had been steadily building a regular user base but unfortunately the cost of operating the scheme in its existing format was not viable for our partners 3B. The number of users proved that there was a market and the Council is hoping to be able to offer a replacement service in future, potentially with the help of a new partner.

Food we eat and the Food we waste

There has been a lot of work behind the scenes to ascertain the amount of food waste generated in Haddenham, where it goes and how much energy it creates. Haddenham produced 266,000kg of food waste last year and the Committee are exploring initiatives on improving community engagement to reduce this figure.

Alan Thawley

Chair of Climate Emergency Committee

Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee has a very wide remit covering all the open spaces of the parish, including all the buildings and street furniture belonging to the Council.

The Committee has four sub-committees – Orchard, Snakemoor, Sporting Facilities and Allotment Committees - their reports are included.

Play Areas

All our play areas continue to be kept in top condition for all users. Weekly inspections are carried out by the Facilities Manager along with independent quarterly and yearly inspections completed by professional bodies.

Regular grounds maintenance keeps these in great order and any repairs needed are done efficiently and in a timely manner.

The Council will very soon be adopting two more play grounds from Dandara on The Grove Estate and these will be looked after in the same meticulous fashion.

With the village growing and many young families moving into it these play areas are seen as an essential part of life.

Along with our football pitches, tennis courts, B.M.X track and open spaces Haddenham really is a great place for outdoor entertainment.

Street Furniture

The Parish Council continues to maintain the bus shelters. These are inspected and cleaned on a regular basis. We also work with Bucks Council and our in-house ground staff to ensure our rubbish bins and dog waste bins are emptied and cleaned on a regular basis.

New bike stands have been erected in various locations and we plan to also install some planter box style stands. Look out for these over the next few weeks.

New benches have been installed and should any parishioner wish to donate a bench please refer to our bench policy which can be found on our website.

Streetlights

Streetlights continue to keep us busy as we look to gradually replace the older columns and make repairs as soon as we practicably can.

We are replacing ten columns this year and adding five brand new ones to our car park at the Airfield.

Repairs are made as soon as possible but in some instances this is down to our grid supplier UKPN who are sometimes a little slow to rectify things.

Schools

We worked with one of our contractors and the junior school this year to light up the village for Christmas. The large conifer tree next to Fitlife was illuminated and a large banner was hung on the fence. The banner displayed art work from the school students who took part in a competition for some fabulous prizes generously donated by Eldridge, our street light

contractor, and the right to have their work displayed on the banner for all to see over the festive season.

Trees and Hedges

Many trees have been worked on over the past year. This includes dangerous and decaying trees which were felled. Overgrown trees causing obstructions have been reduced and crown lifted.

A tree survey that was carried out two years ago is in the process of having its last works completed before a new survey takes place later this summer.

REleaf have been busy planting hedging plants around the Airfield site.

St Mary's Church

We continue to maintain St Mary's Church yard, including trimming of trees, the cutting of grass, clearing of ivy and lots more.

The wall running parallel to the school path was rebuilt last summer entirely of witchert. We believe this to be the first witchert wall to be built in the village for quite some years.

This summer we intend to carry out repairs to the front east side wall and extensive works to the school wall.

Specialist contractors will be used experienced in working with witchert and in traditional ways.

Church Pond

St Mary's Church pond is a focal point of the village and HPC are planning some works here to freshen it up. Nothing is confirmed as yet but there are some good ideas to work with. Watch this space.

Grounds Maintenance

The village grounds maintenance contract was renewed last year with a company called Tivoli taking over from Aspire.

Some great work has been carried out already from the guys on the ground and hopefully the results are there for all to see.

We are working hard with the team so they understand what is wanted and is best for the village.

Buckinghamshire Council Devolved Services

The Parish Council continue to cover devolved services from Bucks Council. The amount of money received from BC for this task has only risen slightly on one occasion over the last eight years so the Parish Council have to top these funds up to ensure all grass and hedge cutting is carried out across the village.

Community Litter Pick

A community litter pick has been arranged for this Saturday 20th April for The Tibbs Road area. This will be headed up by our Facilities Committee Chairman John Wheeler and is planned to start at 10:00 AM. Why not come along and help keep your village tidy? Litter

pickers and bags will be provided so just bring yourselves and a pair of sturdy gloves. We will meet in the car park.

Sporting Facilities Committee

We continue to work with the local sports clubs who use our facilities in Haddenham. We were delighted that we were able to get the Airfield Pavilion fully open for the 23/24 football season. It is home to Haddenham Youth Football Club and we also welcomed Aylesbury Vale Toqueers Titans who are Aylesbury's Senior team.

The Parish Council were pleased to be awarded grants for pitch maintenance through the FA Football Foundation. The Council already spends a considerable amount on improving the condition of the ground and this additional grant will allow us to get all of our pitches to a rating of good or above. Thank you to HYFC who have assisted in getting all the pitches assessed and have also participated in a Ground Management Course. We just need it to stop raining so we can start!

The Whistler continues to grow and we were grateful with their contribution to the improvements at the Woodways Pavilion function room. It has been re-decorated and had improved insulation in the ceiling. This has greatly improved the appearance of this room. Solar panels have been added to the roof to improve the carbon footprint of the building and hopefully reduce the bills!

The new cricket ground situated by Aston Road is starting to take shape. Again, the wet winter and spring has made it difficult to complete and fingers crossed this will be finished this summer. Work continues on the design of the new Aston Road Pavilion and we have had several meetings with HCC, the ECB and Bucks Cricket Board to ensure that we can provide a first-class facility that stays within budget! The plans are being drawn up and we hope to apply for planning permission very soon.

The Council continues to support the Tennis Club with a grant to assist in providing coaches for their school coaching program.

It was great to see the Table Tennis Club back at Woodways and they continue to use this facility once a week on a Tuesday club night.

Snakemoor Committee

The following report was prepared by the Reserve Head Volunteer

Eco-tools: A set of three battery-operated power tools, with associated equipment has been purchased - generously funded by Haddenham Beer Festival Trust (HBFT). These have been used extensively for tree, brush and safety work. In addition to improving our environmental performance, they are both quieter and safer in operation.

Owl boxes: also sponsored by HBFT, four owl/raptor nesting boxes have been installed by BORG, who will also carry out monitoring activities.

Bird box upgrade: 15 bird boxes have had improved squirrel protection plates installed. Further steps may need to be taken to keep vermin out, and aid the bird population.

Hedgerow planting: c. 200 hedgerow saplings have been planted. These are mostly along the driveway, to fill the many gaps.

Hedge laying: a team worked through the winter months to clear dead wood and brush, then carry out traditional hedge laying.

Paths: unfortunately, we have had an insufficient supply of wood chippings to maintain the paths in a mud-free state. Support is requested to source further material from tree surgeons working for HPC.

Townsend Community Orchard

Report from the Orchard Team:

The Orchard continues to mature as a project and gain a special place in our community's heart. Visitors report spending "many a sunny day in the orchard with my children playing in and out of the benches in the core" and it being "a wonderful space".

During the last year we have increased our volunteer involvement and attracted new wildlife species through a greater diversity of planting and leaving wild areas for new habitats, this in turn is supporting the pollination of our maturing trees. We are currently supported by over 100 volunteers on our Orchard community mailing list who support us in various roles throughout the year.

During the year there has sadly been some minor damage to branches, however through the social media page, members of our developing support network have been able to communicate these to the committee quickly and as a result repair and pruning work has been able to be carried out quickly to support the trees to recover. On the whole the area is being respected and is developing to be a meeting place, drawing a wide range of visitors. The quince trees have attracted attention this year with a large crop on both trees, creating great discussions on when they are ready to harvest for the best produce.

During the year, with the support of local funding streams and our volunteers, we have made the following developments to enrich the area:-

- In April, three espalier were trees planted alongside the fruit bush trellis. One of which was kindly donated by Haddenham Horticultural society.
- The trellis and posts of the fruit frame were repaired at the same time making a lovely feature to the area.
- In December a freezing work party planted a test area of 200 bluebells and 20kg of daffodil bulbs to attract early insects to the area.
- We have added a lavender hedge planted behind the bench in the sensory garden which will support the wellbeing of our visitors through calming scent and colours. We hope this will also attract more pollinators to the area next season.
- We have also purchased new pruning tools to support and educate our volunteers in the pruning of our trees. Which were funded by the Beer Festival.

As always, our maintenance programme continues, we have organised 10 work parties between Feb-Dec. During the growing session we have also had weekly mowing volunteers. Our orchard watcher volunteers have made monthly inspections and the raised beds have been refreshed after the extreme dry conditions of the summer. We have restocked with

more herbs and strawberry plants. In July we had a monitoring visit by Woodland Trust to assess how well the hedge saplings were doing two years after they had been donated. The Woodland Trust representative commented favourably on how well they were being cared for and the good amount of growth they were displaying.

In 2023 our events calendar had something for every season. On Jan 28th we held a Wassail supported by local musicians and a lantern parade in collaboration with the village hall. This was well attended with many bringing their creations to the parade. To support the scarecrow festival we held a family mini scarecrow making day in collaboration with a local art hub

Renboga on June 4th. With thanks to Rosie from Renboga, this was a hugely energetic day where we saw families enjoying and exploring creativity in the core of the Orchard. We were delighted to have Rosie's infectious energy with us for the day and look forward to collaborating with Renboga and other organisations in the future. We welcomed the late summer with two further events. On Aug 12th we held a Bat and Moth night/walk - This was wonderfully attended and supported by Brian Fattorini and equipment lent to support the event by BBOWT. The night saw many community members joining together to watch bats in flight and explore the night life of the orchards up close, despite heavy downpours of rain a great night was had

by all, some seeing the Orchard for the first time. Our closing community event for the year was on Sep 1st when we held a Music picnic, a splendid evening of enjoying music in the late summer. This raised funds for the charity WaterAid and the local food bank. We thanked our wonderful volunteer team and celebrated the continued growth and success with our volunteers with a social evening with a cheese and biscuit evening. With thanks to the generosity of our neighbours we were able to do an entry for the village Xmas light festival which was appreciated by many community members as the winter draws our season to an end.

The future will continue to see the Orchard develop to deepen the relationship with the wildlife and the community through some exciting collaborations and events. We have plans to develop our communication through display boards which have all events and how to be involved in the Orchard, including a donation code to help the community support us instantly, we also have up and coming collaborations welcoming in the local cubs to build a new bug hotel with us.

We welcome new orchard committee members or volunteers if you are interested you are very

welcome and can register your interest in helping out via the Chairman, Diccon Proctor, by emailing communityorchard.haddenham@gmail.com.

You can also follow any news and updates through following our Facebook page - Townsend Community Orchard.

Allotments Committee

Demand for allotments remains strong with only 2 vacant plots at the time of writing.

Over this winter, a group of local volunteers have been laying parts of the boundary hedge. Led by Diccon Proctor, this enthusiastic group laid five sections in order to rejuvenate it and

bridge gaps in the hedge.

Hedgelaying is the process of partially cutting through stems of a line of shrubs or small trees close to ground level, and then bending them without breaking them, to encourage them to produce new growth from the base and the leaning trunk.

This type of management helps to keep the hedge healthy and over time thickens and stabilises it. It also creates an excellent habitat for wildlife, providing refuge, nesting sites, food and corridors to move along.

The group only works between October to February so that nesting birds are not disturbed.

The group also planted approximately 200 Woodland Trust tree saplings on the inside of the hedge to help plug other gaps or where the hedge is particularly thin. In the future all this hard work should produce some lovely displays of spring blossom and autumn berries.

A very big thank you to the volunteers for all their tremendous efforts. If you would like to join in with the 2024-2025 hedgelaying season please email Diccon proctor at dicconp@hotmail.com.

Cllr. John Wheeler
Facilities Chair

Haddenham Village Hall Committee

Over the year, the village hall facility has been well used, with 67 different categories of activity taking place over the year. Our web and social media presence, alongside the online booking system has come into its own and are helping to keep bookings healthy.

The committee prioritises decarbonisation of the facility, both from an environmental point of view and to ensure sustainability of the facility in the face of rising energy costs. The main hall's ageing, gas-fired warm air unit and its lack of insulation had been a challenge to address. With a number of initiatives to reduce financial and environmental costs already completed, we completed a further energy efficiency improvement programme to replace the old gas-fired warm air unit with an air source heat pump, insulating the roof and installing solar panels with battery system.

This sits alongside the work which was carried out in the previous year to update the heating systems, electrical work and décor which has been enjoyed by users. We continue to work on accessibility and regularly receive feedback from users for improvements to make to ensure that the hall is a welcoming and accessible place.

Haddenham Parochial Charities

The three Haddenham Parochial Charities are currently managed together by a board of trustees appointed by the Parish Council:

- **The Reverend John Willis Charity**, Charity No. 205529. This charity owns the land at the allotments on Townside which is held by the Official Custodian. The allotment site is leased to Haddenham Parish Council and the income to the charity is annual ground rent.
- **Alms Corn Charity**, Charity No. 237625. The income of this charity comes from 2 local land owners who are required to make a donation to the charity each year calculated on the basis of the value of corn.
- **Joseph Franklin Charity**, Charity No. 204185. The income of this charity is from an investment fund.

The income from the Parochial Charities is distributed to those in need who apply for a grant in December each year. Last year (December 2023) the Parochial Charities made a grant of £100 to each of twenty-nine residents.

The Parish Council is continuing to work with specialist solicitors and Parochial Trustees to put in place the necessary protocols to amalgamate the Haddenham Parochial Charities with **Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity** and **Haddenham Educational Charity**. The charity has also received residual funds from the defunct charity and limited company Haddenham Youth & Community Centre to continue to fund youth work in Haddenham.

The proposed new charity scheme

The assets of the individual charities would be transferred to the new charity which will have a broad constitution incorporating the aims of the original charities:

1. To provide financial support to those in need with food and fuel during the winter months.
2. To provide financial support with vocational or educational expenses.
3. To own land at Townside to be protected for use as allotments in the village.
4. To own, manage and improve the land and leased properties at Banks Park.

The process is quite complicated and progress is slow, but briefly to outline what has been achieved and what is needed:

1. The land and assets of the charities at properties at Banks Park and the allotment site valued by a specialist surveyor to ensure that any disposals do not disadvantage those charities. This has resulted in the Reverend John Willis Charity having increased income from the Parish Council for the lease of allotment land.
2. The trustees of each charity have met and agreed in principle to the amalgamation.
3. We have continued to work with an expert solicitor in charity law to advise and liaise with the Charity Commission to make sure the correct legal procedures are followed.
4. We continue to engage with stakeholders to seek their views.
5. A constitution will need to be drafted and agreed for the new charity.
6. Work with the Charity Commission to set up the new charity and appoint trustees.
7. Transfer the assets of the existing charities and wind them up.
8. Get updated / new leases in place for all properties.

Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity (BPRGC)

Haddenham Parish Council is the sole trustee of Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity (BPRGC) which holds the land and properties at Banks Park for the benefit of the community.

Leases

The leases with BPRGC for each of the properties at Banks Park, and the ground rent for the properties is the main income for the charity. The most complex arrangement is that between BPRGC, Haddenham Parish Council (HPC) and the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC), where the Parish Council has different and potentially conflicting responsibilities. We have been seeking legal advice on the best way to set up a new lease for the village hall, new PC office and committee room. This involves solicitors to represent each party and will need the approval of the Charity Commission. The process is taking a lot longer than we originally anticipated but we hope progress will improve in the coming year when staffing levels in the Parish Council office are increased.

Facilities management

The Conference Room continues to provide a useful space for a variety of community groups. We also have held a series of free CPR and defibrillator training events in collaboration with South Central Ambulance and Heartbeat Haddenham.

We have needed to carry out a lot of tree work including the removal of a large diseased tree in front of Banks Cottage.

More new doors have been installed at the village hall, at the side of the main hall and serving the Mable Parkinson room, this just leaves the main door to replace. Repairs to the main hall roof were carried out prior to the installation of the solar panels, and moss has been removed from the tiled roof.

David Truesdale
Chair of Banks Park Recreation Ground Charity

Haddenham Educational Charity

The charity has an income from the investment made following the sale of the Old British School in Churchway. The Old British School was a charity, with a deed of 1851, the original deed being varied over time until 1982 when the sale of the school was authorised the deed was varied to the scheme in existence today. The Trustee of the Charity became Haddenham Parish Council at this time.

Applications for small grants are accepted from Haddenham residents in need of support with pursuing further education, including university, apprenticeships, sports and the arts.

Grants

In 2023 there were fewer grant applications than last year, with only 9 applications received and awards of £200 made to each applicant. The income from the investment has increased in 2023-24 over recent years and the surplus will be reinvested.

The charity is also holding the residual funds following the winding up of Haddenham Youth and Community Centre Charity and has used some of these funds to support the running of the Youth Club with new equipment

David Truesdale

Chair of Haddenham Educational Charity

Haddenham Community Library Report to Haddenham Parish Council

In the last twelve months the library has upgraded the internal lighting, and seen completion of a significant Council funded external refurbishment project. It has also continued to deliver and develop a range of community outreach services.

We also celebrated our 10-year anniversary as a community library – and 50 years since the library first opened.

Funding from the Parish Council (£5000) has helped support a number of these library activities and services to the community, including purchasing of new book stock.

Significant achievements

Library refurbishments and improvements:

- Upgrades to internal lighting in adult areas of library, replacing existing lighting with energy efficient versions, and installation of a new central light, funded from library reserves.
- Refurbishment of library exterior including windows/doors and roofing, undertaken by Bucks Council, improving energy efficiency.
- Garden maintenance and improvements including weeding and replanting of flower beds, supported by local businesses TL&P Local Landscapes and Haddenham Garden Centre.
- Purchase of new furniture for children's area from recycled business furniture supplier.
- Utilising the Repair Café for repairs for library items.

Community support and outreach:

- We celebrated our 10/50 year anniversary with a VIP reception for library supporters including members of the Parish Council, followed by an author panel event (with a capacity audience) and an associated 'daffodil planting' on the grass verge, as well as an ongoing display of archive photos of the library. All have been very well received in the community.
- Embedded regular community activities including storytime, bounce and rhyme, Lego club, knit and knatter and "all things digital" support.
Extended these activities to include including jigsaws in the library, additional Mah Jong sessions, and after-school storytime for primary children.
Supported local charity initiatives such as Macmillan Coffee Morning – hosted in the library.
- Established regular children's craft activity programmes throughout all school holidays, including Summer Reading Challenge.
- Supported visits from local nursery groups to the library, and visited junior school to judge children's competition.
- Introduced a programme of exhibitions by local artists/groups on a rotating basis.

Future Plans

- Continuing refurbishment with redecoration and improvement to back office area.
- Continued expansion of community activities across all age groups, and enhancing contacts with local nurseries, schools, and community groups. We have a

programme of regular topic visits to the library planned with St Mary's from April 2024.

- Participation in any further warm space initiatives

The Haddenham Community Library Trustees and Management thank the Haddenham Parish Council for their continued support.

Prepared by Anna Baldwin and Harriet Craig – Library Managers 04/04/24