

# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL HADDENHAM PARISH MEETING

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 7.00pm

Haddenham Village Hall

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## PRESENT:

Cllrs Mrs Aston, Mr O'Hanlon, Ms A Capp, Mr. Sharp, Mr. Truesdale.

33 members of the public

Assistant Clerk: Mrs J Allman

The meeting was preceded by an informal reception where each committee of the Parish Council presented a written report of its activities throughout the year and Councillors and Co-opted members were present to answer any questions. The written reports are appended.

The following community and sub-committee groups also reported on the work they do in the village:

Haddenham Safe Walking and Cycling Group

Heartbeat Haddenham

Haddenham Community Orchard

Snakemoor Nature Reserve

Haddenham Village Hall – Social Centre User Group Committee.

Haddenham Allotment Committee

A demonstration on the use of defibrillators was performed by Heartbeat Haddenham.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr C Young, Mr T Armitt, Mr T Newton, Mr D Lyons and Mr J Wheeler.
2. The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 were AGREED as a true record and signed.
3. Margaret Aston gave a summary of the events and activities of the council year 2015/16. With a preliminary update on the heating and water supply situation in the village hall.

I expect you will all wonder why Sue Gilbert the Clerk is not here this evening. I am sorry to have to report that her mother died last night and she is obviously having to take time off to attend to everything. It is a difficult time for her but we will give her as much support as we can.

It will now give me opportunity to welcome Jane Allman, who was appointed as Assistant Clerk earlier in the year, and who has stepped in as clerk to take the minutes for this evening, welcome Jane.

I expect some of you will wonder why just the Chairman and Clerk are here at the table. We had a training session for Parish Councillors earlier in the year given by someone from Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils and were advised this was the form.

As all the Chairman of the various Committees have written reports on their particular responsibilities which are available at the door I am just giving a roundup of some of the projects which we have achieved during the year

The railings around the village hall site were looking in need of attention and some repair. After long discussions and advice we decided the best and most cost effective remedy was to replace them. They do certainly make the site look better and I hope they will last as long as the previous ones.

We have three village ponds, Rudd's, Banks and Church End. Both Rudd's and Church End ponds were in need of some work, the former needed a complete clean out and Church End pond required some major work to the bank. I am pleased to announce that this work was undertaken and has considerably improved both ponds.

During the year we have decided to form two new committees. The Community Facilities Committee, which includes representative from all the Sports Clubs and Art and is in the process of discussing how the 106 money which is earmarked for sport and recreation should be spent. The personnel Committee will be involved in staffing issues.

The Old Medical Centre has been empty for several years and I am pleased to report that Stephen Gregory has bought the building from the NHS and is in the process of renovating it to provide a Fitness Centre. We wish him well. The Day Centre part of the village Hall is also now not required as a Day Centre and we are in discussions with the County Council as to its future. As I expect you all know the Churchyard will be finally closed in November. We will then be responsible for finding land for a new burial ground. This could be costly to the Parish.

We received resignations from two Parish Councillors during the year, Lindsey Poole and Rachael Martin, due to pressures of work. We thank them for their contribution and wish them well.

I am pleased to announce that last Monday we welcomed a new member to the Council, Amanda Capp. Amanda has lived in the village for over two years and is keen to take part in the community.

This has been a busy and difficult year for the Council with all the problem planning issues. I will leave any further mention on this to David Truesdale who is willing to give an update and further information after my report.

As I have said it has been an exceptionally busy year particularly for Sue Gilbert. She has done incredibly well to achieve all she has done and I know at times it has been very stressful getting all the papers together on time. She seems to have always remained cheerful though I do wonder how!!! We are so lucky with both our Clerks whose commitment to the Council has been brilliant and I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to both of them.

My thanks too to the Councillors for their support and commitment, I would like to mention David Truesdale for all his work regarding planning. Without his professional knowledge and contacts I do not know how the Council would have dealt with some of the difficult issues we have been faced with. Also David O'Hanlon for bringing the Council into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the accounts.

## **Planning Update**

Mr D Truesdale gave an update on the major planning applications, including the Haddenham Airfield site, Peking Rendezvous, Rectory homes at Stanbridge and Dollicott housing sites. Sainsbury's application at Chiltern house was discussed and the reason for the objection was stated as the loss of eighteen small businesses and the loss of employment for Haddenham this would cause.

Neighbourhood plan/Glebe site

We are still awaiting the Secretary of State's decision on the Glebe site.

What is next for the Neighbourhood Plan? A review and rewrite of chapter six.

AVDC, the local planning authority, is due to publish the new local plan in June and Haddenham will be a strategic housing area. The Parish council is looking for volunteers to help build a new neighbourhood plan, working with planning consultants to protect the volunteers. All planning application approvals after April 2013 will count towards these housing totals. The reserved matters application for the business area of the Airfield planning application has recently been submitted.

District councillor Judy Brandis stated that she has made the district aware that a mixture of light industry and retail should be compatible to the number of residential dwellings.

Mr Brian Foster, AVDC councillor, asserted that he is liaising with the case office.

#### **4. Open forum**

Residents discussed McCormick's proposed replacement of perimeter fencing, a meeting has been arranged on Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> May between the resident and McCormick's representative to discuss the proposal.

Public concern was expressed by a local resident for the ongoing safety issues concerning the Woodways Clay crossing junction. Margaret Aston asserted that she would get the cabinet member to deal with the issue. It was suggested a roundabout would be a solution however there was some disagreement. Judy suggested a VAS may be a solution. Roderick Flood asked when a full transport review was happening, Mr D O'Hanlon confirmed that once the Housing strategic plan has been released then it would be more relevant to initiate a village traffic review.

Residents discussed the parking situation at St Mary's school site, Mr Sharp suggested looking into the feasibility of the compulsory purchase of part of County Farm for a car park.

Sheerstock parking restrictions were discussed, Margaret Aston confirmed she is meeting with Chiltern railway and B.C.C to discuss a parking solution and possible funding.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of Haddenham Parish Council

5<sup>th</sup> May 2017

# SNAKEMOOR LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

May 2015 - 2016

## Detailed Report for AGM of HPC 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016

### Work, events and discussions

- May 21 Rainbows visited Snakemoor. Andy Hardy gave the 24 girls a talk about the reserve and how to use, enjoy and respect the birds and plants. Andy gave them a walk around and with clip boards they made their own record of the visit.
- May 28 Robyn removed wood thrown in the pond. This was the hazel wigwam erected to encourage honeysuckle to grow near the pond that I re-established. The elm tree near the pond was propped from leaning over. Jim had done a good cut and made a temporary repair to the seat near the meadow.
- May Harry Makepeace returned this year to spray the path weeds.
- June Andrew and Julia Gordon kindly donated £200 to Snakemoor to show their appreciation for all the work done at Snakemoor.
- July 16 Jim and Robyn removed the wall stones thrown into the ditch at the water entrance and transferred them for use on the small weir near to the meadow. Jim adjusted the entrance gate but says the hinge post needs renewing.
- Aug 1 With the knowledge that the work of volunteers at Snakemoor contributed to our Best Kept Village award we had an enthusiastic work group. But of course we always do. Our volunteers were Ros Hawarth, Steven Sharpe, Alison Watt, Jim Joiner, Tony & Ann Warris, John Wilson, Andy Hardy, Martin Bygate, Chris Young, Rob, Sarah with Eddie & Maggie, Keith Milmer, Chris and Robyn. Keith as Webmaster to Haddenham.net; Chris provided well appreciated refreshments. Much nettle pulling (removing) done on the pond banks, around the fruit trees and in the ditch by the Weir. Ross tied loose Willow ends of the Willow path to make them grow higher. Overhanging Elder and Willow branches were removed. The elm trees were cleared around as were the seats. A leaning Hornbeam tree near the entrance was rope tied to hold it up. With this amount of tidying and Jim having cut the paths last week the reserve is looking good.
- Aug 4 Michael cut the meadow. Bill Piers and Robyn installed a new stone weir to replace the original. The latter leaked water.
- Aug 8 Michael returned to clear the cut hay from the meadow. Robyn mowed around the fruit trees. I also made a good start to creating a new path. This will go from the Elm tree behind the Willow path along the bank of the ditch through to the weir.
- Aug 19 John Wilson, Peter Quilliesh and Robyn forked hay from the new path and levelled it at the weir end. The path is now completed and will be suitable for cutting by Jim (when the weeds grow). We now wait for water to fill the ditch and spill over the weir.
- Oct Jobs done:  
Mark Nicolson cut down a dangerous willow in the NW corner. Have since agreed he will cut down another dead willow in the NW corner. This is leaning over the path so I have

put up a warning notice at each end of the path. Mark will remove a third willow at side of W path and 4 ash near SE corner of meadow.

Mark gave Snakemoor two substantial steel seat ends. With oak slats that I have ordered this seat will replace the seat on E of meadow.

Michael 'topped' the meadow. I repaired a further leak in the stone weir.

Bill Piers with me cut down two small silver birch (SW corner) and a hawthorn (W side).

- Nov Bill refurbished the 2<sup>nd</sup> bench seat on the west side of reserve.
- Jan 8 Mark Nicholson cut down and made safe a large dead willow on the west side path and another large branch that had fallen over the path near the ditch.
- Feb 15 Mike Kershaw, Bill Piers and Robyn installed new seat to replace the Don Jeffkins seat on the E side of the meadow. Mark Nicolson donated the seat supports and Peter Barns of Watlington the excellent oak slats. Jim fabricated the seat.
- Feb 27 Much work done this morning by Guy & Alec Redshaw, Brian Fattorini, Ross Haworth, Wendy Brazier, Andrew & Mary Hearsey, Ann & Tony Warris, Jim Joiner, Sarah Heydon with Rob McLoughlin & Maggie, Bill Piers, Roger Rowe, Chris and Robyn.  
Jobs done: Large fallen Willow over pond removed, Elder trees along ditch at station end removed, 4 Black Poplar provided by AVDC planted (female tree at station end and then alternate male and female), snowdrops moved to along ditch and at reserve entrance, rubbish picked up from adjacent field at entrance, holes dug or re-dug ready for 3 Sweet Chestnut trees, dead lying wood removed to wood heaps, ditch cleared, cherry saplings removed and notice board cleaned. Refreshments provided by Chris.
- March Alison Hollowell kindly donated £200 to the reserve in appreciation of knowing that she was supporting a very worthwhile project.
- April 3 Pot grown Sweet Chestnut planted. David Hollick of Seasons Landscapes kindly donated these.
- April 17 Haddenham Horticultural Society visited for a conducted walk around. We finished with mulled apple and cakes provided by Chris. The society kindly donated £76.

Robyn Thorogood  
Volunteer Manager of Snakemoor  
April 2016.

## **Report for the Parish Meeting on 6 May 2016 from Haddenham Safe Walking & Cycling Group**

1. Thame-Haddenham Cycleway: we have been waiting for the Feasibility Study for this cycleway for a year. The study, made by Sustrans and financed by both Bucks CC & Oxfordshire CC, is said to be at present with the two county councils. We have been told that we will be able to comment on it thereafter. We are meeting at the end of the month to do so.
2. Footpath along the edge of the airfield from the small playground to the gate onto the A418: Lands Improvement have met their obligation to create this path, along with some landscaping to shield the airfield from the main road. They have agreed to fund signposts for the path. Robyn Thorogood, Jim Robinson and Brian Bowman have worked for many years to get this path and they intend to call it "Grand Prix Circuit", referring to the use of the airfield in 1949 for 4 national race meetings.
3. Pedestrian Crossing on Woodways: our Secretary, Angela Matthews, has been a key support to Emma in achieving the crossing.
4. Wychemt Way: 41 gates were installed by May 2015. There are still 8 stiles where the land owners have refused permission to change the stiles to gates. Jim Robinson, with the assistance of Robyn and Brian, is currently planning to install 5 gates on the path from the airfield gate on the A418(see above) to Chearsley after discussion with Lincoln College. We will then have spent all the funds which we obtained from the LAF etc.
5. Haddenham-Aylesbury Cycleway: with the help of Tom Bucknell and Graeme Kimber, I am in negotiation with 2 farmers over the route at Haddenham Low. Meanwhile there is a possibility that the New Homes Bonus might pay for the cycleway from Haddenham Post Office to the start of the footway on the A418 at the road to Cuddington.
6. Please do not park on the Pavement: these signs are available from the Parish Office and have been used by many residents.
7. Haddenham Pavements Survey: Angela Matthews organised us into completing a detailed survey of our pavements with photos. A summary of the survey was given to the Parish Council, with priorities for action. A copy of the full survey is on our display.
8. 20s Plenty: Andrew Gordon is monitoring the Bucks experiment of a 20 mph zone in Askett. We support a 20 mph zone for the whole of Haddenham in the interests of pedestrian, cyclist and child safety.
9. Foot & cycle path from Dollicott to the station: we have removed one obstacle to this path on the airfield, but we are pressing both developers to achieve the path in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan.
10. Danger areas in and near Haddenham: we are concerned about the failure of Transport for Bucks to introduce safety measures at Clay Cross where accidents are even more frequent: we deplore the failure of Oxon CC to cater for the safety of cyclists at the Thame roundabout. We have been in touch with both councils on these and other matters. Sign the petition at <https://www.change.org/p/buckinghamshire-county-council-transport-for-bucks-make-haddenham-clay-cross-junction-safe>
11. **We consider it urgent that Haddenham Parish Council set up a Transport Review as detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan.** We wish to take part as soon as possible.

Cynthia Floud, Chair, Haddenham Safe Walking & Cycling Group.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF HADDENHAM VILLAGE HALL**  
**SOCIAL CENTRE USER GROUP COMMITTEE**  
**TO THE**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

This report represents an update of the work carried out by the Executive Committee of the User Group of the Haddenham Village Hall Social Centre since the Annual Parish Meeting held in 2015.

Activities continue to flourish and the hall is regularly used by village organisations and the web site (<http://www.bucksinfo.net/haddenham-vh/>), continues to show the level of activities within the Village Hall.

The regular use of the Walter Rose Room by Bucks County Council's Children Centre continues albeit on a more informal basis. We are awaiting for decisions from Bucks County Council as to the future plans for the Day Centre area

Having carefully built up funds over the last few years, the Committee felt they were in a position to continue making further improvements and this year lights in the Foyer and Bar area were replaced with LED lighting.

We have had and are still having considerable problems with regard to gas and water supplies and electrical repairs and it seems that as soon as a problem is solved, almost immediately another problem arises. This is causing frustration and taking up a considerable amount of our time we can only offer apologies to those on the receiving end of these problems. On a more positive side the curtains in the main hall have been rehung and a microwave purchased.

Our thanks also go to the Parish Council for their continued support in the areas for which they are responsible and we await the start of the work, once a quote has been accepted, for the work to be carried out in the Walter Rose Room following the window survey made earlier in the year.

Our AGM is to be held in the lounge of the Village Hall on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May and all are welcome.

JOHN HEYDON – Chairman.

## **Haddenham Parish Council – Annual Parish Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

### **Finance & General Purposes Committee Report**

#### **Banks Park Trust Report**

The role of the F&GP Committee is broadly to: set and monitor the budget and accounts; manage all Parish Council income, expenditure; overview of all PC business including staffing, assets, policies & procedures; deal with all matters not covered by the other Committees. F&GP meets monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month except for the recess months of August and December,

The Banks Park Trust manages the land and assets of which the PC is the trustee. During the year, Banks Park Trust business has been undertaken immediately following F&GP with the same Parish Councillors.

The year's principal activities have included:

1. Managing the 2015/16 budget and setting the 2016/17 budget and precept. We have taken forward the detailed review of the PC's approach to accounting started last year in order to place the PC in a strong position to face future challenges in local government.
2. Appointing a new internal auditor.
3. Agreeing to set up two new PC Committees for personnel and for community facilities; the latter had its first meeting in January 2016.
4. Recruiting an Assistant Parish Clerk.
5. Negotiating a devolved service agreement with Bucks County Council and taken over responsibility for grounds maintenance along highways.
6. Establishing clearer separation of the business of F&GP as a PC Committee, and of Banks Park as a trust.
7. Reviewing staff pension enrolment options and agreed to join The Peoples Pension scheme for the financial year 2016/17.
8. Initiating and hosting a Parish Councillor training event for surrounding Parishes held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
9. Assisting Heartbeat Haddenham with the deployment of defibrillators.
10. Commissioning a review of various older leases and management agreements held by the PC.

11. Making recommendations to AVDC for the use of S106 resources earmarked for leisure and recreation arising from larger planning applications.
12. Agreeing to take responsibility for St Mary's churchyard when it closes as a burial ground and to help plan the style and location of a replacement facility.
13. Negotiating and approving the assignment of the NHS lease on the old medical centre to Fitlife Ltd for use as a gym.
14. Commencing discussion about the future of BCC's day centre in the village hall.
15. Funding major maintenance and improvements to ponds at Rudds Lane and Church End.
16. Funding the replacement of the railings around Banks Park and tree work around the perimeter.
17. Undertaking condition surveys of Village Hall windows and of Banks Cottage (dentist) and ordered repairs.
18. Funding legal representation for Aston Road planning inquiry and for judicial review.

## **Budget setting 2016/17**

The Precept set by Haddenham Parish Council (HPC) has increased significantly over the past two years, and residents will, quite naturally, want to understand why this is the case, and how the additional money is being spent.

There are a number of quite separate factors that have contributed to the increase which we set out below.

### **2015/6**

You will be aware that there are major cut-backs in town hall spending as part of the government's policy of reducing public expenditure, yet at the same time Parish and Town Councils are being urged to assume new responsibilities and new ways of working as part of the government's policy of Localism.

As part of the former policy Central Government has capped the Council Tax increases that can be raised without a referendum by the higher tiers of local government (County & District) and there is consistent speculation that capping may be applied in the near future to town and even parish councils.

The present reality of the caps on higher tier councils has obliged them to devolve responsibility for some of their former functions to Parish Councils in order to preserve services as Parish Councils still have the ability to raise the funds to pay for them.

The future likelihood of capping for Parish Councils has obliged them to take a more forward-thinking approach to how they set budgets, and beginning in 2015/6 this has been the approach of Haddenham Parish Council (HPC).

For many years HPC's policy was to minimise increases in the Precept. This policy involved not setting aside funds for large foreseeable expenses but instead raising the money only when incurring the cost was unavoidable.

Whatever the merits of this policy, the prospect of capping in the future makes it untenable as HPC would be unable to "spike" the Precept for one year to cover large repair bills when needed. HPC also takes the view that it is a surer basis for financial management to set aside funds for foreseeable repairs and to hold the NALC-recommended Contingency Reserve level and this practice commenced in 2015/6.

The largest foreseeable cost the village faces is the renewal (or, when residents prefer, retirement) of street light columns. Most of the street light columns on the village were installed just over 30 years ago and these columns have a useful life of 30 years. Today 82% of the columns are either over their anticipated useful life of 30 years, or the lamps are mounted on poles which will need to be replaced.

Following the practice of other Councils in the UK, HPC has put in place a programme to reduce this percentage from the 82% today to between 15% & 20% in 15 years' time. Over this period the columns have to be regularly inspected to ensure they are structurally sound and safe. These inspections drive the replacement programme with Franklin Road being one of the first streets to now have new columns with LED lanterns. In some cases the PC elicits residents' preference as to whether the column is replaced (which costs £1,800) or retired (which still costs £1,400). The PC is responsible for 220 of Haddenham's street lights (not those on private roads nor main roads).

The combination of beginning to build earmarked reserves for specific needs and of bringing the Contingency Reserve up to the recommended level, together required HPC to set aside £31,469 in 2015/6, with around 50% of that amount being attributable to the Street Column Replacement Programme.

2015/6 was a year when one of the foreseeable repairs, for which no money had been set aside in earlier years, could no longer be avoided. HPC had to use money from the Contingency Reserve to remove the sludge from Rudds Pond and carry out repairs to the banks of Church End Pond. Together this cost £16,699. This means in the next financial year we have to replace those reserves; a big expense in a single year. The new Pond Repairs Reserve Fund prevents any

repetition by setting aside a small amount each year. So when the pond needs dredging again in around 20 years' time the funds will be there to do so.

Establishing "sinking funds" or reserves is common good practice and is a sensible change for HPC to have made; however, the timing of the change was precipitated by the prospect of capping which would have made the change costlier to implement (it would have entailed a referendum) while at the same time making the previous policy untenable. Therefore, HPC had no option but to move to this more forward-looking policy this year.

The present reality of capping for higher tier Councils also added to the Precept and will continue to do so as higher tier Councils devolve more responsibilities and costs to Parishes as a means to preserve services.

It is, in short, an exercise in robbing Peter to pay Paul that flows from the changes in Council funding arrangements.

The largest item on our Council Tax bills is Bucks County Council (BCC) (70% including the Adult Care extra item) compared to 8% for the Parish. BCC also receives funding from Central Government which two years ago was a third of their income. Central government cuts to funding mean it is now only a quarter and their Council Tax increase is capped at 2%. Over the next several years BCC's central Government funding will fall by approximately £10 million per annum yet they already receive the lowest Revenue Support Grant per capita of any Council in England.

In December 2014, Martin Tett, the Conservative Leader of BCC said "*I think we've reached the tipping point ... where we can't just eat away at our back office services any more. We are going to have to do things in terms of home-to-school transport, cutbacks in a whole range of areas that people are going to really start noticing now.*"

*"We are going to have to make cuts of another £46m in the next three years, and those cuts are going to be felt by people."*

Last year BCC devolved responsibility to parishes for cutting the grass verges and some other highway maintenance tasks such as hedge cutting, cleaning road signs and dealing with fly-posting. BCC devolved this responsibility because the severe cuts in its funding mean that it does not have resources to carry out this non-essential (i.e. there is no safety requirement for it) maintenance. In 2016/17 BCC will only be carrying out 4 cuts of the verges in parishes that didn't take up the devolution offer. Haddenham's devolution agreement is sufficient to fund 6 cuts a year. HPC has decided to increase this to 10 cuts because of the lengthening growing season in recent years. The cost of the additional 4 cuts has to be met HPC. With capping by central government and the complete removal of central grant funding, BCC anticipates needing to devolve more duties to the Parish in the coming year along with the financial burden that entails.

Because of the asymmetry between BCC's budgets and HPC's, whenever they devolve to HPC what is to them a small percentage of their budget, it is a major increase in HPC's budget even though the cost to residents is the same. As stated earlier, it is an exercise in robbing Peter to pay Paul, but as was found with the grass cutting it can have the benefit of improving the service experienced by the community by being handled and provided locally.

These were the main items that resulted in the increase in the Precept for 2015/6, a year in which HPC also had to accommodate the impact of changes in legislation regarding pensions and rectify a significant deficiency in the resourcing of the Clerk's Office including the recruitment of an Assistant Clerk as the workload increased dramatically. However, around half of the impact of these two items was covered by net savings and efficiencies from the rest of our operation.

In 2014/5 HPC's longstanding policy of minimising the Precept resulted in Haddenham having a per household charge 37% below the average for the largest communities (the top quartile by population) in Aylesbury Vale. With these changes in 2015/6 the Precept was 2.7% above the average.

**2016/7**

With this new policy in place, and running the services we were required to in 2015/6, the Precept we would have been setting for the coming year would have been a small reduction of £1,194(-0.8%) or a reduction of 0.7pence per week for a Band D household.

So why the increase of 84%?

Firstly, as mentioned above, BCC's difficult budgetary predicament means they will be devolving more services to the Parish this year that, had they not been capped, would have continued to appear as part of their Council Tax charge. We have been advised to earmark £23,000 for the coming year in advance of a decision as to which service(s) to devolve.

As is common with devolved services there is initially some contribution to our costs from the higher tier Council and this year the contribution from BCC for grass cutting will be reduced, as expected, by £2,090.

We also heard from the Church that the Churchyard will be full and closed to new burials from November 2016. The Church has used its right to ask the PC to take on responsibility for the maintenance of a closed churchyard which the PC has agreed to do. The alternative was to allow AVDC to take care of this, and the village residents would have been charged a special item by them for this. A new budget has been set up for this new responsibility.

The closure of the Churchyard also means that Haddenham needs a new burial ground. It also means that the Parish Council has to become an active Burial Authority. Land needs to be acquired and a site prepared, so budget provision has been made to enable a start to be made. If the Secretary of State does decide to approve the planning application for the Glebe site, then the Diocese of Oxford has promised to provide a 2.5 ha plot there for a new burial ground but by far the largest costs are in site preparation rather than the acquisition of the land. HPC's most likely approach is to obtain a loan in order to spread the costs over several years. The impact of the closure of the churchyard in terms of our taking on the upkeep and providing a replacement will, in the coming year, be a charge of £26,500.

The past year has seen also an unexpectedly high expenditure on legal fees to instruct barristers to represent the Parish Council at the Public Inquiry into the Lightwood Strategic planning application at Aston Road. This expenditure was required because AVDC's Strategic Management Development Committee voted in favour of the application despite it conflicting with our Neighbourhood Plan with the result that AVDC's own legal team spoke at the Inquiry in favour of the planning application in support of the applicants. The PC also had to instruct barristers to advise on defending the application for Judicial Review of the Neighbourhood Plan. These costs ate into the reserves which now need to be replenished. Costs were broadly the same for each of these two actions and in total will be just shy of £50,000, the impact being on the Precept for 2016/7

With the demise of the Neighbourhood Plan and the likely significantly increased housing allocation for Haddenham in the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan a budget has been included to produce an updated Neighbourhood Plan. It is anticipated that this will require professional help and the budget has been set accordingly. This will cost between £25,000 and £30,000. Any new referendum has to be funded by the District Council.

All these additional pressures and responsibilities that have come to the Parish Council have meant that, instead of the slight reduction on a like-for-like basis, the precept for 2016/17 has been increased to £302,520. This equates to an increase of £1.20 per week for a household in band D. The increase is from a low base after many years of low or nil rises, and brings us into line with the other larger parishes in the area. The Parish Council constantly endeavours to find alternative sources of funding to supplement the precept for major projects such as the £86,000 grant from AVDC's New Homes Bonus for a new zebra crossing on Woodways.

More details on the setting of the precept can be obtained by contacting Sue Gilbert the Parish Clerk.

## Environment Committee Chairman's Report 2016

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The year 2015-16 has been a busy one for the Environment Committee with several large projects to manage some of which have been completed and others that are still in progress.

### **Ponds**

The Parish Council owns three of the ponds in Haddenham at Church End, Rudds Lane and Banks Road. In 2014/15 the PC was receiving an increasing number of complaints about the build-up of silt in Rudds Pond and its effect on the pond wildlife. The problem the PC encountered when trying to deal with this was that the silt needed to be disposed of as contaminated waste which proved to be a costly exercise. After trying for many months to find a contractor to carry out the work and any potential sources of funding the work was commissioned to Ponds UK Ltd and the decision was made to use some of the general contingency reserve to pay for it. The trees and shrubs around the pond were also cut right back to tidy up the area and reduce the amount of debris falling into the pond.

### **Woodways Zebra Crossing**

Following a residents' campaign started in 2011 and a feasibility study in 2013 the Parish Council applied to AVDC for funding under the New Homes Bonus scheme for the installation of zebra crossing on Woodways. In January 2015 it was confirmed that the funding would be made available. Since then the action group, the Parish Council and Transport for Buckinghamshire have been working together to confirm the scope of the scheme, keep the costs within the grant funding and commission contractors to carry out the work. Delays due to other commitments at TfB have extended the time to get the project started but it is anticipated that at long last the implementation work will start at the end of May with a road closure in the first week of June to coincide with the school holiday.

### **On Street Parking**

The problem of on street parking of cars on roads near to the station continues to increase with the Parish Council receiving a large number of complaints. In May 2015 the PC carried out an informal consultation of the residents on the affected roads to gauge their views on approaching Bucks County Council with a proposal for some yellow lines on their streets and on Thame Road. There was a large response to the consultation with a significant majority in favour of yellow lines. The PC then applied to the LAF for funding for a feasibility study and formal consultation, this was initially approved, but due to cuts in public spending was withdrawn. The Parish Council is now trying to obtain further funding from LAF to continue with this project.

