

The Hanney's

East Hanney and West Hanney

Annual Parish Meetings

Wednesday 16th April 2025 at 7:30pm

Olde Hanney Room

With drinks and nibbles after

Minutes

In attendance: 20 members of the public, 6 members of East Hanney Parish Council, 4 members of West Hanney Parish Council, Clerk to East Hanney Parish Council and Clerk to West Hanney Parish Council.

- 1) Apologies
 - a) Cllr P Packham, Rev Alex Gill and Hilary Cakebread
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of the Joint East and West Hanney Annual Parish Meeting held on 17th April 2024 – the minutes were approved.
- 3) Matters Arising from the aforementioned minutes.
 - a) None
- 4) Report from Chairman of EHPC

The East Hanney Parish Council Chairman welcomed everyone to the Joint Annual Parish Meeting. He expressed his thanks to those attending and said that he would not be giving much of a report as he would like to use the opportunity to say thank you to all volunteers from all groups and associations for the time they have given to make Hanney a good place to live. Also, the members of East Hanney Parish Council passed and present for all the help and support he had received as chairman a position that he was relinquishing in May. He went on to thank the residents of East Hanney for the support they had given to the Parish Council. Thanks for corroborating on various matters that could have an effect on both villages were expressed to West Hanney Parish Council.

- 5) Report from Chairman of WHPC

Welcome to our third joint Annual Parish Meeting. Holding a joint meeting makes sense as many of our community facilities, activities, clubs, and societies are shared by residents of East Hanney and West Hanney and many of the challenges we face are similar across both our communities.

At our last Annual Parish Meeting, I reported on the planning application to construct and operate Manor Solar Farm on farmland to the east of Denchworth. Although the planning application was refused, the developer appealed this decision. The appeal was heard by a Planning Inspector on 11th March with a site visit on 11th March. The planning inspector concluded the benefits of the solar farm in terms of renewable energy generated outweighed the harms and granted planning permission. As a grid connection is available next year, we can anticipate the construction work will start imminently, with construction traffic being routed via Cobweb Barn Industrial Estate at Lyford.

Detailed Planning Conditions have been agreed with the developer and both West Hanney Parish Council and Denchworth Meeting will endeavour to ensure these conditions are fully complied with.

Separate to the planning process, both parishes have agreed an index linked Community Benefit Fund to be paid by the developer over the operational life of the solar farm.

After 40yrs, or sooner if the solar farm ceases to generate electricity, the solar farm will be fully decommissioned, and the farmland restored.

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West Hanney Neighbourhood Plan failed to protect our lowland vale landscape from this development. Please take the opportunity to enjoy the walk to Denchworth whilst it remains unspoilt and take a moment to listen to the skylarks singing.

After the wet winter and spring of 2024, named storms continued to have an impact on West Hanney in the autumn and over the winter. The road to Denchworth was frequently flooded. The parish council would like to thank Chris Surman for monitoring the flooding on the road to Denchworth, informing Highways when the road is deemed to be impassable and together with Graham Young at Botney Meadows for putting out the road closed signs.

In November, Storm Bert brought flood water from Letcombe Brook down School Road to add to the surface water flooding West Hanney.

Church Street was also badly affected by surface water flooding, although no properties were inundated. The parish council together with officers from VWHDC and OCC are investigating possible solutions, but none are proving easy to implement.

The parish council paid for the cleaning of the roadside gullies and catch pits on Church Street, Main Street and around West Hanney Green. We are very grateful for the continuing work of Hanney Flood Group and support the recently formed Future Flood Resilience Forum to better understand the cause of flooding in both Letcombe Brook and Childrey Brook catchments. It remains imperative that riparian owners keep their ditches clear of any obstructions to help surface water flow through West Hanney, from south to north.

High winds from Storm Darragh severely damaged several trees at Headings Pond, that sadly have needed to be felled. The parish council are seeking to replace these trees with three specimen trees that will provide year-round interest and support biodiversity including pollinators.

Thames Water conducted a survey of one third of properties in West Hanney to determine if surface water from these properties was entering the foul water system. The survey did not find this to be a problem.

In January a burst sewer pipe led to a major sewerage operation in West Hanney with 14 tankers being used to relieve the pressure on the system. These tankers caused some damage to our village green and grass verges. Thames Water have undertaken to repair the damage.

We are fortunate to have our community woodland, community meadow and community orchard in West Hanney and look forward to establishing a new pond in the community woodland.

Paul Sayers co-ordinates our team of woodland volunteers. A huge thank you to Paul and to all the volunteers who turn out to help keep our community woodland accessible for everyone to enjoy. Paul will be giving his report on the community woodland shortly.

West Hanney Community Speedwatch Group volunteers continue to operate sessions to detect speeding drivers, help educate them to reduce speed and improve the road safety of all users of our roads. Cllr Ahmed Farrag co-ordinates the group and is always keen to hear from anyone who would like to help.

West Hanney Allotment Gardens

We continue to have several vacant allotment plots – if you would like to take on an allotment please contact Barbara Martin, our Parish Clerk. Water is included in the annual rent which is £11 for a full-sized plot and £5.50 for a half-sized plot is very good value. Our allotmenters are happy to provide free advice, support and encouragement.

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6) Reports from local bodies and representatives

Community Woodland presented by Paul Sayers –

BACKGROUND

Just a reminder that the woodland was planted in the 1990's by Nigel Eady of Church Farm under the EU Set-Aside scheme to take land out of cereal production because of a perceived surplus. It was gifted to WHPC by his estate in 2012. The adjoining Church Farm Meadow came to WHPC in 2017 as part of a 'Section 106' agreement with Sweetcroft, the developers of St James Way.

Both were skilfully negotiated for us by Chris Surman, then Chairman of WHPC.

The Woodland covers 27 acres [11ha] with 1.6 miles [2.6 km] of rides. The Meadow covers 7 acres [3 ha].

COMMUNITY WOODLAND

Like last year, this has been another exceptionally wet autumn and winter with much of the woodland inaccessible until the last few weeks. There have been large areas of standing water with resident moorhens and mallards and substantial lengths of rides churned up by footfall so badly that even the most intrepid dog walkers eventually would not venture along. However the northern third, closest to the village and this side of the bank, which is an old field boundary running from the gate into Cow Lane across to the Forest School, has been much drier.

MAINTENANCE

We aim to hold regular monthly working parties throughout the autumn and winter; these mainly concentrate on cutting back scrub encroaching onto the rides and also swamping the areas which have been kept clear for wildflowers. We only had to cancel one working party, in September, due to bad weather. However, the ground conditions have limited where we can work so we have had to concentrate our efforts in the drier northern section, along the bank and under the powerline. Fortunately, in March it had dried out enough for us to tackle a very overgrown and churned up section of the western ride between the Forest School and the powerline.

Des Thomas has continued to cut the rides for us when ground conditions permit.

Many of the ash trees at the northern end are continuing to die due to ash die-back disease.

There is little problem with litter but any which does appear, usually bottles or cans, is quickly picked up either by me or other dog walkers.

Wildlife

Despite the wet winter, the orchids did reasonably well last year, it will be interesting to see how they fare after a second very wet winter. The cowslips are doing well this spring and those which my wife Kay grew from seed gathered in the woodland are now well established and spreading.

Like last year, after waiting without luck for drier conditions, I carried out the annual nest box check in January. In places my Ladder was standing in 6 inches of water! There are now 42 nest boxes [plus a couple in need of serious repairs or replacement], 30 of which I have built and installed over the last few years, the remainder were erected by Dudley Iles. Thirty two contained bird nests or nesting material with a further 3 containing mouse nests.

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Deer are sometimes seen in the woodland, mainly muntjac but sometimes roe. There seem to be more runs and tracks than there used to be, probably because of fewer dogs and humans due to the wet conditions. There are rabbits in the drier parts and occasionally I see a hare or smell a fox. I also found dead weasel which may have drowned as it showed no signs of injury.

CHURCH FARM MEADOW

Alan Cottrell kindly cut the meadow for us again. This is essential maintenance as cutting and removing the hay maintains the open nature of the area and, because we do not use any fertilisers or pesticides, it slowly reduces the fertility. This decreases the competition from grasses allowing the wildflowers to increase and it is noticeable year by year how successful this has been.

The trees along the northern edge planted with Wenda Reynolds legacy are now well established and did not need any watering over the summer. The only maintenance they will require this year is to loosen the tree ties to allow the trunks to expand. Because they are planted on the tops of ridges of the medieval ridge and furrow, they 'keep their feet dry' even if water sits in the furrows.

The overgrown dumping strip to the north of our boundary, full of rubble abandoned by Sweetcroft after building St James Way, continues to be a source of weeds and again I have dug out a number of hemlock plants encroaching on the meadow.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the volunteers who turn out for the working parties, Des Thomas for mowing the Woodland rides and Alan Cottrell for cutting the meadow.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

By David Corps

The 24 apple and pear trees planted by West Hanney PC are doing very well and should provide fruit this year. As are the trees planted in memory of her late husband by Helen Cavendish.

HANNEY FLOOD GROUP

By Clive Manville

There are some signs of progress in seeing where the flooding is coming from in both villages. The flood group volunteers are constantly clearing drains and ditches in the villages.

HANNEY WAR MEMORIAL HALL by Graham Garner – Hall Chairman

We have replaced the original floors in the toilets, and had the potholes repaired in the car park. We have also replaced the lighting in the hall.

With regards to the two changing rooms that the hall has, we have been informed that there is S106 monies available for replenishing changing rooms by EHPC. After looking into this and getting quotes it will cost approx. £9k to refurbish the two rooms and showers, approx. half of which could be paid for by the S106 funding. As these rooms are available to all residents of the villages the chairman asked if the two parish councils would be prepared to help with some of the funding.

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ST JAMES CHURCH by Stuart Cakebread

NEW INCUMBENT

Our new incumbent was appointed in 2024 and officially started his role in January 2025. As it is Alec Gill he was already well known to us. Support for him among the 4 parishes which make up the Vale Benefice was overwhelming, and we were delighted that he had applied for the post. The hunt is now on for his successor as associated vicar. The great news for the village is that he has chosen to make the Vicarage in Hanney his base and so for the first time in almost 15 years the Vicar is again lives in Hanney.

VILLAGE SERVICES

St James Church is very conscious of its roots in the village community. Each year we Baptise village children [and sometimes adults], marry our young [and the not so young] couples and provide a fitting celebration of lives well lived that have run their course. It is always moving to see family and friends coming together on these important occasions.

A bit like the Windmill Theatre during the war it is St James' boast that we never close. Our church is open 12/7/365 and we know it provides a quiet reflective space where villagers can light a candle or just sit and be still.

We also provide services for the community as a whole to celebrate the great Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter as well as special services to commemorate national events. We calculate the numerically about 1/3rd of the village joins us in celebrating Christmas and this year we re-introduced a carol service inside the church. It was a wonderful evening with music provided by our talented musicians and singers and readings from a variety of texts and poems. Our 'carols around the crib' once again overspilled from the great barn at Philberds Manor and witnessed a wonderful variety of kings, Josephs, Mary's shepherds and associated farmyard animals.

We continue our policy of giving every penny from our 4 Christmas services to those in need. This year through our villager's generosity we were able to donate nearly £1000 split between Wantage & Grove Foodbank and St-Martin-in-the-Fields Fund which makes grants to help provide long-term secure accommodation and prevent homelessness.

CHURCH RE-ORDERING

We are engaged in an exercise to make our building more flexible in keeping with modern needs and demands and we are very aware that we are the only public space in West Hanney. The Diocese moves in very slow steps, but we believe we are very close to having approval allowing us to start and we received tenders for the works. We shall be undertaking some works to the interior, including improved storage, refurbishments to the Tower making it a more usable room when bells are not being rung and most importantly installing a loo in the church.

THE CHURCHYARD

We are hoping that this year we shall begin to see the first real fruits of our re-wilding of parts of the churchyard. It has been a learning curve, and we knew that it would take time, but we anticipate that this year will see a greater profusion of wildflowers and a return of more fauna.

We have been examining options for future burials as the "dog leg" plot is filling up, work on the first of these is now underway. The PCC is committed to keeping the churchyard open for burials far into the future.

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PAROCHIAL CHARITY by J Stagg

Jim Stagg gave an overview of the Charity and the work they do in the community. He explained that the charity was especially proactive when it came to helping young persons from the villages with help with their expenses when going to college or university for the first time. All requests have to be looked into and agreed by the committee.

MICHAELMAS FAYRE

Last year's Michaelmas Fayre had to change its format as a wedding was booked into the church, so no competitions took place. Hopefully this will not occur this year. Returning this year hopefully will be the Tug of War between the two villages, along with the Morris men, and the competitions. The Plough will be helping again this year with the early September event.

SPEEDWATCH GROUP.

Ahmed Farrag gave an overview of what the WH Speedwatch group have been doing over the last year., with over 300 sessions during the year. The average speed of vehicles going over the 20mph was 35mph. Although a few people were going at speeds over 50mph, most were doing between 30-40mph.

There is a shortage of volunteer's inn West Hanney so any help would be most appreciated.

Dickon Green gave an overview from EH Speedwatch. Monitoring was fairly static, with traffic going faster past St James Primary School than on the A338.

HANNEY YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

Paul Aram said that the football club was approximately 20years old and that they started with 5 players and now had 330 players and 17 teams and 30 coaches, making one of the biggest clubs in Oxfordshire.

Paul thanked both villages and HWMH for providing the pitches and facilities for the club. He also took this opportunity to inform everyone that he was stepping down as chairman of the football club.

HANNEY TENNIS CLUB by D Corps

The club founded in 1988 continues to thrive. It is a very friendly village tennis club, drawing most of its members from the Hanney's. We offer social tennis and tennis coaching for adults and juniors, run a club tournament and enter men's, ladies and mixed teams to play tennis doubles matches in various Oxfordshire Lawn Tennis Association leagues.

THE PLOUGH – West Hanney

The 'village' pub continues to flourish under the present tenants Owain Lloyd Jones and Luke Mayor's stewardship. Their innovative food offer using where possible locally sourced Ingredients and independent breweries ales remain popular, and it is a village gathering point. They 'do their bit' to support community events in line with the board's pledge when our village bought the pub back in 2014.

The board continue their responsibility to maintain our listed building and ensure we play our part by investing in equipment required for their business.

And happily, a new A frame sign to replace the one the weather had beaten into submission on Buttercross Green will be arriving very shortly!

HANNEY CRICKET CLUB

Now have two teams so there will be a cricket match every week during the season on EHPC Playing field.

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THE BLACK HORSE

Now has new tenants.

Open Forum – Questions and Suggestions

New pond at Headings Pond quite complicated due to number of trees. Put on back burner for now.

Survey of Pond site in Woodland needed, but hopeful this will be completed soon. Possibility of being able to get some funding towards cost.

Pond to front of Denes Farm [Spring Close] is actually a SUDS .

Reporting footpath needing repair should be done on Fix My Street website. {path in front of The Causeway]

WHPC has meeting with Highways booked.

Footpath to southside of School Road needs repair, but this path is not recognised as a public footpath.

The meeting close at 9pm

Cllr Paul Aram

Chair of East Hanney Parish Council

Cllr David Corps

Chair of West Hanney Parish Council