

**MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Thursday 17 March 2016 at 7.00 p.m. at Brooklands, Holmes Chapel Community Centre.**

**1. Present:**

**Parish Councillors** Cllr S Ranger (in the chair), Cllr AR Armitt, Cllr BA Bath, Cllr ME Blomeley, Cllr JA Clowes, Cllr PA Cotton, Cllr DC Grice, Cllr P Medford, Cllr M Ranger, Cllr D Savage and Cllr MJ Street  
Nicola Clarke, Clerk to the Council and Sue McKay, Assistant to the Clerk.  
15 members of the public

**2. Introduction** and welcome by the Chairman, Councillor S Ranger

**3. Apologies** from Cllr RC Parry and Mrs B Street

**4. Minutes:**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 26 March 2015 were **approved** and signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.

**5. Presentation by Gordon Whittaker and Steven Smith of the Environment**

**Agency** on the Regulation of the Shale Gas Industry. Gordon and Steve gave an informative presentation relating to the monitoring of drilling and gas extraction, and then went on to answer many questions. These ranged over topics such as the process in obtaining a licence, factors in the area that would effect the gaining of a licence, how they work closely with both the HS executive and local Planning Authorities, how extracted gas is connected into useable networks and the operational length of a typical shale gas site.

It was stressed that there are no pending applications in the Holmes Chapel area.

**6. Chairman's Annual Report:**

The Chairman commented on the election of the new council in May 2015, thanking former councillors WA Ashworth and IM Mackenzie for many years of devoted service to the parish.

The Chairman went on to describe in detail the achievements of the Parish Council over the past twelve months to include:

- The purchase of the former AP Club, saving it for the community.
- The refurbishment of the AP Club, and subsequent opening as the Holmes Chapel Community Centre, jointly managed by the charity Everybody Sport & Recreation.
- The production of the Neighbourhood Plan, headed by Cllr Bath.
- Re-routing of HGV's away from the village centre.
- The formation of the Speedwatch Group, helping to maintain speed restrictions.
- The completion of the Elm Drive Play Area.
- The signing off of repairs to the Hermitage Bridge.
- The scheduling of repairs to the Station Footbridge.
- Continued upgrading of the Christmas Lights.
- Upgrade to the Zebra Crossing in the village.
- The PCSO, Jill Cope, is now based in the Parish Council Office.

He thanked Cllr Bath, Cllr Savage and Cllr Street for sterling work on the Holmes Chapel Community Centre project.

**7. Accounts:**

The Parish Clerk provided information on the annual accounts up to the end of February and informed the meeting that additional financial information is on the Parish Council web site.

**8. Questions and Answers:**

The Chairman opened the meeting for questions and comments and the following issues were raised:

- Traffic entering the village on London Road from Brereton is consistently speeding and the vibration from HGV's is causing problems to properties.  
Cllr Ranger asked the Speedwatch group to monitor, and the possibility of locating a SID there was discussed.
- Can Dog Bins be installed in the Dane Meadow, and can there be more frequent waste collection services.  
The Clerk explained that we cannot put dog bins on the meadow as CE are not able to collect the waste. They are positioned at all access points. More frequent collections will be pursued.
- What is the commitment of the PC to the current Leisure Centre, and is this in the budget?  
Cllr Savage explained that the PC involvement in the Leisure Centre is joint management only, with no financial input.
- Can we have a promise of no further large precept increases?  
Cllr Ranger explained that there are no big plans in the offing, hence there are no plans for further increases, but the Parish Council cannot predict increases of responsibility of the PC if local government devolves more power to local Parishes.
- Are we to have a swimming pool in Holmes Chapel?  
There is a group of people investigating the possibility of a swimming pool, separate to the Parish Council. At the moment, it is purely a feasibility exercise.
- Do we still pay for the PCSO, and do Cranage and Goostrey contribute?  
Cllr Ranger explained that there has been a reorganisation, and the PCSO now covers the Dane Valley Ward, not just Holmes Chapel. We are awaiting her new contract before we can comment on future payments.
- There are several HGV's coming through the village who are completely ignoring the restrictions.  
Cllr Ranger explained that when the new signage is installed, which is on order at CEC, then the Police will be able to enforce the restriction.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions at the meeting.

**The meeting closed at 8.35pm.**

Signed by Chairman of the Council as a true and accurate record.

.....date.....

21st March 2016

# Annual report - 2015-16

## Council matters

The new council was elected in May. May Mackenzie retired after many decades of service to the community, as did Alan Ashworth. We thank them both for their long and dedicated service to the community.

Lee Slaughter resigned. Councillors are all volunteers who put in many long hours for no monetary reward, and I am pleased that three more residents have taken up the challenge - David Grice, Anita Armit and Paul Medford all joining the council.

Our assistant clerk, Rose Raine, retired to a large garden in the country and was replaced by local resident Sue McKay.

## Holmes Chapel Community Centre

This year we finally purchased the former AP Club and reopened it as the Holmes Chapel Community Centre. A management contract was signed with Everybody Sports and Recreation (ES&R), a charitable trust that runs leisure centres across Cheshire East.

The first task was to make the building usable again with substantial repairs to roofing, asbestos removal and grounds maintenance required. ES&R have remodelled the gym and fitness studio, installing brand new, state of the art equipment. The community response has been fantastic, with over 700 members signed up to date. I must thank Peter Hartwell and the team at ES&R as well as Councillors Bath, Savage and Street and our clerk Nicola, for all the hard work they have put in to make this project a reality.

The Rugby Club are back playing their home games at the Centre and have been successful in receiving grants from the RFU for various upgrades.

We are now starting to refurbish the social areas and plan to have them opened fully during the summer. We are working towards opening a skateboard park at the Centre paid for by grants and fund raising events run by local youngsters.

We will be putting together a long term development plan looking at how we can best use the site to provide the facilities the Village needs.

All of this needs to be paid for. When we started the project we said that the increase to the precept would, on average, be less than £1 per week per household. I am pleased to be able to say that we have kept well within this target.

## The neighbourhood plan

A key focus during the past year has been the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. We hope to have the first draft ready for public consultation in the next few months. Thanks to all the local residents who responded to the questionnaire, to the many volunteers who have helped draw up the plan and to the Councillors who have devoted many hours to the plan's production.

As I said last year the Village continues to change. More shops have closed; some new ones have arrived but several remain empty. The proposal for a Sainsburys supermarket remains on the table but there is no concrete news. Meanwhile Aldi is coming to Manor Lane.

Proposals for new housing continue to be submitted, with around 600 new houses planned in the next five years.

The Neighbourhood plan cannot prevent new houses being built, but it can influence their location, type and design. It can also ensure that planners take into account the need to match the growth in housing with improved infrastructure and social amenities.

Holmes Chapel residents are not the only users of our infrastructure. People in the neighbouring villages depend on the shops and services in the Village. Developments in our neighbours will affect us, so we are talking to the councils in those areas, so that we can coordinate our respective plans.

## **Traffic**

Following further public consultation, the experiment to divert HGVs from key bottlenecks was made permanent this year. This has not pleased everybody as traffic is transferred from one road to another; but the general view is that there has been some overall improvement, especially on London Road in the Village centre. We will continue to explore and implement ways of making our roads safe.

Parking issues have escalated as local shops, businesses and the railway station tighten up restrictions on parking. On-street parking continues to be a major annoyance and double yellow lines are being considered for key junctions. Parking will be a key issue for the Council in the coming year.

A local Speedwatch group was set up at last year's parish meeting. Led by Anita Armit, they are now a regular sight in their hi-vis jackets and are helping to keep the speed of vehicles through the Village under control.

The M6 in Cheshire is being upgraded to a "Smart" motorway. Whilst this will bring benefits in the longer term there is bound to be some disruption, from time to time, as the work proceeds.

## **Repairs and upgrades**

The revamped play area at Elm Drive re-opened in July. At last Cheshire East Council has taken control of the Hermitage Bridge and is planning the necessary repairs. The bridge at the station is due for repair in the next week or so. St Luke's was restored with grants from the National Lottery and the Parish Council. The programme of updating the Christmas lights continued with the precinct looking more festive this year. The Zebra crossing in the centre has been upgraded.

Following a reorganisation of neighbourhood policing, our PCSO, Jill Cope, is now based in the Parish Council office.

## **Thanks**

Finally, thanks again to Nicola, Sue and all the councillors for their hard work.

Cllr Steve Ranger  
Chairman of the Council 2015-16