



## Hawkhurst Parish Council

Annual Parish Assembly  
Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015

### Annual Parish Assembly - Agenda

1. Introduction – Chairman
2. Chairman's statement
3. Neighbourhood Development Plan – Michael Robertson
4. Speedwatch - Mike Armitage
5. Police report – Sgt Ross Shearing
6. Any questions?

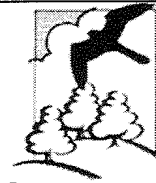


Questions will be invited to each speaker at the end of each presentation.

This presentation can be viewed after the meeting at  
<http://hpc.visithawkhurst.org.uk/>

Paper copies of this presentation can be requested from the Parish Office.

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



## 1. Financial Summary

- We have been operating within our budget for 2014/15
- Preliminary results of 2014/15 audit are not signed off yet, but will be available for public view in approx 1 month.
- Reserves at end of 2015 approx £168,000
- Running costs of allotments, halls (Copt Hall, Sports Hall) and cemetery are close to balance with their income, i.e. cost neutral.
- Main income
  - Total Income £159,423
  - Precept (income from council tax) £109,522
  - Victoria Hall letting
  - Copt hall letting (£9k)
  - Sports hall letting (£2.5k)
  - Cemetery fees (£4.7k)

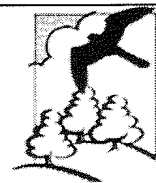
## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



## 1. Financial Summary (cont)

- Total Expenditure £99,116
- Largest areas of expenditure
  - Administration (£35k)
  - Office (£7.4k)
  - Maintenance of playing fields (£14k)
  - Maintenance of cemetery (£4.6k)
  - Streetlights (inc cost of electricity) (£10.6k)
  - Running costs of 2 halls (£12.6k)

Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



2. Thanks to community groups

- Hawkhurst has a fine, long standing tradition of strong community groups which benefit the local way of life.
- There are too many to mention individually, but provide support for those of older age, youth, hobbies, sports, interests and different faiths,
- The parish Council would like to thank all those who volunteer to make these community groups function and enjoyable to all who are involved.
- We would like to thank the team who publish the Village Magazine every month. This is essential for Village communication.

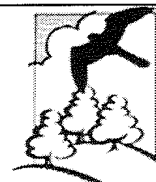
Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



3. KALC Award

- Kent Association for Local Councils runs the award scheme, supported by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent
- A long list of worthy names was proposed. The winner was chosen by a secret ballot within the Parish Council.
- The winner for 2015 is Derek Sedge for his voluntary work with the Scouts and the British Legion

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



### 4. Parish Council Activities – Planning highlights

- Appeal by Ward Homes dismissed to build 120 homes on Site 64 Fowlers Park
- 30<sup>th</sup> July TWBC Planning committee rejected outline application for 62 homes on Highgate Hill by Countryside properties, despite being supported by Planning department. Birchfield site development approved.
- 24<sup>th</sup> October opposed full application by countryside properties for 62 homes at Planning Forum
- 10<sup>th</sup> November TWBC cabinet advisory board opposed inclusion of Highgate Hill site in Site Allocations DPD in favour of brownfied sites at Springfield and Woodham Hall
- 12<sup>th</sup> November TWBC Planning Committee rejected full application by Countryside properties for 62 homes on Highgate Hill
- 4<sup>th</sup> December TWBC Cabinet proposed removing Highgate Hill site from SA DPD
- 10<sup>th</sup> December TWBC full Council approved removing Highgate Hill site from SA DPD
- 8<sup>th</sup> April Station Garage site redevelopment approved.

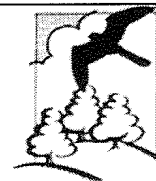
## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



### 4. Parish Council Activities – Planning comments

- Hawkhurst was the only Parish to negotiate a change to Site Allocation DPD
- The Parish Council will continue to oppose the development of Highgate Hill site at the appeal in September
- From the original 240 dwelling allocation for 2006 – 2026, there are only 48 remaining to be approved. Beyond this we expect KCC to oppose further development due to road junction capacity.
- The parish Council is not fundamentally opposed to all growth, but insists that it has to be on smaller developments and to be organic so as not to put excessive strain on infrastructure. Future growth in the Village should feature strongly in the NDP.
- We have objected to some modern extensions onto historic character properties. We expect this to feature prominently in the NDP and a meeting is being set up with TWBC planners to examine some recent cases.

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



### 5. Hawkhurst Community Trust (HCT)

- The Parish Council is sole trustee of HCT
- HCT owns the Copt Hall and is responsible for provision of a Village Hall facility in Hawkhurst.
- Planning permission for a 2 story Community Centre on the site of the Sports Pavilion at the Moor expires in May 2015 and cannot be extended again. A new application would be required.
- The parish council is not able to embark on private fund raising, and so has not been able to embark on fund raising for the Community Centre or new village Hall
- We are working with an experienced solicitor to set up a new charity with the task of providing Village Halls or a Community Centre in Hawkhurst. This will have a number of trustees with appropriate experience to raise funds.
- We expect certain requirements for new Village Hall(s) to be defined within the NDP. HCT and the new charity will be obliged to adopt the direction as defined in the NDP.

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement



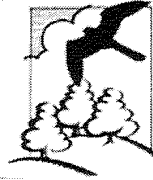
### 6. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

- The Parish Council is supporting and funding the development of an NDP during 2015. This is the responsibility of the NDP committee, with both councillors and residents as members.
- In the argument for change to the Site Allocation DPD, we were able to quote our emerging NDP as evidence of local opinion preferring development of brown field sites.
- If you love living in Hawkhurst and appreciate all the Village facilities, please support the NDP and get involved.

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement

## 6. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) (cont)

- Article in the Times 21<sup>st</sup> April 2015!



## Landmark victory for residents in the battle against building sprawl

Ben Webster Environment Editor

Towns and villages will have a better chance of resisting unwanted new housing after one of Britain’s most aggressive developers lost a test case.

Gladman Developments has withdrawn its legal challenge against a “neighbourhood plan” drawn up by the residents of Winslow, in Buckinghamshire, who wanted to determine where new homes should be built in the town.

The residents’ victory over Gladman is expected to encourage many other communities to fight proposals by developers by adopting their own neighbourhood plans.

Gladman, which uses weaknesses in local planning policies to target greenfield sites, had tried to block the adoption of the residents’ plan.

The Cheshire-based developer wanted Winslow to double in size to 4,000 homes, whereas 98 per cent of local people voted in favour of a plan under which only 450 homes would be

built. Gladman initially tried to prevent the residents from voting on the plan by seeking an injunction to prevent a local referendum from taking place.

After losing that case, Gladman challenged the legality of the plan at the High Court. A judge dismissed the case in December, but last month the company made an appeal against that decision. The developer has now withdrawn the appeal, meaning that Winslow’s plan will be used to decide where new homes should be built.

Uncertainty over the legal status of neighbourhood plans, which were introduced under the Localism Act 2011, has deterred many communities from adopting them, with fewer than 50 completed to date.

At least 1,400 communities are understood to be preparing plans and Winslow’s victory may encourage them to complete the process.

Lew Monger, a Winslow councillor, said that the case set a precedent that could be used by other communities fighting developers. “This is perhaps



Residents of Winslow have drawn up their own housing development plan

the dawn of more localism and much less legalism in relation to neighbourhood planning, which will hopefully encourage many other communities to embark on developing a neighbourhood plan.” Mr Monger said.

Roy van de Poll, another Winslow councillor, said that Gladman appeared to have given up boasting about its aggressive approach to obtaining planning permission for housing. He said

that the company had recently removed statements from its website in which it described itself as “obsessed with winning consents” and said it was expert at obtaining “residential planning consents on edge-of-town greenfield sites”.

The Times revealed last year how Gladman had sent a letter to landowners in another area advising them to “move quickly whilst the local authority is vulnerable”.

Neil Sinden, policy director of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, said: “Hopefully now other communities will stand up to bullying developers. However, there is a need for much clearer legal status for neighbourhood plans.”

“We are pushing for a community right of appeal against speculative development in areas where a neighbourhood plan has been prepared. This is intended to level the legal playing field between developers and local communities.”

Gladman declined to comment.

## Annual Parish Assembly – Chairman’s Statement

## 7. On-going work for 2015/16

- Complete the NDP
- Set up new charity to enable fund raising for new Village Hall or Community Centre
- Oppose development of the Highgate Hill site at the appeal in September
- Support development of Brownfield sites to complete our housing allocation
- Improve relationship and communications with planning department to ensure local opinions are listened to.
- Continue to investigate the viability of building a Skate Park
- Elections for new Hawkhurst parish council are in May 2016. This is an opportunity for all to get deeply engaged with the community.



Annual Parish Assembly – Neighbourhood Development Plan



- LOCALISM ACT (2011) GIVES LOCAL PEOPLE A LEADING ROLE IN SETTING PLANNING POLICY
- WE MUST ADHERE TO WHAT IS ALREADY DEFINED (EG 240 HOUSES 2006-26)

BUT

- WE DEFINE THE FUTURE OF OUR LOVELY VILLAGE
- DIFFERENT TO PREVIOUS VILLAGE PLANS AS IT BECOMES PART OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Annual Parish Assembly – Neighbourhood Development Plan



PROCESS

- IDENTIFY ISSUES TO LIMIT SCOPE
- VISIONING THE FUTURE
- DESIGN EVOLUTION INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS
- DRAFT REPORT / CONSULTATION / REVISE / CONSULTATION
- SUBMITTED REPORT / INSPECTION / REFERENDUM

APPROVAL REQUIRES 50% OF VOTERS

Annual Parish Assembly – Neighbourhood Development Plan



TIMELINE

- VILLAGE APPRAISAL (2012) + NDP CONSULTATION LAST YEAR (June 2014) = ISSUES
- VISIONING NEXT (**30 APRIL**)
- 3 DAY DESIGN WORKSHOP (**26-28 MAY**)

**PUBLIC EXHIBITION ALL 3 EVENINGS**

**YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION, COMMENT, SEE HOW IT'S EVOLVING**

- DRAFT REPORT END OF JUNE
- SUBMIT TO TWBC JAN 2016
- TARGET REFERENDUM APRIL 2016