

SUMMER 2006 NEWSLETTER

AN UPDATE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF
HANLEY CASTLE AND HANLEY SWAN

Chairman's Report 2006

DURING THE PAST YEAR THE PARISH COUNCIL HAS:

- despaired** of Bromford Housing's idea of consultation regarding their proposed development of affordable housing on land between Westmere and the primary school.
- delved** into the housing need process more deeply in consultation with Keith Parry of MHDC and with Alan Saunders, the Rural Housing Enabler, *and subsequently*
- delivered** Housing Need survey forms to all houses in the Parish.
- directed** tree surgeons to work on the oak tree on the village green in Hanley Swan.
- developed** the Lengthsman scheme to include the maintenance of the Parish's milestones and furthered the good working relationship with the Malvern Hills HPU.
- driven** on with the quest for some alleviation to the traffic problems associated with the Three Counties Showground and continued the ongoing liaison with Nick Vincent, the Society's Executive Director.
- dissolved** (or at least, mothballed) the Hanley Villages Trust and taken the work of delivering on the Parish Plan "in house", deciding to focus on one major aspect at a time.
- developed** the liaison with Rob Haring at Hanley Castle High School.
- discovered** some of the problems of antisocial behaviour around the Ewe & Lamb Green and worked with PC Mark Taylor and Nexus Housing to ameliorate its effect.
- discussed** the crime figures for the Parish.
- developed** further the website and its range and content.
- dipped** into the matter of the ownership of the pond and the responsibility for remedial works.
- delighted** in the response to the appeal for funds to repair the War Memorial in Hanley Castle churchyard.
- determined** a response to some 54 planning applications.
- disappointed**ly accepted the resignation of Marjorie & Michael Nelson as PPWs after thirteen years of dedicated and devoted service to the Parish.
- delightedly** welcomed the offer of John & Margaret Quibell-Smith to act as PPWs from now on.
- delivered** on most of last year's commitments; though the quest for QPS and improvements to the Play Area remain targets for the coming year.
- and**
- detailed** all of the above in regular contributions to Parish Link, in the Parish Council's quarterly newsletter and on the Parish Council website

despaired of Bromford Housing's idea of consultation regarding their proposed development of affordable housing on land between Westmere and the primary school

Bromford Housing Group had proposed an affordable housing scheme to be built on land between Westmere and the primary school and had sent initial plans to the PC. These were subsequently displayed at a consultative exhibition held in the village hall at which residents were invited to comment on the plans and register any need for affordable housing should the scheme go ahead. Chris Knibbs and Julian Kent of Bromford then attended the July meeting of the PC and brought news of their decision to alter the scheme following consultation with MHDC planners. However, they did not offer any feedback from the exhibition and did not have any updated plans to present to the PC and local residents, and it was therefore felt that a more thorough investigation of the Parish's housing needs was required before any scheme by Bromford or anyone else could be considered.

delved into the housing need process more deeply in consultation with Keith Parry of MHDC and with Alan Saunders, the Rural Housing Enabler

Keith Parry attended the November meeting of the PC and explained the process of providing affordable housing in rural areas. He said that if a housing need was identified then a suitable site would be chosen in consultation with the PC and local residents; a scheme would then be drawn up; planning permission obtained and the houses built by a Housing Association. The scheme would be likely to consist of 6-10 dwelling, be rented/shared ownership for families/older residents or young people and could be on a "Rural Exception Site" i.e. outside the settlement boundary. There would then be a Section 106 agreement as part of the planning permission for the development, restricting occupancy to local people. It was agreed that the first step was to conduct a Housing Need Survey and Alan Saunders, the Rural Housing Enabler, agreed to provide the necessary questionnaires and to collate the information gathered. To that end the PC delivered Housing Need survey forms to all houses in the Parish. These were distributed during the middle of April with a return date of April 28th. Nigel Potter (Alan

Saunders successor as RHE) agreed to attend Annual Parish Meeting to report back on the findings.

directed tree surgeons to work on the oak tree on the village green in Hanley Swan

The oak tree on the village green shed a couple of large branches at the start of the year and was subsequently inspected by Chris Mayes, Landscape Officer, MHDC. Mr Mayes was then kind enough to attend a meeting of the PC to report on the state of the tree and suggest a course of action. He said that the tree was a turkey oak, *Quercus Cerris*, which was planted in 1863 and was probably about a third of the way through its useful life. He recommended that an all-round reduction of the branches by about 10% would help to prevent further loss of significant branches and it would then be as safe as any other tree. It would however require regular inspection and on going management most likely in the form of a similar reduction in ten or twenty years time. Adrian Hope was employed to carry out the work in liaison with Chris Mayes and David Cheale and this was completed on December 9th at a cost of £795.00 plus VAT. The PC is most grateful to Chris Mayes for his advice and also to David Cheale, Don Cairns and Ian Thompson who had previously tidied up the area following the initial fall of branches. Additionally the PC would like to thank Ann Davies and Upton Brownies who planted bulbs under the tree's canopy last autumn and whose efforts were rewarded with a nice display of flowers this spring.

Adrian Hope also undertook the general tidying up work to the trees behind the pond, following his earlier inspection, and with this costing £1500.00 plus VAT the PC spent £2295.00 plus VAT on tree work during the year, over 20% of their budget.

developed the Lengthsman scheme to include the maintenance of the Parish's milestones and furthered the good working relationship with the Malvern Hills HPU

The Lengthsman scheme, which had been piloted here in Hanley Castle parish, continued and once again Bob Kendrick did a fine job siding out footways, clearing drains and grips

and attending to overhanging vegetation. The scheme was also extended slightly to allow lengths to maintain milestones and, to that end, Bob will now keep our seven milestones in tidy order – especially now that John Taverner has managed to find the one near Chance Flowers and clear it of its ivy blanket.

the pressure on Hanley Swan.

dissolved (or at least mothballed) the Hanley Villages Trust and taken on the work of delivering on the Parish Plan “in house”, deciding to focus on one major aspect at a time

The PC continued its good working relationship with MH HPU and with Nils Wilkes in particular, and have found him as ready as ever to deal with the usual problems of potholes, footways, etc. Bearing in mind this regular liaison the PC was particularly concerned to hear that the local HPU units are to be closed and everything centralised to Warndon, with just a few staff working from the depot at Newland. The WCC made their decision with little or no consultation at parish level and it remains to be seen whether the level of service enjoyed until now will continue under the new system.

The Hanley Villages Trust was set up under the chairmanship of Ian Bowles to take forward the items highlighted by the Parish Plan and deliver on them. Six separate areas were identified and working parties established to drive the ideas forward. However, when the Trust met on September 28th it was felt that not enough progress had been made and that the work of implementing the Action Plan of the Parish Plan should be returned to the PC. It was agreed that the Hanley Villages Trust should remain dormant until or unless it was required.

driven on with the quest for some alleviation to the traffic problems associated with the Three Counties Showground and continued the ongoing liaison with Nick Vincent, the Society’s Executive Director

The PC subsequently decided to focus on one major area of the Action Plan at a time and to that end decided that housing and particularly the investigation of the need for an affordable housing scheme would be the first priority.

Nick Vincent had visited the March 2005 meeting of the PC and returned in September to report on the summer’s activities and improvements made during that time. He admitted that there had been some problems during August with helicopter rides and with Vanfest but said that these would not be repeated. He indicated the improvements made during the year including signage on the showground exits pointing to the motorways, “drive carefully” notices and direction information on their website. He also said that they were working closely with event organisers and that firework events would be limited to two per year. Nick Vincent promised further updates and will attend the PC’s Annual Parish Meeting in May.

developed the liaison with Rob Haring and Hanley Castle High School

The PC has met with Rob Haring (Head, HCHS) and indeed with Rob Johnston (Deputy Head) and discussed the usual topics of school numbers, parking, traffic and litter. Additionally the spate of vandalism around the village was mentioned and the school promised to do all they could to prevent further incidents. Litter was perceived to have been less of a problem in recent weeks with one member of the care-taking staff having litter picking as one of their regular duties. Once again the school undertook to provide onsite parking for all their staff and pupils but as ever parking in the village continues throughout the school day.

John Taverner has continued to attend meetings with the TCAS at the showground at which traffic issues have been discussed. However, a change of emphasis has been apparent with the new Leader of MHDC and he felt that he was now a lone voice. Sue Adeney has also attended meetings and reported that the routing of traffic through Poolbrook would be used for more events during the year relieving some of

The school’s application for Language College Status had been granted and a building programme proposed for the Bowling Green side of the school site. This would commence during summer 2006, the funding having been identified, and on completion the area would be landscaped, the access fenced off and parking

transferred to another part of the site. This would help with traffic in Bowling Green and the road surface and verges could then be attended to by Highways. It remains to be seen whether on site parking provided as a result of this development will be sufficient to eliminate the need for school traffic to park in the village.

discovered some of the problems of antisocial behaviour around the Ewe & Lamb Green and worked with PC Mark Taylor and Nexus Housing to ameliorate its effect

Following reports of youths causing nuisance and some vandalism on the Ewe & Lamb Green and a couple of calls to the police a meeting was arranged between residents of the area, Nexus Housing (who own The Walnuts), PC Mark Taylor and representatives of the PC. Mark Taylor had spoken to the young persons involved in the vandalism and persuaded them to contribute towards the cost of the repairs (which they did). The wall was rebuilt by local residents and Nexus agreed to erect a small fence rail above the wall to prevent bicycles being ridden across and on to the Green. Nexus were also investigating some reworking of the pergola area and to provide better car parking facilities and a bin store and agreed to make it as vandal proof as possible.

The PC is most grateful to PC Mark Taylor for his help in this matter and hopes that his efforts have nipped this potential problem in the bud.

discussed the crime figures for the parish

PC Mark Taylor has also been kind enough to attend a couple of PC meetings during the year to report on the crime figures for the Parish. (which thankfully remain fairly low and stable) and to talk about Neighbourhood Watch. Brian Hamilton-Hewitt (the Co-ordinator for Upton and Hanley) and Adrian Symonds also attended and after a brief introduction to the current scheme and local arrangements those attending the meeting were able to collect post coded stickers with which to mark their items of valuable equipment.

developed further the website and its range and content

The PC owes a debt of gratitude to Ian Thompson for all his efforts at running and updating the website which now has not only the fairly "dry" information about PC meetings, minutes, freedom of information stuff and the like but also some items of more general interest including village hall news, TROT scheme information, and soon some local history as well.

dipped in the matter of ownership of the pond and the responsibility for remedial works

The gradual erosion of the side of the pond and the consequent danger to the edge of the footway was remedied by Nils Wilkes of MH HPU who arranged for the footway to be relaid nearer to the road and away from the pond. Nils Wilkes also agreed to rebuild the headwall which housed a drainage pipe and which had collapsed into the pond but hoped to be able to undertake the work during a dry summer when the water level in the pond had reduced slightly. Some discussion took place as to the ownership of the pond and therefore the responsibility for the cost of any works to prevent further erosion of the banks but no firm conclusions were reached and Nils Wilkes undertook to further investigate the HPU's files particularly with reference to the time when the crossroads were staggered and the area around the pond altered as a result.

delighted in the response to the appeal for funds to repair the War Memorial in Hanley Castle churchyard

The War Memorial Fund stood at £ 2551.84 at the end of the financial year thanks to numerous contributions from local residents.

The PC applied to the "Friends of War Memorials" for a grant to assist with the cost of the repairs but in their response the Friends recommended a different approach to the renovation work and suggested that a conservation expert should be employed to provide a condition report on the memorial. Subsequently Mr Strachey of Strachey & Strachey of Wells, Somerset visited the site and sent a report outlining the current situation and detailing how the problems could best be treated. The PC had previously

asked Steve Allard of Callow End to undertake the work on the memorial and was still keen to employ a local craftsman and so it was agreed to send a copy of the recommendations to Steve Allard and ask if he could carry out the work as detailed. His reply is awaited.

determined a response to 54 planning applications

These have included –

i) Cross Hands Cottages. An outline application to build two detached three bedroom cottages in between the existing cottages at the Cross Hands was received and numerous local residents attend the meeting of the PC's Planning Committee at which it was to be considered. The PC objected to the proposal but also noted that the application was likely to be withdrawn by the applicant following an indication that it would be recommended for refusal. A subsequent application for just one dwelling was considered at a meeting in December which once again attracted a number of local residents. The PC decided to register its objection to this application as well and it was later refused at a meeting of MH Southern Area Planning Committee.

ii) Blackmore Gardens. This proposal to extend the gardens and create a new lake etc. caused some concern to other residents of the area particularly because the applicant indicated an intention to open the gardens to the public on a number of days during the year. This was perceived to have the potential to cause traffic and parking problems with the entrance to Blackmore Gardens being down a narrow drive off the layby at the sharp corner by Blackmore Caravan Site. Some members of the PC visited the area and the PC's comments on the application reflected some of the local concerns.

iii) 1 & 2 Rose Cottage, Picken End. The PC objected to the proposed large scale extension to these semi-detached cottages and they were refused by MHDC. A TPO was placed on a pear tree at No. 1 Rose Cottage and subsequent application to fell the tree refused with the result that it has recently been pruned in expert fashion and reportedly looks very well.

(iv) The Corner House, Roberts End. Two re-

lated applications were received in respect of this property in the form of a new access to the front of the house but off the Welland Road, (on which the PC made comments regarding road safety and the proximity to the cross-roads junction) and an outline application for the construction of two dwellings with garages in the garden to the rear (to which the PC objected).

(v) Fairfields, Worcester Road. The PC objected to a proposal to build another dwelling in the grounds of Fairfields – one having already been built the other side of the existing house – but the permission was granted by MHDC.

The Planning Committee also noted the following –

i) The appeal against refusal at Jubilee Cottage, Malvern Road was allowed and therefore outline permission for residential development behind Jubilee Cottage exists. No further applications have since been received, however, and the PC continues to press for all the area behind the houses on the Malvern Road to be considered "en bloc".

ii) Apple Tree Cottage, Picken End is now Grade II listed.

(iii) Parish Councils are now able to speak at meetings of the Southern Area Planning Committee of MHDC and the PC decided to consider whether to send a speaker on an application by application basis, having regard to the strength of their objections.

disappointedly accepted the resignation of Marjorie & Michael Nelson as PPWs after thirteen years of dedicated and devoted service to the Parish and..

delightedly welcomed the offer of John & Margaret Quibell Smith to act as PPWs from now on

There is little more I can say about Marjorie & Michael and the wonderful job they have done over the last thirteen years. Many times I have been told that we have the best PPWs in the county and we are, of course, very sorry to lose their skills and experience which have served us

so well since the launch of the Paths Warden Scheme. It just remains to thank them most sincerely for their hard work and to wish them well in their "retirement".

Of course the lack of a PPW would have been a great blow when the paths have been so well maintained over the years so it is with great pleasure that the PC welcomed the offer of John & Margaret Quibell-Smith to act as PPWs from now on. We wish them well and hope they enjoy their new role.

In the coming year 2006/2007 the PC aims to:

decide on the most suitable course of action regarding repairs to the War Memorial and see the project through to completion

discern the housing need of the Parish (from the survey) and continue the process of looking at affordable housing

develop the Play Area provision whether it be on its current site or at a new location nearer to the centre of Hanley Swan

discuss the management of the Pond and the erosion of the banks

and finally

deliver on our commitment to achieve Quality Parish Status!

CONCLUSION:

I should like to record my thanks to Ann Canham for her hard work throughout the year and to my fellow Councillors and our team of Wardens, whether they be tree, path or environmentally orientated, and also to Sue and Mary, our District Councillors, all of whom give their time and energy freely for the benefit of our beautiful parish and its residents.

Thank you all

Sue Roberts

(Chairman)

17 May 2006

UPDATE — June:

Housing Needs Survey Results

A total of 174 survey forms were returned, 19 of which stated some sort of housing need. In reply to the question: "would you be in favour of a small development of affordable housing for local people in your parish?", 124 (71%) respondents said "yes" and 50 (29%) said "no".

The Way Forward...

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council it was decided that a housing need had been identified and that — on the advice of Nigel Potter (the rural housing enabler) — it would be sensible to proceed by trying to identify possible sites on which any affordable housing might be built. Therefore, if you have any land which you think would make a suitable site, please contact Nigel Potter on 01386 565521, to discuss the matter. Please note that a 'Rural Exception Site' (i.e. one that is outside the parish development boundary) must be directly adjacent to the parish's settlement boundary.

The Parish Council Website

Our website presents far more information than can ever be printed in a newsletter. On it, you will find all the minutes of committee meetings, planning decisions, information regarding businesses resident in the parish, news, links to other sites, information about recycling facilities and much, much more.

We are very keen to expand this site and to make it a valuable source of data for our residents. However, it is run by volunteers at no cost to the Parish and consequently would benefit from additional effort. If you would be prepared to lend a hand in providing content and timely updates, we would be glad to hear from you. Experience is not necessary (we'll help you with the technical stuff!), but a PC, an internet connection and boundless enthusiasm are all essential! We have plenty of ideas — we need help in getting them put onto the site. If you can help, please contact the editor: irt@cygnetlodge.co.uk or phone 310716.

Receipts and Payments for year ended 31 March 2006 (unaudited)
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RECEIPTS	Precept	10000.00	
	Interest	22.00	
	Dividends	8.76	
	Worcs.CC - Parish Paths Grant	402.47	
	Worcs.CC - Lengthsman scheme (contra)	1435.00	
	V.A.T. refund for 2003/2004	437.04	
	Transfer from Parish Plan account	<u>105.58</u>	
			12410.85
PAYMENTS	Staff Costs	3847.44	
	Members allowances & expenses	75.00	
	Other administrative costs	322.30	
	Insurance	408.81	
	Section 137 Payment	50.00	
	Section 142 Payment	150.00	
	Subscriptions	301.96	
	Grass cutting	1332.00	
	Playing Field rent	200.00	
	Paths maintenance	741.89	
	Playing Field & Play Area	250.65	
	Audit Fee 2003/2004	120.00	
	Training	50.00	
	Tree Work	2295.00	
	Timber for Cider Press	0.00	
	Lengthsman scheme (contra)	1335.00	
	Demon - Internet Service	120.00	
	V.A.T. paid 2004/2005	774.50	
	Printing Newsletters	157.50	
	Rodent Control	350.00	
	Notice Board repair	<u>10.60</u>	
			<u>12892.65</u>
			(481.80)
EXCESS OF PAYMENTS OVER RECEIPTS			
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD 1 APRIL 2005			
	Current Account	424.09	
	Instant Gold Savings Account	420.08	
	Consolidated Stock 2.5%	<u>351.44</u>	
			1195.61
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD 31 MARCH 2006			
	Current Account	183.25	
	Instant Gold Savings Account	179.12	
	Consolidated Stock 2.5%	<u>351.44</u>	
			713.81

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Hanley Castle Parish Council meets on the third Thursday of January, March, May (AGM), July, September and November at Hanley Swan Village Hall: meetings start (usually) at 7:30 pm. All members of the public are welcome at these meetings, though they will be allowed to address the council only before and after the meeting unless otherwise invited by the Chairman.

Our Council comprises:	Telephone
Sue Roberts (Chairman)	592686
Tony Atkinson	310408
Anne Ballinger	592812
Ann Davies	310861
Francis Harcombe	310740
Margaret Norris	310786
John Taverner	310460
Ian Thompson	310716
 Associated officers:	
Ann Canham (Clerk)	310366
John & Margaret Quibell Smith (footpaths)	310578
David Cheale (Tree Warden)	310233
Sue Adeney (MHDC Councillor)	310440
Mary Wilkinson (MHDC Councillor)	593704

Comments and contributions from parish residents are welcomed on any subject to do with our community. The Parish Council is very conscious of the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter and the methods of so doing will be under constant review.

If you would be prepared to receive it in electronic form either by email or by downloading it from our website, please let us know — this will help us to keep production costs to a minimum.

The information contained in this newsletter is edited by Ian Thompson
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