

**Minutes of WAPPENHAM VILLAGE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2015**  
**Held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7:30pm**  
**in Wappenham Village Hall**

*Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting.*

**1. Parish Council Welcome and Opening of Annual Assembly, Apologies**

Cllr Hilary Wickham welcomed those present to the meeting, including parishioners, representatives of local organisations and Cllr Peter Davies. Brian Watts, Eliza Bond, Mr and Mrs Tomkinson, Dene Ayres, Jane Harries, Dianne Walsh had sent apologies.

**2. Approval of minutes of Annual Assembly held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> April.

**3. Matters Arising from minutes of the Annual Assembly on 30th April 2014**

None.

**4. Parish Council Chair Annual Report – Cllr Hilary Wickham**

A warm welcome to all of you here today. I am back in the hot seat after many years and in an emergency agreed to stand at the last AGM of the Parish Council. I would like to thank Paul and Liz for all the support they have given me as promised, I certainly could not do it without them.

With election fever here with a vengeance a good place to start is in our own parish. Alas apathy reigned in Wappenham and only four candidates put themselves up for election, those being Charlotte Supple, Sheena Warren, Paul Featherstone and myself. We should be seven councillors, and this is important in order to maintain a balance and being able to ensure we have a quorum for each meeting (during this year for the first time in my memory we had to cancel a meeting on the day owing to this problem). Obviously people have work and family commitments, as well as holidays and illness. We are hopeful to re-coopt Howard Mordue and David Wilson at our AGM as well as one new member in the near future. Sheena Warren joined us since the AA last year but unfortunately we lost Tim Portlock - thank you both.

It has been a relatively quiet year with 13 meetings of which 3 were exclusively planning, nothing particularly controversial and the majority approved. They involved 8 The Jetty, Priesthay Wood Farm, Beeches Farm, Manor Farm, 5 Brookside, the Old Rectory and Lazy Acres. Although the position of the single wind turbine is now out of our hands I confirm that Aidan Jones has sought leave to appeal against the recent decision.

There have been many wonderful things going on this last year Safari Supper, Beer Festival, Plant Sale, Craft Fair, Christmas lunch for the over 70's and much more and a big thank you to the Village Hall Committee and all they have achieved to make this building so much more comfortable and appealing, much more on this from Jenny later.

The Wings of Life run was a little disruptive for some last year but I have attended a meeting and I believe things should go more smoothly this year.

We have set up an annual grant of £100 to support village groups and organisations and all will be notified later in the year.

Before quickly moving on as always we would like particularly to thank

Jane Harries for her great work in producing our newsletter  
Clive Watt for his continuous hard work on the production of WIZ - what a lot we learn about our community and the 'for sale' board seems to be very popular as well  
Brian Peart for his long walks through the village and out on all the approach roads keep abreast with litter  
Dianne Walsh for updating the website  
Paul Elcoat who has done great work on the millenium oak and its iron surround as well as pruning several trees on the green

## 5. Proposal for Community Project – Cllr Featherstone

Cllr Featherstone introduced the proposal by explaining that the Parish Council wished to ascertain from the parishioners whether or not speeding vehicles were considered to be an issue in the village, and if so would the village support a project to try and address it - the installation of a radar Speed Display similar to the one in Abthorpe. He clarified the funding streams available to the Parish Council, if the project were to go ahead (residual funds from the VDS project, New Homes Bonus funding from SNC and support from Ian Morris under the Empowering Councillors Scheme). Cllr Featherstone was keen to point out that without village consultation and support this project would not move forward.

Questions were raised from those present such as:

consideration regarding the best sites in the village; *(would be reviewed via additional consultation and with NCC)*

whether or not the ongoing cost of replacement batteries had been factored in; *(to be considered)*.

whether other methods such as traffic islands and speed bumps had been considered *(had been considered in the preparation of the VDS)*

whether several radars could be purchased to cover all entrance points *(the project could be scaled up)*

whether theft could be an issue *(this would be looked into but insurance cover would be at no additional premium)*

There were several general comments of support for the project and a show of hands gave the proposal **unanimous support**.

## 6. Observations from the County Councillor –Cllr Ian Morris – read out by Hilary Wickham

### Friends Life Women's Cycling Tour

Last May, we hosted the start and first two stages of the 5 stage "Friends Life" Women's Cycling Tour through Northamptonshire. The cream of the international and Olympic cycling world participated with 300,000 spectators over the five days and a total of over a million television viewers which equalled the viewing figures of the British leg of the Tour de France. The event was an incredible success for Northamptonshire, both economically and for the prestige of the County. I am delighted to report that we have successfully negotiated 3rd stage of the 2015 tour back to Northamptonshire on 19th June starting in Oundle and finishing in Kettering.

### Educational Excellence: Race to the Top

February 2015 saw the launch our "Race to the Top" strategy to raise educational attainment in our schools. We are aiming to make Northamptonshire one of the highest performing counties for education by 2020 by encouraging schools to strive for excellence.

An innovative Strategic Education and Skills Partnership Board will be created to lead the programme, bringing together education and business leaders. The project has the support of, George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nicky Morgan, Secretary of State for Education and Lord Heseltine who has been working closely with the County Council to make this a reality.

Race To The Top has been prepared with collaboration with the Department for Education and has three main strands:

1. To identify and intervene in schools across the county which are judged to be failing or in need of improvement. These schools will be given time to produce improvement plans, with a promise of local authority intervention if they fail to improve.

2. An invitation to all schools to apply for a share of the £1million improvement fund for projects to improve young people's aspirations. The bids will be assessed by a panel, including representatives from the business sector via Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership and Northampton University, and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

3. Sixteen new schools will be needed in the county over the next 12 years and the council will be looking for a number of top quality sponsors, with clear track records of success, to collaborate with the LEA in providing these schools.

Good educational attainment is a key cornerstone of the prosperity agenda of our County and we plan to engage local businesses and schools to work more closely together to provide better outcomes for our children.

### **Tri County Alliance:**

In December 2014, the leaders of Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils made an alliance, to work together with the three Local Enterprise Partnerships, (LEPS), to focus on their common economies of innovation, science, technology and creative industries.

Our strategic alliance is asking Government to allow joint new plans to be developed for transport, spatial planning and other key infrastructure. We want to devolve employment and skills funding so employers' needs can be properly met locally, and support a devolved approach to the local trunk road network. We want enhanced powers over bus services and the ability to maximise public transport between key towns and cities and ensure the best economic benefits are unlocked from projects such as East-West rail and the connectivity of technology centres like Silverstone to the national road network.

Our Tri County area has a Gross Value Added of £45 billion, a population of 2 million people and is the equivalent combined Authority for Greater Manchester. We believe that by creating this alliance, we can find smarter ways to achieving savings for all three Councils and also secure genuine devolution of powers and funding, similar to the Greater Manchester model. It is important to point out that this alliance is not about setting up a super county, but is simply about collaborating on the issues that we have a statutory responsibility for. The alliance is still in its early stages and over the next couple of months we will be working out the details to present to the government after the May General Elections.

### **Our Infrastructure Programme**

The County Council is in the middle of the largest infrastructural investment programme in its 125 year history. In the last five years we have spent over half a billion pounds. During the next five years we will be investing a further £600 million upgrading and building new schools, roads and Superfast broadband. Last year saw the opening of the £35million Corby Link Road and workings on upgrading key strategic junction pinch points. We are laying the basis for the next stage of the dualing of the A43 between Northampton and Kettering. Other important road projects include the A45 Daventry link Road, the Weekly Warkton bypass and the A6 Chowns Mill Junction. The Kettering East Development will see the opening of the first of two new primary schools in September.

Work will also begin in the next couple of months of the County Council's New HQ. This is an 'Invest to Save' project that will see the closing and selling of twelve old, expensive to run existing buildings. This project will bring 2000 plus public sector workers back into the town which is an important boost to our County town and more importantly, will reduce our running costs and make significant savings. We estimate that in the first year of running, we will be £300,000 better off and in the next thirty years our annual operating costs will be half of what we would be spending on the twelve existing buildings.

### **The Council Budget and Next Generation Working for Public Services**

The pressures on Strategic Local Authority services are immense. We have already taken out nearly £200 million from our base budget and we have another £148 million left to take over the next five years. Quite simply, we cannot go on as we are. Our current operating model is not fit for purpose.

Over the next five years the costs of providing services due to a continued surge in demand and other pressures will rise by £104m while the money given to us by government will reduce by £79m. This means the cost of running services will be double the amount of money available to us. At our February Council budget meeting we passed our 2015/16 budget and our new Council Plan to meet these demands and protect front line services.

Our new strategic direction means that by 2020 we will see a far smaller retained organisation, the right-sourcing and commissioning of services from a new set of accountable organisations and social enterprises which may be owned, managed and run by current council staff. We will be using the Community and Voluntary Sector more in delivering vital local services and most importantly giving our service users more choice and control in the services that they use. For more information on our council plan see our website <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/performance/Pages/plans.aspx>

### **Empowering Councillors Scheme**

Councillors' scheme is as popular as ever. Countywide we have funded well over 2500 community projects to the tune of over £2.5million. In my district I made sure my money has made a positive difference by helping to fund various projects in my Division. I have £7k Pa annum to spend and have yet to be asked to help with anything in Wappenham. The money has to be shared across 14 Parish's and goes pretty quickly so please get your requests in ASAP.

If anyone wishes to contact me about any relevant matter they can contact me on 07710198272 or e-mail me on [IMorris@northants.gov.uk](mailto:IMorris@northants.gov.uk) or you can follow me on twitter [@Cllr\\_Ian\\_Morris](https://twitter.com/Cllr_Ian_Morris)

### **7. Observations from the District Councillor – Cllr Peter Davies**

This year, South Northants is once again in the top ten of the best places to live in the UK, according to the most recent Halifax quality of life survey.

Another big plus is that superfast broadband has now reached further areas, even as far as Moreton Pinkney where I live, ahead of schedule. The council has been urging BT for some time past to move on this and in fact has contributed to the scheme at Grange Park. Local reactions have been very positive, especially from those running businesses from home. I know of course that Wappenham has been part of the Tove Valley scheme for some time.

Over the past year, council finances have again been under a lot of pressure, with a further reduction of 6.1% in funding from central government, following a 13% reduction last year. Obviously this knocks a hole in the council's finances and a huge amount of work has been done to identify possible savings. As a member of the budget committee I have been closely involved.

I mentioned last year the plans to share services with Cherwell DC and possibly Stratford DC. This has moved on to the point where there is now a joint chief executive with Cherwell, plus joint head of finance and legal services. In addition some planning staff work at both locations, with increasing use of internet links. This process is working through the system. Savings have also been made in refuse collection, now on a four day basis

The result of all this effort is that South Northant's budget remains in balance, with no resort to borrowing. For the sixth year running there will be no increase in the SNC element of council tax. But there is an increase in the county council share and for the police commissioner

Last year I mentioned sources of council funding for local parish projects. I am closely involved as a member of the grants panel. Apart from the new homes bonus local element, from which Wappenham has benefitted for new storage cupboards (and from which you still have a net balance this year of almost £2,000), part funding for other projects may be available from the community development capital fund, which stands at £175,000. The council's new offices in Towcester are now open for business, paid for by selling the present site for house building.

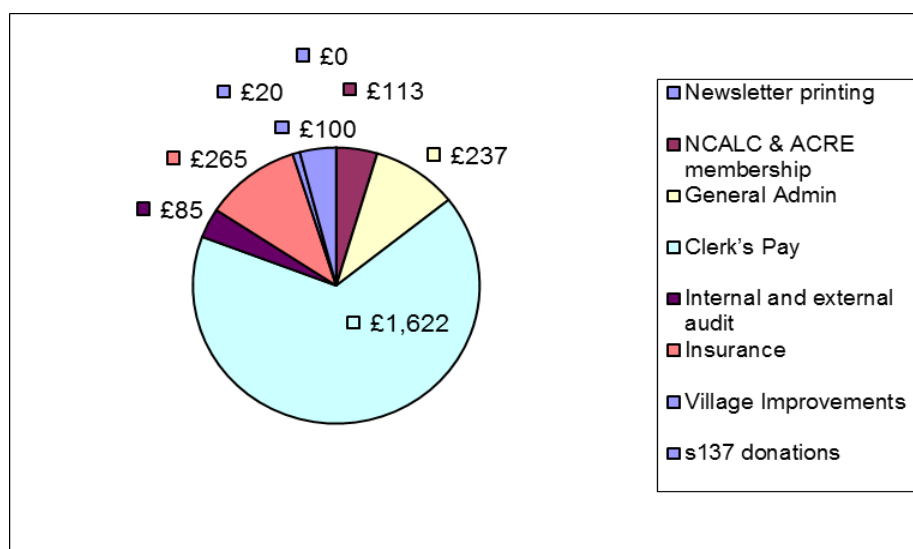
As you know, national and local elections take place on 7 May and the local polling station is this village hall. I am standing again as district councillor. Finally, the Wings for life world run is taking place on Sunday 3rd

May. I see you have been notified of the route, which passes through Wappenham, with local road closures from 15.00 to 16.45pm.

### 8. Parish Council Financial Statement for y/e 2014 and budget for y/e 2015 PC – Cllr Howard Mordue (PC financial internal control officer)

- We closed this year with £2842 in the bank accounts; this compares with last year's £2682 closing figure.
- Total expenditure was £2443; this compares with £2302 the previous year.
- There were no newsletter printing costs incurred due to significant advertisers' contributions.
- The precept for 2015-16 is £2,605, up £3 or 0.13% from £2,602 in 2014; the Parish Council is taking £150 from reserves this year to meet the budgeted expenditure of £2758.
- £100 of this year's budget is set aside for donations to village groups and organisations.
- The Parish Council notes that a total of £1946 is ring fenced for the parish at SNC under the New Homes Bonus grant scheme, a grant of £1065 having been awarded to the Village Hall Committee.

How Wappenham Parish Council spent your money in y/e 2015



Budgeted v actual expenditure by area and predictions for next year

	Budget 2014/15	Actual 2014/15	Comment	Budget 2015/16
<b>Newsletter printing</b>	100	0	Budget set after consultation with Jane H	50
<b>NCALC membership</b>	112	113	Budget set to account for increase in membership	218
<b>General Admin</b>	269	237	£140 for Village Hall hire, £68 for training	308
<b>Clerk's Pay</b>	1622	1622	nationally awarded payrise	1657
<b>Internal and external audit</b>	82	85		85
<b>Insurance</b>	285	265		270
<b>Village improvements</b>	135	20	Salt purchased	70
<b>s137 donations</b>	100	100	£75 to WRA, £25 to the Church	100

## **9. Report from the Police – read out by Cllr Wickham**

Please find enclosed the police report relating to April 2014-March-2015. Once again please accept my apologies for not being able to attend.

Crime Figures 01-Apr 2014- 31-Mar-2015:

Criminal damage to Motor Vehicle – 1

Theft of Motor Vehicle – 2

Violence – 2

Burglary in a Building – 1

Of those figures, vehicle crime was prominent. This related to a local offender who was committing vehicle-related crime, to the extent they were wanted by five separate police forces. They have since been arrested and are currently awaiting trial.

Across the County, Burglary was down by 14.5%; Serious Acquisitive Crime, which includes Robbery has also decreased by 14%; Theft from Motor Vehicles has also fallen by around 18%.

With regards to recent crime on the area, over the past two weeks Brackley has experienced a spate of vehicle crime. The M.O has witnessed the Offender using an object so smash a window and take any items that are on display.

We are advising those with vehicles to make sure there aren't any items on display, especially valuable items such as laptops, handbags, wallets and bags. It only takes a matter of seconds for the vehicle owner to remove the item before they lock their vehicle. Simultaneously, it only takes a matter of seconds for a criminal to break in and take the items on show. Therefore we ask all members of the public to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity through the police on 101, the non-emergency number. Should a crime be taking place at the time please dial 999 with immediate effect.

Brackley police station is also going through a period of change. Some of you may already be aware that the front counter which serves the public ceased trading yesterday. The station is still in place as a base for the local police. It's just the front counter that has closed. We can appreciate that a number of residents have popped into the station over the years to report incidents, hand in property and produce documents. Should anyone be in a position whereby they require contact with their local police or to make a report, please dial 101.

Three members of staff have also moved on: Cathy Baker who was the Administrator, whose role also involved serving the public, left yesterday. PCSOs Clive Ashmore and Stuart Dowell have also decided to venture pastures new. However, we are still determined to provide the best possible service to the public. Patrols and appearances at events and public meetings (where feasible) will still take place. But as you can probably appreciate with the PCSO and Police Officer numbers being less than previous it won't always be possible to meet every request that is put to us.

Should anyone have anything they would like to discuss with me, please pass on my contact details.

Kind Regards

PCSO Graham Suppiah

Brackley Police Station

Tel no 101 x345769

Mobile 07557 778155

10. To receive the accounts of the Parochial Charities, comments of the Trustees, Parochial Church Council:

**Wappenham Thomastide Charity**  
**(formerly known as the Wappenham Poors and Church Charities)**  
**Statement of Accounts for Year 2014/15**

Date	Details	Withdrawn	Paid In	Balance (£)
2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014	Balance brought forward			1,160.66
19 Dec 2014	Received from Trustees		500.00	1,660.66
19 Dec 2014	Withdrawn for St Thomastide Grants	300.00		1,360.66
29 Dec 2014	Cheque to H Wickham for pot plants	40.94		1,319.72

Details of the recipients are confidential but are available to any person – in confidence – nominated by the Parish Council. Signatures were not obtained from recipients, as it is felt that it is awkward and a little degrading to ask for them. The awards were delivered by the Chairman and he has provided confirmation that all were safely received.

### Report

Rupert Fordham continued as Chairman of the Trustees for the distribution of the awards, and Phyllis King, Philip King, Rev Carole Peters and Hilary Wickham continued as Trustees.

Over the course of the year no special requests for financial assistance were received.

The sum made available for distribution for the St Thomastide Grants by the Trustees was £500. This year three people received gifts, each of £100, which was the same figure as last year.

In addition, a number of parishioners who it was felt had had a difficult time recently, perhaps through illness or bereavement, were given pot plants as a Christmas gift. As before, these were well received.

Again, the Trustees decided not to distribute all the money received, but rather to save some. As a consequence, the charity now has over £1,300 in reserve. The purpose of the charity is to help people in Wappenham who are finding it hard to make ends meet, and the Trustees would therefore be happy to consider requests, perhaps of a practical nature, during the course of the year, as well as at Christmas time. They would welcome the help of the PCC and the Parish Council in this respect.

As ever the accounts of the charity can be made available to any independent Auditor nominated by the Annual Meeting should this be deemed desirable.

Rupert Fordham, Chairman

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### Report from the Rector

What a year it has been!

20 months into my Incumbency with you it is good to see many of our new initiatives blooming. Our regular and special services continue to provide varied worship that encompasses both traditional and contemporary styles. Sadly none of our services have seen expansions in regular, tiny congregations, but I am so pleased to say that both our new “fresh expressions” - Messy Church and Village Praise and Prayer are bringing new worshippers through our doors even if in only small numbers.

Our two Eucharistic services on the first and third Sundays have seen overall numbers remain frustratingly static, but we have not only welcomed our soon to be married couples to hear their banns, but their families as well and we have also held a very popular baptism service as part of our regular worship. We now hope wherever possible to host our Baptisms during one of our regular services - a new policy in the Benefice.

Outside of our regular service pattern we have also introduced a range of Festival and Benefice-wide Services Wappenham is hosting two Benefice Sunday Services as well as their September Patronal celebration. We are still on the look out for a speaker for our next Harvest Festival on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Our Christmas and Easter Services were a great success.

With God's help into the future, we must be able to offer a welcoming and accessible church, that through a mixture of lay-led and ordained ministry offers a range of worship that nourishes and helps to sustain a sacred space in our villages. Our churches are open and assessable to all even if they do not attend regularly and long may they remain so.

One of the biggest achievements this year has been our weekly Hope Centre Food run. I am immensely proud that this small rural Benefice has answered a call for help from our local homeless shelter and now collect donated food from a distribution centre in Milton Keynes and transport to the Hope Centre in Northampton. Started here in Wappenham

This year has been a busy one for Occasional Offices. We have had baptisms and weddings - we have another Wedding booked in for 2015.

We have continued to build on our relationship with St Loys School, where many of our Village children go and as well as taking the regular Tuesday morning assemblies, I have been advising staff on how to make their assemblies more interactive.

On a social note – we are holding a Benefice Barn Dance the night before the Rogation Service and this year both will take place at the Weston Barns on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of May and looking ahead we hope to have a big church presence at both the plant sale and of course the beer festival

### **The Future**

Sadly, as a Church, we cannot be said to be in the rudest of health at the moment. With small congregations and increasing bills such as the Parish Share, the future is fragile to say the least and I invite everyone to pray for our future.

This year we will welcome a new member to our PCC and that is a wonderful achievement. We may be small but we can be mighty and while we may at times have to leave old models of ministry and mission behind us, I have no doubt that we will work together to ensure we have a worshipping future.

I hope this year our PCC will join with other PCCs in the Benefice to take part in the Vision Day that will allow us to confront some of our problems and seek solutions. I hope we will achieve a Vision and an Action plan for the future of ministry and mission in these parishes and that with this we can work towards a future that furthers God's Kingdom as we serve the Lord and this community in faith and love, here in the Astwell Benefice.

### **And Finally....**

As we move into the second half of 2015 we do still have so much to give thanks to God for.

As you know this year will see my life change dramatically as I go from a single priest to a married one! I thank you all for your good wishes, advice and support and for your understanding that our service pattern will be disrupted in September.

But also looking back over these past 20 months with you, I thank you all for your support and love and prayers!

Reverend Carole Peters

The Rector St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham.

The Astwell Benefice.



## **11. Reports from Parish Council Officers and Village Organisations' representatives**

### **The Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham. Charity No. 1116889**

#### *Introduction*

The Friends continued to raise funds during 2014 whilst awaiting the outcome of the Quinquennial Review to find out the fund-raising challenges that faced them. The report was received in June 2014 and considered by the PCC.

#### *Treasurer's Report*

The Friends' funds stood at £7,394 at the end of 2014, of which £750 is earmarked for the WC. There is also outstanding Gift Aid to be claimed.

#### *Works and Faculties*

##### Tower Steps and north porch roof

Following the Quinquennial Review, the decision was made to focus primarily on repairs to the tower steps and then tackle the north porch roof. The cost was estimated to be £20,000, approximately £300 a step. Whilst expert professional advice was sought the Friends began raising money, inviting residents to 'sponsor a step' in memory of a loved one, to be commemorated on a plaque in the Church. Several such donations have been received.

##### Kitchen and WC

Progress has been made in that we have, thanks to the Tove Valley Broadband works, now got a water pipe which runs from the stand pipe at the gate up into the boiler room. The next step might be to organise the soak away.

#### *Fund-raising events*

The Plant Sale took place in May 2014 and moved up a gear, being held in the Village Hall. There was more room for plants and teas were served. Many thanks to Di Watts and Hilary Wickham for their plants and to Anthony Tucker for his vegetable seedlings and perennials.

The Church/Friends have been asked to participate in the second Wappenham Beer Festival, sharing the proceeds with the Village Hall. This would be our major fund-raising event of the year. Last year's event netted over £2,000. The beer festival will take place on Saturday 27 June 2015.

May I thank all the hard working and enthusiastic members of the Friends and our supporters!

Jane Mordue

Friends of St Mary the Virgin Wappenham

*Jane agreed to publish details of the Foodbank on WIZ.*

### **Wappenham Short Mat Bowls Club**

The Bowls Club is very appreciative of the recent improvements made to the village hall. Numbers of attendees are down mainly due to transport issues but still at approximately six each session. The club meets Thursdays at 2pm and new members are always welcomed.

Anthony Tucker

## **Wappenham Village Hall**

The Village Hall Committee is pleased to report an excellent year in terms of finance, building restoration and use of facilities. Thanks to the combined efforts of Jane Harries who has generated money from local grants and to Anthony Reid who has overseen the spending, and in some cases undertaken the work himself, the Hall is looking in much better shape. After a few setbacks the heating is now working well as is the recently installed lighting. Acoustic panels on both the walls and ceiling have greatly improved the sound quality as has the purchase of a PA system and in March 2014 Dave Long installed the WIFI facility – so we have finally joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! The front and kitchen doors have been painted and missing roof tiles replaced. In recent weeks Ben Lawrence has made two new cupboards one in the main room to house the table tennis table and one in the vestibule for the Christmas tree, lights and PA system. Anthony Reid has quoted to paint these and also the vestibule which has been badly marked. Our next project is restoration of the rose window and we are currently awaiting advice from a friend of Hilary's who runs a university course on glass restoration.

The building continues to be well used as a venue for meetings, birthday parties, table tennis practise, short mat bowls and the monthly coffee mornings. Rarely a week goes by when it is not in regular use.

Throughout the past year the committee has been proactive in organising a range of events and on the whole they have been well supported and financially successful. The two quiz nights with fish and chips, ably run by Frank Kinner, have both been very popular the last one being held just two weeks ago made £195. The Christmas Lunch Club held at the Old Barn Restaurant in December and financed by the committee was well attended with twenty sitting down to enjoy an excellent meal. Jane Harries organised the Art/Craft Market in October this made £132 and was felt to be worth repeating this year. The Beer Festival last June, although an exhausting and extremely long day for all concerned, proved to be hugely successful both in terms of money raised and in bringing villagers together to enjoy a day of fine weather, fine music and local beers - we just hope that this year's festival will be as successful. The Safari Supper co-organised by the committee and WRA was again well supported and raised much needed money for the Hall. Finally in March the committee was pleased to host a touring group of theatricals known as The Pantaloons who presented their very original version of Bleak House. This was a sell out and all those attending had a most entertaining and enjoyable evening. We already plan to have them back in the Spring with their performance of The Importance of Being Earnest. This made a profit of £120.

The only two disappointments were firstly the lack of interest in the Wappenham calendar we reduced the print run to 100 yet still had many left over and lost money on the venture, secondly the Computer Club which looked so promising to start with but tailed off at the second session with only a couple attending and has regrettably been scrapped. Otherwise the committee can be justly proud of a very successful year.

**Jenny Szczerbowski – Secretary Wappenham Village Hall Committee**

### **Footpaths**

Hopefully it's just the beginning of some lovely walking weather!

Following on from the damage caused by horses in the winter and the recent very dry weather there are still some difficult and uneven surfaces on SC4 and SC24. Otherwise no complaints or problems that I am aware of, except, guess what! It is true that dogs are still being allowed to foul footpaths in the churchyard,

cemetery, village hall and around the village itself - please please can owners be more vigilant about cleaning up after their pets.

There is an ongoing situation between NCC Highways and the developer Francis Jackson regarding the reinstatement of the footpath up Pittams Lane.

Has anyone any questions or concerns regarding footpaths and trees? My contact number is 860236.

Hilary Wickham

### **Clive Watt – WIZ**

No report required this year; WIZ continued to provide a much appreciated service to the village.

### **Slapton and Wappenham Evangelical Church**

Our village Chapel follows strictly the word of God from Bible and we believe and trust in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and shed his blood for us so that we have hope in Him. Our chapel uses a modern English Standard Version of the Bible which uses modern language so the Word is clear and relevant to us all from the youngest to the oldest.

The Christian Church is not a group of peculiar people, but people who have put their faith in the Living God into to practise. Our country has lost its way from its routes where the church played a central role in the community and this is such a great tragedy. People in villages like Wappenham used to find comfort in hearing the word of God. Our village is privileged to have two places of worship. How sad it is that only a few people find comfort in God's word and attend regular worship. The Church is not as many think, a building, it is the people; the buildings will only crumble if you don't come along! Sunday is the Lords Day.

Our Chapel still has a regular congregation of 20 to 25 in the morning as well as occasional visitors. The service in the evening which is held at Slapton Chapel has the same congregation.

We have our regular Sunday school on Sunday mornings and those children who come along do find it really helpful and they learn so much which will prove valuable to their future lives about love, kindness, good morals and the application of the teachings of Jesus. If you have young children and you would be happy for them to come along to learn about the Bible teachings then it would be a real blessing to welcome them. There have been some lovely new friendships made where some of the children would not have meet, due to them going to different schools.

In the last year we have started a small children's bible class on two Friday evenings per month for those who attend the Sunday school. The children are learning about the life of Jesus and understanding the application of his teaching which even they see is relevant today. They read from the bible are watch a film about the life of Jesus which brings the bible to life.

All the Sunday school teachers and leaders in the chapel have attended a full CPAS training course and are registered with them which gives us clear training and guidance in safe guarding of children and vulnerable adults.

One of our continued encouragements for the chapel family, even as we continue without a pastor is the quality and number of visiting pastors and gifted preachers who have come to share ministry with us over the last year. From as far afield as Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Devon, Leicestershire, Suffolk, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire and closer to home we are supported from the local towns of Northampton, Wolverton and Banbury. In this last year we have had 24 visiting pastors and preachers. We do hope within the next year we will be able to find a pastor to lead the chapel again. But those who have preached here have blessed us with a powerful teaching ministry.

Our chapel holds regular meetings each week for prayer. Within our prayers meetings we always pray for our village and those who we know who are suffering. If anyone would like any practical, pastoral support or would like to discuss anything on the Christian faith, or questions on the Bible, then please do contact us we

would be pleased to help or advise you. It would be a great blessing to welcome any of you from our village and local area to our Sunday morning services at 10:45, or our Bible studies which are on a Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm. It would be a real blessing, not just to us, but to you as well, if you could hear God's word through a teaching ministry in our village and then come know the Lord Jesus in your hearts. Your life will be enhanced in way you never could imagine. You are most welcome to join us. Thank you for listening and God bless you all.

### **Newsletter**

The newsletter has been continuing as usual this year. Thanks to all our contributors, who are the ones who make it a good magazine, and to all who deliver it (and picks it up from the printer) and who pass it on to others. Advertising has been good this year and I would like to thank our local businesses who place ads and in doing so sponsor the newsletter. Please carry on letting me know your news and ideas.

Jane Harries

### **Wappenham Recreation Association**

#### **Insurance**

The WRA have negotiated an agreement to have the insurance for the playground covered under the Village Hall and agreed a contribution to cover the increase in premium to both parties benefit. This has reduced the amount need to keep the playground going but still leaves the committee the need to raise around £500 a year.

#### **Halloween Night**

A trick or treat was organised again this year. This event is not organised as a fund raising event but just to provide the children of the village a fun and safe night. My children seem to look forward more to Halloween than Christmas!

The 'Reeds' at the Bake house keep raising the bar in terms of a show and it is very much appreciated to all the households who agree to be visited. We are offered houses at the bottom of the village but due to logistics it is easier and safer to keep them up near the village hall.

#### **Fencing**

A new fence has been erected between the playground and the neighbours in the last year.

The fencing around the play equipment has broken and is on the list of works to be undertaken.

#### **Rospa**

A number of the items on the 2014 Rospa report have been dealt with in the last year like:-

- New bark
- Repairs to the slide access
- Removal of broken equipment, etc

The next inspection is in June. There is still a proposal to remove the basket ball hoop as it is not used and has been noted as a risk.

#### **Trees**

We were contacted by the council last July to remove overhanging trees. This was undertaken by the committee along with further pruning of the trees. The branches were very kindly removed from the playground by one of our residents free of charge.

## Long Term Future

The long term aim is still to move the playground adjacent to the village hall with the consent of the Church landlord.

The long term future will need to be resolved as the cost of maintaining the playground in its current location with the current funding arrangement is not sustainable even with the reduced insurance cost.

The committee is currently operating with 4 members now that Justin Van Hoff has joined us to replace Harvey Lay (the outgoing Chairman). I have taken the Chairman role on again but would like to find someone to take on this role as I had been chairman since 2001.

I would like to obtain a long term solution before handing the reins to someone else.

Dene Ayres

Chairman WRA Committee

(01327) 861009

## Wappenham website – Dianne Walsh

### Hosting

- The website is still hosted by Northampton school for boys (NSB) (since 2003.2004) but it would be possible to move it across to wappenham.net and have it hosted by TVB at a cost. This would have to be paid by a benefactor or by the PC.

### Managing

- Finding increasingly difficult to upload info. I am now working full-time, and have little if any time to do this. I have recently received offer of help to upload contributions and will look into this but it often involves more than just uploading links need creating and so forth. But will investigate further.

### Advertising

- Organisations in the village do not send adverts directly to me apart from FSMV even if I have requested this often. Consequently I need to search through the Newsletter or get my info from WIZ which in terms of image quality is not suitable for web publication. Documents need to be submitted in word in order for me to convert in high quality pdf or actually cut and paste the text on the webpages.
- I also offered to show people how to upload their own events on the google calendar embedded on the website but again I have had no takers.

### Tweeting

- Twitter account. The address is <https://twitter.com/Wappenham>
- There are 22 followers. Organisations should be tweeting Wappenham events directly from the Wappenham twitter account but this is not happening. It would need someone to be more active and to tweet regularly. This is completely separate from the website and would be happy to pass on the details for someone to take a lead by tweeting regularly in order to attract followers.

## 12. Open Forum

The Clerk was asked to follow up a details of a possible road closure in Abthorpe with Gary Thorp of Highways.

A member of the public thanked all the village organisations and the members of the Parish Council for all the hard work they put into improving the village amenities.

***The meeting closed at 21.30pm.***