

HUNSDON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING **23rd March 2015**

Present D Gibbs (chairman), S Oliver, B Toll, N Clark, H Brown & B Dunthorne with M Newman (Dist.Cllr), R Beeching (Cty Cllr) A Pummell (PRT), E Nicklin (Hunsdon JMI), J Robinette (Clerk), J Felstead (VHMC) & 7 members of the public.

Apologies for absence

J Ashley and B Carthy (PPP)

Approval of minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2014

The councillors approved the minutes and they were signed by the chairman, D Gibbs.

Chairman's Report

This council had ten meetings in 2014/15, with August and December as recuperation months, with a 93% attendance record from councillors.

Council Format In May 2014 Cllr. David Kitching resigned his position as deputy chairman due to continual bad health. David removed to a British Legion home in Bexhill-on-sea. As a result of a terrible accident he succumbed to severe burns and died later in a Brighton hospital. His death is still under investigation. Mrs. Bernadette Dunthorne expressed an interest and desire to serve on the council so, after the necessary interviews and form signing was co-opted at the September meeting. The position of deputy chairman was accepted by Councillor Bob Toll after being proposed and seconded.

Infrastructure The summer fete on the playing field continued with its annual success with proceeds going to our village hall. Our grateful thanks to Brian Smith of Argonaut Stud for his generous support in supplying the public address system and power wherever it was needed, he does this each year and without this essential help we would be held wanting. The army of helpers defies description but is indicative of the community spirit in our village. The village memorial to both WW1 and 2 is in a disgraceful condition but please be assured that we are trying to wring some financial assistance from a military charity and hope for restoration during the summer months.

Police Liaison with Herts constabulary is spasmodic. My monthly meetings with the Community Inspector and Chief Inspector have long gone and police/resident contact has not improved with the closing of Bishop's Stortford police station. Their visits to council meetings are welcome and we do sympathise with the diminishing numbers of officers coupled with the enormous areas they have to operate in.

Bus operations With HCC on a massive cost cutting exercise there is little doubt that the bus timetables will be one of the services to be affected. This is highlighted by Hunsdon being outside of the school free travel area. When a bus company has its licence revoked by HCC without consulting the respective parents of the travelling children leaving the children at the roadside there is something dreadfully wrong at County Hall. Equally, private company 'Trustybus' refusing an elderly lady to alight because it "*wasn't an official stop*" even though buses have stopped at that particular spot for over forty years! The driver did not stop for the next four miles and a return bus to Hunsdon wasn't due for two hours. An act of crass stupidity. An explanation by the driver like "This time but not in the future" would be enough.

Herts Highways Looking back on annual reports one is struck by repetition, an example – 2009 – speeding cars and drivers holding little black boxes to their ears probably

enjoying the time between leaving their Herts respective companion and catching the train ; saying what and to whom ? A Jaguar driver was possibly running late and was seen performing his shaving routine whilst gathering speed on Acorn Street. Government is declaring war on selfish tractor drivers who are content to chug along seemingly oblivious of other road users; but how do you police that? Some are incapable of a 'chug,' compounding speed with their massive size and heavily ridged tyres which decimate grass verges with waste transfer trucks chewing up the rest. This council spends thousands of pounds each year endeavouring to maintain our village but substandard road repairs, unrepaired damaged walls and a poorly serviced sign together with an unbelievable amount of road garbage makes us wonder why there is never any improvement. On Thursday 9th April I will attend a Herts Highways evening covering reporting situations and how they are dealt with – feel certain that Hunsdon will feature. Planning Stop Harlow North received over 2000 responses to the District Plan with a further endorsement of support from Mark Prisk M.P.

Because there is an absence of statutory regulations until a Neighbourhood Plan passes into law the void is simply a developer's charter. This village contains a rare field, rare in as much it is the habitat of families of wildlife and several species of wild plants. When will destruction of wildlife habitats for the march of concrete and tarmac going to cease? Over a year ago the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) was scathing in their comments on EHDC's Draft District Plan. The Plan, proposing housing development, is fundamentally flawed. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear, assessed housing needs should reflect the constraints of the Green Belt. These constraints are ignored by EHC, which has brought them into conflict with NPPF. It is a concern that publication of excessive housing targets in the Draft Plan will allow developers to get approval in the countryside and Green Belt. The public meeting of 14th March 2015 here in this hall displayed considerable feelings against two proposals for development. Inappropriate development is being swept aside by a planning system that is heavily weighted in favour of developers and development. The Government's complacent response to the Communities and Local Government (CLG) committee report on the operation of the NPPF seems to reject that there are problems. We do not have an up-to-date local plan in place and we do not have a five year land supply yet the Government still applies a presumption in favour of development. This Council raised concerns that the EHDC Draft Plan of 25% growth in households would be ruinous, breaching the Green Belt, overloading infrastructure and spoiling the environment for future generations. This was put before the CPRE who said EHDC's assertion was wrong and were confusing the NPPF policy [to *objectively assess full housing needs*] with a completely different policy [which *concentrated on sustainable development*], and are required to determine how much is right for East Herts; if they stick to their current line they can't say they haven't been warned if the Plan gets thrown out. Of late we have seen the emergence of three planning applications for housing on the outskirts of the village boundary ; south of Tanners Way, Wicklands Road and Drury Lane and the old Crane Yard in Acorn Street. A common theme has been evident; under the draft District Plan, Hunsdon was designated a Category 1 village, this means it is able to sustain a minimum of 10% of its housing stock. As we have examined the pros and cons of the several developer's proposals it has become clear that this assumption is erroneous. However, the same question is raised time and again. Do we have the infrastructure and support for a

10% or more increase in housing? We accept that more housing is required in the District and particularly in Hunsdon we have established a need for an additional modest amount of affordable housing through our own survey. At this moment in time we have before us some examples of planning applications which are obviously attractive to the land owners and associated developers alike, but display an absence of close thought and consideration with the community.

The eyesore on entering the village from Stanstead Abbots is the Waste Transfer Site. This ramshackle collection of machinery and various buildings attracts a huge number of waste delivery lorries for business who, in turn, pay no attention to grass banks if meeting a car coming towards them. There has been a physical injury to a walker from a brick coming off an insecure load, burning unknown materials pollute the air and cause bronchial problems. The District Council and Authorities continue to find themselves confused and somewhat powerless to exert control. There are other Planning Applications in the pipeline and probably more to follow but let me implant in your mind this vision – all can be resolved if those who own land around our village could pause, - step back, - and reconsider their respective patchwork planning applications and adopt a more community spirited attitude.

Then, and only then, applicants and their developers would embrace the obvious benefits of the Neighbourhood Plan and go forward together with the long established community of Hunsdon.

4. Police Report

None recd.

5. County Councillor's Report

I will go through some pointers of the work I have undertaken on your behalf this year. It had been very busy as you will see. I will make points with regard to HLB, LB, SCRUTINY, CTTE WORK, HIGHWAYS, and PROBLEMS FROM PCs and TOWN COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS

HLB 20 items worked on and spent £90,000 on roads matters

This year have selected for a list that has come in over the year of items various request have been made for action I have a priority list of 23 or so down from an initial list of 55 Some are too big for my budget and have been forwarded to Ringway for their list of actions and consideration. Mine this year a have ranged for carriageway resurfacing to footways refurbishment , to waiting restriction lines remarked n consultations on TRO, traffic studies i.e. speeding, or not, street scene enhancement and verge clearing and vegetation cut back

Locality budget £10,000 spent on 16 projects These are aimed at enhancing the quality of life of our residents in some way or another. Include Operation Stomp run by Police and supplying boots and bells. A defibrillator for public use. A hedge for allotments. Repairs in a Memorial Hall. Computers for Samaritans in Ware. A replacement bench in a shopping centre. Paint for railings. A weekly drama workshop for an all ability class

PROBLEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS These in my division are numerous and diverse. They include in the not definitive list....Admission to schools problems of access. Highways.potholes verges litter, lighting yellow lining. Health and Social include GP surgery and problems with appointments Hospital treatment transport, cycle

ways footpaths housing associations bridle ways. Trees in gardens, on footpaths both upright and horizontal. Parking on pavements, footpaths overgrown. Dog bins lacking and needed same with litter bins. Land ownership disputes. Social services in various ways. Waste transit site, and quarry in filling with soil. Lorries not obeying the weight limit on roads. Domestic violence. Taxi licensing complaints, houses being built outside of planning permission granted. Dog faeces on playing fields. Enforcement matters not occurring. Flooding, fear of flooding and concerns an area might flood. Crossing points for children at schools. Mothers parking on zig zag lines outside schools. An objection to lighting in a car park keeping fish in a pond awake at night. **AT COUNTY** I am on various committees and panels including; Health and Adult care. Chair many scrutiny panels Chair MRTG, Vice Chair Standards Committee attend all full Council Meetings and group meetings, Go to many trainings and meetings re larger items that have an all-inclusive county importance. Through the year I have attended 819 at events meetings and trainings and information seminars for both HCC and EHC also attend Parish Council and Town Council meetings when I do not have a clash elsewhere. At present I am Chairman of East Herts council as well as there are events to organise for this too. I have held about 12 this year. The Scrutiny panels I have been on or chaired are including the following; Health and Well-being Panel, Adult Car and health, Health Scrutiny Committee, Overview Scrutiny Committee. Scrutinies have been ... Thriving Families, Part night Lighting, Autistic Spectrum Disorder HSCB HSAB JSNA Integrated plan café scrutiny. It is a rich and varied life being a councillor, you see all aspects of the human condition and at times it becomes very tiring. I have another two years as your representative on County.

6. District Councillor's Report

I am pleased to present my fifth annual report to you as your District Councillor. As I will mention later, with District Council elections approaching on 7 May this might be my last, so I have taken the opportunity to re-read all the previous four reports. I started my first report to you in 2011 by clarifying those local services which the District Council – rather than anyone else – is responsible for, since I have to admit that was not clear to me when I started as a councillor, and I then decided that might be a useful format for this year's report.

Planning District councils have long had the responsibility for day-to-day application of local development policies ('development management'), building regulations and enforcement – and that continues as one of the principal council services, but one where resolving conflicting interests and aspirations often proves difficult. However although it seems an age ago now, it was only in the lifetime of the current government that responsibility for identifying and meeting targets for new housing ('planning policy') was replaced from Regions (and before that Counties) to Districts – but then soon afterwards was introduced the National Planning Policy Framework which took most of that new-found self-determination away again. So a few words on each of Development Management and Planning Policy. ***Development Management / Building Control / Enforcement*** Last year EH Council processed 2,326 planning and related applications, and carried out 15,570 building control inspections and initiated 450 enforcement investigations. Of the planning applications, 16 were in Hunsdon relating to 13 unique properties. 8 were approved, 3 withdrawn, 1 permission not required and 1 refused. I don't recall that any of these approvals were particularly contentious – but I will take this

opportunity to warn again that in the absence of an approved new District Plan we are currently vulnerable to speculative applications being approved by reference to the National Planning Policy Framework rather than local policies. We have seen this happening across the district, and I'm sure residents here will be aware of 3 current proposals, each for a dozen or so houses on sites just outside the village boundary which are likely to be determined in coming months. Although I do not see any of these singly or together as threatening the soul of this village, I am very concerned that the village school is absolutely full and new children coming in will have no alternative but to be ferried to Widford (until that becomes full) or elsewhere. I'm also conscious there are specific concerns, justifiably raised by residents about each of these applications and I will ensure these concerns are duly considered by officers' and councillors on the Development Management Committee. **Planning Policy** As already mentioned EH Council has a legal responsibility to develop plans to provide housing for a growing population, using a process that is independently examined to ensure it has been 'soundly' produced at each step. So for the past 3½ years, a team of planners has been developing the District Plan to address the provision of housing in the period up to 2031. The council will not, of course, ultimately build anything itself – that will be done by the private sector responding to supply and demand in the housing market, but what the council can do is determine a set of constraints on developers so that future housing is where, and of a type and quality, that meets local needs. That, then, is the key and final deliverable from the process – a new District Plan that will replace the existing (2007) Local Plan and which provides the criteria against which all applications for development are assessed. The process of developing a District Plan is enormously complex and, unless it has been done thoroughly, professionally and objectively (in other words, every conclusion they reach is backed up by some evidence or other) then the chances are it will fail the test of 'soundness' and be sent back, incurring even more delay and risk of unwanted development. The team is currently going through each of the comments made during last year's Public Consultation to assess whether some change to the draft policies should be made, but also still awaiting more of the key Technical Studies. Incidentally, one of the comments that the team will be grappling with is an overwhelming reaction to the inclusion in the Draft Plan of reference to the Gilston Area as a Broad Area for Development, that was orchestrated by STOP Harlow North. Whilst it remains with that status then it always on the horizon, but we know from published minutes that Places for People are pushing to have it brought forward as an allocated site; clearly the coming emphasis must be to resist any such proposition. The expectation is that the next 'Examination Ready' draft of the District Plan will be ready later this year and that will, again, have to go out for Public Consultation – although since the changes and additions will be quite limited then the timescale for undertaking that should be markedly less than the last round. No-one on the team is prepared to give an assurance, but it would seem to me we can expect the new plan to be in place by the middle of next year, if all goes well. While on the subject of planning policy, I would acknowledge the PC's involvement with E&G PC in starting work on a Neighbourhood Plan. This will require significant time and effort by its authors and I would encourage as many residents as possible to offer their services in its formulation. **Licensing** Another key responsibility of the District Council is that of licensing – for example of premises, taxi drivers etc. Although a

decision by the council can have huge impact on an individual's livelihood, I am not aware of anything contentious in the Hunsdon parish over the past year.

Street Cleaning and Waste Collection Apparently EH Council cleaned 36, 592, 923 km of highways last year – although I'm sure we could all point to the litter alongside some local roads and ask how that was missed out! Otherwise I hope the current system of collection and recycling has bedded in now and continues to contribute to the reduction of waste going to landfill. **Locally Administered Benefits and Housing Allocations** East Herts supported 6,361 housing benefit customers and 6,961 council tax support customers in East Herts; the shared Benefits service with Stevenage supported almost 30,000 individuals and processed over 110,000 changes to benefits in the course of the year. I know that, in some of the East Herts towns there are areas of real poverty and some of the councillors in those areas find that helping people through the benefits system occupies a large part of their time and effort. I count myself fortunate that in the Hunsdon Ward that does not seem to be the case. **Setting and collection of Council Tax** Although East Herts council is responsible for collecting Council Tax, much the greater proportion of that tax is collected on behalf of the county council, police authority and parish councils. The parish element of course varies from one to another but at the last meeting of Council when the forthcoming budget was presented and discussed, it was proposed and agreed that the EH Council Tax should be reduced by 1% for the forthcoming year and then frozen for the year afterwards. Otherwise fees and charges charged by EH would be frozen. However – as I'm sure you will have realised when your Council Tax bill arrived – the reduction in EH rates is more than lost in a 2% increase by HCC. **Community grants** EH is continuing with a relatively modest programme of community grants to support the activities of community groups. I mention this every year and am very happy to guide and support applications – but the initiative has to come from the groups **EHC itself** EHC – in common with every other arm of local government – is struggling to maintain services with a diminishing budget from central government. It continues to look for ways of cutting costs; I mentioned that the Benefits service is shared with Stevenage and similar arrangements are being explored with neighbouring councils for other services. Staff numbers are pared to the bone and as staff turn over they are often not replaced at all, are replaced part-time or the responsibility is loaded on to an existing members of staff. Everyone hopes that levels of service are being maintained, but if any resident does experience a level of service which falls below standard then please mention it, otherwise I fear the process will continue indefinitely. Perhaps symptomatic of that was the report of a 'peer group review' (ie senior officers and members from another council) of the Develop Management Process in EH, which was fairly critical in many respects. The Executive says that it has acknowledged those criticisms and will be acting to address them, so we shall see. Finally I would just mention the recent news that George Robertson, the Chief Executive for the past 4 years, has decided to take retirement at the end of May. I understand that approaching half of the 50 current members are standing down (or being stood down), so there will be many new faces about in the new term. For my part, I will be standing again for this ward of the District Council; I had a fairly easy ride back in 2011 but really have no idea how many other candidates will stand and of what political persuasion. I genuinely hope I will be successful because it has been a privilege to serve as your local councillor for the past 5 years. **Broadband** Provision of broadband is not District Council

– or any other council – responsibility, but in the spirit of putting my energies into something which I know is of real local interest, I have been pushing for progress on the matter. The latest response is that funding of £8.14 million has been confirmed for the second programme rollout across Hertfordshire, and the team are now going through the process to draw down a contract with BT from the government framework contract. As part of this process they are working with BT to determine exactly which areas the second programme will benefit and under what timeline. Due to the scale and complexity of this work they will not be in a position to confirm any area’s inclusion until later in the year, with the rollout itself due to start in March 2016 and run to December 2017. However they are actively looking to include areas in East Herts and hope to be able to make fibre broadband available for local residents, as they do recognise the need for faster broadband in these communities.

7. Parish Rooms Trust Charity Report

Hunsdon Parish Room Trust was founded in 1921. It was established in its present form with a Charity Commission Scheme in 1984. Under the terms of the Trust’s Charity Commission Scheme, the Trust’s income shall be applied “for any charitable purposes for the general benefit of the inhabitants of Hunsdon”.

The Trustees in 2014 were; Mr Tom Whyman (Chairman), Mr David Gibbs, Mrs Esther Nicklin, Mrs Judy Walford AND Mr Andrew Pummell (Secretary)

The Trustees met on two occasions in 2014; on the 3rd of March and the 6th of October. The following grants totalling £1766.17 were made during the year. £225.48 to Hunsdon JMI School. This amount of money was used to provide prizes for endeavour throughout the school year. £350.00 to Hunsdon Over Three Score Club as a contribution towards the cost of the Club’s Summer coach trip. £190.69 to Hunsdon Ducklings. This amount was used by The Ducklings to purchase outdoor play equipment. £1000.00 to Hunsdon Ducklings as a contribution towards the cost of renewing heating and windows in their portacabin. The Trustees are always pleased to consider applications for grants of a charitable nature and very much hope that groups within Hunsdon will continue to continue to seek the support of the Trust as the need may arise. The accounts for the year ending 31st December 2014 have been approved by the Trustees and have been confirmed as correct by a person independent of the Trust. The Trustees are grateful to Mrs Diane Dangel for performing this task. The accounts can be inspected by reference to me, Andrew Pummell, Trust Secretary. The Parish Room Trust held a total of £19772.51 at the start of the year and ended the year with a total of £21047.84 divided between its Nat West current account and its Barclays savings account.

8. Council Footpath Warden’s report

Firstly, some background as to what the Parish Paths Partnership is all about. The Parish Council has been a member of the partnership for some 15 years. This involves us working with our partners, Groundwork Trust, Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way Team. The object is to manage and promote the local footpath network at a local level, at the same time funding and carrying out rights of way improvement schemes in the parish. In April of 2014 we undertook to take on the Footpath Warden role from John Ashley, who had delivered the role for a number of years with great energy and success. Recognition of his impact in the role can be judged

by the fact that it has taken two of us to replace him and even then he continues to be of help and support in the background. Our primary role as volunteer footpath wardens for the parish council has been to monitor the condition of the paths and carry out any small items of routine maintenance such as cutting back overhanging bushes across paths and replacing damaged waymark discs and posts in partnership with the HCC Rights of Way team. Projects of a larger nature are undertaken in conjunction with the other members of the partnership. Accepting that this is the first year we have been in the role and the majority of this time we have been learning what needs to be done and who will do it, it has been a quiet year and the council has not embarked on any major projects. Whilst the spraying out of autumn sown crops commenced October 2014, there are still areas of the old airfield where the line of the footpaths have yet to be established, as the land was ploughed and then left fallow until recently. Nicholas Maddex has taken some action on this issue. With the exception of the above, they are now all clear for walking. There are no other items of importance that are not covered by routine maintenance. In conclusion we would like to thank the council for their support in our endeavours, also Nicholas Maddex, the Countryside Access Officer at HCC who has helped sort out any issues that we encountered, but primarily John Ashley who continues to provide informed advice to two non-dog owning walkers.

9. Hunsdon School Report

At last year's annual meeting I reported that Jo McGregor had chosen to take retirement from the Headmistresses post. Jon Millward has been appointed the position of Headmaster. Jon is settling in very well. Already being a member of staff and being able to have a good handover with Jo clearly helped in the transition process. Jon was the year 5/6 teacher and so his appointment as head teacher led to a vacancy in this post. Interviews were carried out to fill the vacancy and Nina Hall has been selected. Due to some complications in the release process from her previous school, Nina was not been available for the Autumn term, but has joined in January. In the interim period a combination of 2 supply teachers and Jon successfully filled the gap. The Autumn term also saw the anticipated Ofsted inspection take place. Jon, the staff and governors are very pleased with a grading of "Good". This is one down from the top grade, but is a good and fair reflection of the continued hard effort that the staff and governor team put into the school, and also gives us something to aim for next time. The governors have also seen some changes. Stefan Radajewski and Claire Dunstan have stood down and we thanked them for their significant contributions. Vacancies for 2 new governors are likely to be filled in the near future. The constitution of the governing board has also changed, which sees a reduction in the number of types of governor and the channels they are recruited through. This gives the governing board more freedom to add specific skill sets to the governing board. One of the changes is that there is no longer a formal Community governor role, which had links to the Parish council. We do however intend to continue to feed into the Parish council meetings, which is a role I will continue to do. The school is currently full with a total of 112 pupils. This ensures the school has a healthy funding level, which in turn helps to ensure there are adequate staff and facilities. The classes now consist of 3 classes in Infants split into reception and years 1 and 2. In Junior there are 2 classes split into year 3/4 and 5/6. The funding situation has enabled smaller individual classes' sizes in infants by splitting year 1 and 2, which is a way to better

integrate all of the younger pupils into the school. At that age there is a high relative age gap between the children, which leads to large range in ability. Having the smaller class sizes is a way to cater to all ranges of ability. There is 25 staff at the school either leading the class years or in supporting roles. We are grateful to all of these people who play a huge part in making the school successful. **Activities:** The school continues to offer a wide curriculum and here is a sample of the variety of special events and outings that the school organises: Winners of the Years 5/6 Athletics competition at Wodson Park Djembe drumming lessons for KS2 throughout the term Dance Festival World Book Day with Alice Hemmings, Konflux Theatre group to work with all the children putting on a play at the end of each day to the parents eSafety session, Years 5/6 Football Tournament, Comic Relief Day, Years 5/6 to run a Games afternoon for the school, Year 6 Reading Challenge Competition, Year 5 Maths Challenge, Year 6 GSK Science morning, Easter Egg Hunts, Ash Class Performance – The Romans, Easter Assembly, Ash trip to the Henry Moore museum, Trip to the seaside, Cedar Play – “Shrek”, Chauncey Community Day, Year 6 outing – Raft Building, French assembly, Talent Show, Cedar Trench Trail at Haileybury, Harvest Festival, Road Safety for Oak and Ducklings, Remembrance Day Event. The “Friends” continue to support us by paying towards the cost of coaches and are now in the position of having two Chairs and a full committee! Extra curricula: Apart from the usual clubs such as football, music, Gym and Dance clubs the school is also now also offering Philosophy, Basketball, Gardening, Fencing and photography Clubs Themed days: The school has continued its trend of dressing up days with the new leadership. These are seen as a good way to conclude and cement learning. This term there was an event around cartoon characters. These events are hard work and time consuming for the teachers, but very worthwhile when the children show such enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. Curriculum: There has been a new curriculum which has been taken on by the staff. This has to the need to purchase new materials. The staff has also managed to ensure old favourites such as the Tudors and WWII can be maintained as there is strong local history in these areas. Premises: The push on energy efficiency continues and new heating has been installed in the outbuildings, which is bringing significant benefits and the team are currently looking into solar options. New features are present in the playground with the addition of some outdoor table tennis tables and a revamp of the sandpit area to make way for an outdoor stage. The fencing has also been renewed in places where it was falling down. Performance: Part of the governor role is ensuring the performance standards for the school are high. We had another very pleasing set of SATs results at the end of the 2014 school year in Key Stage 2. Year 6 achieved 100% Level 4 in all English and Science subjects. In Maths the school compared well vs the national figures with 13% achieving level 6. The progress of the pupils from KS1 to KS2 was also very good and well above national average in Reading and Writing. So overall solid results and all the pupils and staff are to be congratulated on their efforts! Feedback: The school is always looking for feedback to confirm that school is maintaining high standards and look for opportunities for improvement. Last academic year when the parents’ consultation evenings took place, parents were asked to fill in a questionnaire. 60 responses were received, and the answers to the questions were positive with either the “agree” or “strongly agree” boxes ticked and only two questions had the “Don’t know box” ticked. The questions covered such things as “My child feels safe at this school, My child is making good progress at this

school, My child is well taught at this school, There is a good standard of behaviour at this school.” To receive such positive feedback is both helpful and encouraging to the staff as we seek to ensure that each child in Hunsdon JMI is looked after, cared for and offered the best education possible thus ensuring that they meet their potential.

10. SHN report

East Herts Council continues to prepare the District Plan. This time last year they consulted on the Preferred Options. More than 2,000 of our supporters submitted objections. However the draft plan still includes the Policy "GA1 Land in the Gilston Area" which states that "To meet long-term needs, land in the Gilston Area is identified as a Broad Location for Development". Once identified as a broad location for development there will be no defence against any future planning application. The policy goes on to say "East Herts Council will test through a Development Plan Document (DPD) the feasibility of land in the Gilston Area to accommodate between 5,000 and 10,000 new homes (overall looking beyond this plan period) and supporting uses and infrastructure ..." We gave East Herts Council clear evidence that residents do not want major building on the green fields north of Harlow. East Herts Council has repeatedly argued that building on the green fields north of Harlow is unsustainable and the campaign is very angry that they have apparently changed their tune. We await the publication of a final Plan which will have to undergo an examination in front of an independent planning inspector.

11. Report from the Neighbourhood Plan

It had been agreed by Cllrs that a Neighbourhood Plan should be developed with Eastwick and Gilston Parish. Cllr B Toll and Cllr N Clark had met others from this parish to compile the terms of reference. This now needed to be formally approved by both PCs in the near future. The plan would be in 3 parts. One for Hunsdon Parish, the second for Eastwick and Gilston and the third part for the land in between the parishes. It is then hoped that villagers would come forward to volunteer to be on focus groups to develop the plan.

12. Report from VHMC

Cllr. H Brown has resigned as the representative of the PC on the VHMC, therefore as the PC are the primary Trustee of the Village Hall, the PC need to consider a new representative. Following refurbishment of the main hall there have been numerous compliments about the hall and its upgraded facilities. Bookings have increased particularly Wedding receptions and parties, however, there are now only 3 people actively involved in the running of the village hall and they urgently need volunteers to help and maintain the Hall open for the village. There have been ongoing heating problems with the boiler system; however, John Felstead is hoping these will be resolved soon after consulting many heating engineers. As landlords of the neighbouring cottages, the committee is looking to improve these, with new windows and central heating for the tenants. The recent "Tipple Off" organised by Natalie Radley was a great success with money raised going towards refurbishing the stage curtains and track. There is unlikely to be a village fete this year as there have been no volunteers coming forward to organise it. This is a real shame as a lot of money is raised on the day for the hall, but also for the

loss of a village/community day. Again new volunteers are needed to help with fundraising and the running of the Hall. Chairman D Gibbs wished to thank Angela Felstead especially for all the work and support she continues to give to the hall.

13. Open Forum

a. PA Land South of Tanners Way. Mr. and Mrs. Findlay expressed their views concerning the PA, which they as applicants have submitted to East Herts, and that had recently been deferred. Mr. Findlay accused Chairman D Gibbs of calling him “Greedy”. Chairman D Gibbs firmly refuted this accusation. After much debate, Mr. Findlay acknowledged that it may have been too harsh a claim. Mr. Findlay went on to say, that he felt aggrieved that both Chairman D Gibbs and Dist. Cllr Newman had led him to believe that his PA would be accepted by both the EHDC and the PC. This again was refuted. With regard to the Waste Transfer site, he stated that it had been had been established for 50 years, employed local people and he believed it was not a noise nuisance and 2 recent noise surveys commissioned by him had agreed with this. He also stated that the EA had established a management plan to diminish the noise. Mrs. Findlay stated that a lot of thought had gone into the South of Tanners Way proposed development of 13 houses with particular consideration to the requirements of affordable housing and for elderly residents in Hunsdon.

b. Public Footpath. The footpath between Rise Cottages and Widford was in need of repair. This had already been highlighted to the Cty Council R Beeching.

c. 4th Wheelie bin. A resident asked if this was forthcoming from EHDC. Dist. Cllr Newman stated not to his knowledge.

d. Local Plan/ Village Forum. Concern was raised that this had not commenced. Cllr B Toll reiterated that it was now the Neighbourhood plan and that shortly villagers would be invited to join focus groups to develop the plan.

e. Dogs. A resident asked if there had been dialogue about out of control dogs in the village. The clerk replied not that she was aware. However, Chairman D Gibbs did state that a recently a resident had been bitten by a dog and that it should be noted that not all people are dog lovers and indeed some can be scared of dogs therefore it is up to the owner to ensure their dog/s do not frighten other residents.

Meeting finished at 9.00pm.