

HITCHAM AND TAPLOW SOCIETY

Minutes of the 63rd Annual General Meeting

Taplow Village Hall

Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 8pm

1. **Welcome by Eva Lipman**

Eva welcome members to the meeting and thanked Robert Miles for attending to speak to us. Thank you all for coming.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apology received from Susan Leeson and Mary Meikle

3. **Approval of the minutes of the 2021 AGM.**

Rupert Sellers proposed their adoption and the motion was carried unanimously

4. **President's address (Eva Lipman)**

This year we have been bombarded with bad news from all sides- war, famine, drought, floods, climate change - I could go on. I almost don't dare to listen to the news. On the other hand our little bit of the world about which we CAN do something is peaceful and relatively calm with a lot of kindness about. We are so lucky aren't we? We had great Jubilee celebrations and then lost our beloved Queen but are fortunate to have acquired an excellent King with the right values.

You will be pleased to know that you have an capable committee with a number of new members to carry HTS forward into the future and Robert Hanbury will tell you that our coffers are in great shape. I believe that one of our great achievements over the years is that we have managed to help bring a sense of community to our little patch.

No new major developments have taken place in our magic part of the world. We have an improved rail service in that the Elizabeth Line has come to Taplow making it an even more desirable place in which to live.

The Jubilee River has come into its own and is now a wonderful asset to our community.

I hope you have all taken some of the lovely walks alongside and overlooking it - but for your Committee and the PC it could have become something entirely different. We were all very worried that it might have become a shopping trolley filled concrete culvert.

The Berkeley Homes development of the Mill Lane site has largely been completed and the result is a thriving happy community. I do hope you all realise that but for the work of your society and the PC we could have had a high density low quality development of hundreds more dwellings.

I look back on the work of your Society over many years and can see that we have made a difference. Long may it continue.

Now we come to the many "thank yous". The most important one is to Roger Worthington who has worked tirelessly taking on the dual role of Secretary and de facto Chair. We owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for all he has done. This also includes our Spring and Autumn Newsletters which largely falls upon his shoulders with Andrew Findlay doing the production, layouts etc. Between the pair of them they have yet again published our excellent newsletters and thank you to both. If anyone has any ideas for

future articles please do contact us or better still help with or take over the editorship please let us know.

Robert Hanbury has done a great job of keeping our accounts and membership lists in good order. Thank you Robert. He will be handing the role of Treasurer into the capable hands of Mike Turner. Thank you Mike for taking it on. I have also to thank our auditor Xavier Plumley.

Jacqueline and Mike once again organised a very successful litter pick and the village is all the better for it. I cannot personally understand what gets into people that they think that they can discard unwanted items indiscriminately. It makes no sense to me. Not only that but they have kindly allowed the committee to meet in their lovely home.

To Rupert Sellers many thanks. He did a grand job of organising another very successful VGP. I know of no other community which has such a joyful event like this. It takes a lot of work and planning to put it on as well as a small army of helpers to make it happen. You all know who you are and thank you to you all.

We have within our community a great asset in SGI at Taplow Court. Robert Harrap has been at Cop 27 trying to keep the world from going to hell in a handcart. We are thankful that he and his organisation is a real force for good. The work that has been done on the building and gardens of Taplow Court is and continues to be excellent and we could all have the opportunity of seeing it on their open days and their drinks parties. It was a lucky day when they decided to make Taplow Court their British Headquarters.

I hope you have seen the names of the fallen of WW2 beautifully inscribed on our War Memorial, diligently researched by Nigel Smales, and carved by Adrian Powell? If not do go and look. It was all completed in time for the Sunday Memorial Service when Fred Russell, our decorated veteran of the Korean War, and your Vice President placed a wreath on our behalf. It was all very moving. At this point I will hand over to Roger who will give the Chairman's Report.

5. Chairman's address (Roger Worthington)

Good evening and thank you all for coming on a dark December evening. It is good to see you all.

Eva has covered our regular events and the work that goes into them but I must say how very happy we were to bring back the Village Green Party. We were slightly nervous and rusty after a two year gap but Rupert and a large team delivered an ace, despite the horrendous downpour that opened the Party. We spent the donation from the "Endeavour" filming last year on a gazebo for the ticket desk which came in very timely. We also bought some new lighting and bunting that added a bit of extra colour to the evening.

Eva mentioned also the completion of the War Memorial work. I would like to thank you all for the donations that made this possible, including the generous contribution from the Parish Council. The result of this work is literally carved in stone and for the confidence that we have all and only the right names we owe much to Nigel Smales most thorough and meticulous research – published in NL 113.

It is welcome that the Elizabeth Line now runs through to central London, though present strike actions make any train journey something of an adventure. We would like to hear if, as promised, the station footbridge can still be used when Station Road floods. The powers that be continue to turn a deaf ear to a station car park, despite commuter parking

reaching all of Boundary Road and bringing traffic in Marsh Lane to a standstill. We will continue to press this as the Unitary Authority works on the long overdue new Local Plan.

Most concerning has been the continued absence of a replacement for the Jubilee River footbridge. This ancient footpath is highly valued by walkers and we were continually assured that it would be delivered this year but these assurances were clearly false as it turns out there was no money to get the work done. We know that Council finances are very stretched now for many valid reasons so the replacement may well be at risk in the next financial year. I suggest that we take an initiative in the spring, when Council budgets are being put together, to press to secure this funding. I am sure that other interested groups would join us in this.

Consultations continue to abound. It now appears settled that the County will have 98 councillors but a consultation that has just closed is to determine the size of the wards that return these 98 councillors. Presently Taplow is to be merged with Dorney and Lent Rise into another piece – but not all – of Burnham as a three councillor ward. We fear that this is likely to largely disenfranchise Taplow and so have suggested a single member ward for Taplow and Dorney to reflect the difference between our rural style parishes and the more urban nature of Burnham.

Planning items closer to home include the emergence of the Boatyard pub and the housing on the Old Boatyard site. This latter in particular has raised concerns over their plans to develop the moorings business with possible consequences for parking blight and blocking of a channel. We have also a wider concern for river access in Taplow. The only place to launch a boat is Marlow Boat Services just north of the bridge which is on a short lease from the County. The Council has been asked if it has any policy on this but there has been no response.

Another current application is to replace the Amerden Lane kennels with 16 houses, given grave concern about accident risk at the access to the A4 by the railway bridge.

So what of the Society itself? We still struggle without a chairman and only half an editor but somehow everything keeps working. I have been greatly heartened by new energy coming onto your committee, welcoming Mike Turner, Graham Valentine and Cat Howard. Cat has already re-instated Carols on the Green, Mike will bring new energy to our membership processes – the subject of the next item on the agenda - and Graham again reflects the changing face of Taplow as its centre of gravity shifts southwards with the thriving energies of Taplow Riverside. And my personal thanks to Robert Hanbury, as he hands over to Mike, for his work as treasurer for the last six years and for over forty years of committee work, variously as chair, secretary and vice-chair, not to mention being a founder of the Village Green Party. The Society has been most fortunate and we are happy that he continues on the committee. Thank you Robert.

For myself I can only say that I find enjoyment and pleasure in working with people who care about life in Taplow and who put such often unsung energies into keeping it such a great place to live.

Roger Worthington (acting chairman).

6. Treasurer's report (Robert Hanbury)

The Village Green Party brought together 388 people and produced a surplus of £130

which was good for a damp evening. We spent £500 on the gazebo which is available for others to use and about £200 on lights and bunting.

We paid the £920 from the appeal two years ago for the war memorial engraving. There were 13 contributors with a mean donation of £50 including £100 from the Burnham Historical Society. I hope some of you will have seen the names that have been carved and are as pleased as I am, as it was me who made the observation that the names were missing, but coming from Hitcham where the 39-45 names were in place I thought it was a Taplow matter.

In November 2016 the balance in our accounts was £2800 and at the end of October this year it was just over £10,000. Our auditor Xavier Plumley correctly insists that we include those costs which we have incurred but have not yet actually paid. These include the newsletter and the engraving on the war memorial and reduce the balance to £9000. You have in front of you the audited accounts. The one circulated earlier was the unaudited version.

I have been Treasurer and membership secretary for seven years. I have caught myself making mistakes and thus it is time to move on before I make mistakes that I do not catch.

In no way can I claim any responsibility for the healthy state of our finances but am happy to hand over a satisfactory position.

The RAF C17 Globemaster carrying the coffin of her late majesty Queen Elizabeth II flew over our parish on its approach path to Northolt airport. I was walking my dog in Hitcham Park. Owing to the rain I was wearing a hat so that I was able to demonstrate my respect and affection to Her Majesty as she flew directly overhead by removing my headgear.

7. Elections

Roger Worthington proposed the re-election of Eva Lipman as President. The motion was carried unanimously.

All other posts and the executive committee were then elected by unanimous vote. (The piece of paper with the record of proposers and seconders was mislaid. If anyone wishes to supply details the minutes can be updated).

8. Society Technology

Andrew Findlay gave an overview of the perceived needs to update the technologies used by the society. The systems used to maintain membership information and track subscriptions are clumsy and error prone. Members need to be able to use newer payment methods for subscriptions and the website processes need updating. The work would be ongoing and a working party will report back as progress is made. A recent email to members set up a channel for any comments members may wish to make.

9. AOB

No items raised.

10. Close (Eva Lipman)

After refreshments, Robert Miles, the General Manager at Cliveden for the National Trust, gave a presentation of the revised approaches of the National Trust post Covid and how he saw Cliveden adapting and evolving over the coming years.

He was thanked by Eva for the talk, highlighting the excellent relationship we have with Cliveden.

Eva also thanked Jacqueline, Charlie, Robert Harrap and Pauline for their provision of the refreshments

Signed.....