



SOUTH HANNINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



NEWSLETTER WINTER 2022



If you have any comments, please contact the Parish Clerk, Mrs. Julie Moule: Tel 01268 710820; email:shpc1@hotmail.com

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Santa will be lighting this year's Christmas Tree at 7pm on Friday 25th November at the Ramsden Heath War Memorial. This will be followed by refreshments (mulled wine, mince pies tea & coffee) in Ramsden Heath Village Hall, courtesy of the Parish Council. Santa will be handing out sweets to the children in the small hall. We do hope you will all come along.

The Village Hall Management Committee have donated the Hall free of charge.

CHRISTMAS TREE CAROLLING - SOUTH HANNINGFIELD

Christmas tree carolling on South Hanningfield Tye will take place on Tuesday 20th December 2022 at 7pm. Proceeds will go to St Peter's Church. The Parish Council has donated a new set of lights for the tree. Please note, this event is managed by St Peter's Church and the Parish Council has granted permission to use the Tye.

CHRISTMAS CHEER - £15 per Household

Any resident aged 60+ who is registered on the Electoral Register and who has not applied before please contact the Parish Clerk no later than 30th November 2022 at shpc1@hotmail.com or 07985 430365 to register for a voucher worth £15. If anyone does not want to receive a voucher, please let the Clerk know - the money can be used for other causes.

The vouchers must be redeemed by 30th December 2022 at any of the following companies:

KJ Marshall Butchers, Inside Whitegates Farm, South Hanningfield Road, Rettendon Common CM3 8HE, Elite Hair Studio and Barbers, Hemmings Stores Too, Nags Head Public House, White Horse Public House, Downham Hall, Pete's Place, Urban Fresh, Forever Young Aesthetics, the De Beauvoir Arms.

Our appreciation goes to those participating businesses.

RECREATION GROUND HEDGE

The Parish Council took the decision to remove the old hedge in the Recreation Ground as it was dying. It was intended to replant a new hedge but due to the possibility of it being vandalised it was decided to have palisade fencing instead, to match the existing fencing. This is due to be installed week commencing 21st November 2022, earlier than anticipated. Some sort of planting will also take place to support wildlife.

SPEEDING IN HAWKSWOOD ROAD

The Parish Council is pleased to report that it has been working with Chelmsford City Council and Essex and Suffolk Water to prevent boy racers from speeding in Hawkswood Road. CCTV will be installed and the Parish Council has made a contribution to the CCTV data costs.

Speeding Outside Downham School

We are happy to report that following our request, Essex County Council have finally agreed to install a solar panelled device known as a wig wag by Downham School. It will be a flashing device showing a 20mph speed limit within a certain zone.

Councillor Vacancy

There is currently a vacancy for a Parish Councillor to represent the Downham Ward and the council now has the power to co-opt a new member. If anyone is interested in becoming a councillor please contact the Clerk for further details. This is a volunteer position . The closing date is Friday 11th November 2022

PARISH COUNCIL OPENING HOURS

The public can drop in to the Parish Council office between 10am and 4 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. At all other times an appointment will need to be made - or you can call Julie on 01268 710820 / 07985 430365. The Office is closed on Fridays. Please like and follow the South Hanningfield Facebook page, where you will see road closure information, recycling and latest news etc. Also the new Parish Council website is up and running - please take a look at www.shpc.org.uk

The Clerk, Councillors and Staff of South Hanningfield Parish Council would like to wish all Parishioners a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL THOMASON - A PARISH APPRECIATION

I will leave it to others to tell the story of Michael's life as a farmer and a devoted family man and try to tell the story of his work as a man who gave so much time to others in the Parish of South Hanningfield.

My own time as a Parish Councillor started in 1990 after seeing an advert in the Herald for a new Councillor to fill a vacancy. I moved to Ramsden Heath in 1982 but was not directly involved in local activities, but my wife Jacquie was a member of the Play Group which used the old Village Hall.

I joined the Parish Council and met Michael, who had joined the Council in 1976, and we became friends for the next 32 years. He was a very determined person, quiet but very persistent in getting things done and it was impossible to stop him once he had decided what was needed.

The Parish Council had already acquired the lease of the Sports Field and erected the pavilion by the time I joined and Michael was very involved in the planning and design of the building. However, funds were tight and it became his mission to build up the finances of the Parish Council and to ensure that all three villages received their share of resources.

In particular, the Parish was unusual in having three village halls none of which were directly owned and run by the Parish Council. Downham Village Hall had been rebuilt in 1987 and Michael, as a resident of Downham, had been involved in getting planning permission and fund-raising. South Hanningfield Village Hall had been refurbished in 1985 so the main priority was to replace the hall in Ramsden Heath. Those of a certain age will remember the decrepit Village Hall and the efforts of the committee to raise funds for a new one.

However there were many other projects carried out in the villages and Michael, as Chairman of the Parish Council for many years, led the way. The play areas in South Hanningfield and Ramsden Heath were both updated and refurbished and Jubilee Gardens in Downham was created to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. All this time Michael was running his farm in Downham and caring for his family – I don't know how he found the time to do this. He knew and was always available when needed. It was he that found out that the land on which Ramsden Heath Village Hall now stands was available for sale and he and I, by then the Chairman of the Parish Council, carried out the negotiations to buy it. A deal for the sale of the land where the old Village Hall raised a considerable sum but planning permission was needed as the new land was in the Green Belt. Michael was determined to get it. Together with Chelmsford Borough Councillor Jean Norton they succeeded in getting the Borough Council planning committee to agree that the hall could be built and, using money raised by the residents of the village, grants from the Parish Council and the proceeds of the sale of the old village hall site in Mill Lane the new hall was opened in 1999.

In 1999 I had the honour of succeeding Jean Norton as the Borough Councillor for our villages and also served as Chairman of the Parish Council and therefore worked closely with Michael. His telephone calls at 7.45am became a regular feature of my life and I even learned a bit about farming.

He had over 100 cows on the farm and also grew crops on his arable land and he still had time to be a Parish Councillor and a trustee of Downham Village Hall. Under his stewardship the Council had built up a healthy bank balance and again it was Michael who took the lead in negotiating with Essex & Suffolk Water to get grants and to ensure that their land was properly looked after.

The previous Clerk retired and our present Clerk, Julie Moule took over and she and Michael worked well together. "She is my rock" was the phrase he often used and they spoke most days to ensure that the Parish was in good order. Michael used his agricultural knowledge to good effect on the Sports Field and it has won the Best Kept Sports Field award on a number of occasions. His skills were also put to good use in keeping the parish allotments in good order, with the many problems of drainage sorted out so that all the plots are let and look really good.

Downham Village Hall has recently been extended and it is appropriate that Michael's Wake was held there at his request. Michael was also involved with the work of Downham Church and played indoor bowls at the Village Hall most weeks.

Over the years he has been a great friend, helping me when I was unwell and unable to drive to hospital and it is only recently that he started to decline from the ruddy-faced farmer we all knew so well. He probably was aware of his illness but, in typical fashion, never complained and continued to chair the Parish Council right up to the end.

He did so much for the Parish that I cannot fit it all in here, but I hope that this gives a flavour of the work of this remarkable man who will be long remembered.

Our hearts go out to his family.

COUNCILLOR ROY WHITEHEAD Member for South Hanningfield, Stock and Margaretting Chelmsford City Council