



Heybridge Parish Council

ANNUAL REPORT

**1st APRIL 2014 to
31st MARCH 2015**

Contact Details

Parish Councillors

Dr. Michael Blyth
Selkirk House, 8 Rennie Walk
Heybridge

Mark Burmby
44a Hillary Close
Heybridge

Gary Davies
10 Samian Close
Heybridge

Ian Dobson
6 Emperor Close
Heybridge

Michael Edwards
8 Doubleday Drive
Heybridge

John Harrison
Pargeters, Stock Chase
Heybridge

Stephen Jennings
123 Holloway Road
Heybridge

Keith Lawson
2 Chapel Lane
Heybridge Basin

Richard Perry
Mill House Hotel
Langford

Prof. Lew Schnurr
42 Basin Road
Heybridge Basin

Gary Young
6 Mayland Close
Heybridge

District Councillors

Anne Beale (Heybridge East)
93 Hillary Close
Heybridge

Bryan Harker (Heybridge East)
34 Mariners Way
Maldon

Alan Cheshire (Heybridge West)
21 Wellands
Wickham Bishops

Miriam Lewis (Heybridge West)
24 Beeches Road
Heybridge

County Councillor

Rodney Bass
Five Corners
Maypole Road
Wickham Bishops

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 – 2015

1 Overview

1.1 Heybridge Parish Council plays an important role at the grassroots level of Local Government (Tier One), directly representing and promoting the interests of its community.

In addition to the Councillors, who are your unpaid representatives, the Parish Council employs a Clerk (see 1.7) to carry out its business and ensure that the many statutory requirements of the Parish Council are met. The Clerk manages the Parish Council business such as financial matters, employee supervision, minutes, meeting arrangements, paperwork, agendas etc as well as the management of Plantation Hall, King George V Playing fields and other areas of responsibility (see 4.1).

An election is held every four years and qualified persons nominate themselves for office. If an election is held, the council will be voted in to serve the electorate of the parish. If during the four year period there is a vacancy, due to a resignation or other reason, the position is advertised. Should no-one come forward for election, the Parish Council is permitted to co-opt someone to fill the vacancy.

Funding for Parish Council activities is by precept, levied on Maldon District Council which is then collected from households within the village through Council Tax.

The Parish Council is non-political. It is solely involved in issues, items and developments for the village's benefit and well being. Decisions are decided by vote. Each Councillor has one vote with the Chairman of the Parish Council also having a casting vote, if that is required.

The Parish Council can refer matters they consider requiring action – such as issues concerning the local environment, highways, footpaths, policing etc to Maldon District Council or Essex County Council, for their attention. The Parish Council does not have any powers in its own right, but acts as a “ Pressure Group ” **to try to get things done!**

The Parish Council deals with local people and local matters on a day to day basis and welcomes help and interest. One way to get involved in local community matters is to stand for election to the Parish council. Indeed this year is election year.

Attendance by the public at Parish Council meetings is also welcomed. Contact details and meeting dates are published on the Parish Council's website as are our Policies and Procedures and the Register of Parish Councillors Interests.

1.2 I was elected Chairman of Heybridge Parish Council in May 2014 for the fourth year running. The Parish Council is a local authority under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 and came into operation on 1st April 1987 following the creation of the civil parish of Heybridge in 1986. It consists of twelve members

(Parish Councillors) who are elected every four years. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the Parish Council at its statutory annual meeting in May.

1.3 Heybridge Parish Council has a variety of roles. It has direct responsibility for various land, property, amenity areas and car parks within Heybridge and Heybridge Basin and is consulted on a wide variety of topics, where it will express views and exert influence whenever the interests of Heybridge and its residents are affected.

1.4 In addition to the Council itself the Parish Council delegates certain of its functions to the Planning Committee, Budget Committee, Personnel Committee and the Events Committee, appointed each year at the statutory annual meeting.

1.5 During the last municipal year, I also held the post of Chairman of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Prof Lew Schnurr was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, Chairman of the Budget Committee and Chairman of the Planning Committee and Councillor Dr Michael Blyth was appointed chairman of the Events Committee.

1.6 During the last municipal year the Parish Council lost two Councillors, However a number of new Councillors were co-opted including Councillors Gary Davies, Keith Lawson, Stephen Jennings and Gary Young.

The Parish Council wishes to thank Chris Livingstone and Hayley Trowbridge for their hard work and dedication to the Council during their time as Parish Councillors.

1.7 Laurie Wiebe is the Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and will continue in her role as the Parish Emergency Co-ordinator. Laurie has completed her studies for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and is now a fully qualified Council Clerk. John Williams acts for the Council as the internal Auditor and Janice Martin is our financial contractor.

1.8 The office at Plantation Hall is manned Mondays – Tuesdays between 08.00 hrs and 17.00 hrs and Thursdays - Fridays between 08.00 hrs and 16.00 hrs. Bernie Hall continues to be our day caretaker and we now have a new evenings and weekend caretaker, Mrs Denise Kemp, who replaces Mark Smy as he has left for pastures new. The Council wishes to thank Mark for his work whilst employed by the Council and wishes him well for the future. As mentioned in my report last year the Council has now employed Amanda Hilton as a part time admin assistant on Thursdays and Fridays only. Nicky Percy continues as our cleaner and Keith Locke continues as our groundsman.

Both our day caretaker and our Clerk have undertaken Fire Marshal and First Aid training and our staff training programme for this year will include First Aid training for the evening/ weekend caretaker, admin assistant and cleaner.

1.9 Anne Beale, Alan Cheshire, Bryan Harker, and Miriam Lewis are our District Councillors representing Heybridge and Heybridge Basin. Rodney Bass is our County Councillor.

The Parish Council wishes to thank our County and District Councillors for their hard work in looking after the interests of Heybridge and Heybridge Basin.

The Parish Council continues its membership of the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), the Chelmer Canal Trust and the Greater Thames Estuary Partnership.

The Parish Council Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and serves on the SLCC Essex Branch Committee. In addition, the Clerk is a member of the Institute of Local Council Management (ILCM) and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC).

2 Planning, Highways and Environment

2.1 The Parish Council is notified of all planning applications affecting Heybridge and Heybridge Basin, and due consideration is given to the comments to be submitted to the District Council. Planning Applications are available for inspection thirty minutes prior to the Parish Council or Planning Committee meetings at Plantation Hall.

2.2 During the last municipal year over 70 planning applications were commented on by the Parish Council.

2.3 The Parish Council is well aware of concerns with regards to flooding and loading on the local infrastructure when considering development proposals. The Council has also contributed to the Local Development Plan (LDP) and The Maldon Design guide. This sets out the criteria in planning for the Maldon district for the period 2014 - 2029.

The Parish Council understands the concerns of residents on the LDP and its effect on Heybridge and is endeavouring to clarify and make representation, as far as it can, to Maldon District Council. The Parish Council has responded to the various LDP consultations and has had a place at the table during the recent Inspectors hearings.

2.4 The Parish Council, through its representatives, continues to liaise regularly with Essex County Council on local highway matters. This is carried out via the Highways Panel which meets on a regular basis to discuss highway matters throughout the district. There are a number of issues which the Parish Council have concerns about including speed limits, verge reconstruction, bollards and kerbing.

2.5 We presently have a vacancy for our Public Rights of Way Warden and our Tree Warden. The Parish Council is actively looking for volunteers and if you enjoy walking footpaths and are interested in helping to keep the footpaths in a good state or you have a general interest in trees and want to help in the community, please contact the Clerk.

3 Finance

3.1 For the Financial Year 2014/2015 the Parish Council has maintained a careful use of resources to remain within Budget. However due to the implementation of additional staffing, increased running costs and various repairs some elements of the budget had to be revised. In essence, it is considered both reasonable and prudent for the Parish Council in seeking to absorb a budget deficit to strike a balance between the impact this has on both the precept and the working balances.

3.2 Major expenditure items are always put out to tender to ensure best value for money and transparency in the way the Council works and awards contracts.

3.3 Quotes will continue to be sought for replacement kitchen equipment and Air Conditioning for the main hall and meeting room.

3.4 After review the precept for 2014/15 which is the element of Council Tax covering the Parish Council's budget requirement was increased to £148,625.00.

4. Direct Responsibilities

4.1 The Parish Council has responsibility for Plantation Hall, King George V Playing Field, Childrens Play areas at Plantation Hall and Elizabeth Way, Daisy Meadow Car Park at Heybridge Basin, various amenity and grassed verges including at Larch Walk, Rowan Drive, The Roothings, Green lanes, the Horse Trough in The Street, the War Memorial at Heybridge Cemetery, Bus Shelters at Bentalls shopping centre, Goldhanger Road and Basin Road, a number of bench seats, various litter/dog bins and thirty four amenity off-street lighting.

In addition the Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the closed Churchyard at St. Andrew's Church, the surrounds of St. George's Church at Heybridge Basin and Elms Farm Roundabout.

4.2 Plantation Hall and Playing Fields have a high usage factor with very competitive hire rates ensuring a steady income stream. Due to increased running costs we had to review our hires rates for the 2104 / 2015 financial year but still remain competitive. The main hall, the two meeting rooms and playing fields are used extensively.

4.3 Major works have been carried out during the year including resealing the flooring in the main hall, new flooring in the kitchen, repairs to Daisy Meadow Car Park, and a deep clean of the Memorial.

4.4 Having experienced the second year the Parish Council had agreed to finance the extended Bus Service 288 connecting Maldon to West Heybridge for another year. This operation will be reviewed again for 2015 - 2016.

4.5 The Parish Council is aware of a need and requirement for allotments within the Parish and is actively looking for suitable land in the Parish. Some allotments have become available in Hatfield Peverel and we have advertised these in the Heybridge

Herald. Allotments have also been set aside in the LDP for the North Heybridge Garden Suburb.

The Parish Council has had a complete tree survey carried out on trees on its land and amenity areas and some work is being undertaken accordingly.

4.6 The Parish Council has nine notice boards throughout the Parish including two in Heybridge Basin, one at the Bentalls shopping complex , one in Holloway Road, one in Ten Acre Approach, one in Temple Way, two at Plantation Hall and one next to the main entrance to the car park at Plantation Hall. We are actively investigating adding two more one in East and one in West Heybridge.

In addition to the Hall activities the names of Parish Councillors, their contact details and Parish Council meetings / Planning Committee meetings dates are displayed.

4.7 The Parish Council considers training to be an integral part of a successful and innovative Council. Training assists Councillors reach their full potential, imparting knowledge; skills; competencies; best practice and legal guidance. Councillors are encouraged to attend training sessions where appropriate.

5. Parish Council in the Community

5.1 The Parish Council will continue to seek to exert influence in relation to those things which affect Heybridge and Heybridge Basin and its residents. The Parish Council works closely with both the District and County Councils.

5.2 The Parish Council, through its representatives, maintains regular contact with the District Council, Essex County Council, Highways, Local Health providers, Elms Farm Park Group, The Parish Passenger Transportation Group, Park Rangers and the Police.

The Parish Council wishes to thank our PCSO's especially Sophia Bishop who provides public reassurance in tackling local anti-social behaviour and other issues affecting the quality of life in our community.

5.3 The Park Rangers continue to carry out regular patrols at Plantation Hall and King George V Playing Fields to help combat anti-social behaviour as well as issue fines for dog fouling etc. Not only are the Park Rangers acting as a deterrent but they have meaningful dialogue with the youngsters as well.

The Parish Council wishes to thank the Park Rangers for their important work during the year.

5.4 The Parish Council looks to support local organisations and community groups in their work. This past year it has contributed to the Maldon Cricket Club, Oars and Paws Fun Dog Show, the Darby and Joan Club, the PCC United Benefice of Heybridge, the Heybridge Neighbourhood Group, J's Hospice and The Heybridge Residents Association.

5.5 The Remembrance Service last November was well supported by both the uniformed organisations and general public. The Parade started from Plantation Hall with a short service at the Memorial and parade back. Refreshments were served to everyone afterwards at Plantation Hall. Plans along the lines of last year's service will be put into place for this year's service in due course.

The Parish Council wishes to thank all those who helped and took part.

5.6 The Parish Council will continue to publish the Heybridge Herald quarterly. This is part of raising the profile of Heybridge Parish Council as well as to inform the Community the details of their Parish Councillors, their contact details, what facilities are available to them and to notify the community of upcoming events.

Following the success of the Community Festival held last year the Council has decided to host another Community Festival this year which will be held on Sunday 26th July 2015. As before the Events Committee will be organising the festival and it has now become an annual fixture in the Council's diary.

The Parish Council has also started holding fundraising events designed to raise funds for the Community Festival and other events the Council may put on throughout the year. The first one which we did last year was a dinner organised by Cllr Perry and was a great success.

Further details of these events will be published in the Heybridge Herald and on the notice boards as and when. The Parish Council wishes to thank all those involved with these events especially the Community Festival last July.

5.7 The Parish Council website is regularly updated and contains a wide range of information pertaining to the Council and its activities, including agendas, minutes, dates of meetings and Councillor contact details. The Council has a ' Facebook page ' on its website to help promote its activities as well as create a greater awareness of its work.

5.8 The continued support and work of the Parish Council's staff is valued and crucial to the Parish Council's work and achievements.

Cllr. Michael Edwards
19th March 2015
Chairman
Heybridge Parish Council