

# HAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY

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The Parish Assembly of Ham Parish Council took place on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in Ham Village Hall following the Annual Parish Meeting

**Present:** Mr. Charles Dean (Chairman), Lady Mary Walker (Vice-chairman) Mr. Martin Humphreys, Councillor Stuart Wheeler and 7 members of public.

### 1. Apologies:

Jethro Marriage

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

None.

### 3. Matters Arising:

None.

### 4. Committee Reports

Lady Walker read out a prepared statement on the Village Hall.

#### *HAM VILLAGE HALL REPORT 2025*

*The Village Hall has been put to good use over the year. Our heating costs are now substantially reduced thanks to the wall insulation and from changing our electricity supplier to Octopus.*

*The annual Harvest Supper was well attended and many remarked on what a very friendly and relaxed evening it was, with a delicious supper prepared and cooked by Chris Daking and the committee.*

*We recently held another Quiz and Supper Night which was a great success and the committee have decided this should become an annual fixture along with the Harvest Supper.*

*The Pilates classes continue to be popular and the class is full.*

*The 4 ash trees on the top of the bank by the Hall were finally felled earlier this year – this was a substantial cost for the Hall but thanks to generous donations and the selling of the logs, our accounts are in good order.*

*At our recent AGM meeting, Mary Walker retired as Chair of the Village Hall Committee after many years service. Heather Bladon and Olivia Marriage are now the joint Chair and have enthusiastically taken on the role. They have some excellent ideas for future events and will undoubtedly, with the support of the Committee, do the Village Hall proud.*

*The current members of the Committee are Heather Bladon, Olivia Marriage, Rachel Gear, Liz and Chris Daking and Minnie Davies.*

Mrs. Lin Holford from the PCC read out a prepared statement

### *Ham with Buttermere PCC*

*As you may all know, our PCC cares for two churches: All Saints' Ham and St James' Buttermere. Tonight, my focus will be All Saints' Ham.*

*I hope you will agree that our beautiful Grade 1 listed 12th century church is an exceptional village asset. In today's world, many churches are locked when not in use. All Saints' is purposely always kept open (we pay additional insurance to do so). Whether of faith or of none, it is there for all: a quiet space in an often busy and troubled world.*

*We would, of course, love to see more of the village at all our services. Though I am not sure we could have squeezed in one more on Easter Day!*

*Our community has worshipped in All Saints' for very nearly a thousand years. The PCC's purpose is to ensure it's there for another thousand: to care for the life and fabric of the church so our community can worship, be baptised, marry, be buried there or simply enjoy its tranquil and enchanting presence.*

*And there's the rub ...*

*To maintain its fabric and provide pay, pension and training for vicars there is no funding from the centre. Rather, the community within every parish - whether a worshipper or not - funds it. Last year, 77% of Salisbury Diocese income came from parish share, that is the money which parishes provide. Adding parochial fees, external grants and investment income, the Diocese then spends 85% of its income supporting local ministry (stipends, clergy pensions, housing, training and so on). No funds are given to us for maintaining church fabric.*

*Ham & Buttermere's parish share for this year, 2025, has seen an increase of 21% (£12.2k). The original request was significantly higher, but much effort was expended fighting for a reduction. On top of this we must also find funds for maintenance & repair - not inexpensive, given All Saints' heritage.*

*We are hugely appreciative of and thankful to those in our community who already generously donate their time and money. However, if our community wishes All Saints' to endure, then we must continue to seek the whole community's patronage.*

*I will, hopefully briefly, just share a few thoughts: firstly, about the life of the church and secondly, its fabric.*

#### *Life of the Church*

*Because of Alan Deboo's continuing indisposition and Michael McHugh's retirement in August, the pressure on remaining clergy - Colin and Jo - have been exceptional. Perhaps felt especially keenly in the volume of "Life Events" such as funerals and weddings and pastoral support whilst also fulfilling their Sunday services. We are deeply thankful for and appreciative of Colin's ministry ... and stamina. And thankful too for those priests in retirement who have stepped in to support Colin and Jo. Our gratitude is extended to Ann Massey and Howard Jameson for leading services in our parish. And to Sammy Cave, our Team Administrator, without whom pretty much everything would fall apart. Given all of this, perhaps it is not surprising that we have been called on to lead more lay services.*

*You may know that officially Colin is engaged on a part-time basis. In reality, of course, he works way, way beyond that caring for Ham, Buttermere, Shalbourne and Burbage churches and their communities. We are hugely blessed to have him.*

*I must thank all Parochial Council members for their support plus all those who clean, arrange flowers, play the organ, put the heating on and off, dress the altar, read the lesson, choose hymns, keep the churchyard in order, make the odd repair and so on and so on. They are a small but very effective and faithful army who love and support our church. Many of us are not getting any younger and we would welcome younger bones to help!*

*Adrian has retired after many years as Treasurer and Robin Buchanan-Dunlop has thankfully stepped in as Acting Treasurer whilst we continue to seek a permanent replacement. Please do consider helping us in this role.*

*Looking forward, it is both heartening and inspiring that Sue Hart is joining us as our new Team Rector and Brenda Woodrow as Deacon (under Colin's tutelage). There is a national scarcity of clergy, with over 30 vacancies within the Ramsbury area alone. So please forgive us if we feel we've hit the jackpot! The Savernake Team moves in spirit from strength to strength.*

*Fabric of the Church*

*A major repair of the arch above the balcony was undertaken earlier this year - a like for like replacement of oak laths, lime plaster and breathable paint. It is anticipated that, having used the correct materials, the repair will last for a hundred years.*

*We are conscious of the importance of keeping the roof in good order and have engaged professionals to replace fallen tiles and keep gutters clear.*

*To make the older part of the churchyard safer, preserve and prevent further damage to memorials and enhance the setting, a faculty has been applied for to reinstate some headstones and footstones as well as lay flat one free standing headstone. If approved by the Diocese (a decision is pending), MJ Sly Stonemasons will undertake the work.*

*Finally, the Diocese funds an architect to inspect churches every five years. The most recent Quinquennial Report in 2021 flagged that some external masonry needed attention. That is our next financial challenge.*

*Lin Holford  
Churchwarden  
Ham with Buttermere PCC  
9th May 2025*

The Chairman thanked Lady Walker and Mrs. Holford for their reports.

Councillor Wheeler provided a quick summary of the situation with the new local council explaining that no party had overall control. He also provided updates on some of the road works planned for the near future and agreed to chase up on plans for Church Road which was in a bad state of repair.

The Chairman explained that there was no parish report but highlighted the forthcoming Ham Shalbourne Cricket match on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **5. Open Forum**

The Chairman reported back on the forthcoming Open Garden event planned for June 14<sup>th</sup>. 11 Gardens would be open to the public and weather permitting the Phoenix Brass Band will be playing on the Village Green at 2pm. Further updates would be provided over the Whats App group.

The Chairman explained that, as agreed at the previous meeting, the usual Parish Summer party would be delayed until early September and asked if the council would be happy with a spend of £300 for a BBQ. All councillors concurred. It was agreed to arrange a suitable date over email, but likely to be Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Tom Davies for his continued help with the monthly Defibrillator checks.

There was a general discussion about the state of the village, and it was agreed by all that the green and surroundings were at their best.

The meeting closed at 7:30pm.