

Dunsfold Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2025 at
6.30pm at the Winn Hall, Dunsfold

There were 62 attendees present.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Cllr Waterson, Chairman of Dunsfold Parish Council welcomed those present to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Nick and Judith Lahey-Bean.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd April 2024

3. Report from Henry Smith Charity

Details of the accounts were circulated.

A grant of £3000 had been received, with another one later in the year. Vouchers had been issued by the Village Shop at Christmas, with 24 residents receiving £150 each. Gift boxes were given to some for suffering a bereavement. A total of £4000 was distributed over the year, leaving a balance of £1000 in the account.

The 2024/2025 Henry Smith Charity Accounts were noted and agreed by all present

4. Presentations from village groups and organisations

Father Shane Griffiths

Father Shane thanked residents for their warm welcome to him and his wife Jackie to the village. He is settling in well.

Dunsfold Village Fete

Kate Houghton said that the Fete would be held on 10th May this year and would commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. It will be opened by veteran Henry Rice, and resident Pat Higgins, both 100 years old. There will be various stalls, 1940s fancy dress is encouraged. MP Jeremy Hunt will be giving a presentation to Mr Rice. Last year the Fete made a profit of £5000, which was used to fund a new defibrillator and bleed kit; thanks to Barbara Judge for organising this.

Dunsfold Amateur Dramatic Society (DADS)

DADS has been running for over a century, and presents all sorts of entertainment, such as dramas, farces, musicals and whodunnits. It puts on three performances a year, and is always a good evening out. There are 9 on the Committee, and membership is £5. New members are always welcome.

Horticultural Society

The Society is 100 years old this year and offers a range of activities, including talks and workshops, garden visits and shows. It will be having a stall at the Village Fete. If anyone has any photos of past events, these would be welcome as the Society is putting on an exhibition celebrating Dunsfold gardeners.

Winn Hall

David Airey said that the Hall is 109 years old this year, as it was built in 1916. It was named after Rev Henry Winn, who lived in the Old Rectory and who dies just before the Hall was opened; the opening was during the Battle of the Somme.

The Hall is very well used by local users, as well as for parties and other events. It is also used as the local Polling Station. Runnings costs are going up, so any ideas for new activities would be welcome.

Village Shop

The Village Shop was established as a Community Shop in 2011. Since that time the Post Office has been re-introduced and the kitchen has been renovated. New volunteers are always welcome. Also, welcome would be feed back on what residents want to see in stock.

KGV Field

The football club is trying to establish a girls team. The Tennis Club is always popular. However, there has been incidents recently when the floodlights have been shot out, which is worrying.

Cricket Club

The Club was established in 1845, and has 30 playing members. New members are welcome; memberships are £50 for an adult and £30 for a student. They play around 15 to 20 games a year, the majority being played at home. A huge amount of work is done behind the scenes which is much appreciated. A new lease has just been agreed with Waverley BC; thanks to Alan Grant and Kevin Deanus in assisting with this.

Evergreens

Members range from those in their mid-60s to late 90s. Their activities include spring and autumn lunches, outings, talks and garden visits. They recently went on a canal trip on the Wey & Arun Canal, and a boat trip on the Thames is being planned.

Friends of Dunsfold Common

The Friends started in the 1950s and have evolved over the years. They assist the Parish Council financially in the cutting of the Common, and with pond and woodland management. They will be having a stall at the Fete, and hold several fund-raising events during the year.

Toad Patrol

The annual Toad Patrol is carried out by members of the Dunsfold Amphibian Rescue Team (DART) from late February to May. The toads head towards the KGV pond, but are stopped from crossing the road by the DART nets. Members are out every evening collecting the toads from the nets and drains, and transferring them to the pond. Numbers are increasing – there were 9 Great Crested Newts last year, and 18 this year. DART work in conjunction with national and county groups. Thanks to Kevin Deanus who helped to fund the signage. New volunteers are always welcome.

DOGS

The Dunsfold Old Girls Society has been going for 33 years, and meet on the 3rd Thursday in the month for a pub lunch. Anyone interested in joining, speak to Barbara Judge.

5. Chairman's Report

A warm welcome to our Annual Parish Meeting. This is not a parish council meeting as such but organised and financed by your parish council.

It has been a busy year, as usual – with a range of challenges to meet.

As always, our agenda has been dominated by planning issues. The greatest disappointment was permission on appeal for 53 houses at Coombebury Cottage. This was strongly resisted by your parish council and by local people. The appeal decision was challenged in the High Court and Leave granted, but ultimately without success. More broadly, protecting the Common and Green has remained a major priority.

And the world is changing around us. The new Government has effectively doubled Waverley's target for new housing and made it more difficult to resist developers. The situation is not helped by the decision to "pause" the development of Dunsfold Park. The scrapping of borough and county councils will mean that the role of parish councils will be enhanced.

I know Kevin Deanus will be touching on all this and don't want to steal his thunder!

The only defence left to us is the Neighbourhood Plan. This has proceeded more slowly than I would have liked; but it is important to get it right this time. I have said before that the Plan is not a "Get Out of Jail Free" card, but it is a "material consideration" in planning applications and appeals, even as it emerges. So, I am pleased that recently councillors voted to redouble their efforts to get the Plan over the line.

I should add that we remain a candidate for inclusion in the expansion of the Surrey Hill AONB. This would be a major protection against unsuitable development.

We have also continued to improve the way your Council is organised. This includes a proper committee structure with Terms of Reference and in some cases delegated authority, plus an up-to-date Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Working with our Auditor and Locum RFO we have improved the way the finances operate. Some legacy issues have been addressed .

We have striven to communicate with villagers – through councillors' surgeries, the parish magazine and the consultation for the development site criteria.

Dunsfold is known as a village of ponds. So, I am hugely grateful for all the work by the Commons Committee (colleagues Roy and Jane) and others - agreeing to work with the Surrey Wildlife Trust to carry out a full survey of the ponds in the village. We have managed to attract significant grant monies, with a view to developing a proper long-term plan for the management of our ponds.

Another village asset sorely in need of attention was the KGV. Shortly the car park will be entirely resurfaced and improved. And high time you might say! We have

also been sorting the outside lighting, the boiler and heating, the electrics and other repairs etc. The playground has been serviced and repaired and new exercise equipment ordered. Tigi and Dave have both been very active.

We set up a working party to look again at possible solutions for the Old School Site. No obvious favourite solution has as yet emerged, but discussions with the Diocese will resume.

We have been enthusiastic supporters of the County Council's ban on HGVs in this and other villages. But enforcement remains a challenge.

I would like to thank our Locum Clerk Julie Flenley who stepped into the breach and looked after us with great efficiency and cheerfulness. One additional benefit that been that as the Clerk in Alfold Julie has helped develop greater cooperation between neighbouring parishes. This has been particularly helpful in resisting the uncontrolled expansion of travellers sites especially Stovolds.

I am delighted to say that we have now recruited a new permanent Clerk and RFO – Jennifer Nagy. She is fully qualified and hugely experienced and I am sure will be a great asset to the Council and the village.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues on the Council; but particularly Jane Wright and Ginny Fraser who have recently left the Council. That means two vacancies for willing volunteers who have the wellbeing of our village at heart! A thick skin is also helpful! If you have some time and energy to spare, and perhaps some expertise or special interest, please chat to me or our Clerk afterwards.

On a personal note, some of you may recall the election hustings we held two years ago. I said then that we came to Dunsfold for a quiet life. But there were issues around the parish council which I felt needed addressing. Two years on, I believe we are in a better place, but with (as always) more to do. For the reasons I have set out, I believe we are headed in the right direction. So I will be standing down as Chairman at the annual council meeting. It has been a privilege to serve the village in this capacity. And I will continue to do so from the relative freedom of the backbenches!

6. **Guest Speaker – County and District Councillor Kevin Deanus**

Many will be aware of the Local Government Reorganisation proposals. The structure of local government was last reviewed in 1974.

Surrey will be split into either two or three new unitary councils, it will be up to central Government to decide which option. All 11 Borough Councils will be dissolved. Each Unitary Council will have an elected Mayor.

The decision as to whether it will be 2 or 3 councils will be made by the end of the year.

It is good to see neighbouring parishes working together to address the Stovolds appeal.

Housing targets have gone up to 1400 a year; Alfold has had 480 houses permitted in the last two months alone. This pressure will continue.

Elections will be held in May 2026, which will be for the new Unitary Councils.

7. Questions

Q: Why is one of the current vacancies on the Council to be decided by co-option and one by election?

A: Residents have the right to ask for an election, and only one vacancy resulted in the requisite number of electors asking for one.

Q: Why did both female councillors leave?

A: (One of the ex-councillors was present so responded) It was nothing to do with gender, I lost interest.

Q: Why does Hascombe have a 30mph speed limit in the village, and Dunsfold is 40mph?

A: (By Kevin Deanus) Speed data strips in the village did not show speeding issues. A Rural Speeding Review is currently being undertaken.

Cllr Waterson said that there is a Speedwatch group operating in the village who always need new volunteers.

Q: The walk being the pub is very wet, and needs hard surfacing.

A: Is this an official footpath? We will look into it.

There being no further questions, Cllr Waterson thanked all who attended, especially the groups giving presentations.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm