



**Chairman's Parish Report
April 2024 to March 2025**

- **Planning** – The Parish Council reviewed 39 applications submitted by the Wiltshire Council Planning Team. We expressed concerns regarding the widening of the entrance to Centre Parcs, near Heaven's Gate. Wiltshire Council has acknowledged our feedback, and a decision is pending at the time of writing.
- **Community Traffic Management** – The community was consulted, and it was agreed that a whole village speed assessment was progressed. We are still waiting for an update on this to see how we can achieve the most from the information. Wiltshire County Council agreed that our white lining needs to be redone, and they will be doing some but have asked everyone to use the [MyWilts online reporting - Wiltshire Council](#) app to get their local white lining redone. They have also agreed to SLOW being put in places around the village.
- **New Grounds Contractor** - The new maintenance team is now regularly visiting the village. Ken often chats with them to thank them for their work. Their efforts seem to be enhancing the village's appearance. As this is our most significant expenditure, we aim to ensure its effectiveness.
- **Verges** - We are working with Wiltshire County Council (WCC) to protect our verges, especially on the common. We appreciate WCC's advice and support, as stopping people from parking on the common is beyond our control.
- **Bulb Planting Scheme** - A three-year project to plant bulbs annually across the village aims to finish this autumn.
- **Village tidying** – The grounds maintenance contractor assisted with clearing one of the walls at the village entrance. Additionally, the area around the memorial and another wall in front of the alms houses were cleared. Appreciation is extended to all who participated in this effort.
- **Litter pick** - Overseen by Councillor Stephen Crossman in 2024 was well attended. I am always amazed that in this day and age, people still drop litter, what do they not know?
- **Street signs** – A few more to go, it was held up by an apostrophe. Rowes' or Rowe's, which one should be used?
- **Benches** – We've received benches over the years, but some deteriorate and need removal. Our new bench by the pub is made of durable material and should last long. The orchard bench was removed due to wear; a replacement depends on donations. We can budget for one next year if the village wants. Let us know.
- **Teenage Recreational Provision Project** - grant funding was received from the Warminster Area Board, Community Land Fill, and the Fudge Trust.

Further grants will be explored in the future. The village is currently able to offer tennis, basketball, cricket, and football facilities, along with excellent cycle paths. The council aims to try to provide additional sporting opportunities and welcomes suggestions. Use of these facilities is encouraged to ensure effective use of the funds.

- **Hollybush Bus Stop** – Rebuilt with an active bus service. Please use the buses to help maintain the service.
- **Rights of ways project** – This project is nearing completion and has received positive feedback, including comments like, “The access to footpaths and bridle paths around Horningsham is easier than ever these days”. Appreciation is extended to all who have supported and contributed to this effort.
- **New Co-options** - Bruce Martin has joined us. He has a background in IT, operates a local business, and is interested in cricket. He also has a general interest in the village.
- **Christmas Tree on the Common** - Longleat generously donated a Christmas tree for the community along with a permanent fixing for future years. We extend our gratitude to Longleat. Our village pub, under the new management of Katy, along with the friends and residents of Horningsham, collaborated to host a wonderful carol service.
- **BT Phone Boxes** – Following their refurbishment in 2023, we are now seeking suggestions for their potential use. Kindly submit your proposals to our Clerk at clerk@horningshamparishcouncil.gov.uk.
- **Community Emergency Plan Update:** Salt grit has been bought and distributed around the village for use during icy weather. Keep your Parish Councillors' phone numbers handy for assistance.
- **Parish Steward** – This service provides one day a month for planned village maintenance tasks, such as removing salt bin detritus or clearing water covers. Please inform us of any tasks that may require attention. The Parish Steward also addresses potholes. However, the most efficient way to have potholes repaired is by using the WCC App [MyWilts online reporting - Wiltshire Council](#). Reporting potholes through this platform ensures they are addressed promptly.
- **Councillor Ken Windess** – As a dedicated volunteer Parish Councillor, Ken significantly contributes to many village organisations. We are grateful for his willingness and invaluable service. Thank you, Ken, from all of us.
- **Gullies** – A team of councillors identified all of these in the village and arranged for them to be cleared. This task may need to be repeated annually due to frequent rain.

- **New Clerk** – Welcome Stephanie Storrar, our new parish clerk. As a former headteacher, she brings exceptional organisational skills, attention to detail, and clear communication. She will be highly valued.
- **Defibrillator training** – Councillors and residents attended a training session, in our historic village hall. On knowing what to do if . . . What an eye opener! Using the defibrillator was only part of it. My rose-tinted glasses of human nature allowed me to wonder if as a village we might be able to say at the end of 2025 we as a whole village know about CPR and the defibrillator and would know what to do if . . . What do you think?

Horningsham Cricket Club

Thank you to the Parish Council for this opportunity to share a few words about the cricket club ..

... which is in fine health and seems to be expanding and spreading like a weed. We recently cropped up in Thailand.

We now have at least 45 or 50 people playing for us. Men, women and children : 10 residents of Horningsham, 9 former residents, 6 people connected to the village by work, family or school; and others: friends, who enjoy playing for Horningsham.

7 of the squad are under 18 , and 4 are over 60

Playing 60 games a year, all over England, indeed all over the world.

That successful tour of Thailand in January. This summer's tours will be back to Bamburgh in Northumberland, and to Cornwall.

If we claim to be a Horningsham team, what do we bring to Horningsham?

- We look after the sports field : it is not our field, but we do the grass cutting, drainage, we keep the banks and hedges under control - spending £1,000 – £2,000 a year. We do this for ourselves but the benefit it is shared also by the village, and means others don't have to pay for it. And it is hours and hours of unpaid work.
- We play a part in village events and fund raising activities : the village fayre, bonfire night, other events at the hall
- We introduce young teenagers to the sport

Do we need anything back?

The Club is financially self-sufficient on a day to day basis.

From time to time we have to address more expensive projects for which we may need extra funding. Over the next few years these may include

:

- replacing our ancient pre-WW2 equipment
- replacing the side netting along the boundary on the left hand side
- making the field flatter. It has ridges

We may look at grant funding for some of that. Mostly we get by

What is our biggest challenge?

- Village cricket is a social activity. In certain villages we go to, the cricket club seems to have a big place in village life. Crowds come to watch them play. We are going to Wriggle Valley CC in Dorset on Sunday. There will be 20 or 30 people there, drinking and heckling, in a very partisan way. We have not achieved this in Horningsham. I see this as a failure on our part, we need to up our game. This is our challenge for the future.
- We would like to create a welcoming atmosphere at home games, so that people can enjoy popping down for a while to have a cup of tea, or a glass of something stronger, maybe a piece of cake, see people they know, and enjoy spending some time here.
- That's our next challenge.

Last word to an umpire.

Because it reflects the Club's approach to the playing cricket, I share these words from an umpire at one of our recent games. In cricket, the umpire's decision is always final :

'I wish more clubs were like you. You guys are' he said 'a shining credit to the sport of cricket. Rarely have I seen the 'spirit of cricket' so embedded as today. Thank you from both umpires'. And that was just us, playing the way we play every game.

Horningsham Gardening Club Report May 2025

The gardening club was set up as a community initiative to share our love of gardening and nature, and to facilitate the sharing of resources - eg practical skills, knowledge, seeds and plants, as well as to develop ideas for projects to enhance community, biodiversity, food security and the natural environment, through gardening, growing, conservation and community.

In addition to occasional informal meet-ups, Cherry and I and members of the club have been involved in taking over the running of the plant stall at Horningsham Fayre from Carole Hill. At this stage Carole is still giving us some guidance as well as growing and propagating plants but she is no longer responsible for administering the whole operation on her own. And going forward she should finally be able to step down from running the stall!

We are also working on securing a site or sites for a community allotment / garden / orchard - a place for the whole community - adults and children - to grow food, enjoy and use for range of activities that could include things like workshops and community meals.

HORNINGSHAM LUNCHEON CLUB

The Luncheon Club has 36 members at present. We usually have between 28 to 30 who regularly attend and three of the lunches are delivered to Horningsham residents who are house bound.

The Club is open to anyone over the age of sixty and new members are made very welcome.

We are open 42 weeks of the year on a Thursday between 12 and 2.0pm. We have a team of ten cooks, with two on duty each week giving a wide choice of meals for the members to enjoy. The price per lunch was raised in January to £5 due to the higher cost of ingredients. All the cooks and helpers give up their time for free and we are very grateful to them all.

We also have a Christmas Meal each year for all the members, cooks and helpers to come together and enjoy. At our meal in December last year the children from Horningsham School came to sing some of their songs from their play and carols to us all. Everyone was delighted and they have promised to come again this year.

We are very fortunate to receive a donation from the Village Fayre and are grateful to the Village Hall for the favourable rent charged to the club.

We believe the Club is an asset to the Village and hope we can continue into the future.

Margaret Long & Lesley Trollope (Co-Chair)

HORNINGSHAM ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 2025

I am afraid that there is nothing new to report. The Benefice has been vacant since October 2023 and the post is about to be advertised for a second time. Nationally, there is a shortage of clergy and there are a large number of vacancies. We are very lucky to have our licensed lay minister Robert, who works hard to make sure that there is a service somewhere in the parish every Sunday.

The number of services we have at Horningsham continues to decrease. The Christmas Day congregation was small and we had no service at Easter. The one service that continues to be a great success is Plough Sunday. The morris men are very popular and attract a large congregation. We host a Benefice service occasionally when there are five Sundays in the month and this is well supported by all the villages.

The building is in good order. The churchyard looks very tidy and, as always, we are grateful to the Parish Council for funding the mowing of the grass. A number of people visit graves to leave flowers and it is good to be able to demonstrate that the churchyard is well cared for. The sum of money we receive from the Village Fayre each year is also much appreciated.

It is reassuring to know that visitors continue to be grateful to find a church that is open. Many of them sign the visitors book and they are usually looking for graves of relatives. Some say that they were married here. It is clear that people gain comfort from having access to their parish church, but funding is becoming more and more challenging. We can only do the best we can. Our churchwarden takes care of the building and there is always a service available somewhere for those who wish to attend.

Horningsham Residents Action Group – Report to Parish Council May 2025

The HRA continues to develop as an inclusive, volunteer-led forum for the residents of Horningsham to engage in constructive dialogue, raise concerns, and share ideas to benefit the village and its people.

Key activities to date include:

Community Consultation and Representation:

We invite all village residents to participate. Efforts are ongoing to establish better communication channels (including a WhatsApp group and notices in the Horningsham News) and represent a collective voice. Meetings are held six weekly at the Bath Arms (Longleat) pub.

Engagement with Longleat Estate and Savills:

The HRA is in communication with the Longleat Estate and Savills. We have constructive proposals for discussion, among them are heritage building use - we are exploring potential reuse of the Chapel School House and Pill box Factory for community benefit and exploring the possibility of a small museum of Free Churches and a home schooling space / scrap store, along with requests to repair and not leave to ruin: My Ladies Bridge, Barn at corner of Pottle Street, Hexagonal timber barn on stilts amongst others.

Village Heritage and Environment:

Our Village History and Well Restoration Projects are progressing, we have received historic maps from the Longleat archivist to help with the charting of field names, woods and lanes etc.

We are also liaising with Longleat about invasive vegetation on estate property: Himalayan balsam - Little Scotland, Japanese knotweed - Entrance to path into woods below the Monument and Winter heliotrope - surrounding the Monument and asking for access to their environmental policy or for them to form one with biodiversity protection and enhancement in mind.

Village Leaflet and Accessibility:

Work continues on a village leaflet containing mapped walks, local history, and accessible routes, with collaboration between local families, artists, and children.

Volunteering and Informal Support:

HRA wants where possible to offer volunteer support on practical matters – vegetation clearance, litter picking, painting, and exploring community services. Presuming insurance requirements can be met.

Aspirations for the coming year

Promotion of nature-positive schemes and heritage asset restoration.

Supporting activities that bring the community together, skill sharing and promoting practical ideas for social connections and community requirements in the village. including exploring options such as a community-run garden, pop-up shop / cafe / art studio / gallery (using renovated building/s), even a sauna.

The HRA remains a discussion-led, action-focused body working voluntarily in collaboration with the estate, councils, and most importantly, our neighbours. We value continued dialogue with the Parish Council and hope to collaborate more closely in the year ahead.

Respectfully,

Andy Dean

Horningsham Parish Meeting: 15.05.25 Longleat Enterprises Limited Steve Backshall Live

- • Build has started for event arena.
- • Rehearsals 22 and 23 May
- • Show 24 May – 1 June.

Hippos

- Due to arrive in June – Lola and Hodor coming from Whipsnade. • Council received the consultation letter and wider stakeholder conversations in place regarding road closures and Cycle route closures: Center Parcs, Sustrans, Wiltshire Council, local schools, local residents, Bike Park etc.
- 12-14 Sept – reduced to three days based on feedback.

Horningsham Fayre

Keepers attending with a selection of close contact small animals and interesting props. Animals will depend on weather and keepers.

Icons of the Sky

Season Pass

- • Launching Friday 23 May.
- • New offer to encourage repeat visits.
- • £94.95 for 12 months excluding restricted dates inc The Festival of Light.

Also doesn't include Cheddar. Really good value, particularly for families looking for summer activities!

The Festival of Light

- • Theme is British Icons with Wallace & Gromit and friends. 8 November – 11 January.

Longleat Estate Shearwater Reservoir Safety & Café

- • Reservoir Safety Works progressing well, benefitting from dry weather – due to complete Mid July.
- • Previously shared the café has come back to the Estate.
- • Pending completion of the reservoir work, the intention is to reopen café for summer. We will announce details once confirmed.

Property Refurbishments

- • Committed to reducing the number of empty properties in the village – 5 refurbishments have or are completing within the next few weeks – 2 already with tenants secured.
- • Specifications and tenders being produced for others around the village which we hope to progress soon.
- • Do approach the Property Team if you have friends/family who are looking to move into the village – we have prospective list we continuously update.

Horningsham Village Hall – Report to the Parish Council

This report summarises the activities and achievements of the Horningsham Memorial Hall over the past year, from May 2024 to May 2025, and outlines our aspirations for the forthcoming year. We are grateful for the ongoing support from the Parish Council, including the generous grant funding.

The past year has seen the Hall continue as a busy and vital hub for our community, with a focus on expanding our reach and securing the Hall's future.

1. Vibrant Community Engagement & Events:
 - Regular Activities: These include 'Wellbeing Tuesdays' (exercise and yoga), monthly coffee mornings, the weekly Luncheon Club for our over-60s. and games nights offering badminton and ping-pong..
 - Events: Our Thai Night, Harvest Supper and Bonfire Night all brought the community together and raised substantial revenue for the hall, cricket club and Horningsham News. Most recently we held a tea party to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, attended by a pleasing number of children, and Lionel Marsh, who's brother was present at the original Horningsham celebration 80 years ago!
 - Rural Voices Series: This is significant new initiative launched last summer. These monthly breakfast talks on Saturday mornings have proved very successful, selling out almost every time. They attract attendees from well beyond Horningsham, putting the Hall on the map and raising funds for the Regeneration project. Rural Voices has prompted tech upgrades, including a new projector and PA system repairs, increasing the amenity value of the hall for all, including the Parish Council.
2. External Partnerships and community links: We were pleased to host the Wylde Arts Trail for an exhibition and continue to support Horningsham Primary School's use of the Hall, along with the Village Fayre. We have actively worked to strengthen our relationship with Horningsham Cricket Club, and to support local businesses. This includes providing concessionary rates for local well-being class providers, focusing on locally sourced ingredients where possible for our Rural Voices menus and hosting some Maiden Bradley village hall classes when they were closed for maintenance. We also held a big community Spring Clean of the Hall, which attracted lots of volunteers and yielded a whole skip full of debris!
3. Building Maintenance & Finance:
 - Maintenance remains an ongoing expense, and our long-term goal is to reduce this via our ambitious regeneration project. Overall our finances have improved over the last 18 months as a result of increased effort being put into events which raise funds. The balance in the bank is gradually increasing, despite some sharp increases in overheads, such as electricity costs
 - One area of immediate focus is Hall lettings for private events. Wedding bookings are up this year, although we would like to see them rising more quickly.
4. Hall Regeneration Project:
 - Timed for completion by the Hall's centenary in 2030, this project aims to secure the Hall for the community for the next 100 years.
 - We have engaged with the free 'Design For Change / Neighbourhood Toolbox' initiative, which supports sustainable community hub development. Under this scheme, we are currently engaging with an architect, interior designer, and structural engineer to develop initial plans. The next step will be wider community engagement, planned to start at the Village Fayre.
 - We are growing the fund for this project, which is primarily intended for match funding against grants.

Overall the Hall committee have been tasked with "improving the conditions of life of the inhabitants of Horningsham and surrounding villages" and are seeking to fulfil this by

offering accessible community events, and raising funds to allow us to take the necessary actions for the Hall's upkeep and long-term security.

The committee is dedicated to ensuring Horningsham Village Hall remains a welcoming, well-maintained, and active centre for our community. We appreciate the support from the Parish Council and look forward to our continued partnership.

Respectfully, Chair, Horningsham Memorial Hall Committee