

Hougham Parish Council History

The following notes are taken from articles written in the Hougham Herald Newsletter from September 2016 to the latest edition, by Andrew Finnis.

In August 2016, I was wondering what could be a suitable subject for my next month's newsletter entry as there was no parish council meeting in that month. Looking through some old files I found the parish records dating back to the very start of the parish council's work from just before the turn of the 20th century.

To put some background to the start of this subject I looked through the Official Parish Council Administration Book and found this interesting statement in the forward to the book. The book is titled "Local Council Administration" and is the reference book for council's administrators, known to most users as the council's "bible".

"The history of local government appears to have been long and often turbulent and it was near the end of the Victorian era that one of the first milestones was laid down relating somewhat to where we are now. This was when parliament passed the Local Government Act in 1894. In relation to parish affairs the Act of 1894 was based on two apparently simple principles.

- *First it created institutions having a civil origin, status and affiliations – these were "the parish meeting" and "the parish council".*
- *Secondly it transferred the civil functions of the older parish authorities to these new institutions.*

As a result the church was excluded from formal participation of local government and the traditional functions of the parish, which had always had a "Christian" basis, were now to be administered by laymen!

This was a very significant change in the life of every village community in England and caused great acrimony at the time. It was generally expected, at that time, that the new parish council's would have a stormy existence. Up to this change it was the squire, the parson and sometimes the schoolmaster who were the leaders of the community. Their influence depended on their traditional prestige, their superior education and their relative wealth, and, in a hierarchical society their social standing. History has shown that it took many years for society to change and for the next sixty years it appears that parish councils operated in near obscurity from which they only began to emerge in the 1960's."

Returning to the Hougham Without parish record book, titled "Parish Meeting Minutes", there was a copy of the 1894 Act stuck in the front pages. The Act set up this major change to parish life, never before had there been a structured meeting for all the village community and, as it was open to all so it must have been welcomed by some and feared by others. The book is the official minutes of the significant things that went on in our village over the last 120 years. The notes are a summary of these minutes.

1894

The first minutes entered were dated 4th December 1894, for the Parish of Hougham Without, and stated it was the first parish meeting held in accordance with the 1894 Act and took place at the schoolroom in Church Hougham at 6.30 pm.

(At this point I would just like to add that my family and I have lived in the old school house in Church Hougham now for the last 30 years so finding these records referring to the first annual and first parish council meetings of 1894 happening in the very place I was sitting in was both humbling and amazing!)

Prior to the start of the minutes was a written copy of the parish notice, which it states, had been posted at the Church and Chapel doors and other parts of the Parish convening the meeting, it was read by Mr J Kingsmill one of the overseers of the poor of the Parish. Then a list of those present first, the Rev'd E.R. Orden, Vicar, Messrs John Tapley and A.M. Evenson, Churchwardens. Messrs John Kingsmill and John Bromley, Overseers, and then the remaining attendees making a total of forty-two parishioners. *(They are all named in the minutes.)* Mr John Kingsmill was elected as chairman and he informed the meeting that by instructions received from Kent County Council they were to form a Parish Council to consist of seven councillors and that he was then prepared to receive nominations papers of candidates for the office of Councillor.

There were 13 nominations for councillor *(all listed together with proposer and seconder)* and a vote took place, by show of hands, *(the number of votes for each candidate was also recorded)* with the seven highest being elected for the year. The chairman then stated that if any of the candidates who had not been elected, or any parishioner, were not satisfied with the result of the show of hands then they could demand a written poll! After a prescribed time had elapsed and no poll being demanded the councillors were confirmed duly elected and the meeting was declared closed.

The first meeting of the elected Parish Council took place just a few days later on 13th December 1894 and the seven councillors all signed an acceptance of office written on a separate page in this minute book and they were: - John Brooks, John Tapley, Arthur Evenson, Thomas Hambrook, Henry Knott, Edward R Orger and John Kingsmill.

(Given the earlier comments on the significant change to the way parish life was now to be organised this list is interesting in that it still contains Arthur Evenson who could be described as the squire of the parish and the local vicar Edward Orger – but at least they had to work now within a prescribed civic structured council!)

1895

The 1895 annual meeting minutes

show that they had appointed trustees of the new “Pepper Charity”. This charity was to administer the funds for the distribution of bread to the poor of the parish and to report this to the annual meeting.

The Local Government Act required the parish councillors be elected each year by a vote at the annual meeting. *(I've heard of the “Pepper Charity” and perhaps more may be detailed in future minutes but if someone in the village knows anything about it - please let me know?)*

As each of these early annual meeting minutes were recorded (all hand written of course) it is interesting to see that the most important function of the council was receive reports from the Pepper charity on the distribute bread to the poor of the parish. In 1895 a Major

Lawes had donated one pound (*written £1.0.0. for those who remember pounds, shillings and pence*) and this had produced 28 gallons of bread. 48 parishioners had received this bread and their names were recorded, as the new act required that these parishioner's names should be published. (*I haven't been able to work out what a gallon of bread was as yet but I'm sure someone will let me know?*)

1897

The meeting of 26th May 1897 did produce a new subject, that of how to celebrate Queen Victoria's 60th Jubilee year. A date of 22nd June (less than a month ahead) was agreed for the special day and a general committee was set up. They first met on 7th June when the committee members had already been making collections within the parish and around £35 pounds had already been given or promised. By 15th June the committee heard the estimate of people to be catered for; there were 135 men, 117 women, 185 children totalling 437 people. There are no details of what they did for the celebration (*a party I hope*) and a medal is mentioned. At the next meeting on 27th June, the vicar produced the accounts of receipts and payments where the income was described as "subscriptions" amounting to £35.13s.6p and the "Expenses" were £34.6s.11p. They agreed that the balance of £1.6s.7p was to be given at half a crown a week to a Richard Hatton of West Hougham who had recently been disabled by an accident. (*It would be interesting to know if there are any relatives of Mr Hatton still living in the area who may have some history of this story?*)

1902

In 1902, Queen Victoria died and the business for that annual meeting was to consider the new King's (Edward VII) Coronation celebrations. The meeting made specific references to the reading the previous minutes for the 1897 Queen's Jubilee celebration and then they passed a motion that these new celebrations should not be paid for out of the rates! So again collections of voluntary contributions were made and interestingly the committee made another specific requirement; that all the men should be given a free glass of beer! There were no women on the council and there was no mention of anything special for anyone else! The account detail shows total receipts at £29.18s.9p, and payments made at £22.11s.5. The payments were more detailed this time and it looks like a big party showing; provisions, calico, hire of mugs and plates, minerals and tobacco, ribbons, books, bats & wickets, tea & biscuits, cask of beer, 4 gallons of milk, 200 oranges, 140 buns, fixing of tables & erecting swings. *So it must have been a big one!* The remaining funds of £7.7s.4p were divided with £2 to the Church and £2 to the Chapel (which was in West Hougham) and £3.7s.4p to Dover Hospital! No details of the big party celebrations for the coronation of King Edward VII were minuted. *I hope the men enjoyed their glass of beer and the women and children got something special to?*

1904 to 1910

The next few years' minutes show the annual meetings continued to list the distribution of bread via the Pepper Charity and the recipients. The parish councillors were elected by a local vote at each annual meeting and in 1904 it appears the elections became three yearly but were still voted for at the annual meeting by those attending.

1911

In 1911, yes, another coronation this time of George V, and another party costing £29.13s.5p from local subscriptions. The excess of £2.12s.6p was split, with 5 shillings going to Mr Graves who through age and infirmity was unable to attend the party. The remainder

was to go to the school for a tea party, but Mr Evanson (long time chairman of the council) had paid for the tea himself, and so £1 went to the school for prizes and 9 shillings each to the three Sunday Schools. I take it these were one for St Lawrence Church, perhaps one in St Mary's (old Capel church) and one for the Chapel in West Hougham.

1913

In the 1913's meeting there is an insight into the way medical care was arranged (remember at this time there was no NHS). The entry indicates that a letter was received by the council from Mr Rankin in which he lists names of insured persons who could not find a "panel doctor" to put them on his list. The meeting discussed this and agreed to write formally to the Insurance Committee to bring to their attention this unsatisfactory arrangement for the medical attendance on Insured persons in Hougham. Does anyone know more about the arrangement for health care at that time?

1916

The minutes show the only annual parish meeting during World War I was in January 1916, and the subject of the meeting was to protest against an appeal from the SE & CR Co (South East and Chatham Railway Company) to be excused rates, due to the stoppage of their railway line through the Parish by a landslip. The meeting voted to write a letter of objection to the County Council and asked for their help. A second protest letter was to be sent to the Local Government Board, against the increase of local rates required in order to make up for the reduced income involved if the SE&CR appeal is accepted. The landslip had also caused traffic diversions from the Folkestone Road through the villages and, guess what, they were complaining of the damage to the roads. *Sounds familiar even a hundred years on!*

1919

There is no mention of WWI in the minutes, which I suspect even for those not physically involved must have been causing great suffering to the whole community. The next Parish meeting was in 1919, a well attended session to discuss a possible War Memorial. It was chaired by Mr P Saunders who said "it would be a duty and a privilege to subscribe to a memorial to those who had given their lives for their Country". He went on "in the years 1914 to 1918 it was only the superhuman efforts and unparalleled heroism of our forces that the Germans were stopped in their attempt to break through to the coast (of France). Those who had fallen had fought side-by-side on the battlefields and therefore a Memorial ought to be erected to them all by the whole parish". He pledged to start the fund off with a £100 donation and a group was elected to take in more subscriptions across the whole parish. A number of locations and types of memorials were proposed and eventually an agreement was made to have a granite stone cross to be erected in the St Lawrence Churchyard.

1921

There is no detail of the actual cost of the war memorial except that it was paid for by donation from villagers although a local historian suggested it was probably around £200? There is however, a record of the Unveiling and Dedication Service held in St Lawrence Church on Wednesday October 19th 1921 at 3pm. I have a copy of the service sheet with details of the hymns sung together with the National Anthem plus the 23rd Psalm and the reading of the Roll of Honour containing 16 names. Following the service in the

Churchyard there was an unveiling of the memorial, by a Colonel C. De Sausmarez, CMG, DSO, and a dedication by Rev C.H. Bailey BA, MC.

For the next few years the annual meetings had no other business except to elect the parish councillors.

1930

In 1930 came a request from Dover Borough Council (DBC) to expand their boundary by taking part of Hougham Without into the borough of Dover. This was thought to be very disadvantageous to the parish and an appeal sent by reply. It was continued to be pursued by Dover over the next year and by 1932 it looks like the parish had given up as an entry states that after much discussion they agreed not to make an appeal to the "Ministry of Health". (I presume this was the appropriate ministry responsible but don't know why health was involved?).

1932

In 1932 there was an additional request from DBC where they were asking for the right of way between West Hougham and Dover across Stepping Down and the right of way to Abbotts Cliff should to be repaired. It appeared that the borough considered the Stepping Down path to be a bridle way but parish councillors argued that it had always been a footpath with a number of stiles and two councillors stated that this footpath had been as such for over 60 years and never had been a bridle way. I understand this issue may still be a contentious one and wonder if anyone has any more recent knowledge, please let me know?

1934

By 1934 the village meeting was all about getting a supply of water to both Church and West Hougham as although there appeared to be a mains water pipe running through West Hougham (presumably between Folkestone and Dover) it was not connected to anyone. I can only assume that household water must have come from local wells? There were three water companies involved, the East Kent Water Co, the Dover Borough Water Co and the Folkestone Water Co all would be a possible supplier. It was also reported that there may be an acute water shortage over the next few months and they should consider a temporary emergency supply. The council agreed to ask Dover Rural District council for further information and assistance on getting a permanent supply for the whole parish and an early emergency connection?

1935

There was no mention of water but there was another Jubilee celebration - for King George V's Silver Jubilee. You will remember since I've been writing these notes, that many celebrations had already been arranged. This was a similar one with a village committee set up to seek donations for the "feast" and a debate as to which village was to host the event. It eventually went to Church Hougham (and I assume it was held at the school) in fact it could be the event of which I have a black and white picture of the school being a celebration with flags and a tea party. This came (of course) via Wendy

Stokes who has such a vast amount of Hougham History as many of you will have seen at various fetes and festivals held over the years.

1936

In this meeting the water supply was mentioned again but still nothing had been done! The Rural District Council (RDC) had replied to say that Folkestone Waterworks Company can do nothing for us at the present time and that the East Kent Water Company was being approached again on the matter. The Ministry of Health had just enquired of us as to how things were progressing and it was agreed to write to them directly telling them of our inability to get a water supply for the village even when there was a mains pipe running through the village street. We asked them to coordinate the many authorities concerned and to ask for an emergency connection or standpipe to be provided as some villagers only had between two to four days supply!

Other items requested during the 1936 meeting were for a “Bus Stop” to be provided at The Plough Inn. The Bus and Railway Company had been approached with special consideration to be taken as to the safety of passengers alighting from Dover. A number of road repairs were also requested; on the road to the Church where Councillor’s Bromley, Barwick and Stokes agreed to get that work completed. A request had gone to KCC and RDC to repair specific roads – the one beyond Pathfield Cottages, the one up to and beyond Youngs Cottages and the one behind the Vicarage! Another request was to raise the road outside the Parish Hall so as to prevent water standing in the area. The present village hall committee will like this one, they are still asking for similar work to be done in 2016!).

In January 1936 George V died and was succeeded by his son Edward VIII. *(That year saw the constitutional crisis of Edward VIII wanting to marry the twice-divorced American Wallis Simpson and eventually abdicating on 11 December 1936).*

1937

A additional parish meeting in February 1937 was set up to agree the coronation festivities for the new king George VI, and the “Jubilee committee” from 1935 was enlisted to work on this! They agreed to again seek voluntary contributions and hold the festival in Church Hougham starting with a service in the church.

Also at this extra, February, meeting a letter was read from the East Kent Water Company with a new offer of a supply of mains water to the parish which they now believed was possible owing to improvements in automatic boosting plants. They can use these to supply the parish from their St Radigund’s reservoir and the “Admiralty main” (which we had heard earlier already ran though West Hougham’s main street).

They indicated, “By allowing boosters to supply a higher pressure also allows us to reduce the cost of the supply to the village”. They enclosed outlined

plans with three options for the supply: - option 1 was to supply West Hougham only and required the guarantee of £113.16s per annum from the parish. Option 2, was to add a supply to Church Hougham, The Plough, Chilverton Elms and the Vicarage which would required an additional cost of £203 (making £316.16s). Option 3, varied the second route by running the main down Hougham Court Lane to Folkestone Road up to The Royal Oak and down to The Plough then up Plough Hill to Church Hougham and those other areas in option 2. This would require a total guarantee of £402.12s.

As you may have expected the parish were not happy with this cost and voted to write to the Department of Health drawing their attention to the great cost even of the first option considering they would be using the Admiralty main which was already installed. They made the case again that the village needed mains water, also that it had no outside fire brigade available and ask whether, if the East Kent Water Co could not reduce their cost, then could Folkestone Water Co be asked to give an estimate? Also asking whether the County Council or any other public body could make a grant towards the cost?

A month later in March 1937, the annual meeting took place and the Department of Health had replied saying the question was being deferred for further consideration. So, still no progress for village water! The War Office had written to the Parish Council informing them of army manoeuvres that were to take place in the parish beginning in July. The coronation festivities committee reported that it will be similar to the previous jubilee festivities and that the funds were coming in well!

A letter was to be sent to Capel Parish Council asking them if any steps could be taken to prevent to flooding of the road in Satmar Lane (*well nothing changes there does it?*). A letter was also to be sent to the borough council requesting repairs to the road by Young's Cottages. A special vote of thanks was passed thanking Mr E H Souton, for his long and valuable service to the parish for many years.

In November 1937, a third parish meeting was called and the notice indicated that all should attend as a decision was to be made on the proposals from the East Kent Water Co. The seven members of the parish council had voted unanimously to accept the offer. East Kent Water Co had carried out a house-to-house survey to establish which householders would be prepared to pay for a supply of water. They had offered to supply 48 out of 52 houses in West Hougham and the tenants/owners of 37 of these had agreed with the water company to install water fittings and take supply as soon as available. The company still required a guarantee of £113 per year and the council had produced figures of estimated income from an additional rate, based on rateable values, but his was £31 short! There was much discussion on how to make up this shortfall and extra farm supplies was suggested which may bring in more income each year. Mr Stokes of Poulton Farm had been taking a supply from this main and had used £14 worth in the last year. It was pointed out the charge for a house supply would be about 23/- (twenty three shillings)

per year about 5/- per week. Baths if installed would be extra! (*But no figures where given for the cost of a fitted bath*).

There are over seven pages of notes from this one meeting so I'm not going to detail it all here. At the end the three options were proposed for adoption but only the first, for a supply to West Hougham, was seconded and it was put to the whole meeting for a vote: 52 parishioners voted for the motion none voted against so the motion was carried and the meeting closed. Unfortunately this was not the end of the "water" story!

1938

In March 1938 a special parish meeting was called because the water company had revised their proposal. This was similar in cost for previous option 1 and 2 but had more details in option 3 with more details for the various outlying properties around Church Hougham. The total for all works was now £292.3s.0d. It was stated that £180 had been guaranteed by offers (not explained) to the scheme, which still left £113 to be found from a 1/6 in the pound levy on the parish rate. The chairman asked for proposals to this latest scheme and Mr Sleigh proposed and Mr E Knott seconded for all three stages. The vote was 36 for and 2 against, after which the meeting closed. *I found it amazing that there were two villagers not willing to pursue having mains water for the majority of the parish!*

A month later the normal parish meeting had no progress reported on the water issue and the meeting mostly discussed five roads that were in a very poor state, namely: Plough Hill, the road from Coombe Farm to Poulton Farm, Broadsole Lane, the road leading from Elms Vale Road to Woodside Cottage Chilverton Elms and the road leading to Young's' Cottages. (*These roads were obviously not very good in 1938 and not much better now but I expect they have been repaired in between now and then?*). Other items mentioned were; attention required to the pond opposite Connaught House in West Hougham (but no reason recorded). The voting method of parish councillors was also suggested should be changed.

1939

At the 1939 annual meeting the managing director of the EK water company had been invited to answer local questions and discuss the options but he couldn't come and another date for this was being sought. Mr C Souton who had been appointed "Chief Warden" said he was looking for someone else to accept the office, but no one volunteered!

1940

By the April 1940 annual meeting, we heard that the District Surveyor had still not put the road repairs into operation (*well there's a surprise*). A letter from him had said commencement was "in the very near future". He also made the point that if the parish council had had a representative attending the RDC meetings there would be more direct coordination. Apparently the rep was Captain Harvey who had not been able to attend because of his military duties. He had suggested someone else take his place but the RDC required

him to resign before another rep could attend. (*Bureaucratic red tape was probably even worst in those days?*).

And, (*at last*), some information regarding the war came from the RDC on air raid precautions, but no details were minuted. Plus a notice that during the war, councillor positions would continue on without a yearly election.

Information on a new National Saving Scheme had suggested that a local group was set up in the parish and Mr Abbott agreed to help collect the information. The Chief Warden stated that 4 stirrup pumps had been received and were available anytime. He also made the point that only two of the eight parishioners who volunteered for the Auxiliary Fire Service had enrolled properly! Home nursing classes (for women) were being arranged and Mrs Pilcher had been sent information. Also a request for home cooking lectures was to be asked from the RDC.

This meeting was quickly followed just a month later with another in May 1940, reporting on more wartime issues. Firstly the local collection of waste and dormant materials was to be arranged. Mr Kingsmill and Mr Bromley both agreed to store such materials until sufficient items were accumulated and then they were to be transported to the Marine Store dealers to be sold. The proceeds would come back to the parish to be used as the parishioners wished. Volunteers were asked for help run the scheme and Mrs E Knott and Mrs WM Souton offered to run the project and provide an account of the materials collected to the parish clerk each month, which could then be passed on to the RDC.

Mr Oakley proposed that a parish noticeboard be erected to allow the various information notices to be advertised and this was considered a good idea. He also complained about the floodwater still lying in front of the village hall and this was reported, once again, to the district surveyor who had promised to start all the works soon.

1941

By March 1941, the meeting reported that at last the road repairs had been started, but only just - two month earlier! Outside the village hall the road surface had been raised and lowered in certain places and a new "chalk well" had been dug in the grounds of the hall, (*as a soak-away, I presume*).

Practically the whole of the main street had been reconstructed which "was a great improvement". Regarding Broadsole and Cowfield Lane, these had had the cart ruts filled and the road tarmacked putting both roads in a much better state than they had been for years. Plough Hill had also been resurfaced for a considerable length and the rest put into good repair. The parish council were very grateful to the district surveyor who had completed most of the work that had been requested and agreed upon for over three years!

The same meeting had reports from Mrs Knott that £1.0.0 had been sent to the Red Cross Fund from sale of waste paper and that the sale of scrap iron had realised £3.12s.8p which had also been given to the red cross.

1942 & 1943

The next two yearly meetings were very short by comparison. In 1942 the only comment was that the Fire Service authorities had taken a census of all water storage available in the parish. In 1943 only four councillors attended and after waiting half an hour they closed the meeting with no business tabled!

It is perhaps not surprising that during this war time period normal village life was not very active. What was active, must have been the horrors of the war going on around them; with the battle of Britain over their heads not to mention the many bombing raids both direct on the Dover area and bombers flying over to other parts of the country? And then there were the flying bombs (doodlebugs) I remember my mother (she lived in Cheriton) telling me about the feeling you had in hearing them coming over and then when the engine cut out you knew they were coming down and anticipating where?

1944

The 1944 meeting was much longer and rather bizarrely it started with a very long discussion on a letter received from the Rural District Council, with details of changes they wanted to make to the way that local government operates. There were no details of what was being proposed but there was a unanimous vote against it and a letter sent stating that this change should not take place and every available support given to the present form of local government.

They then turned to Post War Planning especially in regard to the need for houses immediately after the war. There was a comment that the six houses in Youngs Place should be condemned as unfit for human habitation. It was suggested that they should be listed for demolition immediately after the war, and at least that number be replaced by building new houses. Parishioners returning from the armed forces should be able to settle down in houses in their own parish. It was our duty to ensure that no parishioners should have to emigrate to the town or elsewhere through a lack of good houses. The meeting unanimously carried a motion to promote this house-building plan.

The last item raised was by Mr A E Stokes, and identify an open rainwater tank at Sunny Side. As there were children living nearby it was a danger and needed a proper covering. The clerk was to contact the sanitary inspector to see that the owners got the tank covered.

On the subject of water I would like to return to the earlier story of the mains water supply for the villages. No other mention has been made in the annual meetings minutes since the 1939 record, when all the parishioners voted to accept the offer from the East Kent Water Company. I've been talking to George Stokes who has lived in the parish all his life initially in Black Swan Farm, West Hougham. He recalls they're farm had water connected in 1936 and particularly that the supply company's stopcock cover (that little 6 inch square lid) had 1936 on it. He was sure that the company changed the date on their box lids for the year they installed it. So this date difference is probably because a supply to a farm would have been considered more essential and was connected earlier than the rest of the village. We know there was the

“admiralty” water main running through the village it just wasn’t available for domestic supplies. It looks to me that most houses must have been connected sometime in 1939/40.

1945

At the annual parish meeting of 18th June 1945 and war was coming to an end and the agenda items imply this. The chairman, Mr Bromley, welcomed back Mr E Knott a member of the council having served two and a half years in the Far East.

The first agenda item was to discuss the position of the houses required for returning soldiers of the parish. A letter had been received from the Rural District Council (RDC) in answer to last year’s request for 16 houses to be built in Hougham in the near future. That request was considered a conservative estimate especially as more had now been lost in Church Hougham by enemy action (this was likely to be the Three Horse Shoes public house and adjacent cottages thought to have been damaged by a “doodle bug”). The number of houses now required was increased to 22. However the RDC had not included any houses in Hougham in the first year’s priority house-building plan. This obviously disappointed all at the meeting and a resolution was passed to ask 5 questions of the RDC, (a) the exact number of houses which had been allocated in the first year’s programme, (b) the names of the parishes to which these had been allocated too, (c) the number of houses which had been allocated to each individual parish, (d) for a definite explanation as to why houses had been allocated to any of the other parishes, (e) why had the RDC not considered it necessary to include any houses in Hougham in their first year’s programme? The resolution for the letter was proposed by Mrs Benfield and seconded by Mrs Post.

The next agenda item was regarding the method of electing councillors and it was approved that a secret ballot be used at the annual meeting instead of a show of hands.

Another item agreed was that the Polling Station’s location be moved from Church Hougham to West Hougham this, like the last item, was agreed unanimously.

One agenda item was considered best to be delayed until all hostilities had finished – that was in respect of victory celebrations!

The last item was to approach the RDC to see what could be done to get a water supply to Cherry Tree Farm and any other houses that had not be close enough to the main water pipe for an earlier connection.

1946

We start this month with the annual meeting in March 1946 at the start of post war Britain. It was a busy year as there were two other meetings in May and July. The March agenda included councillor elections, progress on housing, reports on roads and water in connection with rates and to consider the very poor bus service through the village plus of course the victory celebrations. The councillors elected were Mrs B Knott, Messrs AW Bromley, W Harvey, J Kingsmill, E Knott, F Bromley and C Souton. Mr Harvey gave a report on the new housing stating that nine houses would be built in West Hougham and thirteen in Church Hougham at total of 22 (which was the number requested

last year). He said that sites had been suggested and bills of quantities were being prepared ready for tenders. Mrs Roust asked if the council were aware that building 22 houses in the parish would mean a big increase in the rates and she felt it was only right that people should know this. Mr Harvey said he had had no indication from the RDC of such a costs and he thought that if this were the case they would have advised us before now? The clerk (*and he's never named in any minutes*) said generally, if any special rate were made in respect of a parish, then the district as a whole would meet the cost! The comment was made that whatever the position on the rates these houses were needed for the parish and last year we had all agreed to request that number! Mr Harvey was asked to go into this matter with the RDC.

The East Kent Road Car Co had replied to a request for a better bus service to the village with a refusal to make any improvements. It was considered that a petition be signed to take to the RDC asking for their help. A long discussion took place for suggestions of the most suitable bus times to ask for but there was no clear agreement so in the end they decided to ask for a similar service as was run prior to the war.

Victory celebrations were discussed next and it was agreed to be held in West Hougham, but true to past times a committee was set up to make all the arrangements. Mrs Roust also asked if the "pond" in the Street could be attended too as it was a nuisance. (*Not sure if this was a bad bit of road or a real pond*)?

The May meeting started with a report from the celebration committee, Mr Souton was chairman, the date was to be 8th June and a house-to-house collection had started to fund the event with accounts to be presented to the next meeting.

The July meeting attracted 29 named attendees, (perhaps it was a great celebration day and everyone was keen to be get out after the wartime restrictions)? The accounts for the celebration showed the house collections had raised £45-8s-3d, together with income from teas, sideshows and draws taking the total receipts for the day to £48-19s-1d. Expenditure amounted to £47-4s-6d leaving a balance of £1-14s-7d. Suggestions were then discussed on how to use this and it was agreed to spend it on a new parish flagstaff to replace the one that had recently broken. (I take it this use to be outside the village hall but does anyone remember it?)

The big party for the Victory Celebrations were not detailed any more so does anyone remember these?

I ended the article by saying that the excess funds from this celebration was used to replace the flagstaff and I questioned where it used to be and assumed it was outside the village hall? Well Roger Knott soon told me that it wasn't there but on the island of land just outside the Church gate in Church Hougham. In fact he remembers the old post being rotten and knocking Mr Rouse on the head whilst it was being taken down! All the different flags were kept in his parent house and he remembers having to paint the new pole with white paint. This island wasn't the roundabout that it is today but more an open piece of land with a dirt track around it bordered by trees and bushes. A local farmer Mr Bromley used to graze his cattle on it and as a boy Roger was often detailed to watch that they didn't wander off down the lane or into the

churchyard! Roger also remembers a metal flagstaff being bought many years later but he doesn't think it was ever used and there is no flagstaff there now. Wendy Stokes found a photograph from her history books with Major Evanson (from The Elms) standing at the flagstaff together with children from the school who always used to attend the Ascension Day service and a parade outside on the island.

1947

At the annual meeting in 1947 there were replies from the letters sent to the bus company and telephone company, the bus service appears not to have improved and the clerk was instructed to ask the Traffic Commissioners why the council had not been informed of the new licence granted to the East Kent Road Car Co? Another report stated the wall at the bottom of Plough Hill was still dangerous and should be reduced in height, Mr Harvey agreed to attend to it. Mr Harvey gave a report on the house-building programme but sadly no details were minuted. The clerk was asked to write to the RDC asking that Hougham should be included in their scheme for mains drainage - and particularly not later than Capel getting it! He was also asked to write to the clerk at Capel Parish Council asking for them to attend to the flooded areas in Satmar and Vine House Lanes (these being within Capel's parish boundary, as they still are). Another request was to go to Folkestone Gas Company asking for a gas supply to Hougham villages. The collection of (rubbish) bins was considered as poor and inadequate throughout the parish and a complaint was to go to the RDC. Mr Harvey was also asked to enquire of the RDC if a small rate could be provided to the parish clerk for the minor expenses incurred in the business of the parish?

1948

As you might have expected a few years after World War II, the annual parish meeting in 1948 was a long one. It started with a report from the parish council of the work carried out during the year, which was read by the clerk: - Meetings had taken place with other parish councils in the Rural District to discuss the setting up of an association of Rural District Councils for the area and these discussions were still on going. *(This association did get formed and we are still members of it today.)*

A main sewage scheme for the Rural District was being proposed however they stated that if Hougham was not included in this scheme then a letter of protest would be sent at once to the Minister of Health!

The telephone box had now been installed in Church Hougham. *(Hurrah action at last on this item – shame that in 2017 it's no longer viable!)*

A letter had been sent to the Dover Town Clerk about the dangerous condition of the road between the Elms Vale recreation ground and the Borough boundary on the Elms Vale Road.

General Evanson had explained to the parish council the relationship of the Parish Hall to the Parish. *(If you are not aware it was General Evanson who'd had the hall built in West Hougham "for Church and Parish use" see the plaque in the hall for details.)* He gave a summary of the Trust Deed governing the ownership and purpose of the hall. He had suggested that a committee be appointed by the Parish Council and the Parochial Church

Council to help find the necessary funds for the upkeep and improvement of the hall. This was to help Mr Kingsmill, acting as general manager for the trustees, in the care of the hall. The report said that this committee had since been formed and a summary of the Trust Deed had been entered in the Parish Council minute book.

The building of new houses in West Hougham has been postponed in accordance with the Government's plan to finish all houses already begun before starting on any others!

An application to the Rating Authority for £6 was made for parish council expenses that year; being £4 for the telephone box in Church Hougham; £1 subscription to the Kent Association of Parish Councils and £1 for postage, stationary and other incidental expenses. *(Obviously at that time there was no parish precept levied for such expenses as there is now.)*

The divisional surveyor has promised that the Satmar Lane flooding shall be dealt with as soon as labour is available! *(I have to comment here, as it seems we are still waiting for this labour to be available in 2017!)*

It was reported that the eight Council houses erected at Church Hougham are all occupied. *(This is interesting as there are nine council houses all looking from the same vantage in Church Hougham so I wonder if anyone remembers when the ninth one was built?)*

A notice had been received from the Dover Rural District office giving arrangements of places and times for reporting Births, Deaths and Marriages. *(This would appear to be the start of the present system of recording these by the District Councils. I'm guessing but was it that these were only recorded previously in Church records, can anyone confirm this?)*

A by-pass (or now called a passing place) for vehicles was being made on the road between the School and Elms Farm near the hop garden. *(This one puzzled me at first, what hop garden, the road must be Stonyway Lane but it appears hops were grown in the adjacent field near the farm and the field became know as the hop garden).*

A short account of the parish council proceedings was to be sent to the "Dover Express". The report of the parish council's year finished stating that the parish council clerk, Mr C Souton, had resigned and had been succeeded by Mr Clack, thanks went to Mr Souton for his long and valuable service. *(At last - this is the first reference that I have seen in all the minutes as to who the parish clerk had been. The handwriting obviously changed over the years and Mr Souton distinctive handwriting started in April 1939 with April 1947 being his last).*

The general meeting continued with a request that Mr Harvey (the RDC rep) seeks an explanation from the RDC in connection with a rate put on the whole Rural District area for the charge of £200 for three months electricity use at the Nissen huts in St Margarets (this was in view of the possible rates coming from the building of council houses in West Hougham) also to find out the cost for each of the new council houses at Church Hougham, particularly for the installation of water, electricity, drainage, fencing and footpaths which appeared to be above the accepted tender-price as published in the press? In addition the RDC was to be asked for quicker emptying of the cesspool tanks at Hougham drawing attention to the fact that Mr B Stokes had offered a

suitable dumping place close at hand, and to the fact that two men can do the work and not three as employed some times! Also to make a complaint from Mr Stokes that he had asked that his cesspool be emptied and this had not been done although the tanker had been taken across his land for the emptying of two neighbouring cesspools!

They decided to ask the Rural District office whether the Parish Council may be supplied with copies of the minutes of the RDC meetings? Another letter was to be sent to inform the RDC that it was not the wish of the Parish that the Camp at West Hougham should remain unoccupied when so many people are wanting homes, and that the transport difficulties are not too great, as is shown by the fact that several people living in West Hougham work in Dover: the Parish Council will gladly meet representative of the RDC to discuss the matter.

(If you don't know of the "Camp" site being discussed, it is the site name used where part of the army were billeted during the war at the North Western end of West Hougham now used as the skip site and a building materials yard. These prefabricated buildings were still there after the war).

(This last report was written in the August 2017 Newsletter further history will be added over the next few months.)