



Notes from the Minutes
of the Parish Council
of Harefield.
1895 to 1910

M. Evans



The first Parish meeting was held in December 1894, to elect nine councillors for the Parish Council.

This was a secular body although the Vicar became Chairman. At a meeting the following year the Parish books and their safety were discussed, and Captain Tarleton promised an iron chest. The Enclosure Award Map was to be kept at Mr. C.J. Filkins' house and "not moved without permission from the Council." Also one of the keys of the chest was to be deposited with the treasurer, Mr. Woodbridge.

Mr. Webster, formerly of the Grove, wrote suggesting Poors Land near the Common to provide allotments, and this was accepted. The Common was to be levelled, and a petition was signed objecting to the new byelaws.

The following year Mr. Kinross was elected Surveyor of Highways. It was decided to level Hill End Common using gravel from the public gravel pit on Watts Common.

In June there was a rowdy meeting when George Brown offended the Vicar,

who left the chair. Later, G.R. and H.R. Brown both resigned "because of the death of their father." Mr. Herbert Ewer and Mr. J.H. Nicholas were appointed. £5 was spent clearing Green Lane of "rubbishing bushes." It was at last decided to accept telephones in the village, provided a public call office was built.

In 1897 it was decided to "beat the bounds" on May 24th. The question of poles carrying telephone wires came up again, and the Company was told to put their cables underground. In the end, of course, the Council accepted the poles, for the usual rental.

There was danger in 1898 to children playing on Hill End Green because W. Nicholls was using it for turning his carts. There arose a question about the Village Green and "in whom it is vested." The answer was that "the Enclosure Award is the only document." The Council was told to pay jurors 1/- a day if they applied. The new byelaws on the Green were adopted. The

Clerk was to see that people using the Green cleared their litter, and that no-one camped there on Good Friday or any Sunday. And only sheep and goats could graze.

The Council opposed the supply of electric light. Then the Telephone Company put poles across the Green. These had to be removed.

Pinner Gas Company cut up the footpath from Crossway to the Memorial Hall when laying mains. Mr. Bull, Captain Tarleton's fireman in charge of his private fire-engine, was asked to test the hydrants once a quarter, payment to be £1 per year. This led to complaints by Rickmansworth Water Company about interference. Following the Coronation Bonfire, Mr. Collett suffered a fire which was put out by Mr. Bull. He complained of poor water pressure. The Water Company expected a man to run to Rickmansworth for their fire engine, instead of using Capt. Tarleton's. They then threatened to charge £30 a year for laying water on to the Breakspear Arms.

Harefield joined with Yiewsley in a complaint about charges.

A cricket match was played on the Green, said a Councillor, "by people who came from outside the Parish, which ought to be put a stop to." It happened again the following year.

In 1905 a new Elementary School was to be built, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres was bought by the M.C.C. from Mr. Vernon for £750. In 1906 several of the footbridges were widened to allow for prams. This year the County Rate net annual value was £14158; agricultural land £4641, buildings etc. £9517.

A vote to pay the Clerk 50/- plus 5% for collecting a special rate was not carried unanimously, and Mr. Filkins resigned as Clerk and Assistant Overseer. The following year he died.

In 1908 the disagreement with the Water Co. continued, and ultimately a telephone connection was made for summoning the fire-engine. This cost the Village £16 a

year. Capt. Tarleton continued to complain, and apparently he was not re-elected.

Mr. W. Brock was elected Clerk at £60 a year. He had to make and collect rates, valuation lists, attend Assessment Committee meetings and carry out duties under the Poor Law Board; collect rents, deal with charities, as well as being Clerk to the Council.

New seats were bought for the Green for £8.5s. The Parish asked the R.D.C. to enforce the 10 m.p.h. limit "owing to the dangerous pace at which motor cars and motor cycles travel through Harefield."

The Minute Book was written in beautiful copperplate handwriting, and contains details of Harefield's ancient charities, the earliest being 1622 - a sum of £40 given by Mr. Ashby. In 1664 a further £100 was added by Mrs. Mary Ashby. In 1637 Alice, Countess of Derby left £5 a year for each of 6 aged almswomen. Solomon Burberry in 1697 left land. Mrs. Williams in 1775 specified half a quarter loaf a week from March to September, and

two half-quartern loaves from September to March, to each old woman in the almshouses. In 1858 Henry Goodman arranged for distribution of plums, flour and beer to the Poor each Christmas, and in 1868 Mr. Ashford left money for clothing, food and fuel.

