

THE WEEDON HISTORY GROUP

PRESENTS

‘THE NUISANCES OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS IN HARDWICK & WEEDON 1890s – 1940s.’

**11th November 2011
Weedon Methodist Chapel
7 for 7.30pm**

Light Refreshments.

Raffle

**Proceeds to be shared between
the Methodist Church, Weedon
and St Mary’s Church, Hardwick.**

**Researched and written by Julie Gibbs
with the help of the cast.**

Poster and ‘meat’ by Clare Macdonald.

CAST

Introduction	Peggy Sidebotham
Typical Parish Councillor	Ralph Followell
Typical agricultural labourer's wife	Judy Nagele
Inspector of Nuisances	Stephen Sidebotham
Joseph Watkins, farmer & landlord	Mike Nagele
Medical Officer	Andrew Shaw
William Wood, Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council	Ralph Followell
Rev. Hervey, Hardwick Parish Councillor	Stephen Sidebotham
Hardwick Parish Councillor	Judy Nagele
Mr Bryant, Rat Advisor to BCC	Mike Nagele

Interval

William Wood, Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council	Ralph Followell
Rev. Hervey, Hardwick Parish Councillor	Stephen Sidebotham
Hardwick Parish Councillor	Judy Nagele
Aylesbury Rural District Councillor	Mike Nagele
Florence Brandon, tenant	Peggy Sidebotham
Sanitary Inspector	Andrew Shaw
Weedon Parish Councillor	Judy Nagele
Rev. Walton, Rector of Hardwick	Stephen Sidebotham
Mrs. Harding, tenant	Judy Nagele
George Sear, son of landlord	Andrew Shaw
Mr. Brown, butcher of Whitchurch	Mike Nagele
Sanitary Inspector	Andrew Shaw
Florence Brandon	Peggy Sidebotham
Weedon Parish Councillor	Ralph Followell
Chairman of the Special Meeting of the Weedon Parish Council	Mike Nagele
Mr. Thatcher of the Five Elms	Mike Moore
Summary by villager	Peggy Sidebotham

YEAR	POPULATION TOTALS	
	HARDWICK	WEEDON
1891	183	420
1901	167	325
1911	167	332
1921	167	325
1931	144	282
1941		
1951	182	318
2001	314	388

EXTRACTS FROM AYLESBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL –
SANITARY INSPECTOR REPORTS 1930s – 1940s

January 1934 - PROVIDENCE PLACE, WEEDON – some of the 12 cottages in bad state of repair and 6 new pail closets needed. January 1937 well water not fit for drinking. August 1937 mains water laid on. Work delayed by death of owner in 1935 and the refusal of the executors to spend money on the cottages, but was eventually completed by November 1937.

March 1934 – TWO COTTAGES IN NORTHCROFT, WEEDON – not capable of being repaired at a reasonable cost by the owner, Mr. Goss. Both let at £5 per annum to Mrs. Simons and Mr. and Mrs. Burrell. Demolished by October 1934.

May/August 1934 - WOODEN BUILDING ON PIERS ADJACENT TO WHEATSHEAF INN – not fit for occupation but may be used by the local sports club as a Club Room or as an occasional bedroom in the event of cyclists wishing to stay there for the weekend. April 1943 – occupied by a Mr. Wilson, the new tenant of the Wheatsheaf asked for the Council’s assistance to evict him.

October 1938 - FIVE ELMS DRAINAGE – Aylesbury Brewery Company wish to convert an earth closet to a water closet and build 2 more WCs, to drain into a cesspool to be installed in the coal barn. Not approved as road drain not adapted for receiving WC sewage.

September 1939 - THREE COTTAGES BY HARDWICK CHURCH (Overby) - drainage consists of old clay pipes which run underneath the neighbouring property (Pear Tree) causing dampness therein. The owner of the 3 cottages is awaiting Lord Cottesloe’s permission to lay drainage in one of his fields as there is no land belonging to the cottages. Mr. Hasberry, the neighbour, makes regular complaints. Work commenced May 1940.

July 1942 - HARDWICK WATER SUPPLY UNFIT FOR DRINKING due to contamination by dung trodden into the water by cattle in the field where the spring rises. A request by the Bucks Agricultural Executive Committee to use Manor Farm as a hostel for the Women’s Land Army should help in getting a main supply for the village. April 1943 a draft provisional order approved for supply of water by Bucks Water Company.

**The Nuisances of the Good Old Days.
Hardwick & Weedon.
1890s – 1940s**

Narrator - Welcome to the ‘Nuisances of the good old days in Hardwick and Weedon - the 1890s to 1940s.’

Ah, the good old days, when both villages had a post office and a shopkeeper or two. In addition, Hardwick had a boot maker and Weedon a tailor, baker, wheelwright, blacksmith, builder and a carrier.

Milk, supplied by local farmers, was carried around the village in 5 gallon buckets, two on a yoke across the shoulders, until the 1950s. Many people kept a pig, which once fattened could be slaughtered at the Weedon shop during the weekly visit of the slaughter man from Aylesbury.

Rowsham Brewery produced ‘Small Beer’ especially recommended for farmers. Rumour has it that you could drink a gallon and still walk in a straight line! The Five Elms was known for its ‘fighting beer’ and the Wheatsheaf, sold by the Aylesbury Brewery Company, in 1961, for its ‘talking beer.’

While there were plenty of carts on the road in the early 1920s, there were only 5 cars in Weedon – for those interested, an Overland Whippet, owned by Tom Rolls the grocer, a two-seater bull nosed Morris owned by Joseph Paine at Weedon Lodge, a Trojan belonging to Colonel Houghton at the Cedars and a Buick and a Citroen, to Miss Heap at the Lilies. The brass band, the cricket teams all add to the picture. No doubt we could continue to reminisce.

But you have to remember that in the 1890s, the countryside was still in the grip of an agricultural depression that started in the 1870s. With the improvements in transport it was cheaper for grain to be imported from America and Russia, beef from Argentina and fruit from the continent. Farms were difficult to let, wheat prices remained low and agricultural labourer’s wages continued to fall. Life in the country was not easy.

If you did not work on the land or as an indoor servant, there were few alternative occupations. Many had to make their life elsewhere, in Aylesbury, in the industrial north or Canada or Australia for example. The population figures collected every ten years reveal that there was a mass exodus from the countryside during this period. The population of Hardwick dropped from 183 in 1891 to 144 in 1931 and in Weedon from 420 to 282. The biggest drops were between the years 1891 to 1901 and 1921 to 1931. (See programme or pinned up at back.). In 1911, Vernon

Brittain lived with his mother in the 26 roomed Lilies. They employed 8 servants, none of whom were from Buckinghamshire, let alone Hardwick or Weedon.

The labouring families that stayed were forced to live in the old cottages, such as those found in Stockaway, East End and Northcroft, in Weedon and near the church and in Lower Road in Hardwick. In 1911, 54 out of the 92 properties in Weedon had fewer than 5 rooms and in Hardwick 25 out of 47 properties. The cottages were owned or rented by local tradesmen or farmers who let them at low or no rents to subsidize low wages or by absentee landlords who had bought or inherited property in the parish.

Few houses had their own water supply and the disposal of waste was a constant concern. You will be pleased to know however, that the Aylesbury Rural District Council and the Parish Councils of Hardwick and Weedon, all established in 1894/5, did their best to improve the lives of all the inhabitants, subject to cost of course. Much of the material tonight comes from their records, which unfortunately do not always overlap and those for Weedon have not survived, prior to 1928. You will have a chance to meet some typical councillors, officials, landlords and tenants. I will now hand over to a parish councillor of the late 1890s.

Typical Parish Councillor -Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Well, although we have many issues to deal with, the supply of water was a priority. Where are the Hardwick residents? Can you remember a couple of years ago when there were few if any communal wells and the difficulty we had maintaining a sufficient supply of water despite the number of springs. The old drains were made of common agricultural clay and the water very often ran away to waste. In 1897, we decided to lay 360 yards of galvanized iron pipe the whole length of the field called Portway, as we considered that this would provide plenty of water for the whole of the parish. What about the expense you ask? Fortunately the landowners agreed to pay for the work. This year, 1898, we extended the pipe work with stopcocks where necessary for the better regulation of the water supply. I hope that you appreciate our efforts.

One of the first things that Weedon Parish Council did was to apply to the District Council to have a pump fitted to the parish well, known as Parrott's and repair gratings to certain cesspools.

Of equally pressing concern is the condition of the labourers housing. A visit to a typical labourers' cottage at East End, Weedon, will illustrate how dire the situation is. It is now April 1899.

Typical Agriculture Labourer's wife - You have picked a rather bad day to visit as I'm waiting for my landlord, Joseph Watkins, and the Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. James Hill, to arrive. Some of you will know Joseph Watkins; he's often to be seen walking around the village in his flowery waist coat, corded trousers, light hobnail boots, a frock tail jacket and a billycock hat otherwise known as a bowler. He always has apples in his pockets for the children, but will he repair my cottage? No! What with the drains, the roof and the privy, I don't know how we have survived this winter or the last.

Inspector of Nuisances - Good morning, I am James Hill, the Inspector of Nuisances. I am employed by Aylesbury Rural District Council to investigate nuisances, as the title suggests. What a job, I have to inspect village water supplies, drains, unsanitary or dilapidated houses, pigsties, water closets, deal with overcrowding, and fumigate and disinfect houses as directed by the Medical Officer. I also check plans for new houses, of which there are many, and make sure that they are built in accordance with the District Councils Bylaws. I have asked several times for an assistant but the most the council will do is give me an additional £5. My salary of £154 per annum must sound very good to the many of you who have no hope of earning anywhere near that much but I doubt that any of you would have the stomach to do my job.

I visit this parish often and most of you do seem very familiar. The most irritating complaints are those made by the Thames Conservancy about the poor state of the roadside drains and defective or missing drain filters which allow slop water or worse into a ditch joining the Thame. But that's not the reason for my visit today. I have come to meet Mr. Watkins, a landlord, to discuss the condition of some of the cottages he let's and I must say, I have every sympathy with the tenants.

Good morning, my good woman. May I come in and wait for Mr. Watkins. No doubt he will be late as usual.

Joseph Watkins - Good morning everyone. I live in the old thatched farmhouse opposite the chapel and my 100 acres keeps me very busy. I rent a number of cottages from New College and let them out. Why I bother I do not know as I'm responsible for their condition which I consider to be perfectly acceptable but the tenants are always complaining about something. There is one tenant in particular, you just cannot please, and I'm sure it's because of her that I have been summoned to a meeting with Mr. Hill at her cottage in East End.

Good day to you both. I hope that I haven't kept you waiting. How can I help you?

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - Well Mr. Watkins, we meet again. How many times would you say that I have met you to discuss the state of this and other cottages that you let?

Joseph Watkins - Once or twice, I seem to remember.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - At least four and each time I have pointed out what requires doing and each time you have promised to do the work. However, it looks to me as if very little has been done. How can you let this poor woman and others live in such terrible conditions? Now, if you remember, the first notice requiring you to abate this nuisance was served as long ago as 23 July 1898, almost a year ago, and it specified that the work had to be done in 21 days. Is that not correct?

Joseph Watkins - Possibly.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - Last November, I was forced to report to the District Council that the five cottages, occupied by George Todd and others, including this dear lady, had defective drainage and were in an unsanitary condition. There was no proper privy accommodation, the roofs were unsound, whilst some of the walls were unsafe and in a filthy condition. I do not believe anything has been done for years. You also let two other cottages in East End, occupied by Stephen Griffin and John Turner, which are just as dilapidated. The case was adjourned for one month to allow time for the defects to be put right, by you, the agent.

Ladies and gentleman you will not be surprised to learn that in February, Mr. Watkins, was charged at the Petty Sessions yet again for failing to do the work. And what was your defence? That you had started but that the frost stopped you from completing it!

Joseph Watkins - It was a very bad frost this winter past. I remember it well. It killed all of my neighbours' vegetables.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - Well never mind that, you were given another month, but again no work was done. This brings us to the Petty Sessions in March. You didn't bother to appear on the two previous occasions, but you did at this one.

Joseph Watkins - I was far too busy to attend the earlier sessions but I had to in March, as I thought your requirements were totally unreasonable. You wanted me to carry a drain up hill and empty it into a tank 15 or 16 feet

deep

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - Look, I accept that you have recently drained 3 cottages into a cesspool on Mr. Tomes land, that is Kirby's, but there is still no drain to the other 2 cottages, which in all other respects are in the same condition as when the notice was first served.

Joseph Watkins - There is no need for a new drain as there is an old main into which the cottages drain; and that is properly trapped.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - I beg to differ!

Joseph Watkins - I'll have you know that this drain has been properly trapped for 20 years. I'm willing to do anything reasonable. The roofs were sound until the last high winds, and it did not rain in. There are earth closets to the cottages, the same as there are to scores of others in the village, but I can not answer for them being emptied at the proper times. *Look knowingly at Judy*

Typical Agriculture Labourer's wife - Are you suggesting that I do not empty my closet regularly? How do you think my vegetables grow so well? (To the audience) You can come and see for yourself if you like, although on second thoughts maybe not. I'm not going to tell you whether it's just a hole in the ground, or whether it's lined or has a bucket or whether there is one seat or two but I can tell you that I add soil to it regularly, which reduces the smell and the resultant mixture works wonders on the allotment!

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - Let's continue, I have other nuisances to sort out, not just the ones of your making. The barn in which one of the closets is placed is in an unsafe state, the wall being propped up.

Joseph Watkins - Look, I thought it would be sufficient to give the tenants a little lime and a brush, so that they might do the interior when they thought fit. I did not know the wall was in a dangerous state. I'm sure that it's alright really, there's just a knack to opening the door, that's all.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - The District Council has a duty to make sure properties are kept in a sanitary manner and to take proceedings where necessary. There are children living in these cottages

and it is absolutely essential that something be done. If only you had left it in the hands of the builder whom you entrusted with the work originally, as you promised the Chairman at the March Petty Session. All would have been done by now. You were given another 6 weeks to do the work.

Joseph Watkins - Would you believe it; I had to pay costs of 8s!

Inspector of Nuisance, Mr. Hill - You are probably not surprised by now to hear that nothing was done during the 6 weeks and what explanation did you give to the Chairman at the Petty sessions in April?

Joseph Watkins - I told him the truth, I could not get anyone to do the thatching, for the man that usually undertakes the work in the neighbourhood, has been ill. As far as the drains are concerned, I was told that I was not supposed to disconnect my drains from the main. Anyway, I did not know what I was supposed to do.

Inspector of Nuisance, Mr. Hill - I despair. I have met you several times at the premises and pointed out exactly what had to be done. Your case was adjourned for yet another 4 weeks!

Joseph Watkins - Another 8s to pay.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - If the work is not done now, another summons will be issued and a penalty claimed for every day after the expiration of the time stated. Well ladies and gentlemen; do you think any work will be done? Yes or no? Let's see.

At the Aylesbury Petty Sessions in June, which Mr. Watkins did not attend, I reported that nothing had been done to improve the drains and only a little thatching. The court inflicted £1 fine and 8s 6d costs or if unpaid, 10 days imprisonment, and endorsed the order for the Council to carry out the work. I would not recommend living in one of Mr. Watkins cottages and I pity anybody who is forced to do so. The Bucks Herald called him the 'Obstinate Defendant', that's putting it mildly, to say the least!

Joseph Watkins - I don't know, these officials are always trying to take money from hardworking men like myself. If I didn't rent out cottages like these, where else would the labourers live? I thought I was doing them a good turn. They can't afford anything better. That reminds me, I've bought for £53, the two cottages that Stephen Griffin and John Turner lived in, which I used to rent from New College for £26 per year. I can envisage a nice brick and tile house standing on that site one day, eventually painted

white, with a very genteel family called Nagele living in it. In the meantime, if anyone is looking to rent a very reasonably priced cottage do let me know.

Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Hill - On a different matter entirely but still of great importance, the District Council, in an attempt to improve the drainage in Weedon, has asked me to prepare two schemes for their consideration. The first would separate the sewage matter from the storm water, which is what Councillor Rolls has always advocated, and would cost about £145; the second would take the drain onto the allotments and empty into a catch pit, for about £80.

Councillor Kingham, a farmer on the Buckingham Road, favoured the cheaper scheme, owing to the fact that Weedon being situated on a hill, the drains would soon clear after a storm, although he still thought it absurd to spend so much money just to drain a few cottages! Apparently five voted for the second scheme and one against. The latter not wishing to burden a small parish with the heavy expense that this would entail. As you can see my work is very varied.

While I am here, I might as well fumigate and disinfect the bedding of a house in Weedon, after a case of typhoid fever, as directed by Dr Morrison, the Medical Officer. There have been 4 cases this past year. You will be pleased to know that all are progressing favourably. I met the medical attendant and Dr Morrison on two occasions and after careful consideration we were unable to find any specific cause of complaint. If you are interested, my annual report, dated March 1900, is pinned up at the back.

Talking of the Medical Officer, he has just arrived to give you a summary of his findings for the general area, for the years 1908 – 1919. His report will show that Hardwick and Weedon are not alone in having to find solutions to the issues identified.

Medical Officer 1908 – 1919 - Good evening. I'll get straight on with my report.

Water - In rural districts the water supply is generally derived from the shallow wells or from obviously contaminated sources- the Rural District of Aylesbury seems to be fortunate in having a good supply whilst Newport Pagnell, Wing and Winslow are particularly unfortunate. It is difficult to obtain recognition of the dangers of using polluted water and any action taken to improve the supply seems to meet with active

opposition from those who believe they have never been injured by drinking sewage and that they will continue to enjoy immunity.

In the Aylesbury rural district, the water is supplied partly from the Chiltern Hills Water Company and partly from spring wells from the surrounding hills. The water supplies have been well maintained.

A new drainage system has been adopted at Weedon and it is proposed to deal with effluent on the land.

Housing - For rural housing, the crucial problem is of rent and wages. The rents that agricultural labourers can pay are not in proportion to the building costs. Therefore, it is necessary to either increase the means of one or reduce the cost of the other. Common rents are 6d to 1s 6d for cottages owned by farmers with the rent acting as a grant-in-aid of wages. A new build cottage needs a rent of 2s 9d or 3s per week, beyond the agricultural labourer but affordable by the village artisans and skilled labourers. If the present building by-laws regarding material or mode of construction were relaxed it would be cheaper to build agricultural labourers cottages.

In 1911, in the Aylesbury Rural District, 58 houses were inspected, 40 were reported as unfit for habitation, 28 were repaired, and the remaining cases are in hand. Many have a bad appearance but are clean and comfortable inside.

Milk supply - A large supply of milk throughout the district is sent to the Anglo-Swiss Milk factory in Aylesbury. You will be pleased to know that they employ an inspector to visit all dairies which send milk to their factories.

Scavenging - Aylesbury refuse is collected once a week by the council cart. No special type of moveable ashbin is provided with a cover; therefore one finds old baths, boxes and pails placed on footpaths, with the result that refuse is blown all over the roads. The owner of the property should be made to provide a sanitary covered bin.

Does anyone live in Stewkley? No? Then you are fortunate indeed.

Stewkley is one of the least sanitary of the larger villages in the county. The ashbins are allowed to accumulate all summer in festering heaps so that when the autumnal rains set in, the flints sink into the soil and the gases percolate through the floors of the houses, where the floors are of brick and stone laid on mud. The closets are bad. In so many cases they are

simply holes dug in the ground, without bricks or lining of any kind. There are still fowls, pigs and cows kept in confined places close to the houses. These latter should be cleared away. The closets (and there should be one to every cottage) must have properly bricked and cemented pits. In some cases earth closets must be adopted by the advice of the Sanitary Inspector. A proper system of scavenging should be undertaken. The labouring man has not time to empty the closets and ash heaps regularly and moreover he has nowhere to put the refuse or any means to convey it away, and he is an irresponsible being whom one can not get at. A proper scavenger, who is paid to do his duty, can be punished if he neglects it. The alternative is to have more water closets, which would entail proper flushing and a complete system of drainage that would have to be approved by Thames Conservancy, and we know what they are like. It would entail enormous expense, whereas my suggestion – indeed my urgent requisition – need not do so. The unsanitary condition which exists is comparable to living over a powder magazine with trains in every direction. It only requires a spark in the shape of a carelessly thrown match or an equally carelessly thrown germ to start the whole in a blaze. It may be some time coming, and the people may be as heedless as those living on the slopes of Vesuvius but the outbreak is as surely certain to come.

You can see that a great deal needs to be improved. Hardwick Parish Council has already made a start on improving the water supply as you have heard. Three Councillors are ready to update you on that and other matters. I'll hand over to them now.

Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council Mr. Wood, farmer May 1919 -
Good evening. Welcome to the Hardwick Parish Council meeting starting in 1919 and lasting a few years. I am William Wood, Chairman, and I farm at Manor House Farm. When we took office, the water was in a precarious state, the tanks were broken, the pipes silted up and water was running away on the surface. The wells from which we obtained our water were in a very unsatisfactory state and the Lower Well by the churchyard was unusable. The nozzle of the suction pipe of each of the pumps was touching the mud. The well opposite Mrs. Victor Todd's house was encrusted with a thick tangle of what looked like a heavy fishing net but proved to be a mass of roots from the tree in Mrs. Burrell's garden. A dray had to be obtained in order to disengage them – it's little wonder that the water was foul. We arranged for 3 wells to be cleaned and new lids to be put on 2 of them.

All the work was well executed by Arthur Thorne for £18 18s. The water was cloudy for a few weeks afterwards but was alright once the silt had cleared.

The morning following the remedial work, the upper well was filled but water was still running in the lower well up to late in the evening. The well however, that supplied the Manor House was entirely empty and was still so, the following day. More work is needed to improve the flow and the man to speak about the subject is my fellow Councillor, the Rev Hervey, who is very passionate about access to water for all.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council Rev Hervey - I am indeed; the subject is very close to my heart. I feel very concerned about the long distances that some of you have to go to get water. While every house above cottage status has its own water supply, the cottages, of which there are many as you know, are served by only 2 wells, necessitating a walk of 200 yards to get water.

I offered to pay for putting a well or standpipe opposite the new cottages built by New College, on the east side of the village, to bring water nearer to 6 more cottages; for a tank for the thatched cottages occupied by Messrs. Shepherd and Miller and another tank to meet the needs of those living between the church and the main road, 5 cottages in all. Unfortunately we were not able to supply the latter tank immediately as we could not find a pipe to tap into. The first part of the work was completed and my wife and I dedicated it to those who died in the war, amongst whom was our own much beloved son. It was not done without some conflict, one farmer refused access to his land where the Ox House Well stood and felt that as the owner of the thatched cottages it was a question for him to decide when they had a water supply and that he would provide it at his convenience! We managed to find a way round it.

I believe that it is necessary to avail ourselves of all the possible water and to make use of the overflow now running to waste in the village including at the Rectory, where there are three tanks or wells and at some of the farms. I continued to press for more schemes to be started.

I suggested that pipes be laid from the Lower Well direct to Manor House, the two new cottages belonging to New College, Mrs. Joseph Hughes property and to the front of the thatched cottages. This would avoid having to alternatively turn the water off to the Lower Well and the Ox House Well, in dry seasons, as happened in four consecutive months during the drought of 1918. Not only was this inconvenient but labour intensive. The work went ahead. An alteration to the pipes and an additional tank allows the Ox House Well to fill first, followed by the Lower Well. In this way a continuous flow of water is taken to both wells ensuring that all have their fair share of water. New College contributed to the scheme and possibly paid for it all. I can assure you that it will not be charged to the rates.

I could go on and on and do so in the meetings.

Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council Mr. Woods farmer -You can say that again! (Perhaps tapping table)You would think that there were no other issues to deal with.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council Rev Hervey - I've nearly finished. Just one more scheme. Who lives in one of the cottages between the churchyard and the main road? (Mrs. & and Mrs. Cranford - Stan & Alison Killick). I do not know which one of you goes to get the water but you do have a long way to go. It really looked as if the situation was hopeless. But you will be pleased to know that help is at hand. I've offered to pay for a 100-gallon tank, properly protected from frost, to be placed in the roadway leading from the main road to the lich- gate, against the wall and the gate leading into Mr. Dancer's backyard. (Sunnybanks). It would serve Mr. Dancer and the five cottages. Mr. Joseph Hughes, who owns the property concerned and some of the cottages, has offered to pay for the pipe extension to the tank and for a tap to be placed on the outside of his wall in the roadway leading to the church, for the use of all five cottages. This should be completed early 1921 and at no cost to the council. Now, I hope that you will enjoy using your tap.

Anyone interested in the details of all these scheme is free to read the parish council minutes. It is a wonderful story of branch pipes, taps, ball-cocks, turn- cocks, stop- cocks, screw plugs and conflict. By the beginning of 1922, there were only 2 cottages whose occupants have some distance to go to get water and these are beyond the councils help.

On a lighter note, I asked permission to make a quoit pitch on the upper green along the side of the road by the pond. I thought that it could be enjoyed by those of you whose cricketing days are over. I have been given permission as long as there are no injuries to children or passing traffic, so please do be as accurate as possible when throwing the rings!

Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council Mr. Woods farmer - Thank you Rev Hervey. The work has not been entirely cost free, as we have received a claim for £2 from a farmer in respect of a lamb that drowned in the tank in his field which was not properly protected when the new pipes were laid. We accepted liability but felt that he should have made the claim immediately and not 6 months after the event and that £1 would be more than sufficient. It was decided to meet the claim only if he persisted with it. He did and it was eventually paid in March 1920.

While as a farmer I understand how important water is to the running of a

farm, we felt obliged to write to Lord Cottesloe about the necessity of stopping the council's water running to waste in his yard at Manor Farm. We pointed out that the supply should be for the house only and that a ball-cock should be attached to the farm wall with a tap in the back kitchen in place of the open tank. He argued that the water was essential for the farm. The farm was on the market and the Council is determined to protect our rights in the interest of the inhabitants. We suggested 2 schemes to remedy the situation and as Lord Cottesloe declined to comment on either, we went for the one that we preferred. The overflow water is now used to raise the height of the water in the nearest well.

Now, where are the inhabitants of Hardwick? Can you please **stop** filling the ditches with rubbish and tins? If we were Germans we would make them into tin soldiers, but as we are English we leave them in the ditch! Those of you who own the ditches must clean them out. Please note that we are going to build a rough shed where the old village pound used to be and you must throw your tins and crocks in there. Mr. Cannon, builder of Whitchurch, has offered to cart the contents to his clay pits.

Hardwick Councillor (Jan 1921) - Rats, ladies and gentleman. How many of you are bothered by rats? Just the Hardwick villagers, just as I thought. I wonder what that says about you. Well not to worry. Bucks County Council has requested that an organized attack be made on the rats in the parish. Unfortunately, Mr. Woods, our Chairman, seems to be the only farmer present, we really need all the farmers here to discuss the subject properly but it can't be helped.

Now it gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Bryant, Rat Adviser to the Bucks County Council, who will tell us about the rat catching service he offers.

Mr. Bryant Rat Catcher - Well ladies and gentlemen you can rest assured that when you employ me and my men your rat problems will be a thing of the past. I can offer you two very good deals. I can either supply a rat catcher at £5 per farm or, and this is the one I perceive as being of exceptional value, I can tackle the whole parish, for the year, for £15. You won't do better than that.

Hardwick Councillor - Very interesting. Let's see, we have Manor Farm, Manor House Farm, Folly Farm, Mr. Victor and Mr. James Todd farms. What do you think ladies and gentlemen, £5 per farm or £15 for the year? I quite agree £15 for the year. And the good news is that Lord Cottesloe and all the farmers will contribute to the cost.

Mr. Bryant Rat Catcher - You will not regret your decision to instruct me. My man uses gas and ferrets, both essential for a good rat catcher and he will be with you very shortly. (Mike step to side)

Hardwick Councillor - How many rats do you think were killed, in one week alone, during the first visit of the rat catcher? Any ideas? 120! Obviously, we were very pleased, but we have not seen the man since and we were forced to write to Mr. Bryant to complain.

Mr. Bryant Rat Catcher - Unfortunately my best rat catcher is a reservist and has not yet been released from his duties, but don't you worry I'll get someone else for you as soon as possible. You can rely on Mr. Bryant.

Hardwick Councillor - I am beginning to have my doubts, but we will see. No one else arrived; time passed and the rats multiplied. We continued to complain to Mr. Bryant, after all, we had paid for a year's work. Mr. Bryant eventually came himself. But his visit was without notice and on market day with the result that all the farmers were from home. He only had gas with him and no ferrets. His visit was entirely useless as no rats were killed. We requested that he come on 3 consecutive days as the contract was nearly up and we had certainly not had our money's worth. We will not be renewing the contract with him after such poor service. We would like to take action against him but feel unable to do anything.

Let's forget the rats for a moment and have refreshments. We will continue with the meeting after the Interval and discuss the ever-pressing problem, the lack of housing.

INTERVAL

Chairman - Welcome back.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council **Rev Hervey** - Chairman, before we discuss housing, there is one matter that I must raise with you, to do with your usage of water at Manor House farm. The water diverted to the farm well is for the household consumption only as you very well know. There was never any question of it being used for other things. Your very considerable daily consumption of water to cool milk is affecting the supply to the Lower Well. You really should have consulted the Council first.

Chairman of Hardwick Parish Council Mr. Woods, farmer - The only reason that I have to use so much water is that due to the more stringent rules of the Milk Factory I have to exercise extra care in cooling the milk. Otherwise I wouldn't need to do so. As it is I need about 100 gallons daily. As far as I am aware there is never a shortage in the Lower Well and if there is I'm sure that it is not down to my usage but something else. Since you, as Clerk, first came to remonstrate with me, I have saved the water in tubs, so as to use it again.

Hardwick Councillor - Councillor Todd agreed that 100 gallons of water a day was a great quantity to use at such a time. The subject was discussed with great bitterness between the Chairman and Rev Hervey and was eventually dropped without being resolved. There is no need for you to hear it all. It was noted that only 60 to 80 gallons of water were actually used daily rather than the 100 first mentioned.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council Rev Hervey - As I will be leaving the parish shortly, I think it would be best if I resign my posts as Councillor and Clerk and Treasurer, here and now. You can appoint my successor at the next meeting!

Hardwick Councillor - Well, while the Chairman calms down I 'll continue. The Rev Hervey did leave Hardwick before the end of 1922. One thing I can say that since his resignation the meetings and minutes have been much shorter!

It has come to the notice of the Council that a new bath has been installed at the Yews, where Rev Hervey used to live. Yes, you heard correctly, a bath! To make matters worse the water has been connected from the parish supply. It was decided to write a 'friendly note' pointing out that in case of a shortage of water, the occupiers of the Yews must be prepared to exercise great care in its use and to dispense with it entirely if necessary. I hope that no-one here is thinking of doing the same. I really can't see the need myself. Housing. It is very annoying that one cottage has stood empty for 2 years but as it is now on the market we have no power to do anything about it.

As long ago as 1920, we wrote to the District Council asking when the 6 new houses that we had requested would be commenced, as we had already received applications from prospective tenants. We had given the Council long enough to reply, as they asked all parishes for an estimate of the numbers needed, back in 1918. We heard unofficially that the Council was considering a site alongside the parish churchyard, a most unsuitable position. The District Council persistently ignored all letters from us

concerning the housing question so we decided to take it further by complaining to the Ministry of Health. The reply was a long time coming. In July 1921, we were told that under the present decision of the Ministry, it would not be possible for the Council to put in hand a scheme for the parish. Meanwhile the housing problems continue.

It came to our attention that a cottage belonging to Lord Cottesloe, which had been empty for some time was let to a family from Whitchurch, who also work there. All applications for this cottage by inhabitants of Hardwick and Weedon had been refused. It turned out that the new occupier of Manor Farm did not require it for his own use and on receiving an application from Sir John Duthie of Whitchurch, allowed him to use it for one of his watchmen. We decided to write to Lord Cottesloe in protest, due to the inadequacy of housing in the village. Parishioners have a right to be considered first when a property becomes vacant. As Councillors we are all experiencing the sense of hardship felt by parishioners when a home, which many of them would happily have occupied, is let to a non-parishioner. On second thoughts, although we felt very strongly about the matter, we decided it was advisable to take no action.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council in 1924 -Would you believe, it is now 1924 and we are still waiting for the 6 houses that we asked the District Council for, a few years back? We have written again to the Council stating the urgent need in this parish and asking for information as to the best method of procuring them. We do not believe that we should have to undertake to build them ourselves. They replied that we must endeavor to build them by private enterprise. We complained again to the Ministry of Health. During the last few years several closing orders and demolition orders have been issued by the District Council on cottages in both Weedon and Hardwick. This has hardly helped the situation. Two of the condemned cottages in Weedon belonged to New College, Mr. Hook being the lessee.

Councillor for ARDC 1925 - I am a Councillor on Aylesbury Rural District Council. We have received a letter from the Ministry of Health with reference to the District Councils decision not to build houses in the parish of Hardwick. The Ministry has asked whether we are satisfied that there is no need for houses in that Parish and if this is not the case what are our reasons for not submitting any proposals? Well it's down to the cost of course but I'm not sure that that reason alone would satisfy the Ministry. We'll think of an excuse no doubt. Do Hardwick not realize that every village is in the same position and that what we do for one we will have to do for all the others.

However, it has been decided that now is the time for the Council to advertise in the local papers for quotations from builders, for the erection of 3 bedroom houses with a living-room and a scullery-kitchen, to ascertain if it would be economic to let the cottages at a rental of 5s weekly, inclusive of rates. Quotations for similar houses but with 2 bedrooms will also be requested.

Councillor on Hardwick Parish Council July & Oct 1925 - We were very upset at the dilatory attitude of the District Council and erroneous statement in their letter to the Ministry. We decided to send a deputation, consisting of the Rev. Walton and Mr. Thorne, to the Ministry to stress the acute need for more homes. The Ministry was very empathetic but although they have power to take over the provision of houses where the local authority neglects their duties they are extremely loth to do so. Councillor Todd, our representative on the District Council informed us that a contract for 100 houses has been approved and that Hardwick will get its fair share.

Councillor for ARDC - Both Hardwick and Weedon Parish Councils asked New College if they were willing to sell land for the erection of the new working men's cottages. The Bursar replied that they were willing to sell half an acre in Weedon, on the Aston Abbots Road, for the sum of £45, on condition that the land was fenced with a substantial stock-proof fence before any building work commenced. In the event of a well being dug, the council must deepen the existing well to the New College cottages on the corner of East End, if that supply was affected. Unfortunately, they refused to sell the suggested site in Hardwick but offered an alternative, which we agreed to purchase. The District Council felt that four, two-bedroom houses with an outside privy would suffice for each village and these were erected in both villages, late 1926/early 1927.

To illustrate the need for housing we now meet Mrs. Florence Brandon of Weedon.

Mrs. Florence Brandon 1926 - I am so worried. We have received a Notice to Quit from the District Council. I had to ask someone to explain what it meant. Apparently, it's an Informal Notice telling us we have to leave our home and if we don't, a Statutory Notice will be served. Why you ask? That's what I said.

My family and I live in one of the old thatched cottages in Stockaway. There is a row of 4, right at the end on the left-hand side. Three are thatched and the last one tiled. They are all owned by a Mr. James Sear, of Bourne End. I live with my husband Frank, our son who's 21, a daughter of 16, a

son of 14, a daughter of 7 and a son of 5, so that's seven of us. It is a bit overcrowded as it has just one bedroom up the ladder, but we manage. Unfortunately, it seems our being there is regarded as a nuisance, one which has to be abated. It is not a nuisance to us, so why does it matter to anyone else? Where are we meant to go? We can't afford higher rents. Frank does gardening as and when he can get the work. We have already moved from a 4-roomed cottage in Main Street. Frank and I come from Weston Turville originally and our eldest son was born in Surrey but I don't suppose things would be better there.

Frank wrote to the Rural District Council in 1921 asking whether they could take one of the houses at Weedon under special powers to allow us to occupy it. They decided that it was not a case in which they could take any action.

After a month of worrying, you will be pleased to know that we have abated the nuisance. Yes, we have arranged for our eldest son to sleep in the living room and our eldest daughter is going to sleep away from home. We will be allowed to stay. I am so relieved.

I have even better news; we are going to be one of the first tenants in the new Working Men's cottages.

Councillor for ARDC - The District Council continued to send the Inspector of Nuisances or Sanitary Inspector as he is now called, to Hardwick and Weedon to deal with drains and housing. The Inspector wishes to give a brief summary of his visits during the years 1926 – 1929. I'll hand over to him now.

Sanitary Surveyor May 1926 - Good evening. I recently had to visit the 12 cottages, known as Providence Place, in Weedon, after a scarlet fever case. I found that the drain from the cottages discharged into a sewer and that the roadside gullies in the village were untrapped. I've suggested that they should be trapped by the Highway Surveyor.

Jan 1927 It wasn't long before I was back in the area to inspect 2 old cottages near the church at Hardwick, one of which is empty and the other occupied by Mr. Peach. The empty cottage is in a very bad condition and quite unsuitable for human habitation and I consider that in order to prevent it being occupied before it is made habitable, a Closing Order should be made. The cottage occupied by Mr. Peach is not so bad. The owner, a Mr. R Endicott, of Surbiton, is a working man who can not afford to do the necessary repairs and in view of the fact that the property might be sold, I suggested that a Statutory Notice should be served under Section 3 of the Housing Act and my recommendation was accepted. Just be warned if you are looking for somewhere to rent, avoid the cottages near the church.

Feb 1927 I have received an application from Mr. H Welch, builder of Hardwick, with regard to the repairs to a cottage occupied by Mr. R Rickard. The cottage is structurally good but requires considerable work to make it into a very good home. The only disadvantage is that there is no way to dispose of the sewage on the premises as there is no ground attached to the house. The present drainage from the sink is discharged into the drain or gully on the roadside and this road drain appears to have no definite outfall but terminates in a ditch with a soak away near the main road. Mr. Welch asked if he purchased, whether the council would allow him to discharge the drainage from the cottage into the roadside drain. It was decided to allow this application under the exceptional circumstances.

Now some general matters that you need to be aware of **1928**

My attention has been drawn by Aylesbury Town Council to the dirty condition of the milk produced from premises in the Rural District as revealed by ten samples of milk taken in the Borough since 1st January 1928. This means that I will have to visit all the farms again. More work.

Scavenging tenders – Larger villages such as Haddenham contract out the scavenging, but it can be costly. For example Mr. Jackman, the Scavenger, charges £2 10s per day for 4 men and 4 horses with two sewerage vans, 14s 6d per day for one man and one horse with a cart, and 11s per day for one man and one horse with a hardware refuse cart. Villages such as Weedon have to make their own arrangements. Hardwick have already arranged for the disposal of tins and bottles as you have heard. We will now go to a meeting at Weedon where the Council is discussing this very matter.

Weedon Parish Council Councillor - Owing to the vast collection of tins and bottles building up in the village it was decided to provide a dump in which to deposit these articles. The trustees of the allotments gave permission for 3 poles in the allotment field to be used for this purpose. We just needed to find a willing volunteer to give up a small part of their allotment. The first person asked said no, but Mrs. Sidney Ming kindly agreed for the Council to use 3 poles of her plot. I'm sad to say however, it wasn't long before you took advantage of this area by throwing vegetable matter in as well and we have had to erect a Notice Board saying 'Strictly to be used for the depositing of tins and bottles only', so please take note. Can you also make sure that you distribute the bottles evenly rather than piling them up at the front of the dump, wasting all the space behind. It's down to pure laziness I'm sure.

We have had to erect yet another notice board forbidding persons to throw rubbish into the pond, it's an ongoing problem. However I am very pleased with your efforts in cleaning it, especially as it was all by voluntary labour. (1928) The Hardwick residents seem even worse behaved, as the Parish Council has had to ask them to stop emptying the contents of their pail closets along with ashes and garden rubbish in the dump provided solely for tins and crockery. (1930)

Councillor Rolls understands that Aylesbury Borough are extending their electricity Scheme to Hardwick and Whitchurch and it was resolved that the clerk write to the Electricity Committee to ask for Weedon to be included.

I'll let the Sanitary Inspector continue with his report.

Sanitary Inspector 1928 - The Contractors who built the first 100 Working Men's Cottages had gangs of men engaged in this building work. Once the work was finished, the contractor offered to build another 50 houses at a reduced rate of £325 per cottage, if the Council would extend the scheme. The Council was reluctant to accept the offer until the impact on the General rate of the District was known and whether there was actually a need to increase the number.

Certainly the 4 houses built in Weedon didn't resolve the problem, as we will now find out.

The Rector, Rev Walton - I'm the Rev Walton, Rector of St Mary's. I'm going to visit poor Mrs. Harding in Stockaway. Her thatched cottage is in a terrible state and urgently needs work doing to it. It's very near the cottage that Mr. and Mrs. Brandon lived in, in the same terrace in fact. In October 1928, an Informal Notice concerning the necessary repairs was served on Mr. Sear, the owner, by the Sanitary Inspector. Two months later the District Council felt obliged to make a Closing Order. You will not be surprised to learn that nothing has been done and there appears no prospect of the owner doing the necessary work. It's February 1929 now and I just wanted to see how the family are getting on. Here's Mrs. Harding. How are you feeling my dear?

Mrs. Harding - Terrible. The worrying has made my poor husband so ill. We've had a letter from the District Council asking when we will be able to leave. I have written back but I was very vague about a date. We have nowhere to go, unless any of you have room for us. The Council has given us a month's notice and said that they will re-consider the matter then. A month is not going to make any difference to us.

The Rector, Rev Walton - Don't you worry yourself Mrs. Harding, I'll write to the Council and explain that Mr. Harding is so very ill and that it is a great source of trouble to him that you are under Notice to Quit following the Closing Order. I'll ask whether under the circumstances the Council will extend the time.

Mrs. Harding - You are so kind Rector, what would we do without you?

The Rector, Rev Walton - I did write. In April, the Sanitary Committee decided that after much consideration, to extend the time for a further 3 months.

Mr. George Sear, Son of the owner - I am George Sear, son of the landlord. I attended the April Committee Meeting on behalf of my father James, who had more important business to deal with, being a gentleman. He has been issued with a Closing Order on the 3 thatched cottages. I stated that my father was anxious to get the family out, so that he might repair the cottages for his own use. I urged the Council to take immediate steps to eject the family.

Where are the landlords amongst you, wouldn't you want them out? Yes or no? I'm sure that the delay is unnecessary. These tenants will use any excuse to stay put. It's my father's property after all. I cannot believe that the Council refused to entertain the suggestion. My father and I will definitely take it further. He bought these old cottages from Arthur Thorne in 1920, for £150. While there are people willing and needing to live in them, there seemed little point spending money on doing them up, after all the rents do not bring in much. It hardly seems worth the effort keeping them.

Father wrote to the Ministry of Health who promptly wrote to the District Council asking for their observations. It's taken long enough, it's already November.

The Rector, Rev Walton - Again I communicated with the Council and reiterated that the Harding's were still not in a position to leave the property. My letter was forwarded to the Ministry. The Council agreed that the matter should stand over for another month.

Mr. George Sear, Son of the owner - Yes, they decided that my letter had no impact on the matter. Can you believe it?

The Rector, Rev Walton - Two years after the case began, (November 1930) I took great pleasure in writing to the Council stating that Mr. and Mrs. Harding had found another house and thanked the Council for their

consideration. What a happy ending. It is commendable that the Council is prepared to stand up to these unscrupulous landlords.

Mr. George Sear, Son of the owner - Who would be a landlord nowadays? There is just no money in it. Now at least we can do what we want with it. Just moving forward a little in time, my parents moved in to the brick and tile one at the end of the row, the other 3 remained empty. In 1932, my father sadly died. My mother Fanny sold all 4 cottages to Miss Joan Fletcher, owner of the Holt, the neighbouring cottage, for £250. So we didn't do too badly from the sale and my mother was allowed to continue to stay in the one that was now her home. That is until the Inspector made his final visit to her house and decided that it was unfit for habitation and not capable of being made fit at a reasonable expense. He applied for a Closing Order to be issued. Now there is an Order on all 4.

Mr. Brown, butcher of Whitchurch - Good day/ evening?? I was just passing with my horse and cart and seeing you all gathered here I thought I'd try to shift some of these joints. You can see for yourself they are not yet completely past it and they are going for a good price. Ah Mr. Thomas, (Glynn if he comes!) you usually like them in this state, can I tempt you tonight. I need to get rid of the evidence quickly because I didn't get this carcass inspected as I should have done. I do make sure that the Sanitary Inspector sees the odd one, but what a performance to get everyone checked. Why, last December (1929) I received a strong letter from the District Council, due to diseased meat being found on my premises. I know I am not the only one to have received such a letter. Did you hear about Mr. Price of Haddenham? An inspection of his premises found 102lbs of beef badly affected with tuberculosis. Mr. Price stated that neither he nor his assistant had noticed it. Likely story. He surrendered the meat and it was destroyed. He'd already had several warnings but still only received a strong letter informing him that on the next occasion there was cause for complaint, proceedings would be taken. I should think so too. I am much more careful than he is.

I was a bit unlucky this time (March 1930) I'd taken most of the carcass away to sell but the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Porter, visited unexpectedly. You see the Council has divided the area into two districts now, each with their own Inspector, which means of course they are able to make more visits. He found in my slaughter house, beef lungs affected with tuberculosis, with the result that the lungs were condemned and the remainder passed. I was warned as to the necessity for notifying a carcass for inspection as I had done in one case, but not in this. The Council did agree that the case was not a strong one for prosecution but wrote a further very strong letter.

Of course, I wrote to object to the tone of it but they wrote back saying it was justified. I don't know. Anyway, any takers? Oh dear, I do believe that the Sanitary Inspector has just arrived, I'd better be on my way.

Sanitary Inspector 1929 - I have just been inspecting a polluted roadside ditch near the Council houses in Hardwick and found the pollution was due to the overflow of sewage from a cesspool belonging to the 3 old thatched cottages owned by Mr. J Todd. I have interviewed him and the tenants and told them that it just not good enough and that they must empty the cesspool more frequently. There has been a similar problem in Weedon as one of the tenants will tell.

Mrs. Brandon Tenant at the Working men's Cottages - As you can see, we are well and truly settled in our new 2 bedroomed home but it is not perfect by any means. I had to complain to the Council recently about the state of the ground at the back of the cottages. It is very very damp and keeps flooding. The Inspector, Mr. Dewhurst, agreed that the ground was in a very wet state and that something needed to be done urgently. He is going to arrange for the path at the back to be made up with clinkers.

He pointed out that the drains were defective at No's 2 and 4 and the cesspool over full at No 1. My neighbours were given notice to put their drains and cesspool in proper order and to keep them so. I live at No 3, my drains are always in good condition as you would expect and I never let my cesspool become over full.

These officials are all the same though, you call them out because you have a valid complaint to make and then they try to find fault with the way you live your life. He objected to me and my neighbour at No 2 keeping hens in close proximity to the well. Where else are we meant to keep them? He said that they had to be removed forthwith and that the 'filth' in the pens be cleaned out to avoid polluting the well. No one could call my pen filthy; it must be next door's that he's referring to.

Weedon Parish Council meeting 1930s

Weedon Councillor - Welcome to the Weedon Parish Council meeting covering 1930s.

Housing - At least we have some good news on housing. The District Council is going to build another 100 houses and 4 have been allocated to both Hardwick and Weedon, of course we would prefer more but 4 is better than nothing. We have been asked to recommend a suitable site. The Clerk wrote to Mrs. Tomes the owner of Kirby's, enquiring if she would be

prepared to sell half an acre and also to New College to ask about the site adjoining the existing Council Houses. We preferred Kirby's but Mrs. Tomes was not willing to sell. We were forced to ask the District Council to introduce a compulsory measure in order to assure Weedon being included under the 1930 Slum Clearance Act. Kirby's was eventually acquired as a site for 6 council houses allocated in 1934, to be known as Chiltern View 1934. (Check notes & which ones Chiltern View)

Did you hear that pollution was so rife in Hardwick that the Inspector had to inspect 40 properties under both the Housing and Public Health Acts, tracing and testing the drainage outlets. It was a considerable task and took him several visits. His report of 1933 is on display at the back. (*Hope to get a copy*)

The Dump - Now, we have been searching for somewhere to take the contents of the dump. We tried the owner of the Hartwell Pits, but a dis-used pit at Oving has been put at our disposal for a yearly rental of £1 10s, the cost to be shared between Hardwick and Weedon. That will be a great help.

That is the end of the normal meeting. Please stay for a Special meeting, I'll hand you over to the Chairman.

Special Meeting of Weedon Parish Council Chairman WPC 5/12/1938 -

This special meeting called for the purpose of discussing the advisability of having a weekly collection of pail closet contents by the District Council mechanical emptier from Haddenham. Considering the importance of the subject there is rather a poor attendance. This matter came before us in October 1938 and it was agreed to obtain particulars from the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Cant, about the costs. This is what we have arranged so far.

- 1) An experimental collection of pail closet contents was made on Friday the 11th November, when 46 properties were visited.
- 2) The time taken for the work, including apportioned travelling time to and from Weedon, was 21/2 hours.
- 3) The final working costs for the mechanical cesspool emptier during the half year ended 30th September were not available but it appears that the cost of a weekly collection similar to that made on 11th November would be approximately £17 per half year.

This would make a rate of 31/2d in the £ or slightly less each half year. The product of a penny rate for the parish is £5.

Do you think that we should go ahead with it? Yes or no? Mr. Thatcher, you wish to speak.

Mr. Thatcher of the Five Elms - I consider a weekly collection inadequate, we need a collection twice per week, especially in Stockaway.

Chairman - That would be impossible. It would double the expense and the men are fully employed in Haddenham for 5 days and would not have the time to visit us more than once per week. We will try the weekly collection for 6 months.

The meeting is finished and we leave you with a villager summarizing the changes that happened or were hoped for during the 1940s.

While Weedon was trying out the new system of disposing of the contents of the pail closets, Hardwick villagers had to deal with their own. The Parish Council made several appeals to the District Council to arrange for a collection by a night soil cart. In April 1948, the Sanitary Department authorized the removal of refuse from the earth closets. Well over a year later, the District Council was still failing to collect the buckets. Eventually a collection was put in place but this led to another complaint about the slovenly way in which the men left the buckets afterwards.

Roads - Constant complaints about the road surfaces and the footpaths have been made to the District Council with little effect. Their reply is always that due to the lack of funds, we will have to wait our turn. It does seem that elaborate schemes are planned for other parishes though, so why not in Weedon?

Pedestrians complain about the ever increasing number of motorists speeding through the village and the motorists complain about the road surfaces breaking the springs of their precious cars.

As far as the Weedon footpaths are concerned it did not help that the Chiltern Hills Water company left them in a most unsatisfactory state after laying pipes.

Ponds - In 1947, the Weedon Council decided to dispense with, if possible, an old institution, Stockaway Pond. The County Surveyor was asked for surplus material to fill it in. The ponds in both villages have long been places for dumping rubbish and the grass beside the Weedon pond used as a poultry run but the occupier of the cottage opposite. Hardwick felt that theirs served no useful purpose and was a danger to children and very unsanitary.

Water - It was a great shock to many of Weedon when in 1941, the Sanitary Inspector posted a notice on the well by Stockaway pond stating that the

water was unfit for human consumption. Councillor Seamons begged to differ as he had been a user of that water for many years and suffered no ill effects. He did take up the matter, but I'm not sure how far he got.

The water in Hardwick was found to be grossly contaminated and in 1944 clean drinking water was brought to the village by Bucks County Water rather than the Chiltern Hills Water Co who eventually supplied Weedon.

Housing - In 1943 Weedon applied for 10 more council houses as part of the one year's scheme for post war housing. The site had got to be in the centre of the village. In 1948 more were erected in Hardwick due to the poor state of the old cottages many of which were not waterproof.

Street Lighting - During the 1930s and 40s, the parish councils considered installing public street lighting but were dissuaded by the financial burden it would impose. Years earlier the streets had been lit by paraffin lamps and some were keen to have them lit again.

Although no mention has been made of the war, one comment in the Weedon minutes made in April 1946 regarding Victory day celebrations was quite revealing. 'It was decided that due to the unsatisfactory state of international affairs and the acute food shortage, that such conditions did not merit such rejoicings.' Councillor Jameson felt that individual parishioners should still feel able to celebrate if their opinion differed

In this year 1950, we still await the filling in of both ponds. People continue to deposit their garden rubbish in them causing contamination. Street lighting has yet to be installed. The very bad state of Hardwick house drainage has been brought to a head by the number of new houses and the fact that increase in mains water has doubled the amount of waste to be carried away. Cesspools belonging to the new Hardwick council houses continue to overflow flooding the back footpath and the path to the thatched cottages belonging to Mr. Todd.

Now in 2011, it is clear that while we still suffer from potholes and more particularly blocked drains and leaking sewage, many things, that we now tend to take for granted, have definitely improved for the better. Most of you know that the Weedon pond survived providing an attractive feature.

THE END