

SHERFIELD-ON-LODDON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council, held in the Village Hall on Friday 1st May 2009 at 8pm

There were approximately fifty parishioners attending the APM including the Parish, Borough and County Councillors

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting including Borough Councillors Martin Bierrman, Keith Chapman, Rhydian Vaughan and Ranil Jayawardena.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Elaine Still, John Downes,

3. Minutes of the previous APM held on 23rd May 2008

The minutes of last year's annual parish meeting had been tabled. The minutes were signed as a true record of the proceedings.

4. Parish Council Annual Report

A report of the activities of the Parish Council during the last 12 months had been tabled. The Chairman thanked the Parish Councillors who had retired during the year, Tracy Lander-Sims and Richard Gaiger for their years of loyal service to the village. The Chairman also welcomed new Councillor Sally Hennessey onto the Council. The Chairman also thanked the Borough Councillors for all their years of service.

Bruce Batting explained that this was his twelfth APM and that he would be stepping down from his role as chairman at the next Parish Council meeting.

The Burial Ground at St Leonard's church has been seeded and a survey to mark out the plots will be carried out by a specialist company later on this year. As modern grave diggers use machinery and require a skip for excess soil, it has become apparent that better access will be required; we are therefore applying for planning permission for an access route for maintenance only from the bus lay-by at Church End.

Traffic flow is a continuing problem in our village, and with the help of our Borough Councillors we have entered into a 3 year contract with the Borough for the display of Speed Limit Reminder Devices (SLRs). These will be put up in both Bramley and Sherfield on a rota basis usually for not more than two weeks at any one site. There have been many complaints about the speed of traffic on the Bramley Road and the Old Reading Road and we are hoping to carry out a traffic survey on both roads. We are also hoping to improve the Bramley Road junction and with the help of our ward members and HCC Highways department are reviewing options for an improved layout incorporating a pedestrian refuge.

Almost by accident the Parish Council became aware of a scheme to sponsor the A33 roundabout, which would have involved changes to the planting scheme and advertisements for business from outside Sherfield. The borough has been persuaded that the parish should be offered the sponsorship rights

There is due to be a signs audit around the village with a view to reducing the number of signs, we have already been successful in removing tourist information signs for a local nursery with the help of our Borough Councillors.

There remains concern about the safety of children and others crossing the A33 at the Scats junction to reach Sherfield School and also about the general access arrangements for the school which need to be reviewed. The installation of a crossing at this point would require a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph. Representatives of the Parish Council have met with all parties to see what can be done and we are hoping that some action may be taken during the next year

Sherfield Park community Association has been running for 2.5 years and it is hoped that construction of the new community building will commence within months. At their recent AGM David Leivesley was appointed chairman with a full complement of new and enthusiastic officers to support him.

Progress is being made with the football pavilion; there is a working party consisting of Loddon Sport Junior FC, Sherfield FC and the Parish Council who have met regularly to work towards joint funding applications to various grant awarding bodies. The Parish Council are very encouraged by this joint venture and hope that it will result in a new jointly managed facility for use by both Loddon Sports and Sherfield FC.

The Parish Council has agreed to donate £3,000 towards repairs at the Cricket Pavilion in the new financial year as little has been done to maintain this facility and a new joint venture with Basingstoke and North Hants CC ensured the survival of our local team.

5. Accounts and Budget

The draft accounts for the year 2008/9 had been prepared and were tabled.

There were no questions

6. Reports

Report from County Councillor – Keith Chapman

Councillor Chapman reported that the council tax rose by 1.95% this year and that this was one of the lowest increases in the country in addition to this Hampshire also receives the lowest support grant, which means that the council tax payers of Hampshire have to pay the difference to ensure that the much needed services are provided. In spite of this, a recent government report rated Hampshire as a Four Star authority, which is the highest mark achieved by any authority in the country.

There will be changes to the funding of adult social care in Hampshire. In the future individuals will be given a budget to manage for their own social care, this care could be provided by HCC or by other agencies.

The Music Service continues to strengthen with 72 fully supported ensembles. The Hampshire County Youth Band is for the second year running the national champion.

The County Council allocated £10,000 to each Councillor to allocate to village organisations which was spent in Silchester, Hannington and Kingsclere last year, this funding will be available again and should be applied for.

Report from Borough Councillor – Marilyn Tucker

Councillor Tucker said how sad she was that this would be the last time she would stand before this community as a Borough Councillor following the boundary changes. She highly recommended the new Councillors and was sure that they would do a great job.

The recent elections had given the Conservatives an overall majority of 10 seats and there would be a two year period of stability. The composition of the cabinet would be as follows:

Sport and Leisure	Cllr Keith Chapman
Environment and Climate Change	Cllr Mrs Anne Court
Finance, Property and Performance	Cllr James Lewin
Planning and Infrastructure	Cllr Horace Mitchell
Housing and Health	Cllr Mrs Cathy Osselton
Education and Community Support	Cllr Elaine Still
Community Safety and Development	Cllr Clive Sanders

The development of the German Road area has sadly proceeded despite vigorous objection. There has been concern about the safety of the site following the dumping of ammunition over many years. They have a specialist team who are combing the area with hi-tech equipment and have set aside an area for controlled explosions, so far there have been two such controlled explosions.

The Haymarket Theatre is now under the management of Anvil Arts and is back in action.

There are plans to make the library in Basingstoke into a Discovery Centre following the success at Winchester library.

The railway station at Chineham is still being looked into and Basingstoke and Deane are trying to help provide better parking at stations like Bramley.

Questions

1) A member of the public asked if there could be notification of the explosions at Bramley as some have been very loud?

Councillor Tucker agreed to look into this.

2) A member of the public asked about the value of the planning process if the community were to be consulted and then ignored as had been the case with the German Road development?

Councillor Tucker sadly agreed with the sentiment in this question.

Report from Borough Councillor – Martin Bierrman

Councillor Bierrman stressed the importance of the new Community Association building planned for Sherfield Park especially after there had been so many disappointments – failure to provide a school and Medical Centre being just two examples.

The South East Plan will result in an increased amount of housing in Hampshire, some of which will be built in the Basingstoke area and probably in this area. There needs to be a decision taken about whether it is best to build a large development such as Manydown or whether it is better to build in every village or maybe a combination of the two.

Questions

1) A member of the public asked about the extreme distances some children had to travel to school and why it was that no new school was planned?

Councillor Bierrman explained that no new school would be built until all the spare capacity in the Borough was used.

2) A member of the public asked why there were signs for both Sherfield Park and Taylors Farm?

Councillor Bierrman responded that Sherfield Park was a marketing name and that the land was on the OS map as Taylors Farm.

Report from Borough Councillors –Rhydian Vaughan and Ranil Jayawardena

They promised to do their best for the local community.

They reported that the C32 (Bramley Road) would be closed for 5 weeks from early June and that the Highways Department had promised to create a better alternative route than the one they chose when the Bramley Road was closed earlier this year.

Report from Borough Councillor – Elaine Still (read by the Chairman)

Cllr Still apologised for her absence.

The children's playground plans are underway and this should be built this year .Cllr Still would like any residents who have questions/complaints to make contact with her and she intends to hold regular surgeries to deal with local issues.

Village Charities

Due to some administrative issues, the payments were not made in October as usual, it is hoped that there will be a meeting in July and payments will be made after this.

Village Hall Trustees

Ivan Gosden reported that the Parish Council took over as trustees in October 2007 and thanked the previous trustees for their contribution.

There is a management committee of five of the trustees who handle the management and administration of the Hall. The Friends of the Village Hall is a committee set up to raise funds for the Village Hall as the hall cannot survive on its letting income alone. There is a lengthy list of urgent renovation work which is required to keep the hall operational and funds must be raised to cover this. Ivan asked for more volunteers to join this committee with new and fresh ideas as although the Parish Council can precept for some of the required funds, most of it must come from fund raising.

Ivan reported that the Insurance issues following the 2007 flooding are still being dealt with.

Village Green

The Chairman thanked Simon Hennessey for chairing the Village Green Committee for so long, unfortunately, due to his work commitments Simon had given up this role and it had been taken up by Bruce Batting. The Chairman went on to thank all the Village Green volunteers who make such a difference to the village scene. The Village Green remains the jewel in the crown and any help with its maintenance will be gratefully accepted.

The BMX track organised and re-furbished under the project management of Dick Gaiger has been a great success and is now in constant use.

The new basket goal area and NoMow surface have improved the facilities for older children and has been in constant use.

7. Questions from Parishioners

Member of the public asked:

1) What was the Parish Councils response to the planning application at Brunlea and Oaklands?
Bruce Batting responded that the council had objected to the application.

2) Could School Buses be marked as such to prevent overtaking?

Bruce Batting replied that the Parish Council would investigate this.

3) Could anything be done to relieve traffic on the Bramley Road as it is increasingly heavier and faster?

Bruce Batting responded that relieving traffic through opening Dixon Road may actually make things worse and that the Parish Council supported Vehicle Activated Road signs as these appear to be very effective. It was hoped that one could be placed intermittently on the Bramley Road.

4) Could anything be done about the flooding at the Plantation by the pond?

Bruce Batting responded that the Parish Council would investigate this, perhaps the ditch needs clearing.

5) The weed in the ponds although not Pygmy Weed is still there, can it be cleared?

Bruce Batting responded that the Parish Council would ask Hampshire Wildlife Trust for guidance.

8, Chairman's closure of the meeting

The chairman thanked everyone for coming and contributing to the discussion and closed the meeting.