

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Sherfield-on-Loddon Parish Council, held in the Village Hall on Friday 20 May 2011 at 7.30pm

There were 12 parishioners in attendance including eight parish councillors

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting including Borough Councillor Jayawardena and thanked the members of the Women's Institute for preparing refreshments.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from County Councillor Keith Chapman, Borough Councillor Rhydian Vaughan and Parish Councillor David Leivesley.

3. Minutes of the previous annual parish meeting held on 21 May 2010

The minutes of last year's annual parish meeting were been tabled and it was agreed that they should be signed as a true record of the proceedings.

4. Presentation by Peter Bedford of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

The chairman welcomed Peter Bedford, the district chairman of CPRE, to talk about the work of the organisation. Peter explained the three tiers of management: national, county and district, and outlined the responsibilities of each one as follows:

National: responsible for policy, handling publicity and promotions and finance;

County: responsible for membership issues and local finance. In Hampshire the group has been responsible for the setting up of the South Downs National Park and has been engaged in major planning issues involving Bartons Farm and Hedge End. Finances are not as robust as the organisation would like but events are taking place to raise funds;

District: the local group here is North Hants and a small committee meets four times a year to deal primarily with planning matters, the big issue at the moment being solar farms. The organisation basically supports renewable energy but not if it is on a Greenfield site or is of high visibility. There are 250 members in the district which members would like to see doubled.

Peter closed by thanking the parish council for its ongoing support.

5. Chairman's report

Introductions and thanks:

A report of the activities of the Parish Council during the last 12 months has been tabled. I have now completed my second year in the role of chairman and would like to thank colleagues for re-electing me for another term of office. I would also like to thank Sandy Johnston for his valuable assistance as Vice-Chairman. He has stood down this year and his successor is Bruce Jones. Thanks are also due to those that we have said goodbye to this year: Lucy Marshall resigned from the Parish Council to spend more time with her family after several years valued service and our clerk, Jayne Hawkins, resigned after just over a year's service to take up a post nearer home. Our tree warden, Geraldine House-Barklie, also resigned owing to her move from the village. I would like to extend a warm welcome to their replacements: John Darker as the new Parish Councillor, Julie Collins as the new clerk and Jane Jordan as the new tree Warden. Finally I would like to thank our Borough and County Councillors for all their hard work this year and to congratulate Councillors Jayawardena and Biermann on their re-election.

This Year – A summary:

Precept

The precept in 2011/2012 has increased over that for the previous year to £55,000 meaning an increase of just under £5 per annum for a band D household to £44.09.

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Traffic

The Parish Council is continuing discussions with Hampshire County Council to identify changes to the roads and traffic flows in the village that would result in slowing the traffic down. Grit bins have been provided by Hampshire Highways and sited at key locations. The Parish Council decided that the speed limit reminder signs had served their purpose and had no great benefit in slowing traffic down so would be discontinued from 1 January.

Burial Ground

Work on the burial ground has continued and, as spaces in the churchyard are almost used up, it will probably receive its first burials this year. Regulations and a scale of charges have been agreed and the site has been accurately plotted. The seeding of the ground with grass and wildflowers has taken place and we look forward to seeing this developing over the coming years. Unfortunately, the local Planning Dept has indicated that it would not be prepared to grant permission for an access route off the A33 for maintenance vehicles so other options are being considered for this.

The Village Green

The low point of last year was the invasion of the Green by travellers which resulted in a major and expensive clear-up operation. Further cost has been incurred with the installation of prevention measures in the form of ditching and dragon's teeth around the perimeter. The parish council has a policy in place for dealing with any future encampments which should enable any future incursions to be dealt with as speedily as possible.

Golden Pond fell victim to an outbreak of New Zealand pygmy weed this year which has been successfully treated.

The Parish Council had been considering installing a Trim Trail but decided, on balance, that the extra maintenance required to satisfy the conditions for grant aid could not be justified so the project was dropped. There is also a SINC agreement in place and the Trim Trail would make compliance with this difficult. Thanks are due to the Village Green Committee that meets regularly to make recommendations to the Parish Council on maintenance issues and projects.

Allotments

The new compost bins were installed last year but, unfortunately, the waste deposited in them has been unusable owing to the presence of non-green material. This has been disposed of and tenants have been asked to only use them for soft green waste. The cost of disposal is high and the Parish Council will need to re-examine how it fund this if the bins continue to be misused. The water troughs have also been refurbished. The waiting list is probably short compared to those in other areas with 7 parishioners being on the list although a there is large number of non-parishioners.

Sherfield Park

The new Community Centre is finished and was handed over to the Sherfield Park Community Association at an official ceremony on Wednesday of this week. This is an excellent venue and members are hopeful that it will not conflict with the village hall but work with it to improve facilities.

6. Accounts and Budget

The draft accounts for the year 2010/11 had been prepared and were tabled.

7. Reports

(i) Report from PCSO Geoff Fermor-Dunman

PCSO Fermor-Dunman reported that crime in Sherfield decreased last year. However, 48% of crime was related to non-dwelling burglaries. Stop and search of vehicles is taking place day and night but it is important to find out where the stolen articles are being sold – some are found on E-bay. The trend is mirrored across Hampshire and it is impossible to predict the future although it will probably be similar to 2010

(ii) Report from Inspector Payne

Break-ins continue to occur where front doors are not properly locked and the handle can be manoeuvred via the letter box. This only takes five seconds and car keys can then be taken.

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Question: A member of the public asked if a “slow” sign could be erected in Goddards Lane.

Answer: The Community Speedwatch scheme is being developed to deal with speeding in rural areas but it does require investment and volunteers.

(iii) **Report from County Councillor Keith Chapman**

The chairman advised members that Councillor Chapman had submitted a written report which was available to read.

(iv) **Report from Borough Councillor Ranil Jayawardena**

Councillor Jayawardena thanked all those who voted for him in the recent elections and advised that he is now the cabinet member for Finance and Property and Councillor Vaughan is chair of the Development Control committee. There has been a freeze on council tax this year but the council is keen to protect front-line services. A phased implementation of door-to-door glass recycling will start this year. The Local Development Framework process is ongoing and Councillor Jayawardena is participating in the Members’ Advisory Panels and campaigning for the infrastructure to be put in place before development starts and for the right sort of housing in terms of density and design. It is important to make Basingstoke and Deane a better place by regeneration of the town centre to encourage business. Regeneration of residential land is also important. Councillor Jayawardena thanked the parish council for its support.

(v) **Village Charities Report**

James Christmas Educational Foundation & Sherfield Welfare Trust: a meeting was held in December 2010 at which grants were agreed as follows:

James Christmas: to Loddon Sports Junior Football club, Bramley Scouts (Sherfield children attend Bramley as there is no scout group in Sherfield), Mencap (youth club subs for two Sherfield children), Megan Fright (towards World Challenge Expedition), Tristan Robinson (towards purchase of educational equipment) and Cyrus Angell (towards special needs assessment).

Sherfield Welfare Trust: to the Lunch club (towards cost of insurance), Evergreens and Sherfield Bingo group.

(vi) **Village Hall Trustees**

Bruce Batting gave a report on behalf of the Village Hall Trustees. Work has continued this year on repairs and maintenance with gas central heating being installed in cottage #2, temporary roof repairs being carried out with a view to complete replacement and removal of an old extractor fan and boarding the blacked out windows in the upper main hall. In addition, some general de-cluttering and decorating has taken place. Externally, the appearance of the hall has been improved by replacing the rotten planters at the front of the hall and recovering and replanting the tubs that had been hidden in undergrowth together with clearing the weeds from the garden at the side of the hall and rear of the Lidedll Hall. Financially, the hall has benefitted from receiving 100% grant aid for the installation of solar panels and a settlement has been agreed for the insurance compensation claim made several years ago for the contamination. This will enable the hall to repay the parish council for the temporary loan.

8 **Questions from Parishioners**

Q: The village green is beginning to look like a park rather than a natural area- why is it mowed so frequently?

A: It was necessary to strike a compromise with the maintenance of the SINC area and what villagers want. It is not the intention of the parish council that the green should become a park and care will be taken to ensure that this does not happen.

9 **Chairman’s closure of the meeting**

The chairman thanked everyone for coming and contributing to the discussion. Sandy Johnston proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman on behalf of the parish and his fellow councillors.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm.