

## SHERFIELD-ON-LODDON PARISH COUNCIL



### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Sherfield on Loddon Parish Council, held in the Village Hall on Friday 21st May 2010 at 7.30pm**

There were approximately 7 parishioners attending the APM as well as the Parish, Borough and County Councillors

#### **1. Welcome**

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

#### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from County Councillor Keith Chapman, Borough Councillor Elaine Still, Alison Cross and John Dodd.

#### **3. Minutes of the previous APM held on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009**

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 2009/2010**

##### **Introductions and thanks:**

A report of the activities of the Parish Council during the last 12 months had been tabled. The Chairman introduced himself Ivan Gosden and the Vice Chairman Sandy Johnston and thanked both Bruce Batting and Sandy Johnston for their support in his first year in the role. He also thanked Parish Councillor Brian Archer who retired during the year, for his years of loyal service to the village and also Fiona Craig who resigned as Clerk after 18 months service. He welcomed two new Councillors, Ken Clark and Alan Ball, and the new clerk, Jayne Hawkins. Finally he thanked our Borough and County Councillors for all their hard work this year.

##### **This Year – A summary:**

##### **Precept**

The precept in 2010/2011 will remain the same as in the previous year 2009/2010 at £44,250, this is 39.18 for a band D household.

##### **Traffic**

A full traffic survey was organised this year and, although the results indicated that the majority of drivers do observe the speed limit, the few people that persist in speeding continue to be a concern for everyone. The Parish Council is involved with ongoing 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. Two schemes under review are the narrowing of the Old Reading Road so that the chicanes and signage could be removed and a pedestrian refuge at the bottom of the Bramley Road.

##### **Burial Ground**

Work on the burial ground has progressed, the church has planted a hedge between the old burial ground and the new burial ground. Draft plans for plotting and draft regulations have been produced. The Parish Council has agreed that

the area to the rear of the new burial ground will be offered as a natural burial site, it will be sown with wild flowers and trees such as mountain ash, flowering cherry and hazel will be planted around the border. Planning permission for an access route off the A33 is still being progressed. This entrance will only be used by contractor's vehicles and will not be used for funeral traffic.

### **Ditches and Drainage**

Major work on clearing ditches took place this year with all ditches in the village being cleared out including the removal of 32 willows from centre ditch. A new drainage pipe has been put in behind the playground to prevent water running from the concrete path down into Poplar Close, this work has generally improved flooding and drainage around the village.

### **Emergency Plan**

The Sherfield-on-Loddon flood plan has been updated and incorporated into a more general emergency plan; this has been created with the assistance of Julie James from Emergency Planning at HCC. Councillor Lucy Marshall has agreed to be the emergency co-ordinator and Councillor Bruce Batting the deputy emergency co-ordinator. The parish Council would be very interested in any residents who could offer skills or transport that could be called upon in an emergency. An emergency could be anything from severe flooding to a major road accident. In any major emergency the Village hall will be opened as an emergency centre.

### **Allotments**

The Parish Council was successful in applying for a grant to improve the allotments, new water troughs have been installed and two new compost areas will be constructed shortly. The allotments are currently very popular and the waiting list is beginning to increase.

### **Sherfield Park**

The Sherfield Park community Association is very pleased to report that work on the construction of a new Community Centre and sport facilities has started; this is good news for the whole village.

### **Village Hall**

This year the exterior of the Village Hall has been repainted, brickwork on the porches rebuilt and two windows on the back of the Liddell Hall have been replaced. There are plans in the coming year to help to fund essential maintenance work on no. 2 cottage.

### **Horse Chestnut Avenue**

The Parish Council has consulted widely with various experts including the forestry commission regarding the maintenance for the Horse Chestnut Avenue on the Bramley Road. Nearly all the trees are infected with Bleeding Canker disease and although we did receive conflicting advice it seems the most appropriate treatment is to keep the trees as healthy as possible. This should be achieved by picking up the fallen leaves in the autumn to reduce the level of leaf minor infection, to remove ivy from the trees and to do a minimal prune each year to reduce damage from road traffic.

### **Trim Trail**

The Parish Council has looked at providing a trim trail on the village green and has consulted widely with residents to gather their views. It has been decided that the middle green is not the right place for the proposed trim trail however as the survey did show a local demand for such a facility two other locations will be looked at. This project would only be progressed if the Parish Council were successful in applying for a grant.

### **Communications**

In order to improve communications with residents the Parish Council issued a newsletter in January and has put regular monthly updates in the Loddon Valley Link. A post box has also been installed on the front of the Village Hall.

## 5. Accounts and Budget

The draft accounts for the year 2009/10 had been prepared and were tabled.

There was one question regarding the increase in the specific reserves for Country Watch. The Chairman responded that this had been increased as a precaution should the Parish Council need to fight a potential planning application for 9,000 new homes in the Loddon Valley.

## 6. Reports

### Report from Sgt Chris Swallow

Sgt Chris Swallow reported that the local police continue to target speeding cars on local roads and explained that currently Hampshire traffic will not permit local beat officers to use mobile speed guns, recent trials may lead to beat officers being able use them in future. He explained that area car teams will default to the local rural area if they are not busy on main routes. He reported that over the winter there has been an increase in the number of burglaries from non-dwellings with lots of tools being stolen.

Sergeant Swallow appealed to the public to provide the police with intelligence as this is the area which makes the most difference to their success. He confirmed that although public service budgets will be challenging there had been no proposals to take away the local beat officer.

**Questions:** A member of the public said that she has seen police officers in Hook with mobile speed guns, Sgt. Swallow said this would have been traffic officers.

### Report from County Councillor – Keith Chapman

Councillor Chapman sent his apologies, Ivan Gosden read out some highlights from his annual report:

#### County Council Highlights

- Hampshire County Council's Music Service – assessed as outstanding
- Shared Lives Scheme is Excellent Again!

The Hampshire Shared Lives Scheme recruits and supports carers to provide caring homes for adults who need extra support and it is going from strength to strength with about 110 carers over Hampshire supporting about 200 people.

- **Council Tax**

Hampshire County Council has set its budget for 2010/11 which will see an increase in council tax of just 38 pence a week for the average Band D household with no cuts to service and more money for social care.

- **Hampshire County Council gives value for money - that's the verdict of independent inspectors**

The council was assessed as 'performing well' in managing and using its resources to deliver value for money with praise for 'excellent financial management that has enabled the council to keep council tax low and make savings that can be reinvested in improved services.'

Hampshire is one of only three county councils to be awarded the top rating in a new, tougher inspection by Government watchdogs.

- **Recycling**

Top performing county council in terms of diverting waste from landfill 90% of waste recycled, recovered or composted

- **Library Refurbishments**

More than half of library buildings have been refurbished in the last five years and plans are underway to upgrade Basingstoke library to become the next Discovery Centre. Work on Basingstoke Discovery Centre is due to begin on April 26 with its opening expected in late 2010. Discovery Centres are the next generation of libraries and are hubs of reading, learning and fun, with technology at their heart.

- **North East Hampshire Multi Million Pound Activity Centre Gets Go-Ahead**

A £5.7 million project to deliver youth activities and learning opportunities across Hampshire is one step closer as plans for Runways End Youth Activity Centre, between Farnborough and Aldershot, were given the green light

### **Report from Borough Councillors –Rhydian Vaughan, Ranil Jayawardena and Martin Biermann**

Councillor Ranil Jayawardena detailed some of the committees he serves on such as the Economic Prosperity and Performance Committee, waste management and recycling, audit governance and accounts. He is keen to keep the weekly bin service. Ranil reported that 8% of the Council tax goes to the Borough Council. Ranil supports the refurbishment of the Mall shopping centre in Basingstoke where investments should bring in new businesses and jobs. Ranil has been actively lobbying for faster broadband for the rural community. It was reported that the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council had set up a 16 strong team of community safety officers (CSPO's) to tackle underage drinking, dog-fouling, and graffiti.

Councillor Rhydian Vaughan congratulated the Parish Council on doing a good job for their community. He explained that he is on the development control committee and was busy trying to assist with a couple of unfair planning decisions. He was trying to get the development control committee to take more notice of the views of parish councils. Rhydian explained that he serves on the following committees: Development Control, Licensing, Human Resources, Accommodation members advisory committee. Rhydian advised that the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) is an advisory document and that sites that are included in the SHLAA will not necessarily be built on.

Councillor Biermann reported that the Community Hall at Taylors Farm had been started and is estimated to be completed within 1 year. The football pitches are of very good quality with excellent drainage; these are nearly ready to be used.

A polling station will be run from the community hall in future - this year a Croudace show home was used. Croudace has been asked not to build the entrance to Sherfield Park from Cufaude Lane until near to the end of the development.

Martin advised that it was important for residents to look at the local development framework and SHLAA to see what developments are being proposed in the local area. He recommended that residents look at the SOLVE (Save Our Loddon Valley Environment) website a very active organisation campaigning against plans for 9,000 new homes that would have an enormous impact on the Loddon Valley

#### Questions:

1. Sandy Johnston asked if the proposed building in the Loddon Valley is in the flood plain.  
Martin Biermann said that there were different grades of flood plain, no homes are proposed for the serious areas but as soon as you build more homes in such an area the flooding areas will get bigger

## **Village Charities**

### **James Christmas Educational Foundation and Sherfield Welfare Trust**

The Trustees of the Charities continue to meet twice a year and for the year ending December 2009 grants were awarded to Loddon Sports Junior Football Club, Sherfield Brownies and Rainbows by the Educational Foundation and to the Sherfield Lunch Club and Evergreens by the Welfare Trust.

The current balances are £3903 for the Educational Foundation and £6512 for the Welfare Trust.

### **Village Hall Trustees**

Bruce Batting gave the report from the Village Hall Trustees. He said that Ivan Gosden is chairman of the Trustees and he is chairman of the management committee. All Parish Councillors are Trustees and the management committee is made up of 6 trustees with a very capable treasurer Garry Marshall.

The Hall continues to be well used and fund raising events organised by the Friends have meant that they have been able to carry out a number of improvements. He also thanked those that run the annual Beer Festival which is a most helpful source of income.

Bruce reported that the Village Hall trustees would soon be purchasing 200 new stacking chairs with storage trolleys and 10 round folding tables. Free Wi-Fi internet access was now available at the village hall.

The Village hall website is managed by Sally Hennessey who is their marketing expert; she has worked hard setting up a marketing strategy and producing colour brochures, leaflets and posters. Bruce reported that they are getting bookings for weddings and would be putting in a storage facility for Happy Faces play equipment and carrying out improvements to the garden.

Repairs had been made to the roof of the village hall to stop leaks in the two cottages. New wiring and lighting will be installed. Two new windows at the back of the village hall have been replaced at the back of the Liddell Hall. The sitting room in no.2 cottage has been dry-lined, plastered and redecorated. Heating will also be installed in no.2 cottage, which is a very cold house, resulting in an appropriate increase in rent.

A grant from the parish council has allowed brick work on the front porches of the Village to be rebuilt and the exterior of the Village Hall has been decorated. In the future the Village Hall Trustees and Management committee would like to install a new smoke detection system and completely refurbish the WC's, but this may have to wait a little longer due to the cost.

The battle with the insurance companies continues, following a meeting with the loss adjuster on Monday a change of tack is proposed and hopefully this will be more successful. The car park will be resurfaced during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in August this has been dealt with separately under insurance.

Last but not least Bruce said they were very grateful to Loddon Players who had installed an extremely versatile and adaptable stage that can be moved anywhere and made any size.

## **7. Questions from Parishioners**

- 1 Mrs Gaiger said that residents had noticed a few blisters on the new paintwork on the porches. Ivan Gosden said that this had been noted in a snagging exercise and that the decorators would be returning to fix any outstanding problems.
- 2 A resident asked that the POSH coffee mornings were not forgotten, this was a small fund raising event held monthly.
- 3 Mrs Kay Pearman enquired about the new Compost bins being built at the allotments, she requested that they are well managed to prevent them being used for rubbish and so rats were not attracted to the area. Ivan

Gosden answered that an allotment holder had volunteered to manage the compost bins with the support of the Parish Council.

- 4 A resident asked when resurfacing of Greenway will be taking place. It was explained that Greenway was not the responsibility of the Parish Council but that Hampshire County Council will be resurfacing the track during the summer.

#### **8, Chairman's closure of the meeting**

The chairman thanked everyone for coming and contributing to the discussion and closed the meeting. Bruce Batting congratulated Ivan Gosden on his first year in office and thanked him for his time.