

SHERFIELD-ON-LODDON PARISH COUNCIL

NEWS AND UPDATES

OCTOBER 2011

ISSUE 2

Message from the Chairman

Welcome to this edition of the parish council newsletter—we hope it will provide some useful information on the last 18 months, where we are now and what our hopes are for the future. Parish councils are the third tier of local government and act on your behalf concerning issues of planning, recreation and finance. The parish council has ten members representing the village of Sherfield-on-Loddon and the new development at Taylor's Farm (known locally as Sherfield Park). Your concerns are of importance to us and we encourage you to come forward and let us know what matters to you. The full council meets on the second Wednesday of the month (excluding August) and the public are warmly invited to attend. There is a public participation session at every meeting. The agenda for the meeting can be viewed on the website and on the parish notice boards.

Finally, I would like to stress that we, as a parish council, are here to serve the residents of Sherfield-on-Loddon to the best of our ability and to preserve the quality of life and character of our parish.

Ivan Gosden

Hello and Goodbye

The last 18 months have seen some changes to the parish council and staff members. Alan Ball was co-opted on to the council in February 2010 to fill the gap left by Brian Archer. Members also said goodbye to Lucy Marshall who decided to step down to spend more time with her family. A warm welcome was extended to John Darker who was co-opted in January this year to replace her.

The parish clerk, Jayne Hawkins, resigned in August 2010 to take up a post with another parish council nearer to home and Julie Collins was appointed to replace her in September.

Another familiar face to leave was Geraldine House-Barklie, the parish tree warden, who moved away from the area. Jane Jordan kindly volunteered for this post and members were pleased to welcome her.

There have also been some internal changes and re-organization: in May, Ivan Gosden was re-elected for a third term of office as chairman but Sandy Johnston decided not to seek re-election as vice-chairman although he continues in his role as chairman of the Leisure Committee. Bruce Jones was elected as his replacement. Thanks are due to all those who have

given their time freely to serve the parish.

A full list of committee membership and details of representatives to outside bodies may be obtained from the parish clerk.

As free citizens in a political democracy, we have a responsibility to be interested and involved in the affairs of the human community, be it at the local or the global level.

Paul Wellstone

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Village Hall Update
- ◆ Sherfield Park update
- ◆ Leisure and allotment matters
- ◆ Diamond Jubilee
- ◆ Parish Finances
- ◆ Elections



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Sherfield Village Hall—Improvements and Plans

The management committee's task is to continue to improve the hall to safeguard it for future generations. However, because the hall is an old building with high maintenance costs and is not self-financing, it is important to maximise revenue by providing a premium location. There are several pressing issues:

- The flooring in the Liddell Hall has been replaced as the previous tiles were breaking up and were a trip hazard
- Modern technology and government regulations create the need for on-going electrical modifications
- The main toilets require refurbishment but the cost is £35,000 so a minor improvement programme has started
- The roof of the main hall has been leaking for some time and has been temporarily repaired but re-roofing of the flat part is desperately required. The committee is fortunate to have received funding from local organisations towards this and work will start shortly
- The kitchen facilities are not up to commercial standard and modifications will be needed to incorporate new equipment required by regulations such as a dish/glass washer

These are by no means all the issues facing the management committee and future plans will include making the new entrance more welcoming (this was moved to the rear of the building as direct access from the car park was resulting in grit being walked in to the main hall and damaging the wooden floor). To do this, the entrance hall will be painted in a lighter shade and a literature rack for marketing material will be provided. One advantage of the change of entrance is that guests can be directed to the Garden Room or use the cloakroom facilities upon entering. A longer term plan is the building of an atrium to provide an entrance to the main hall, Garden Room and Liddell Hall and grants are actively being sought to accomplish this. In a perfect world the atrium would have been built first but, by the time it was ready, there would have been significant and expensive damage to the floor in the main hall.

Finally, the management committee faces a difficult task and is aware that some people will object to the changes taking place but, if they are not made, there will not be a hall for people to use and enjoy. Please remember that the management committee is made up of volunteers, most of whom are in full time employment, so please bear with us if things seem to move slowly at times. Getting contractors to tender for work, let alone do it, can be a frustrating activity at times !

Village Fete

The village fete was, again, a successful event this year with all the profits going to support local organisations. The recipients were as follows:

Happy Faces Playgroup	£300
Bramley Scout Group	£510
St Leonard's PCC	£3000
Sherfield Village Hall	£3444

Thanks are due to the band of volunteers who work so hard throughout the year to ensure everything goes smoothly on the day.



..... And Next Year



Next year is the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and members have decided to mark it by replacing the fete with a community event to be held over the public holiday period. The idea is still very much in its infancy but it is hoped that all the local organizations will play a part in providing entertainment for all the family.

Would you like to help? Do you have any ideas? The parish council would love to hear from you, please contact Ivan Gosden (ivangosden@live.co.uk) or Bruce Jones (sherfield@hotmail.com)

Sherfield Park Update

The high point in the calendar this year has been the opening of the new community centre which marks the culmination of over five year's work by the Community Association. This 900 square metres building was completed by Croudace Homes and consists of three meeting rooms, café, kitchen, consulting room, purpose designed nursery and changing rooms with two football pitches. On Saturday 18 June the grand opening took place with the tape cutting ceremony being carried out by his worship the Mayor, Councillor David

Leeks in the presence of Andy Yallop of Croudace Homes and David Leivesley of the Sherfield Park community Association. A whole host of activities and demonstrations took place including face painting and a clown for the children, a reflexology demonstration, a bar for the adults and a free barbecue. Over 300 visitors thoroughly enjoyed the day. The centre has appointed a manager, Candice Wright, who has been busy increasing the number and range of activities provided by the

centre. The first event, a curry and quiz night, was a great success.



Photo courtesy of Croudace Homes Ltd

The Little Adventurers Nursery (operated by GEMS Sherfield School) will be providing the pre-school nursery activities.

Burial Ground

Work on the burial ground has been progressing this year and, as spaces in the churchyard are almost used up, it will probably receive its first burials soon. Regulations and a scale of fees 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 becoming established over the years. Unfortunately, the local

planning department has indicated that it would not be prepared to grant permission for an access route for maintenance vehicles from the A33 so other options are being considered for this.

Allotments

The allotments continue to be well used and the waiting list is probably short when compared with the national figure.

Congratulations go to the winner of this year's Best Kept Allotment competition— Sue Morse. Unfortunately, the first load of compost from the new bins was unusable owing to the large amount of unsuitable waste in them and had to be disposed of at some cost.

Please only put soft green waste in these bins —no large woody items. The bins are also for use by allotment holders only.

If you would like to go on the waiting list please contact the parish clerk—details overleaf.

Leisure Equipment for the Village Green

TRIM TRAIL: the parish council had hoped to install a Trim Trail for residents around the periphery of the middle green but had to take the difficult decision to drop this. The scheme would have been dependent upon grant aid which would have been conditional upon the parish council agreeing to undertake extra maintenance to the green. The cost of this was considered carefully and members agreed that it would be prohibitive, particularly as it would be an annual expense.

PLAY EQUIPMENT: thanks go to all those who responded to the options for a new piece of play equipment detailed in the last newsletter. The Amazon Jungle Climber was the undisputed winner and the parish council has been trying hard to source funding to provide this—not an easy task in these difficult times. Similar but cheaper alternatives have been found but the cost still remains high, in the region of £10,000. The parish council is mindful that the equipment would cater for an age group that is, perhaps, in need of additional stimulation so please be assured that this is still very much an active project and efforts to secure the necessary finance will continue.

Calling all volunteers!

Every successful community depends upon its volunteers and Sherfield is no exception.

The parish council is ably assisted by such groups as The Friends of the Village Hall and the Village Green Volunteers, to name just two. The next important date in the Village Green diary is the planting of the trees and shrubs received under the Hedgerow Harvest Scheme. Can you spare a couple of hours in November to assist the volunteers? Please contact Sandy Johnston (882507), Bruce Batting (882605) or Jane Jordan (880852).



Sherfield Park Community Centre would also like to hear from you if you can spare a few hours a month to support its increasing range of activities or if you would simply like to become a member.

For more information go to: volunteers@sherfieldparkcommunity.co.uk

Parish Council Finances

The parish council obtains the majority of its funding from the parish precept which is collected on its behalf by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council via the council tax billing system. Every autumn the parish council fixes its budgets for the coming financial year and requests the sum it needs to operate from the borough council which then levies corresponding amounts on every household in the parish.

This year members were forced to increase the precept for the first time since 2008/09 and this was largely due to the unauthorised encampment on the village green last year resulting in not only clean-up and legal costs, but also measures to ensure that there is no repeat of the incident.

A copy of the audited accounts may be obtained upon request from the parish clerk—a nominal charge to cover printing and postage costs will apply to hard copies.

This year's budgeting process will again be a balancing act to ensure that essential services can be maintained without putting an unacceptable burden on the tax-payers of the parish. Early indications are that there may be a standstill or, at worse, a cut in grant aid from the borough council. The parish council has made the effects of this quite clear to the borough council.



Next Year and beyond

Fortunately, the parish council does not need finances to carry out all of its duties and will continue to be a voice in planning matters, particularly in opposing large scale development in this area, and in continuing discussions with Hampshire County Council in traffic calming measures. The village green is “the jewel in the crown” and protection of this as a public space to be enjoyed by all remains paramount. The parish council is the corporate trustee of the village hall and will continue to protect and renovate the building for the benefit of residents. The building is managed on a daily basis by a dedicated and professional committee who give their time freely to ensure its existence.

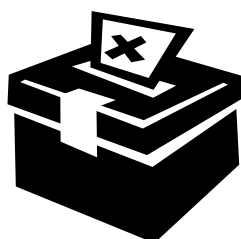
Lastly, despite the financial climate, other sources of funding will continue to be vigorously explored to finance capital projects such as play equipment.

..... And finally

In May 2012 the parish council elections will take place when the current members will reach the end of their term in office and will need to seek re-election if they want to continue. Would you like to have a say in how your parish is run? Do you think you could make a useful contribution?

No special qualities are required to become a parish councillor, just a strong interest in your local environment and a desire to serve your community. The only requirement is your time as it is expected that councillors will also serve on committees and have input to local events. Any of the current councillors will be pleased to answer your questions if you are unsure of the commitment.

The timetables for the elections will start to be published on the notice boards in March so, if you want to accept the challenge, then keep an eye out!



Contact your Parish Councillors

Ivan Gosden (Chairman)	01256 881007
Bruce Jones (Vice chairman)	01256 882881
Alan Ball	01256 883838
Bruce Batting	01256 882605
Ken Clark	01256 882846
John Darker	01256 882334
Sally Hennessey	01256 880224
Sandy Johnston	01256 882507
David Leivesley	01256 882938
Loraine Smith	01256 881498
Parish Clerk:	
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