

## MINUTES OF THE SHERE PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

HELD ON FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2010 AT 8 P.M.

**Present:** The Mayor of Guildford Councillor Pauline Searle, the Mayor's Escort Mr Victor Searle, Professor Paul Moorcraft, Dr Candace Brooke (Chairman of Shere Parish Council) and ten other Parish Councillors, the Clerk, Surrey County Councillor K. Taylor, Borough Councillor D. Wright and six members of the public.

**Apologies for Absence** were submitted on behalf of Borough Councillor D. Wright, Hon. Alderman K. Childs, Parish Councillors D. Hall and J. Tenner.

**The Minutes** of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009 were approved and signed as a correct record.

### **Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council**

The Chairman commenced the meeting by extending a very warm welcome to those present and especially to Her Worship the Mayor of Guildford and to Professor Moorcraft who had agreed to give a talk during the meeting.

Dr. Brooke stated that Shere Parish is geographically the largest in the Borough of Guildford serving the villages of Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Peaslake, Shere and large parts of Abinger Hammer. The population is 3,500 and the Parish also attracts a large number of visitors every year including many school groups.

10 full council meetings had been held during the year with an average attendance of 11.2 councillors and 2.3 members of the public, the same number as the previous year. In addition 23 other Committee and Working Group meetings had been held. The Planning Committee had considered approximately 135 planning applications and made site visits and attended planning hearings when necessary. The Chairman thanked all Councillors for their excellent service, hard work and dedication during the year and also Borough Councillors Roy Hogben and David Wright and Surrey County Councillor Keith Taylor for their regular attendance at Council meetings and the additional insights they contributed.

Routine services provided by the Parish Council during the year included maintenance and safety management of much land owned or leased by Shere Parish Council, the upkeep of bus shelters, seats, notice boards and village signs, operation of the well-frequented public toilets in Shere, tourism information point and Residents' helpline.

### **Achievements during the year**

The Chairman stated that she felt very honoured to be the Chairman to be able to say that work on the long awaited car park in Shere had now commenced! Work should be completed mid May when the Parish Council will take over its management and will operate it as a free car park. This should, hopefully, improve the parking situation in Shere. She thanked Hon. Alderman Keith Childs for thirty years of unwavering determination in seeing the car park built.

The Community Speedwatch scheme has been successfully operating in Peaslake and Holmbury St. Mary. Speedwatch sites have been identified in Gomshall and Shere to enable the scheme to be extended and training for new volunteers will take place in the near future.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Williams for spear heading the scheme which, hopefully, will result in reduced speeds and a safer environment in the villages.

Upper Street, Shere – another long-standing project which unfortunately has made only minor progress this year. During last summer the Parish Council in partnership with Surrey County Council trialled two temporary build-outs at the lower end of Upper Street, one of which is a condition of the car park planning permission. As the speed survey results showed a reduction of only 1 m.p.h. it was decided that only the build-out required under the car park planning approval to improve sight lines would be retained.

The Parish Council's claim for a modification to the public rights of way map to include a path in Holmbury St. Mary was finally successful and the Chairman thanked the many residents who also attended the public enquiry to support the case.

The phase out of the use of bark and replacement with rubberised safety surfaces has continued. The Millennium Play Area in Gomshall was very successfully completed in 2009 and a scheme for the Shere Play Area very recently completed. This policy will continue next year with new safety surfacing being planned for Peaslake and, hopefully, Holmbury St. Mary play areas.

School Admissions – with the deciding criterion now based on straight line distance rural areas are bound to be at a huge disadvantage. A questionnaire has been circulated around rural parishes in Surrey in order to ascertain the problems facing other parishes and the Parish Council will review the results in due course.

### **Disappointments**

The Parish Council is still continuing the battle to get London Lane closed to traffic as it contributes considerably to flooding in the village.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that the ongoing problems with the state of Surrey's roads are a constant cause for concern. Representations have been made to Surrey County Council and whilst potholes are being filled, there seems to be little hope of major improvement due to a lack of funding.

Due to various complications in other areas which need to be solved, legal agreements are still awaited to enable the Parish Council to take ownership of various parcels of land in Holmbury St. Mary. In addition the transfer of Felday Chapel in Holmbury St. Mary to the Parish Council has been delayed due to land registry problems.

### **Finance**

The precept for 2009/10 was £111,618. Most of this was allocated for the maintenance and services that the Parish Council carried out during the year together with staffing and insurance costs. However, the Council's total income for the year was actually £191,951 which included £55,000 in grant aid from Guildford Borough Council together with small amounts from other sources. The annual expenditure has therefore been £198,706 as many projects have been completed.

Donations were awarded to Gomshall Veterans' Club (£250), Surrey Air Ambulance (£250), Mobile Physiotherapy (£600), Holmbury Emergency Help (£150), Wasp Bus (£1,000), Crimestoppers (£35), Hurtwood Control (£800), Sita for Shere Recreation Ground (£1,000),

Shere Museum (£646), Shere Village Hall (£1,000), Holmbury Village Hall (£1,000), Shere Surgery for the use of their car park at weekends (£400).

The Precept for 2010/11 is £115,919 (£59.75 per Band D property). The increase on last year (£1.50 per annum for a Band D property) is entirely due to the loss of bank interest. Projects for the coming year include improving the drainage in the field adjacent to Shere Swimming Pool, continuing to upgrade the playground safety surfaces and £2,000 towards the long term maintenance of Tanyard Hall.

### **Thanks**

The Chairman thanked voluntary workers David Colebrook for his work on the surface of Peaslake Field (to enable the Parish Council to meet its insurance requirements for youngsters to play in the area) and his sister in law Judy Colebrook for planting and maintaining the flower tubs in the centre of Peaslake. Thanks were also given to Graham Eusden, Christine Gorsuch and her team for caring for the ducks in Shere, the Council's contractors Brian Hilsdon and Graham Rapley and the Council's internal auditor Malcolm Foster. Final thanks went to Kenny Madgwick, the Old Fire Station caretaker, who has retired due to ill health. Dr. Brooke praised his dedication to his work and stated that he will be greatly missed.

The meeting then adjourned for light refreshments.

**The meeting restarted** and the Chairman introduced Professor Paul Moorcraft, a Gomshall resident, who had just returned from taking a group of observers to the elections in Sudan. She stated that Professor Moorcraft has been an international media relations expert, former senior instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and UK Joint Services Command and Staff College. He is a crisis management consultant to various large companies and Government organisations and has written a wide range of books on military history, politics and crime and is author of the Anchoress of Shere.

Professor Moorcraft then gave a very interesting and informative talk on his work as a freelance producer and war correspondent with particular emphasis on his experiences in the wars in Afganistan and Iraq. He also very kindly answered many questions that were asked by some of those present at the meeting.

**Finally** the public were offered the opportunity to raise any matters in relation to the Chairman's report or regarding the Parish but no questions were forthcoming.

The meeting concluded with the Chairman thanking the Mayor for attending and Professor Moorcraft for giving his interesting talk.