

MINUTES OF THE SHERE PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 3RD MAY 2013 AT 8 P.M.

Present: Cllr Roger Newman (Chairman), Cllrs: C Brooke, R. Davey, J. Hutton, B. Grover, R. Andrews, B. Cohen, M. Taylor-Cotter, M. Urban, R. Smith & four members of the public

Apologies for Absence: Cllr John Tenner, Cllr Chris Carlisle, (not present David Hall)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman explained that this was not a normal Parish Council meeting. It was a statutory requirement that gives the Chairman the opportunity to tell the Parishioners what the Parish Council has been up to over the past year.

Shere Parish Council was a non political one, unlike some in the Borough. Councillors didn't claim any remuneration for their work, unlike some in the County.

Shere Parish was easily the largest in area in Guildford Borough. Most other Parishes served one village only, whilst Shere Parish Council served the villages of Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Peaslake, Shere and a large part of Abinger Hammer excluding the village centre. Total electorate was approximately 2,840 although true population was probably in the region of 3,500. Also, a large number of tourists visited the Parish each year including hundreds of bikers and many school groups plus film companies used the Parish for location shoots.

Peaslake remained the most popular mountain biking location in the south east of England. There had also been the Olympic road races through the Parish and there was to be a repeat, only with bigger numbers in August and the Tour of Britain in September! The Chairman questioned whether this was something to look forward to.

9 Full Council meetings had been held during the year, and many other Committee meetings, such as Planning, Playground, Parish Maintenance, Health and Safety, Finance, Tanyard Hall etc. were attended by almost all the Councillors. In addition, representatives of the Council attended meetings of Peaslake Memorial Hall, Shere Village Hall, Holmbury St. Mary Village Hall, Shere Recreation Ground, Surrey County Association of Parish and Town Councils, Police, Wasp Bus (Wotton, Abinger and Shere Parish Bus).

There were 13 Councillors split across 3 wards. Sally Neilsen resigned during the year for personal and work commitment reasons and the Chairman stated that he was personally very grateful for her time and efforts during the time she had been a councillor. He hoped to see her back one day. As a result of her departure, Brian Grover was co-opted to the Council. Brian lives in Shere and replaced Sally on the North Ward.

The Chairman also noted the retirement of the long serving Clerk, Lesley Childs and thanked her for all the effort she had put into this Parish over the years. Shere Parish Council would not have been the same without all her hard work and commitment to the Parish.

She had been replaced by Joy Millett, also a resident of Shere, who started in January and was settling in brilliantly.

Routine Services

Routine services provided by the Parish Council during the year included the maintenance and safety management of much land owned or leased by Shere Parish Council (including 4 village centres, 5 play areas, 5 recreation grounds, the upkeep of bus shelters, seats, notice boards and village signs throughout the Parish, operation of the well-frequented public toilets in Shere, tourism information point and Residents' helpline. The Council arranged grass cutting for 34 separate areas in the Parish and had recently applied for and acquired a grant from Surrey County Council to help pay for some of these services.

Achievements this Year

Shere Diamond Jubilee Library was opened in the Village Hall by the Lord of the Manor, Handa Bray, and was now opening regularly with volunteers helping to run it, many in conjunction with the Museum. Books were recycled regularly by the Surrey County Council Library Service. The Council had also held meetings in the space available in the library.

The Chairman also spoke about a number of meetings with the rail authorities over time about trying get improvements made in train services at Gomshall station and there had been some success. A bridge was to be erected over the railway at the station this year and the pedestrian crossing would then be closed.

The Council also now had an Emergency Plan in operation which combined with Borough and County Council plans. A dummy run of it to check its practicability was to be run one day this year.

To commemorate the Olympic Torch coming through Shere and the Olympic Road races, Tony Reid had helped the Council plant a tree on the approach to the village at the top of Gomshall Lane.

London Lane, in Shere had been closed to 4 x 4's again during the winter and this had been a great success with hardly any silt flooding into Shere Village during the winter months. The Council was still seeking full closure and this was supported by Borough and County Councillors. The Council had also emptied the soakaway on a regular basis.

Shere Parish Council had also supported local Jubilee celebrations.

Finance

The precept for 2012/13 was £116,085.

In addition, £5,000 had been carried forward for Upper Street traffic calming and £2,500 for possible improvements to the area around the telephone box in the centre of Peaslake.

Donations given included:

- South West Surrey Mobile Physiotherapy Service - £750
- Gomshall Veterans Club - £250
- Surrey Air Ambulance - £300
- Friends of the Hurtwood - £1,000
- Jubilee celebrations in Holmbury St Mary - £250 (from the SE ward account)
- Citizens Advice Bureau (Guildford) - £400
- WASP Bus Project - £1,000
- Victim Support - £100
- Shere Village Nursery - £110

Precept 2013/14 - £110,879 plus Council Tax Support Grant of £5,303.

Projects this new financial year included the skate and ride facility and possible installation of bollards at Tanyard Hall to prevent unauthorised parking resulting in loss of bookings and lack of parking spaces for the public and councillors when attending meetings.

The Council was also investigating whether having CCTV around the recreation ground, museum, village halls and car park in Shere would reduce acts of vandalism.

The Council was still considering other facilities for the teenagers in the Parish.

The Council would be replacing a very popular piece of playground equipment in Gomshall play area. Unfortunately, the cross scales had become very worn and dangerous and were to be replaced by a very interesting Pendulum swing that the Chairman felt the kids and parents alike would enjoy.

Thanks to: Parish Councillors, Guildford Borough Councillors Richard Billington and David Wright, Surrey County Councillor Keith Taylor, David Colebrook filling in rabbit damage in Peaslake, Judy Colebrook for maintaining the flower tubs in Peaslake, Christine Gorsuch (and the team) and Graham Eusden for caring for the white Shere ducks, Malcolm Foster, the Parish Council's internal auditor, Brian Hilsdon and Graham Rapley, the Council's contractors.

The Chairman announced that he would be retiring in May as he had moved out of the Parish and did not think it was right that he should be Chairman, as one needed to be close to the Parish to do the job properly. He also announced that he was getting married and so would have something else that he should be concentrating on!

Questions from the public – no matters were raised.

Mr Mark Lebus, Director of LC Energy, then gave a very interesting talk on the Wood Fuel Industry, followed by questions.

This was followed by refreshments.