

MINUTES OF THE SHERE PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.

DRAFT

Present: Cllr R.Davey (Chairman) & Cllrs: A.Collingwood, M.Fontana, B.Grover, C.Carlisle, R.Smith, J.Tenner, M.Urban. Also present: Joy Millett (Clerk), Bronya Greatrex (Assistant to the Parish Clerk) & 11 members of the public

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs: M.Taylor-Cotter and C.Brooke

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman emphasised that this was not a normal Parish Council meeting but a statutory requirement for the electors of the Parish that gives the Parishioners an opportunity to ask any questions they have. It was also an opportunity for the Chairman to give a summary of the past year and what the coming year holds.

Constancy

Shere Parish Council was a non-political Council, unlike some in the Borough and an entirely voluntary Council. This means that the Councillors did not claim any remuneration for their work.

Shere Parish was still the largest in area in Guildford Borough. It served 4 villages: the villages of Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Peaslake, Shere and a 5th area, being a large part of Abinger Hammer excluding the village centre. The Chairman explained that the Parish was unique in the amount of land it owned and leased. It was also unique in the tourists and film companies it attracted, which influenced the Parish greatly by way of the facilities it was able to provide. The Chairman commented that this sometimes came at a cost, one being the high level of cycling events in the area.

Changes

The Chairman also highlighted the changes that had taken place over the past year. There had been a debate over how best to restructure meetings and the committee system. Two new committees were established during the year. The first of these was the General Purposes Committee which encompassed the old Tanyard Hall, Playground and Maintenance committees due to the strong relationship between all three of these. The second was the Human Resources Committee that was set up on recommendation to ensure that the Council dealt properly with its few employed staff.

11 Full Council meetings had been held during the year, which was an increase on the 9 held the previous year. This increase had been due to a desire to hold Council meetings before the 15th of each month in order to coincide with the printing of the Parish magazine so a report

could be published in this each month. Planning meetings had previously been held after Council meetings but these had been split to give Councillors more time to discuss items on the Council meeting agenda. This meant that Planning meetings had been held on a 3 week cycle resulting in a total of 17 meetings over the last year. There had also been a push to hold meetings at various venues across the Parish. It had been decided that twice a year a meeting would be held in Peaslake Village Hall and Holmbury St Mary Village Hall to include all the Wards of the Parish. One meeting had recently been held at the newly refurbished village hall in Holmbury St Mary but unfortunately had not had the desired effect of attracting more members of the public to attend.

There were currently 12 Councillors split across the 3 wards within the Parish. Roger Newman, David Hall and Brian Cohen all resigned during the year and the Chairman personally thanked all three for their hard work and commitment during their time as Councillors. Roger Newman had retired as Chairman last year and had served on the Council for many years. As a result two new Councillors, Alissa Collingwood and Melanie Fontana, had been co-opted to the Council. Both were Councillors of the North Ward with Alissa living in Gomshall and Melanie in Shere. There was a casual vacancy in the South West Ward of the Parish (Peaslake) due to Brian Cohen's resignation. A request for an election had been received by the Electoral Registration Officer at Guildford Borough Council and an election was due to be held on 26th June at Peaslake Village Hall.

The Chairman explained that Joy Millet had now served as the Shere Parish Clerk for just over a year. It was decided that an additional member of staff was needed and Chris Howard was appointed as her temporary assistant in September last year. Chris Howard had since left after being offered an opportunity in a different role and had recently been replaced by Bronya Greatrex.

Challenges

The Chairman explained that the first challenge that the Parish Council had had to face was the increasing number of cyclists and cycle races that had been held in and around the Parish. Chris Carlisle had led the Council on this issue and along with Raymond Smith and Robert Andrews had attended many meetings to represent the Council and the Parishioners on this issue. The Council had been concerned with Surrey County Council's willingness to close roads in the Parish and the increased aggravation between cyclists and other road users. The aim of the Council had been to help Surrey County Council understand the effect these cyclists and races had on the Parish and perhaps in the short term to secure some financial benefit for the imposition.

The Chairman reported that works on the Shere Traffic Calming measures were currently underway. These were in response to extensive public consultation and deliberations by the Shere Traffic Working Group. There had been concern expressed to the Council for many years over the extent, speed and nature of the traffic coming through Shere village. One proposal discussed at the public consultation was the implementation of a one way system,

however it was felt that the proposals that had been put forward by the Council would be sufficient and hopefully removed the need for this.

An additional proposal that came out of the public consultation on traffic calming measures was a ban on heavy goods vehicles. This was something that had to be dealt with separately to the initial Shere Traffic Calming measures and it was suggested by the local committee at Surrey County Council that a petition may accelerate the process. An e-petition had been set up and a number of paper copies distributed around the Parish to petition Surrey County Council to implement a 7.5ton HGV ban through Shere Village. The Chairman reported that he would be presenting the petition to Surrey County Council on the 25th June. He would clearly set out the route that needed bypassing and the proposed alternative route along Park Road and New Road which was far better suited to these types of vehicles with only a small number of houses well set back from the road.

The main concern over the last year had been to ensure the protection of the Parish under Guildford Borough Council's new Local Plan. The Chairman discussed that a number of Councillors and himself had attended a consultation meeting at the invitation of Guildford Borough Council to discuss the draft local plan and its impact on villages. It was reported that, to date, Guildford Borough Council have stated in their draft local plan that Shere and Gomshall will continue to be washed over by the Green Belt and that the two potential development areas that were originally identified in the area had NOT been included. They had been thought to be unsuitable by Guildford Borough Council who had challenged their consultant's proposals for development in these areas. The Chairman expressed concern on behalf of the Parish Council at the high levels of proposed house building within the borough and explained that the Parish Council's position was still that the proposals in the Local Plan should be need and not demand led.

Cash/Contributions

The Precept for 2014/2015 will be £113,651 plus Council Tax Support Grant of £5,303. This was the first time the Precept has gone up in a number of years and represented a 2.5% increase. The Parish Council had tried to keep the precept figure as low as it can, despite the looming threat of Surrey County Council's pension black hole and a temporary loss of houses in the Parish. It had done this by moving monies around so that it could still not only run the parish council properly but also help out with local projects.

Donations given included:

- South West Surrey Mobile Physiotherapy Service - £750
- Gomshall Veterans Club - £250
- Surrey Air Ambulance - £300
- Friends of the Hurtwood - £1,000
- Citizens Advice Bureau (Cranleigh) - £400
- WASP Bus Project - £1,000
- Victim Support - £100
- Crimestoppers - £35

Thanks to grant aid from the Parish Council, Guildford Borough Council and the County Council, not to mention the hard work of many local volunteers the village hall in Holmbury St. Mary had been newly refurbished. Although further work was proposed to improve the car park.

Projects planned for this financial year included improvements to Peaslake village hall, a new Parish Council web-site, CCTV and lights around Shere Car Park and the installation of adult fitness equipment in our play areas.

A Planning permission application had been submitted for the siting of a skate-ramp at Shere Recreation Ground. This had followed an open discussion with the residents in the area and a noise survey to ensure that the level of noise coming from the recreation ground would be of an acceptable level. Funds had been approved and reserved for the erection of this skate-ramp sometime this year.

Conservation and Improvements

The path by Shere Swimming pool had recently been resurfaced. However some concern was expressed about loose stones on the pathway and its accessibility to wheelchair and pushchair users. As a result the original contractors had removed some of the stones and were due to lay a more suitable top layer.

The Chairman expressed disappointment that the new car park in Shere was already in such poor condition and largely unfit for purpose. Guildford Borough Council had agreed that the car park was not yet in a fit state to be taken over for continued maintenance by the Parish council and were considering ways of remedying the surfacing issues more permanently. Other similar projects planned for the coming year were improvements to the car parks in both Holmbury St Mary and Peaslake.

A new duck house had also been purchased and set up by the riverside in Shere to replace the old one that had become rotten and beyond repair.

The Chairman welcomed any suggestions for improvements or new projects within the Parish from the Parishioners.

Thanks to: Joy Millett (Parish Clerk), Bronya Greatrex (Assistant to the Parish Clerk), Councillors, Guildford Borough Councillors Richard Billington and David Wright, Surrey County Councillor Keith Taylor, David Colebrook for 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, Brian Hilsdon and Graham Rapley, the Council's contractors and Melanie Fontana and Tristan Greatrex for their gardening and improvement works around the village, including the Pound and Forge Cottages.

Questions from the public

Questions were asked about the possibility of further HGV bans and traffic calming measures in other areas of the Parish such as Burrows Lane and Queens Street. The Chairman suggested that we should re-evaluate the situation after the Shere Traffic Calming measures had been completed in order to assess whether these had eased the issue generally within the Parish.

Concern was expressed by a number of individuals that cars were parking inappropriately on the pavements in Shere Village making it dangerous to walk through the village. It was decided that the Parish Council would look into cutting back the foliage alongside some of the pavements and that measures such as erecting bollards could be considered in more detail. The Chairman explained that he had spoken to Guildford Borough Council a number of times to emphasise the need for traffic policing in the Parish, especially if the Council wanted to promote the village as a tourist destination.

Keith Taylor:

- Directed the Parishioners to the Environment Agency website where you could sign up for flood warnings;
- Asked that we send him feedback on the effectiveness of any CCTV installed within the Parish;
- Proposed that in future he would feedback to us on rural crime issues as a member of the Police Crime Panel.

Katie Brennan, Engagement Manager of Surrey Superfast Broadband Programme, then gave a very interesting talk on the implementation of superfast fibre optic broadband across Surrey. The program will be completed in December 2014 and a review of properties that are still suffering from slow speeds will take place in June.

The main message was that you will not be upgraded automatically to Superfast Broadband. In order to take up a fibre broadband service, you must contact an Internet Service Provider to find out what fibre services they offer.

She then answered various questions from the public about their individual experiences of superfast broadband and the suitability of the service for their circumstances.

To check the download speed you can expect to achieve:

www.btwholesale.com/includes/adsl/main.html

To see if your postcode has been set up for fibre optic broadband:

www.superfastsurrey.org.uk

This was followed by refreshments.