

SHERE PARISH COUNCIL

Serving the villages of Gomshall, Holmbury St Mary, Peaslake, Shere and a large part of Abinger Hammer



ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014

Chairman's Report

Your Parish Council's continues to work on your behalf to make the Parish a more pleasant place in which to live and work. This Annual Report not only tells you what your Parish Council has done in the past year but also gives details of some important projects that the Council hopes to progress in the current year. Information on the role, structure and contact details of the Council appears at the end of the report.

Constancy

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

Shere Parish is the largest in the area within Guildford Borough. It serves 4 villages: the villages of Gomshall, Holmbury St Mary, Peaslake and Shere and a 5th area, being a large part of Abinger Hammer excluding the village centre. The Parish is unique in the amount of land it owns and leases and in the tourist and film companies attracted to it. These influence the Parish greatly by way of the facilities it is able to offer as a result.

Changes

Restructuring of meetings and the Committee system

After much debate on how best to restructure Parish Council meetings and the committee system, two new committees have been established over the last year. The first of these is the General Purposes Committee which encompasses the old Tanyard Hall, Playground and Maintenance Committees due to the strong relationship between the three. The second is the Human Resources Committee which was set up on recommendation to ensure that the Council properly dealt with its few employed staff.

A number of changes have also been made to the scheduling of meetings. There has been a slight increase in the number of full Council meetings held, this has 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. A report on the work of the Council and any recent updates may be found in the Parish magazine each month. Planning Committee meetings have also been moved and are now held on a separate night to Council meetings. This is to give Councillors more time to discuss the Council agenda. It was also decided during the last year that twice a year meetings should be held in Peaslake Village Hall and Holmbury St Mary Village Hall in order to include all Wards of the Parish. Unfortunately, to-date, this has not had the desired effect of attracting more members of the public to attend.

People

Three of our Councillors: Roger Newman, David Hall and Brian Cohen all resigned during the year and we extend our thanks to all three for their hard work and commitment during their time with us. Roger Newman retired from his position of Chairman and had served on the Council for many years. As a result of their departure we are pleased to announce that three new Councillors have been co-

opted to the Council. Melanie Fontana and Alissa Collingwood now form part of the North Ward (Shere & Gomshall) team and Jim Collin has recently joined the South West (Peaslake) Ward team.

This year the Assistant Clerk of the Parish Council, Chris Howard also left to pursue other opportunities and was replaced by Bronya Greatrex. She joins Joy Millet who has now served as Shere Parish Clerk for just over a year and has well established herself within this complex and demanding role.

Challenges

Maintaining a balanced relationship with Cyclists

As promised in last year's Annual Report more work has been done to ensure that Surrey County Council appreciates the effect cyclists and races have on the Parish. Chris Carlisle, the Parish Council's Vice Chairman, together with Holmbury and Peaslake ward Councillors Raymond Smith and Bob Andrews attended many meetings to represent the Council and the Parishioners on this issue. One of their tasks, in the short term, has been to secure some financial benefit for the Parish for the imposition caused by some of the larger, organised events that often pass through the villages.

Traffic Calming measures

For many years there has been concern over the extent, speed and nature of traffic choosing to travel along the roads of Shere. After extensive public consultation and deliberations by the Shere Traffic Working Group, the traffic calming measures are well underway. One proposal discussed at the public consultation was the possibility of a one way system through the village however we hope that the new works will eliminate any need for such a system in the future.

7.5 ton HGV prohibition through Shere village

The inconvenience caused by HGVs travelling through Shere village was one of the major areas of concern highlighted by last autumn's public consultation on traffic calming measures. 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. As such an e-petition was set up and a number of paper copies distributed around Shere. The petition called for a ban on 7.5ton HGV's passing through Shere Village and aimed to protect and preserve the beautiful village and listed buildings that are frequently damaged by large articulated trucks. The petition was presented to the local committee at Surrey County Council on 25th June and proposed an alternative route along Park Road and New Road which is far better suited to these type of vehicles, with only a small number of houses well set back from the road. This petition is now under consideration and a body of evidence has been sent to the Local Committee members in its support.

Guildford Borough Council's Local Plan

The main concern over the last year has been to ensure the protection of the Parish under Guildford Borough Council's new Local Plan. It was initially understood by the Council, that should the Borough Council be unable to identify sufficient sustainable land within the borough, two potential development areas had been identified within Shere Parish.

We are pleased to report that under the draft local plan Shere and Gomshall will remain washed over by the Green Belt and the two potential development areas that were originally identified within Shere Parish have NOT been included. These potential development areas had been thought to be unsuitable by Guildford Borough Council who had challenged their consultant's proposals for development in these areas.

The Parish Council were invited to meet with Guildford Borough Councillors Stephen Mansbridge (Leader of the Council) and Monika Juneja (Lead member for Planning & Governance) to discuss the impact of the draft Local Plan on villages. The Parish Councillors continued to express concern at the high levels of proposed house building within the borough. The Parish Council also reiterated their position that the proposals in the Local Plan should be need and not demand led.

At the time of going to press, the draft local plan has been approved for public consultation. This 12-week consultation period is due to finish on 22nd September and gives local people an opportunity to have their say in the future development of the borough. More information on the draft local plan can be found online at: <http://guildfordlocalplan.info/>

Cash/Contributions

Finance

The Precept is the money raised by the Parish Council through the Council Tax. It funds the Clerks salary costs and all routine costs of 'maintaining' the Parish. This also includes all Donations given to support local organizations, and the funding (sometimes with the help of additional Grants obtained) of all projects and additions to the Parish facilities that the Council agrees to undertake. The Precept for 2014/15 is £113,651 plus Council Tax Support Grant of £5,303. This is the first time the Precept has gone up in a number of years and represents a 2.5% increase. The Parish Council has tried to keep the precept figure as low as it can, despite the looming threat of Surrey County Council's pension black hold and a temporary loss of houses in the Parish. It has done this by moving monies around, enabling it to not only to run the Parish Council properly but also to help 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

Grant Aid

Thanks to grant aid from the Parish Council, the Borough Council and the County Council, not to mention the hard work of many local volunteers, the Holmbury St Mary village hall is now a venue to be proud of. Newly refurbished, the hall has large French windows, leading out to a superb patio with a view into the adjacent woodland. It will make a great venue for Parish Council meetings, weddings and other functions in the future. The Parish Council is now looking at funding the re-surfacing of the car park outside the hall and a number of other car parks around the Parish.

Other projects planned for this financial year include improvements to Peaslake village hall, a new Parish Council web-site and CCTV and lights around Shere car park. We are also looking to invest in upgrading some of the play areas, including the installation of some adult fitness equipment, making the parks more accessible to a variety of age groups.

Shere Skate Ramp

Although not strictly required, but in the spirit of openness, the Parish Council recently submitted a planning application for the siting of a skate-ramp on Shere Recreation Group. This application followed discussions with residents in the area and a professional independent survey was conducted to ensure that the noise coming from the recreation group would be of an acceptable level. Funds have been approved and reserved for the erection of this skate-ramp so we hope to see it up and running sometime this year. The skate-ramp will hopefully serve as a facility for the older children and teenagers within the Parish who are currently under catered for.

Conservation and Improvements

Shere Swimming Pool Field Path

Many of you may already have noticed the smart, new path across the swimming pool field. The new path was funded partly by the Parish Council with the help of grant aid from Guildford Borough Council. Although there was some initial concern about loose stones making the pathway inaccessible, further steps have been taken to ensure the path 'beds down' nicely.

Shere Car Park

It is disappointing to report that the surface of the new car park in Shere has already fallen into such disrepair and has become largely unfit for purpose. Guildford Borough Council has agreed that the Parish Council will not be taking over the maintenance of this car park until something has been done to remedy the surfacing issues more permanently. We hope to see improvements in the near future!

New Duck House

After reports that the old duck house had become rotten and that the ducks were being pestered by rats, a new duck house was purchased. The new house has been set up by the riverside in Shere and the ducks appear to have settled in nicely to their new home.

Thanks to:

- Councillors, the Parish Clerk and Assistant Parish Clerk for their time, hard work and dedication;
- Guildford Borough Councillors Richard Billington and David Wright and Surrey County Councillor Keith Taylor for their advice and regular attendance at meetings;
- David Colebrook for ongoing repairs to the playing field in Peaslake;
- Judy Colebrook for maintaining the flower tubs in Peaslake;
- Christine Gorsuch (and the team) and Graham Eusden for caring for the Shere ducks;
- Brian Hilsdon and Graham Rapley, the Council contractors;
- Melanie Fontana and Tristan Greatrex for their gardening and improvement works around Shere village.

ROY DAVEY (Chairman)

Parish Council Information

Its role

At least 9 full Council Meetings are held each year as well as many other Committee meetings. **All Council/Committee meetings are open to the public and there is at least one adjournment during each meeting to enable members of the public to ask questions or to address the Council.** Meetings are usually held in the Council offices at Tanyard Hall. Dates and times of these meetings are published on the village notice boards and on the Council's website. A short report of each Council meeting is published in the Parish magazines and the full Minutes of all recent Council and Committee meetings are available on the Council's website together with the contact details of individual Councillors.

Routine Services provided by the Parish Council

Much of the Council's work each year involves the management of ongoing services across the Parish and involvement in statutory consultation processes. This entails:

Maintenance and safety management of land and buildings in the Parish which the Council owns or leases (including 4 village centres, 5 play areas, 5 recreational areas, Tanyard Hall and 4 car parks). The upkeep of bus shelters, seats, notice boards and village signs within the Parish. Grass cutting of 34 different areas and the provision of the public toilets in Shere

The Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications in the Parish and liaises with other authorities e.g. Police, Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council. It is also Consultee on a whole range of policy documents from other authorities.

How to contact Shere Parish Council for assistance or information:

Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer -: Joy Millett
Council Office: Tanyard Hall, 30 Station Road, Gomshall, GU5 9LF. Telephone 01483 203431
Email – clerk2009@ShereParishCouncil.gov.uk website – shereparishcouncil.gov.uk
Please note that all correspondence for the Council should be sent to the Clerk, Ms Joy Millett, at Tanyard Hall.

Councillors (as at July 2014):

North Ward (Shere & Gomshall)

Roy Davey (Chairman)
Fernside, Upper Street, Shere, GU5 9JE 01483 202443
roymdavey@easymail.rmplc.co.uk

Candace Brooke
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Alissa Collingwood
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Melanie Fontana
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James Hutton
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ei@handr.co.uk

Brian Grover
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bgrover@talktalk.net

South East Ward (Holmbury St. Mary & a large part of Abinger Hammer)

Bob Andrews
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bobaandrews@btinternet.com

Christopher Carlisle (Vice-Chairman)
Upfolds House, Holmbury Lane, Holmbury St. Mary, RH5 6ND 01306 621209
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Raymond Smith
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South West Ward (Peaslake)

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