

# SHERE PARISH COUNCIL

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



## ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

### Chairman's Report

The Parish Council works on your behalf – its aim is to exercise its powers and responsibilities to guard and maintain those features of the Parish felt to be most valued by the community, and to identify and sponsor community supported changes that will enhance the Parish as a place in which to live and work. This Annual Report is one means by which, together with reports on Council business found on the Parish website, and reports printed in the Parish magazine, we try to give some idea of what the Council is doing and has done, and how the precept you pay through the Council tax is used on your behalf.

Feedback from individuals and groups – be it positive or negative, formal or informal - is always welcome as it helps to inform our decisions. Feedback also gives some measure of the differing views within the community on how the Parish should balance preserving the current environment with meeting the needs of the future - for us as residents - as well as meeting the demands of the many visitors that come to share the pleasures of the Parish that we enjoy - remembering that visitors help to sustain many of the businesses and facilities that we as villagers welcome.

**Peaslake Farm** - this project remains the largest and most significant item on the Council's 'work in progress' itinerary. The last annual newsletter concluded its report on this item by confirming the result of the Parish-wide consultation exercise and looking forward to a June Special Council Meeting to decide on exactly which 'project' to adopt, and begin to proceed to implement over the 12 months of the Council year just concluded.

The decision of the Special Meeting was to utilise the yard area solely for affordable housing, whilst ensuring the fields were used only for agricultural purposes.

Since this decision, the following has been undertaken:

- Consultation with the Borough Planning Department helped the Council to determine and agree the transparent process we should adopt to identify and contract with a suitable 'partner' to undertake the planning, construction and ongoing management and maintenance of the development, under the Council's oversight, and with ongoing community consultation .
- We have written to every household in the Parish explaining the circumstances and conditions that will govern eligibility for renting one of the houses when built, and sought expressions of interest from local residents/those with strong local connections who believe they qualify and will wish to apply. This is to re-confirm the scale of need/interest and more importantly provide help in establishing exactly the most appropriate mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties for the site, within the overall number to be built. This research has in fact brought forward expressions of interest from 45 individuals/families
- We have completed a Pre-Planning Application and received helpful advice, the general conclusion of which is that our plans as consulted on should be well received when submitted as a formal planning application. Also that it would be as easy to proceed directly with a Full Planning Application as with an

Outline Planning Application, which had been our original intention.

- Now, expressions of interest to build and manage the new homes will be invited and the means of protecting the future use of the fields will be investigated.

**Parish Environment** – improvement and repair, both aesthetically and physically, of the Parish's roads, verges, open spaces etc. is an ongoing task. It is featured strongly in the lobbying and chasing efforts of Joy and Suzanne in the office, and the respective ward councillors, over the last year.

In **Peaslake**, the efforts of the Ward Councillors and the office were successful in getting the Highways Department to a) improve the safety (and appearance) of the steps that lead to Peaslake School at the junction of Pursers Lane and Mackies Hill and b) protect pedestrians when walking along the narrow section of Peaslake Lane from the Garage to Peaslake Stores via a 'shared' pavement.



In **Holmbury**, ownership of the wide verge that runs along Horsham Road past the garage has been transferred from Highways to the Parish. This has enabled the Parish and Ward Councillors to embark on a project not only to tidy and improve the appearance of this section of road but also to consult the local residents on how these verges might best be modified to meet their local parking concerns. A local resident with extensive professional experience in highways engineering has offered to work with the Councillors to prepare an integrated plan for submission to the Guildford Local Committee which incorporates the verges not only to meet parking needs but also to help slow the speeding traffic along this stretch. It became evident that this in fact was the main concern of residents when a public consultation meeting was recently held.

In **Gomshall**, the Council invested in ground works to the Goose Green playing field to prevent the field turning into a lake whenever there was sustained heavy rain. This meant putting more drainage pipes under the field and bringing additional earth to level the sunken area near to the road end.

The playground was also restored to full operation by putting in a new steel constructed zip-wire and a new suspended 'rope snake swing' - replacing the previous wooden structures which time and frequent use had worn out.

In **Shere**, the Council made use of some of the special 'lengthmen's' funds to cover work on the road and verge outside the Surgery. Conservation kerbstones were laid to establish a clear edge to the road, the erosion of which was repaired, and the verge itself was tidied ready for a new notice board to be erected outside the surgery.

With the help of extra funding from Keith Taylor our Surrey County Councillor, work has been carried out on London Lane to try to 'filter-out' the debris and mud that floods into Shere when heavy rainfall washes it down the Lane. This would enable the water itself to be better directed away

Finally, the riverbank in Lower St and the island in the Square have received some much needed care and attention. Thanks to the efforts of the local Cubs the island has been reseeded and some flowers planted. The river bank has been transformed from the mud bank which it had become to be again an attractive rural grassed sanctuary with seating for locals and visitors in the middle of the village. People - and ducks – will again over the coming months wear out the grass and this means we will need to repeat the work at some point, but the Council believes we just have to accept the high maintenance needs of this area in order to preserve the attractive appearance of this central spot in our village.



### **Sewage/flooding problems in Peaslake and an HGV Ban for Shere village**

– these were the two ongoing issues mentioned in the last newsletter that were proving the most intractable of problems.

Both have received further attention in the year – but still have not achieved a satisfactory answer or conclusion.

There were three further meetings with Thames Water who have in the course of the year carried out further investigations of their sewage system and reviewed the performance of the most recently installed pumps via their monitoring records. Their latest ‘conclusion’ is that all that they are responsible for is working fine. I quote

*‘The flooding back in the winter of 2013/2014 was caused by storm event/events and not by any faults with our infrastructure. I would personally suggest that it would be worth looking into the condition of the surface water ditches to ensure they are maintained and fit for purpose.’*

Thames Water is not responsible for the condition of surface water ditches. These are the responsibility of the individual property owners through whose property or in front of whose property the ditches run.

However Thames Water are going to do more investigative work to find whether there are any points where surface or ground water infiltrates their sewage system, in which case they will take remedial action to restore the integrity of the sewage pipes.

On the question of HGVs it was hoped that the concerns set out in our 2015 petition would be addressed as part of a special area wide ‘HGV and Quiet Lanes Report and Recommendations’ being worked on for Surrey Highways. Whilst the results and recommendations of this study have yet to be considered by the Local Committee the draft we have seen does not offer to deliver what we and other local Parish councils wished to see – an area wide ban on HGVs except for access. So it looks as though we must return to our original petition and argue again with the Local Committee to accept the case and evidence we have assembled for a ban for the village centre.

On a sad but celebratory note **Brian Hilsdon retires** - a familiar, friendly face around our villages. Brian was born in Peaslake and has lived locally all his life, here with his family. After leaving school, he worked at Gomshall Tannery and when it closed he worked for the local specialist surveying company, Hutton & Rostron. This was all whilst working as a part-

time fire-man, eventually being in charge of Gomshall Fire Station for 10 years. Since then he has worked as the Parish Council’s Handyman, for over 20 years. So the Parish Council was sad to learn that he planned to retire this summer. He will however, still be keeping the Old Fire Station public conveniences in Shere, open and running. Everyone at the Parish Council would like to express their sincere thanks to Brian for his hard work in maintaining the Parish and making it look tip top for all these years. They wish him all the very best in his well-earned retirement.



**Finance** - the Precept is the money raised by the Parish Council through the Council Tax. It funds the staff 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 2016/17 is £115,000 plus Council Tax Support Grant of £5,303.

#### **Thanks to:**

- Parish Councillors; Joy Millett, the Parish Clerk and Suzanne Hoyland, 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;
- Christina Gorsuch and the team and caring for the Shere ducks;

- Brian Hilsdon and Graham Rapley, the Council contractors;
- Melanie Fontana, Tristan Greatrex and Annabel Alford-Warren for their gardening and improvement works around Shere village.

**ROY DAVEY (Chairman)**

## Parish Council Information

**Its role** - 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 as regards the facilities it is able to offer and the character of the environment it seeks to preserve.

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 held around the Parish in the village halls. 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:

Council Office: Tanyard Hall, 30 Station Road, Gomshall, GU5 9LF. Tel: 01483 203431

Email – [clerk@ShereParishCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@ShereParishCouncil.gov.uk)  
website – [www.shereparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.shereparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Please note that all correspondence for the Council should be sent to the Clerk, Joy Millett, at Tanyard Hall.

### Councillors (as at May 2015):

#### North Ward (Shere & Gomshall)

Candace Brooke, The Old Netley Mill, Shere Road, Gomshall, GU5 9HA. 01483 203267

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

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#### South West Ward (Peaslake)

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