



SHERE PARISH COUNCIL

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

Chairman's Report

Last year's Annual Newsletter set out two core aims for the Parish Council's work:

'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' - These aims still stand.

Towards the end of this last Council year problems became apparent involving one of the Parish's most unique and valued community assets - one used by many families across the whole Parish - **the Swimming Pool in Shere**. A specialist report was commissioned and identified a need for significant immediate repairs but even more worryingly the report also advised that the pool was very near the end of its practical life – perhaps not surprising, after all it has now been a valued community asset for over 125 years!



The Council relies on the Shere Swimming Pool Club for the operation and safe functioning of the pool but it is the Parish Council that is ultimately responsible for its continuance and health and safety compliance. However, thanks to the excellent work of David Roe (recently elected as Chairman of the Swimming Pool Club) and his Committee, in recognising and taking on the

challenges presented by the report, the necessary repairs were completed in time for the Council to agree this year's opening. Even more importantly for the future, David and his Committee have persuaded the Council to partner and directly support the Swimming Pool Club in a project, to secure sufficient funding for a major re-build and enhancement of the whole facility.

Funding is of course essential for any major 'maintenance project' or initiative but adequate funding is also key to all the less noticeable, more mundane work around the Parish that the Council now undertakes such as: grass cutting, verge maintenance, path clearing and more frequent drain clearance (but not pot-hole filling!). In 2016/17 the Parish Council took up the County Council's 'Lengthmans' scheme whereby in return for us taking on a range of work normally the responsibility of County workmen we received a grant of £8000 to fund this extra direct work. Then behold, central and local Government cutbacks meant this promised annual grant was cancelled BUT THE WORK STAYED WITH US! So we have had to increase the amount budgeted for Parish Maintenance and dip into reserves, to keep the Parish looking as attractive and safe as possible.

Two significant 'land management' projects were completed towards the end of the year. The first was a long overdue exercise to clear the ditches, tidy the boundaries and cut back the large number of overhanging branches of the fields at Peaslake Farm – resulting in a much improved landscape.

The second was to take advantage of some special funding from Surrey County Council and

Keith Taylor our County Councillor, to be able to put in a catch-pit at the bottom of London Lane in Shere to catch silt and rain water run-off. This is to complete the works to prevent the 'mud flooding' of Middle Street and the junction that had become a regular consequence of the impact that heavy rainfall and 4x4s, were having on London Lane.

On capital investment the Parish Council was again able to support/add to community assets via capital grants and expenditure. A £3,000 grant to Peaslake Community Hall enabled them to be able to carry out emergency roof repairs – so the pantomime could be performed in the dry!



The Parish Council also provided the first part of its promised contribution to the costs of improving the steps and pavement outside Peaslake stores by paying for the initial design fees.

Holmbury Play Area was expanded with the addition of a bright new playhouse/slide structure and the children's play area in Shere recreation ground had a new carousel swing to replace a not-used climbing frame.



The Peaslake Farm affordable housing development has progressed with the selection of Greenoak Housing Association as our preferred housing provider – to build and manage the development. This decision was made after the Council had invited interest from a number of Housing Associations and then carried out a

thorough evaluation of a shortlist of three interested providers, each of whom were asked to provide detailed presentations of their credentials and plans, to a Council sub-committee.

In January a meeting was organised by the Parish Council in Peaslake Hall for Greenoak to introduce themselves to the village. They spoke of their approach and philosophy for sustainable developments such as the one planned for the yard and took questions from the audience and confirmed that their aim was to have the houses completed and occupied by mid-2020.

Traffic, parking, cyclists all remain high on the list of concerns raised by people – as does what might be the effect on the Parish of the imposition of parking charges at Newlands Corner later this year – will those wanting long term parking for walking in the area try to migrate to our village parking spaces?

The long waited 'HGV and Quiet Lanes Report and Recommendations' - billed as a holistic approach to addressing problems in the area – eventually came before the Guildford Local Committee. As feared it did not deliver that which local Parishes and Shere in particular, had been seeking – namely any actual ban except for access, of HGVs. Neither did the Committee agree that in the light of their weak response to the area wide problem, they would finally get around to consider the specific case for acting on Shere's very particular needs as presented by our 2015 petition.

This petition is therefore now so lost in the long grass that we shall just have to start the process again with a new petition, backed by even more evidence of the damage done and danger caused by unnecessary HGV traffic through the centre of Shere.

Council has continued to voice concerns about the impact of so many cyclists - both the on-road groups and off-road users of the hills and tracks in the area, especially around Peaslake. Such complaints to Surrey continue to fall on deaf ears however and the London Marathon with its consequent road closures and inconvenience will, following a new agreement by Surrey, continue to cause inconvenience to the Parish and the businesses along the routes through the Parish.

The last year has also seen a steady increase in the level of visitor parking, especially at weekends. The Shere Recreation ground car park has often been full to capacity and increased parking (often inconsiderate parking) in the approach roads and the centre is proving ever more of a problem.

When the recreation ground first determined that they wished to create formal parking along the side of the pitches – from the gate up to the Bowling Green – they asked the Council if we would consider funding the work. Council offered to do this provided it would be open for general public use when not specifically reserved/needed for booked events. In the event they decided not to seek Council funding and have funded the work from their own resources. However, it has been agreed that it will still be open for public use with the Council agreeing a fair annual rent for public usage, when it is not 'reserved' for private use.



We thought this would bring some easing of the parking problems, at least for a period. Our optimism looks to have been misplaced as already it is not unusual to find both the original car park and the new area both totally full!

We hope the Parish is still for most of the time a pleasant special place to live and that 'sharing it' with visitors is something to be expected and accepted. It is a fact that Shere is regarded as 'one of the most picturesque villages in Surrey' (quote from Surrey Life!) and so attracts large numbers of visitors. This does result in pressure on space and facilities especially at weekends - and some additional costs in keeping up standards. The river bank by the bridge in Shere is a case in point. At the start of the year the Parish Council agreed that it needed to be re-turfed and some additional cobbles should be laid around the benches to extend the life of the new

grass. But the area already needs restoring again - less than twelve months after it was last done.



Tourism concentrated on small communities, does need managing where possible and we have begun a conversation with the Guildford Tourism and Rural Economy officers about ideas for helping us to do this more effectively – and it is an issue we intend to consult on more widely in the coming year.

A final note on the Council's efforts on your behalf is to point out that despite financial cuts from Central and Local Government we have deliberately kept the Parish precept for 18/19 the same as the year just completed – a decision we hope is welcomed in these uncertain times.

Roy Davey (Chairman)

Thanks to:

- Parish Councillors; Joy Millett, 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, Christopher Rapley and Graham Rapley, the Council contractors;
- Melanie Fontana, Tristan Greatrex and Annabel Alford-Warren for their gardening and improvement works around Shere village.

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: 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 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:

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

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