

Annual Parish Assembly – 9.5.14

CHAIRMAN: Vaughan Clarke

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

MINUTES OF THE SHEET ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – FRIDAY, 9TH MAY 2014 AT 7.30 P.M. AT SHEET VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Vaughan Clarke (in the Chair) Ron Dark
Will Glancy Laz Dudas Gail Martin

IN ATTENDANCE: Guy Stacpoole (District Councillor)
Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

9 members of the public and 1 member of the press were present throughout the meeting

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors: Clive Shore, Brian Bird and Robin Forrest

APM14/01 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Sheet Annual Parish Assembly. The Parish Council has now been in existence for 18 months and much progress has been made:

Sheet Village Hall –The upstairs meeting room has now been carpeted, and the kitchen modernised to include a larger cooker and fridge/freezer, larger water heater, fast dishwasher, as well as a new, more efficient, boiler. Grants were received from District and County Councillor funds, as well as EHDC, for the kitchen and boiler, enabling the Parish Council to keep more or less to budget for this project. The Parish Council is now considering the installation of a second toilet as they aim for increased usage of the Hall with the new improved facilities.

The Village Green – all the posts around the Village Green have been replaced and a new, cheaper, grass cutting contract agreed.

Recreation Ground – The Parish Council will be looking at the possibility of replacing the old play equipment in the coming months.

Allotments – These are a regular item on the Agenda as the Parish Council seeks to find a way to run them more efficiently. Negotiations are under way to devolve management of the allotments to give plot holders a greater say in the way they are run, and we hope that a solution can be found to benefit everyone.

Sheet Common – New safety notices have been installed and insurance re-negotiated.

The Millennium Field – the rotted fence posts have been renewed.

The Old Billiard Room - In the recent Village questionnaire there was no clear decision on a future use for the building, and so the Parish Council is in discussion with the Lion & Unicorn Players with regard to improvements to the general internal state.

Website – The Parish Council now has a fully functioning website www.sheetparishcouncil.org where full details of all meetings, councillors, and much more can be found.

Parish Plan – The Sheet Village Community Trust have carried out a detailed consultation with residents via the Village Questionnaire. A number of very useful conclusions have been reached, and comments received, which will form the basis of the Village Plan. Thanks were expressed to Andy Platt and his team for all their hard work, and for ensuring a high response to the village questionnaire.

Planning – There have been a range of minor planning applications over the past year, and the Parish Council awaits, with some trepidation, the arrival of a major scheme (a couple of which are in the pipeline). Most applications are decided by EHDC Planning Officers although the District Councillor can ask for a particular application to be “called in” where there is cause, and at this point the PC will be offered a chance to address the full Committee as to why that application should be rejected.

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Flooding – This issue has affected several households in Mill Lane and the Parish Council has been involved in sorting out the many problems that have arisen, including the overflowing of the River Rother, drains unable to cope with the floodwater, sewage, and the breakdown of the Pumping Station in Mill Lane. The problems are all interlinked and there have been positive moves with regards to the sewage and pumping station.

Sheet Level Crossing – With Network Rail considering alternatives to the present single barrier crossing in Sheet, the Parish Council has not, as yet, come to any conclusion since, so far, no plans showing options for the roads and any resulting traffic issues have been available.

The Chairman concluded his report by thanking all members of the Parish Council for their positive contribution and team work, and also the Clerk, Jenny Hollington, for her hard work throughout the year. The Parish Council looks forward to the challenges of the coming year!

APM14/02 **FINANCE REPORT**

Ron Dark, Vice Chairman, went through the accounts for the year April 2013 – March 2014 – copies of the budget and actual expenditure had been circulated and the full accounts are available via the Clerk if required.

The precept had been kept at £40,362.00, but greater efficiencies by Sheet Parish Council means that cash held has increased by £16,000, giving a total in the bank account of £45,000.

In respect of the Village Hall, the new local caretaking service has enabled greater gas/electric efficiency, saving nearly a £1,000 on PTC estimates. In addition, income was more than predicted.

The allotments have made a loss of approximately £1,000 – this was partly caused by the water bill incurred during the hot dry summer in 2013 but also the cost of the Burley's maintenance contract inherited from PTC (which finished in December 2013). Costs at the Recreation Ground and Old Mill Lane also reflect the cost of the Burleys maintenance contract, and similarly should show an improvement to reflect the new, cheaper, grass cutting contract in 2014/15.

The capital expenditure of £14,000 for the new kitchen and boiler was partially recouped in grants of £8000.00 from EHDC and HCC, and therefore at a cost of £6,000 to the Parish Council.

APM14/03 **VILLAGE FILM CLUB**

Will Glancy explained that the Village Questionnaire had hi-lighted that parish residents would like a Film Club - the Sheet Village Charitable Trust has decided to take this idea forward with the help of a very generous grant from the District Councillor, Guy Stacpoole. The necessary equipment is to be purchased and installed at the Village Hall in the next few weeks and will include a projector, motorised screen, 5-1 surround sound and control panel - the equipment will also be available for hire/use for lectures and events and will be a great asset to the community. It is planned to hold a Film Festival on 14th June to kick start the new Film Club – the aim is to get as many people as possible to make a movie on their mobile phones, to be judged by a panel of carefully selected judges and shown during the day on a specially built stage and screen at the Queens Head. The Alec Guinness film, Passport to Plimlico, will be shown at the Village Hall during the evening. The intention is to get as many people as possible to join in and offer their help and support to the Club.

APM14/04 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

Vaughan Clarke reported that for the 5th year running there was to be NO increase in the County Council's share of the Council Tax. The government grant to the County Council continues to be reduced which has meant another round of job cuts. Hampshire remains as the County with the 4th lowest Council Tax but with the 3rd lowest funding from Central Government.

The major issue in Hampshire has been rainfall, with Hampshire recording the 2nd highest rainfall of any county in the UK. In this area we have had 8 months of rain over a 6-week period. The County's supply of 20,000 sandbags was used up quickly. The damage to the roads has been enormous and a figure of £34m has been quoted just to repair the winter damage. Extra money has been set aside for more highway teams to work on potholes this spring, so the situation should improve. New street lights for Sheet should be arriving in August/September.

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Unemployment in the area is low with this division of the County Council recording figures of between 0.5% and 2%, very much below the average of the UK.

APM14/04 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Guy Stacpoole extended congratulations from the Leader of EHDC to Sheet Parish Council on their first full year.

With regard to EHDC, Cllr. Stacpoole explained that despite having to learn to cope with declining government grants and low rates of interest, EHDC are determined not to cut services and instead remain committed to becoming one of the most innovative Council's in the Country. In order to achieve this, EHDC has initiated cost cutting schemes, including senior officer sharing with Havant Borough Council and shared services, e.g. the waste collection which is shared with Winchester. They are also investigating high yielding investments, such as purchase of rental property - with a return of 5-8% this is considerably higher than a bank or building society – and are looking into selling services to others. EHDC currently have reserves of £24m.

APM14/05 **OPEN FORUM**

- Accounts - The District Councillor queried the annual running cost for Sheet P.C.? Cllr. Dark explained that the 2013/14 figures show the total income for the year was £70,655 (including the precept of £40,362.00) and total costs for the year had totalled £49,105, giving a surplus for this financial year. However, Sheet is still in a transition phase and there is a backlog of maintenance issues to be resolved.
- Sheet Crossing – It was pointed out that the proposed closure and road survey at Sheet Level Crossing is due to take place in the week after half term which coincides with study leave for many students and it will not, therefore, be a representative study. The Chairman explained that originally HCC had intended carrying out the survey alongside Network Rail planned maintenance work. However, a clash of dates has meant the survey has been delayed.
- Network Rail/HCC – Concerns were raised at the lack of information available, especially from HCC with regard to options for the roads for both the temporary closure and any possible permanent closure. The Chairman explained that the temporary crossing closure is the responsibility of Network Rail, and they will therefore be responsible for notification and re-routing the traffic. HCC will carry out the traffic survey and once any problem areas are identified, road options will be considered. However, any road improvements will need to be funded by Network Rail.
- Village Hall - There is currently no internet/broadband provision at the Village Hall which may be an issue for the Film Club who are considering the option of streaming films – it appears that there is a problem enabling a connection to the current cable. The Chairman agreed that this should be investigated further.
- Car Park at Millennium Field – the car park has become very overgrown with brambles and requires tidying up. If there is money in the Parish Council budget, could this issue be addressed? The Chairman agreed that the Parish Council would consider this issue at the next meeting.
- Temporary Kerbing – It was queried whether the temporary kerbing in Inmans Lane/Town Lane had been considered a success? The Chairman explained that the kerbing had been removed very suddenly due to lack of HCC funding. The Parish Council are in the process of organising a small survey to see whether residents thought it had been successful and worth following up on – initial reaction appears to be very mixed.
- Traffic Management - Now that Gary Hedges (HCC Roads & Traffic) has moved on to Winchester, communication has broken down with regard to village traffic management plans. It was agreed that the P.C. should re-engage with HCC on this matter – the Chairman agreed to follow this up and arrange for the appropriate person to attend a Parish Council Meeting.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the Sheet Annual Parish Assembly and invited them to stay for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.