

Annual Parish Assembly – 15.5.15

CHAIRMAN: Ron Dark

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

MINUTES OF THE SHEET ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY **FRIDAY, 15TH MAY 2015 AT 7.30 P.M. AT SHEET VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Ron Dark (in the Chair) Vaughan Clarke Gail Martin
Robin Forrest

IN ATTENDANCE: Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

There were 6 members of the public present throughout the meeting

APOLOGIES: Parish Councillors: Will Glancy and Brian Bird

APM15/01 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Sheet Annual Parish Assembly. Following the very recent elections, the Chairman confirmed that there had been 7 nominees for 8 places, meaning that all 7 candidates were elected uncontested. Cllrs. Ron Dark, Brian Bird, Vaughan Clarke, Robin Forrest, Will Glancy and Gail Martin have been re-elected, and new Councillor Tony Clear will join them. This leaves one position vacant and it may be decided to co-opt someone to fill this in due course. The Chairman thanked ex-Councillors Laz Dudas and Clive Shore for their hard work and efforts on behalf of the Parish Council, and even before that on the Shadow Council. A new District Councillor, Nicky Noble, has been elected and she replaces Guy Stacpoole, who will be missed by members of Sheet P.C.

The Chairman summarised some of the issues facing the parish during the past year:

- Sheet Level Crossing – Network Rail has a policy to close level crossings where possible. The School Lane crossing has been classed as high risk because of its proximity to the School and Network Rail propose to close the crossing to vehicles and install a pedestrian crossing bridge with steps and ramps. The alternative is to replace the half barriers with full barriers that block the road when in operation. There are strong feelings amongst parishioners on either side of the argument and for this reason, the Parish Council has decided to hold a referendum which will be run by the Electoral Reform Service so there can be no accusation of bias. Network Rail will hold information sessions on 13th June at the Village Hall to present their proposals to residents, who will then be contacted by letter and asked to decide whether they would prefer a road closure with the installation of a pedestrian crossing, or for the road to stay open with full barriers installed. The Parish Council will take their stance from the outcome of the referendum.
- Neighbourhood Planning – A Neighbourhood Plan for Sheet had been considered because of concern that Sheet would be allocated a large proportion of housing because of its close proximity to facilities in Petersfield. An Open Meeting to discuss this had been well attended but there had been a mixed response and at a follow-up Steering Group Meeting, only 1 extra person had turned up - enthusiasm was low and there was an imminent deadline to produce the plan before the SDNPA local plan was drafted. At around about the same time, SDNPA produced the results of the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) – of the half a dozen plots of land put forward in Sheet, only a couple had been assessed as having potential. For this reason, it had therefore been agreed to rely on the policies of SDNPA to protect the parish and not to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Flooding in Mill Lane – The Parish Council held a series of meetings with Southern Water representatives to resolve the overflowing sewage in Mill Lane. It appears that a number of issues were contributing to the problems – failure of pumps at the pumping station, ingress of water into the system, and flow backing up to the cottages at times of high usage. New pumps and a new generator have now been installed at the pumping station, flap valves are to be installed at the cottages and the sewers at Church Field are to be jetted to establish whether there is water ingress. The Parish Council will continue to chase this until the situation is completely resolved.
- Church Field – this land is owned by a property developer who has approached the Parish Council and offered some of the land as public open space and, in return, would want approval for 1 house to be built. The Parish Council has expressed interest and await his proposals.
- Sunnymede Development – This development was granted on appeal in late 2008 (before Sheet Parish Council was formed) and, to date, the developer's contributions have remained unpaid and have not been chased by EHDC. The contribution for open space now equates to approximately £7,000 and the sum for transport is £6,500. Representatives from Sheet Parish Council met with Tom Horwood,

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Angela Glass and Julia Potter from EHDC who have agreed to re-open the case and chase the developer again.

With regard to Sheet Parish Council assets:

The Old Billiard Room – This building was originally the Village School but is now used by the Lion & Unicorn Players for storage of their props. Suggestions for use were solicited from members of the public, but the building is not ideal for many of the suggested uses (e.g. village shop) because of the lack of parking facilities. For now it has been decided to maintain the status quo and the Lion & Unicorn Players have agreed to carry out some essential maintenance on the property in addition to paying rent. If someone comes up with a good idea for use, it will be considered.

Sheet Village Hall – Following on from the new kitchen and boiler which were installed last year, the upgrading and maintenance project has continued with the installation of a second toilet - a £1000 donation towards this was gratefully received from ex-District Councillor, Guy Stacpoole. In addition, repairs have been carried out to the meeting room floor, where the joists had rotted. Plans are now underway for the re-decoration of the main hall over the summer months. The front of the building has been brightened up with plant pots and flowers. The Village Hall is now home to the new Sheet Film Club who have installed a new projector and screen.

Allotments – Negotiations to devolve management of the allotments to a new company (Sheet Allotments Ltd) continue and it is hoped that this will come to fruition in the summer in time for the new allotment year. This will give plot holders a greater say in the running of the site and control of the income raised through rents.

Millennium Field – A massive clear up of the car park has been undertaken and the overgrown weeds cleared – this has much improved the situation.

Village Green – A survey of the iconic Horse Chestnut tree was carried out by an Arboriculturist, Michael Hunny, following concerns raised about its condition. Michael's report recommended a small amount of pruning to improve the shape of the tree. This work was undertaken by Myers of Hayling Island, and the tree now looks more balanced. The Parish Council has been advised to place wood chippings under the base of the tree to help aerate the roots which are bounded on 3 sides by tarmac road and this will be followed up. In addition, the seat around the tree has been re-jigged as the slats were impinging on the growth of the tree. The Village sign has also been renovated/repainted. There is currently a problem with vermin scattering litter from the bins – this issue will be addressed at the next Council Meeting when it is hoped to approve new, lidded bins for the village green.

Recreation Ground – The old play equipment has now been replaced, and an outdoor table tennis table installed for older children and football goal posts have also been purchased. Planning permission has been obtained to install a storage shed to keep village equipment safely under cover. The broken gate post has also been replaced.

APM/15/02 **FINANCE REPORT**

Copies of the budget and actual expenditure were circulated to those in attendance and it was confirmed that the full accounts are available via the Clerk if required.

The Chairman went through the accounts and explained that assets had been split up into several sections showing costs. With regard to the Village Hall, costs had been kept down and savings had been made by switching gas and electricity contracts. The Old Billiard Room had cost more than budgeted because necessary hedge and tree work had been carried out during the year. Costs at Sheet Allotments in Mill Lane have been reduced and the allotments are currently showing a surplus of income over expenditure. Costs at the Village Green were higher than expected because of the pruning of the Horse Chestnut. At the Millennium Meadow, fencing had been replaced so, again, costs had increased. Grants paid out during the year had totalled £800

With regard to income, there had been no rise in precept (£39,881.00 for 2014/15) and grants received for various projects during the year totalled £2409. A reserve of £30,000 has now been built up which will be put aside in case of significant maintenance requirements.

APM15/03 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

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Vaughan Clarke reported that for the 6th year running there is 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, albeit at a lower level than in the past. The County has a policy of selling its services to other authorities and public bodies and this helps to keep the workforce more stable.

After the serious damage to Hampshire's roads last winter, caused by the large amount of water, some extra £30m was spent on major repairs and also on filling some 50,000 potholes and more roads will be dealt with in the next financial year. It is an ongoing problem.

New street lights were installed in this area of Hampshire this year, and because they direct the light downwards, the amount of light pollution has been greatly reduced.

The Boundary Commission are looking at Hampshire and will be redrawing the boundaries between divisions. The Petersfield Hangers Division is likely to be increased in size by about 1200 voters for the election in 2017.

Superfast Broadband continues to be a concern, especially in rural areas. In the last few months connection boxes have been erected in parts of Petersfield, Liss and Greatham. 90% of Hampshire's residents should be connected by the end of 2015.

Unemployment in the area is low with a figure of between 0.2% and 1.5% for much of the year – very much below the average for the UK.

APM15/04 **SHEET FILM FESTIVAL 2015**

Following on from last year's very successful event, this year's Sheet Film Festival is to take place on Saturday, 6th June, with a deadline for submission of film's by 22nd May. Details of entry requirements are available from Will Glancy, and it is hoped that there will be a good selection of films produced by local people on their cameras which will be judged and viewed at the Village Hall on the 6th.

APM15/05 **OPEN FORUM**

- The Parish Council were complimented on a well-run meeting, with some impressive accounts.
- It was pointed out that one reason that costs are kept so low, is that Parish Councillors carry out many of the manual labouring jobs themselves – e.g. replacing fence posts, clearing rubble from allotments, etc. This is recognised and appreciated by the community.

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

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.