

**DRAFT**

**CHAIRMAN:** Ron Dark

**CLERK:** Jenny Hollington

**MINUTES OF THE SHEET ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**  
**THURSDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018 AT 7.30 P.M. AT SHEET VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT:** Ron Dark (in the Chair) Gail Martin Tony Clear  
Robin Forrest Will Glancy Alan Biddlecombe  
Vaughan Clarke

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr. Brian Bird, County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer, and District Councillor, Nicky Noble

There were approximately 12 members of the public present

APA18/01 **SPEAKER – LAURA DEANE, SDNPA RANGER**

The Chairman introduced Laura, one of the South Downs National Park Rangers, who's remit covers the western area of the South Downs National Park. The SDNPA is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest national park and has the largest population of all the UK national parks. Laura set out the purposes and duty of the SDNPA and explained how these are fulfilled:

- **Purpose 1:** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- **Purpose 2:** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- **Duty:** To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.

Over 85% of the South Downs National Park is farmland and a new concept of encouraging groups of landowners to work together has been introduced – there are now 6 farm clusters across the Park and this seems to be working well, with farmers able to share experience, machinery, etc. Some of the general programmes that the SDNPA Rangers are involved in, include the re-introduction of the water-vole (the fastest declining mammal), habitat management and mink control. Specific projects within the local area include Riverfly monitoring on the River Rother (increased numbers of vertebrates are a good sign of water quality), clearing of Himalayan Balsam (an invasive, non-native plant which is eroding the River banks) coppicing of Alders at Sheet Mill and birch thinning at Sheet Common. She was also very pleased to report that otters are now breeding again on the River Rother.

Anyone who is interested in finding out more about the work of the SDNPA Rangers and volunteers can find out more via the monthly newsletter at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter)

APA18/02 **MINUTES – ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2017** – The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 were approved and signed.

APM18/03 **ANNUAL REPORT** – The Chairman, with input from Parish Councillors with responsibility for various areas/assets, gave a report of Parish Council activities over the year, as follows:

**Boundary Review** – The Local Government Boundary Review recommendations mean that, once approved, Sheet will be included within the same District Council ward as Froxfield, Steep and Stroud as opposed to Petersfield St. Mary's.

**Website** – Sheet Parish Council now have a new website – [www.sheetparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.sheetparishcouncil.gov.uk) – where you can find up-to-date minutes and local information.

**Planning** – Sheet Parish Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications within the parish and as a result have made views known on a steady stream of extensions - mostly quite straightforward. However, the

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SDNPA Local Plan proposes 30 new houses on land behind Pulens Lane – a radical increase in numbers previously proposed for Sheet. In response to the consultation, the Parish Council has raised 2 major concerns:

- The effect the proposed development will have on natural beauty, wildlife, woodland and cultural heritage of the area, which conflicts with the SDNPA objective to conserve and enhance the landscape.
- The effect the proposed development will have on traffic in Pulens Lane and on the existing community infrastructure which conflicts with the objective to protect and provide for the social and economic wellbeing of National Park communities supporting local facilities.

A subsequent development brief for the site was issued by SDNPA and the Parish Council took the opportunity to reiterate their concerns. The Parish Council await the Inspector's comments.

Petersfield Golf Course has also expressed an interest in developing 14 houses on a piece of their land at Burnt Ash. Although this land is outside the Sheet boundary, it would impact Sheet residents. Sheet Parish Council has made its views known.

**S.106 Monies** – Following the sale of houses on land behind School Lane, S.106 monies have now been paid to SDNPA:

£15,697 for community facilities  
£6667 for open spaces  
£46,545 for transport (specifically allocated for Farnham Road)

Sheet Parish Council will be able to apply to use these funds for various projects around the parish.

**Sheet Recreation Ground** – Sheet P.C. were pleased to support the renovation of the Scout Hut, which is also home to Stepping Stones Play School, by backing their planning application and approving a grant of £5,000. The Group worked hard to raise the money required and the renovations are due to take place over the summer. The Parish Council is grateful to the landlord of the Half Moon Pub for allowing the temporary siting of a portacabin within the pub gardens for the Play Group's use, enabling them to continue for the summer term. The Parish Council are in the process of re-negotiating the Scout Hut lease which has recently expired.

**Village Green** – The Village Green is looking splendid thanks to the hard work of Tony Clear. The Horse Chestnut is showing signs of bleeding canker but this is fairly minor and is being monitored. As per last year, the leaves will be swept and burnt in the Autumn to remove shelter for the Chestnut Leaf Miner. A representative of the Forestry Commission has said that it is one of the largest and healthiest Horse Chestnuts in the area. The long-awaited, ecologically friendly bike rack will be in place soon!

### **Contracts –**

- Village Hall – Regular hirers of the Village Hall are very happy with the caretaking/cleaning arrangements which work extremely well.
- Bins – The bins are emptied each week by a team from Petersfield Town Council – the service has been excellent
- Grass Cutting – Various areas of land owned by the Parish Council have been maintained superbly by Tony Clear

**Community Assets** – The Queen's Head has now been registered as a Community Asset, meaning that if it were to be sold, the pub would have to be offered to the Parish Council first.

**Roads** – Cllr. Martin reported a mixed year with some successes and some disappointments: The junction improvements at Town Lane/Inmans Lane, to provide an extended pavement, narrow the road and provide a dropped kerb, to prevent parking on the corner, have now been completed. One bollard has been damaged already and a replacement is promised within the next few weeks.

Representatives of the Parish Council are due to meet with the Transport Team from EHDC to discuss a feasibility study to improve the footway and access around the new housing development on Farnham Road. As well as widening the pavement and providing dropped kerbs, it is hoped to focus on the steps leading down from School Lane to Farnham Road, as these are incredibly dangerous.

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Cllr. Martin explained that she represents the Parish Council on a School Travel Group and has been impressed with how seriously the Headteacher takes the issue of the children's safety in walking to School. The School have produced a travel plan and are working in conjunction with Hampshire Highways to improve conditions on the roads around the School.

Unfortunately, the Parish Council has failed to get anywhere so far with discussions with Hampshire Highways about reducing the speed of traffic on the London Road, and improvements to the crossing at the Inmans Lane/Pulens Lane junction. Due to funding cuts, HCC are focussing on roads with the highest number of accidents and London Road does not fit the criteria! The Parish Council will continue to fight for improvements.

**Sheet Allotments** – Cllr. Forrest reported that most of the 100 plots at Sheet Allotments are now taken. Improvements at the site this year have included maintenance of the track which was becoming very rutted and almost impassable in areas – drainage channels have been dug and the worst of the pot holes have been filled. The car park at the Millennium Field has also been resurfaced. The little-used plots under the Farnham Road tree canopy have now been grassed over and this gives a more open feel to the site and provides extra access for plot holders. The old noticeboard at the entrance to the site, which was becoming very weather beaten, has also now been replaced. Following complaints about rats and concern about the condition some of the chickens were being kept in, the Parish Council has taken the decision to ban chickens being kept on site.

**Sheet Common** – Cllr. Biddlecombe is also a South Downs National Park Volunteer and he reported that work has been carried out to thin the Silver Birch and Holly to create a vista towards the Downs. It is intended to install a bench at this point to enable residents to sit and enjoy the view. Volunteers are also working to get rid of the Himalayan Balsam to encourage bluebells and other wild flowers to flourish. In addition, new signage has now been installed on the footpaths across the Common which looks very smart.

**The Village Hall** – Cllr. Glancy reported that the Village Hall is extremely well-used by many regular hirers - so much so, that it has been agreed to carry out improvements to the upstairs meeting room to make this into a more private and useable space by installing a stud wall and door at the top of the stairs. Following the installation of new stage lighting, the Lion & Unicorn Players are also now regularly using the Village Hall for their productions.

**The Millennium Field** – Cllr. Clear was thanked for his superb up-keep of the Millennium Field - the wild flower meadow, although difficult to get established, is now coming along well and work has been undertaken to reduce the gorse and docks. Unfortunately, the Ash trees have been affected by Ash die-back and the Field Maples have been disfigured – advice from English Woodlands has been sought and appropriate steps taken to deal with this taken.

APM18/04 **FINANCE REPORT** – A summary of the accounts for the financial year 17-18 was circulated and were discussed. The Chairman explained that the precept had been kept at the same level and it was aimed to break even as reserves have now been built up to cover any major expenditure to the V. Hall, OBR, etc. – in the event a small surplus of £3000 has been made.

Expenditure had been mainly as expected although costs at the Village Hall had been slightly higher than anticipated due to the cost of rebuilding the wall at the rear of the property which was badly cracked and crumbling.

The cost of re-surfacing the Millennium Field Car Park was also noted.

APM17/05 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT** - County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer was unable to be present at the meeting and had sent apologies. However, his annual report for the year 2017/18 was circulated and Cllr. Clarke (ex-County Councillor) gave the report (and is appended to these minutes). In his first year in office, Russell has proved to be diligent and hardworking for which Sheet Parish Council is very grateful.

APM17/06 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** – The District Councillor had sent apologies that she was unable to attend the meeting - no report had been received.

APM17/07 **OPEN FORUM**

- Junction at Inmans/Pulens Lane – A recent accident at the junction was discussed which had involved 2 people being trapped in a car. It was queried whether the Parish Council would support a proposal for a

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“no right turn” out of Pulens Lane? It was agreed that the Parish Council would follow this suggestion up with Hampshire Highways and report back.

- Litter – Details of a “litter pick” taking place on the following weekend were publicised
- Village Agent – Sheet now has a Village Agent, Jean Morgan. Jean is one of 45 Village Agents in Hampshire and her role is to signpost anyone requiring help to the relevant agency. If you know of anyone who requires help, please contact Jean on 07900 028619 or [jean.morgan30@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jean.morgan30@hotmail.co.uk)

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the Sheet Annual Parish Assembly 2018 – he invited those present to join the Parish Council for refreshments.