

Annual Parish Assembly – 9.5.19

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CHAIRMAN: Ron Dark

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

MINUTES OF THE SHEET ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY **THURSDAY, 9TH MAY 2019 AT 7.00 P.M. AT SHEET VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Ron Dark (in the Chair) Gail Martin Tony Clear
Robin Forrest Alan Biddlecombe

IN ATTENDANCE: Vaughan Clarke (Speaker)
Russell Oppenheimer (County Councillor)
Nick Drew (District Councillor)
Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Brian Bird and Will Glancy

There were approximately 55 members of public present

APA19/01 **SPEAKER – VAUGHAN CLARKE – SOME ODD STORIES ABOUT SHEET**

The Chairman introduced Vaughan Clarke to members of the public -Vaughan was Chairman of Sheet P.C. at its resurrection in 2012 and his vast knowledge of Council procedure from his many years' experience at both County and Town Council level was enormously beneficial in helping the newly formed Council become established. Although Vaughan is standing down from Sheet Parish Council, he remains a Trustee of Petersfield Museum and Editor of the Sheet Newsletter. Vaughan is a treasure trove of information and stories which he delights in sharing and it had felt only right to ask Vaughan to share some of his "odd stories about Sheet" at this Annual Parish Assembly.

As anticipated, Vaughan did not disappoint - all were suitably entertained with lively tales of Black Dick and his connection to a notorious smuggling ring, murder and intrigue, mail coach racing, the Battle of Havant (which was apparently bought about by the joining of two railway tracks!) and poor Mrs. Pulen who was taken to Court over a lost Library book! Vaughan also revealed that the W.I., as well as being responsible for curtains at the Village Hall in 1935 and initiating the village horticultural show, also accidentally killed two cows, when they threw the remains of the Christmas greenery over the wall of the Church.

At the end of the talk, Vaughan was presented with a small gift to thank him for his hard work and dedication at County, Town and Parish level over many years.

APA19/02 **MINUTES – ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2018** – The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Thursday, 10th May 2018 were approved and signed.

APM19/03 **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 Parish of Sheet is now part of the Steep and Froxfield ward and accordingly has a new District Councillor, Nick Drew who will introduce himself later in the meeting.

Data Protection – This year Sheet Parish Council has reviewed their use of information following new data protection legislation and concluded that they are compliant with requirements.

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 applications - mostly quite straightforward. However, the SDNPA Local Plan proposed 30 new houses on land behind Pulens Lane – s radical increase in numbers previously proposed for Sheet. In response to the consultation, the Parish Council 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.

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- 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.

Following the Inspector's review, the Local Plan was revised to allow for half the number of houses (14 or 15) and the Parish Council awaits further information on this issue.

Sheet Recreation Ground – Work to refurbish the Scout Hut has been completed and has made a vast improvement to the building. However, the process of drawing up the new lease is still on-going. The new play equipment, as chosen by the children at Sheet School, has been installed and is being well utilised!

Village Green – The Village Green is looking splendid thanks to the hard work of Tony Clear. The new, eco-friendly, bike rack which has been relocated to the Village Green is currently rather under-utilised!

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
- Millennium Field – A local farmer is cutting the grass for hay.

The Lengthsman Scheme – The new Lengthsmen, Frank and Bill who both live in the Village, were introduced – they took on the role in April and will be working across the 8 parishes currently in the HCC funded scheme. Frank and Bill will be undertaking various tasks around the parish (e.g. path and verge clearance, hedge cutting, road sign cleaning, etc.) under the watchful eye of Cllr. Clear.

The Village Hall – Cllr. Martin reported that further improvements to the upstairs room have been carried out during the year – the room is now sound proof and has new blinds making it a private space, and ideal for small classes. The entrance hall has been re-decorated and re-carpeted and new stacking chairs and tables have been purchased with SDNPA S.106 monies. In addition, the path to the front door has been resurfaced and this, along with the beautiful flowering pots and flower beds, has completed an attractive entrance to the Village Hall. In the next few months the disabled WC will be refurbished to complete the renovation of the Village Hall. The Village Hall remains a well-utilised community asset.

Roads – Cllr. Martin reported a mixed year with some successes and some disappointments. Representatives of the Parish Council continue to meet and liaise regularly with Ian Janes at Hampshire Highways over the many issues arising:

- The reconfigured bollards outside The Little School have made the area generally much safer;
- Feedback from residents in Love Lane was taken into consideration following the proposed Traffic Regulation Order from EHDC – it is hoped the new road lining will resolve the issue of bad parking at School pick-up and drop-off times.
- Feedback from School Lane residents was taken into consideration by EHDC following proposals for a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict parking. The amended plans will ensure the Lane is much safer for children and pedestrians.
- The steps at the School Lane/Farnham Road junction are due to be replaced with a pedestrian ramp but this has been delayed by on-going discussions about materials and complexities with the site. The Parish Council has yet to see a final design.
- Speed on London Road is an on-going issue – The Parish Council followed up on a suggestion that the Pulens Lane junction should be left hand turn only but this was turned down by Hampshire Highways. The Parish Council is currently trialling Speed Indicator Devices on both London Road and Pulens Lane to see if this has any impact.
- Speed Watch – This is a scheme being considered by the Parish Council following success in adjoining parishes. Whilst the Parish Council would be willing to fund the scheme, at least a dozen volunteers would be needed, so this needs to be researched more fully.

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- The problem of large vehicles becoming stuck in Village Street is on-going. The Parish Council is working closely with Hampshire Highways to consider proposals for narrowing the entrance to the Lane at both ends to deter large vehicles from turning in from London Road and Farnham Road. Due to the lack of funds at HCC, they have recommended the process is enabled by a Community Funded Initiative, whereby HCC draw up the detailed design and the Parish Council seeks funding from various sources (S.106 and grants) – more information on this will be available shortly and public consultation is an important part of the CFI.
- The eroding bank in Mill Lane – Hampshire County Council Geotechnics Team are investigating the problem and hope to be able to advise the best way of dealing with it very soon.

Flood Group – A group of Mill Lane residents have come together to form a Flood Group to monitor the level of the River Rother and advise other residents of any issues. A document has been produced by the Parish Council which gives advice and advice and relevant contact details.

Sheet Allotments – Cllr. Forrest reported that all 115 plots at Sheet Allotments are taken and there is currently a waiting list. The site is looking the best it has been since Sheet P.C. took over from Petersfield Town Council. There has been an occasional problem with theft and to combat this a new padlock has been installed on the pedestrian gate.

BMX Track – Cllr. Forrest is in regular contact with the BMX Track User Group, and there is a good relationship between the Parish Council and the Group who regularly help clear up rubbish on the Common. The BMX track is inspected quarterly, and any issues are dealt with. In addition, both Cllr. Forrest and Cllr. Biddlecombe regularly walk and inspect the area.

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. The new bench has been installed 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 – photos of wildflowers spotted in the Common were displayed. The barbeque is being regularly used and the new picnic table and benches are a welcome addition.

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 – A representative from English Woodlands has visited the site and advised the woodland trees should be thinned so Cllr. Clear has now taken out some of the trees. The Woodland Trust has offered to provide saplings for the boundary between the Millennium Field and the Allotments to introduce a few more types of trees – this offer will be taken up and the saplings will be installed by the Parish Council.

APM/19/04 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** – Cllr. Nick Drew was welcomed to the meeting. Cllr. Drew is a resident of Froxfield and he urged residents to e-mail or phone him if there are any EHDC issues they are concerned about – he is keen to get involved and said he looked forward to working with Sheet Parish Council and residents. He reminded everyone that all District Councillors are allocated a grant pot of £4,500 to help with community projects and he is keen to ensure the money is distributed evenly over his ward – in the previous financial year he had been pleased to support the refurbishment of the Scout Hut as this provided a benefit to neighbouring parishes as well as Sheet residents.

Cllr. Drew also said that he would be happy to be involved with any planning issues in Sheet and can engage with the Planning Committee if required.

APM/19/05 **FINANCE REPORT** – A summary of the accounts for the financial year 18-19 was circulated and discussed. The Chairman explained that the figures had been broken into cost centres and comparison figures for the previous year provided. There were a couple of anomalies – one of which was the capital expenditure of £29,638 which included the new picnic tables and benches, the play equipment, and the new chairs and tables at the Village Hall. However, it should be noted that S.106 monies and grants in the sum of £22,158 had been received to off-set these figures. In addition, the precept has been maintained at the same level since 2012 and reserves are at a comfortable level. The Parish Council had approved grants in the sum of £2780 for various projects during the year (including the School Library building, Sheet News, the Royal British Legion and Stepping Stones Playgroup).

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APM19/06 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT** – Cllr. Russell Oppenheimer began by thanking Vaughan Clarke – Vaughan had canvassed with Russell after he stepped down from the County Council and had been a great help.

Russell explained that he now has 12 Parishes within his division and he has found Sheet Parish Council to be one of the most efficient and nicest! He has a grant pot of £8,000 to spend within his division and last year had been pleased to support the refurbishment of the Scout Hut, the outdoor learning space at Sheet School.

The County Councillor's full report is appended to these Minutes for info.

APM19/07 **OPEN FORUM**

- Village Street – It was queried whether the Parish Council had tried contacting the mapping system to get the road taken off the system, to stop lorries turning into the lane? The Chairman responded to say that he thought that this had been tried in the past, but it had proved very difficult. It is something the Parish Council will discuss again.
- Eroding bank in Mill Lane – The issue of the bank adjacent to the allotments is causing issues further down the lane, in that more cars are coming the other way increasing the traffic substantially at the other end of the lane. The Parish Council are working with Hampshire Highways to resolve this issue as soon as possible.
- Campaign to stop cars idling in Love Lane – A resident of Love Lane explained that she is campaigning to stop people waiting for children to come out of School leaving their engines running. Sheet Parish Council asked to be kept up-to-date on progress with the campaign.
- Fly-Tipping in Millennium Field Car Park – A resident pointed out that there has been another incident of fly-tipping in the Millennium Field Car Park. The Clerk was asked to follow up on this.
- Parking restrictions in School Lane – A resident of School Lane queried whether the new parking restrictions would be enforced? It was agreed that residents and members of the Parish Council will need to keep an eye on this and follow up via EHDC if it is not the case.
- Missing Road Sign – A resident pointed out that the road sign at the junction of the London Road and Midhurst Road has been badly damaged. The Clerk was asked to follow this up via Hampshire Highways.
- Village Gates – A resident queried whether Village Gates would be appropriate for Sheet – other parishes use them to mark the boundaries of the parish. It was noted however, that the parish boundary is located in Pulens Lane and this would not be appropriate.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming to the Sheet Annual Parish Assembly 2019 and invited everyone to join Parish Councillors for refreshments.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.