

DRAFT

SHEET PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON: Chris Wilton

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th October 2023 at Sheet Village Hall at 7.00 p.m.

Present. Cllrs. Chris Wilton (in the Chair) Alan Biddlecombe Brian Bird
Robin Forrest Gail Martin James Plant
Craig Stevens

In Attendance: County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer
District Councillor, Nick Drew
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were 5 members of the public present at the meeting.

23/170 Apologies – None received.

23/171 Declarations of Interests – Councillors were reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest on any item on the agenda – none declared.

23/172 Minutes – The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th September were approved and signed.

23/173 Matters Arising from the Minutes - None

23/174 Public Comment –

- A resident raised concern about the impact of the recent CFI projects on through traffic – it was pointed out that the work has been carried out to improve safety for pedestrians, especially the nursery and school children who regularly walk to the School and the allotments.

23/175 Resignation of a Parish Councillor – The resignation of Dave McKinney was noted with regret – Dave was with the Council for a short while but had achieved a great deal in that time and will be sadly missed. The Clerk was asked to inform EHDC and initiate the process of advertising the vacancy to residents.

23/176 Mill Lane Sewage – A Mill Lane resident impacted by this issue was present at the meeting - he explained that the drainage system is a closed system for sewage only and the leak occurs when there is heavy rain and the Ashford Stream rises. It is therefore believed that there is a crack in one of the pipes through which there is water ingress and that this should be relatively easy to resolve if man-hole covers are lifted when sewage is leaking to enable the location of the crack to be identified. The sewage is seeping from residents' gardens into the river Rother but complaints to the Environment Agency have had no impact.

A Southern Water Engineer, Stephen Dart, had become involved approximately 6-months ago, but things have gone very quiet again in the last few months. Both the Parish Council and the County Councillor agreed to engage again with Southern Water and to keep the pressure on until the matter is resolved.

23/177 Trees in Town Lane – Residents of Town Lane are concerned about the condition of the overhanging branches and shrubs on the verge opposite the houses and have asked the Parish Council to engage with landowners to resolve the issue. The Parish Council understands that the issue is in the process of being dealt with and will keep an eye on progress.

23/178 County Councillor’s Report – Cllr. Oppenheimer’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting and covered the following items:

- Budget Planning Process for 2025
- HCC Forest Partnership
- Broadband Update
- Increase in monthly payments for homes for Ukraine hosts.
- Funding for rare orchids in East Hants and an update on Byways Open To All Traffic (BOATs)

The full report is appended to the minutes and can be found via the website www.sheetparishcouncil.gov.uk

23/179 District Councillors Report – Cllr. Drew spoke on the following items:

- Planning Committee – The Parish Council were asked to e-mail Cllr. Drew with material considerations in respect of any request for consideration of a planning application by EHDC Planning Committee.
- Town Lane – Cllr. Drew has shared residents’ concerns about tree and verge issues with the PC
- Bins – Please notify Cllr. Drew if you are still experiencing problems obtaining a green bin.
- TAG Farnborough – Cllr. Drew highlighted the current consultation on the proposed change from business to leisure and tourism and the impact this could have on Sheet residents.
- Remembrance Day – Cllr. Drew confirmed he was pleased to be able to attend the Remembrance Day Service in Sheet

23/180 Planning – Current applications were discussed:

SDNP/ 23/03815/TCA	Fell Holly due to overgrowing – replace with hedgerow species	21 Village Street, Sheet GU32 2AH	No Objection
SDNP/ 23/03992/ HOUS	2-storey extension to side, porch to front, alterations to roof profile at rear, with associated internal and external alterations, including new vehicle access with parking for 2-cars	1 Fir Tree Cottages, Farnham Road, Sheet GU32 2AP	Objection (as per previous application)

23/181 Finance –

- (a) Quarterly Actual – Budget Figures (July-September) – A summary of the budget figures had been circulated prior to the meeting and were reviewed. The un-budgeted costs for the emergency tree work to the storm-damaged Horse Chestnut on the Village Green were noted.
- (b) Grant Application – The application for £550 towards the running costs of the Winter Warmer Cafe was considered and approved.
- (c) Bank Reconciliations – The September bank reconciliation previously circulated was approved and signed.
- (d) Actions Outstanding – The Clerk confirmed that Cllr. Wilton is now a signatory on the Unity Trust accounts. The paperwork to open an account with the Cambridge and Counties Bank and the subsequent transfer of deposit from the Cambridge Building Society remains to be fully completed and sent off.
- (e) Cheque Payments - The following cheques were approved for payment and signed:

Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
301574	£396.00	Caines Farm Partnership	Allotment Hedges
301575	£144.00	ALE Fire Systems Ltd	Fire checks - Sheet V. Hall
301576	£269.38	Elan City	Brackets for Speed Indicator Devices

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301577	£746.00	Michael Smith Ltd	Grass Cutting - September
301578	£324.00	DNE Services	Boiler service and repairs at Sheet V. Hall
301479	£118.55	Gail Martin	Refund - cost of replanting V. Hall pots
301580	£379.08	Petersfield Town Council	Bin contract - August and September
301581	£520.00	Sheet Music	Venue management - V. Hall
301582	£991.18	Jenny Hollington	Clerk - October + expenses (stamps)
301583	£550.00	SVCT	Grant application - Winter Warmer Café
301584	£60.00	C, Tinkler	Refund - allotment deposit - Plot 58
301585	£35.00	Home-Start Butser	Charitable donation related to Money Claim
301586	£100.00	S. Harvey-Forrester	Refund - allotment deposit - Plot 71
301587	£81.60	B. Bird	Refund of tree-related costs
301588	£50.00	Royal British Legion	Wreath for Remembrance Day
Total	£4,764.79		

23/182. Gov e-mail addresses – Cllr. Stevens is considering various options and will report further at the November meeting. Cllr. Plant offered to liaise with Cllr. Stevens on an option he believes would be appropriate.

23/183 PPS Responses – Close to 80 responses have been received. The Chairman offered to carry out an initial review and then join with two or three Councillors to analyse in greater depth. It is intended to hold a community meeting to discuss outcomes during the afternoon of Saturday, 25th November.

23/184 Roads and Traffic

- (a) CFI Project – London Road – Sheet P.C. has been advised of a recent nasty accident involving an HGV and an elderly couple attempting to turn right out of their drive on the London Road. It was agreed that Cllr. Martin should write to Hampshire Highways again highlighting the dangerous speed of traffic on the London Road.
- (b) CFI Project – Village Street/Farnham Road – The work is due to be completed during the week of 6th-10th November. Residents living around the Village Green will be advised that it is essential that the junction is kept clear.
- (c) Future Roads Projects – The dangerous crossing at the roundabout at the top of the London Road was highlighted and it was suggested that consideration could be given to the installation of Village Gates before the crossing to slow traffic as it approached the roundabout from the A3 slip road. Cllr. Martin undertook to discuss this issue with Alistair MacAdam at Hampshire Highways to see what would be possible.
- (d) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) – Cllrs. Bird, Stevens and Biddlecombe will meet to ensure these are installed as soon as possible.
- (e) EHDC Community Speedwatch Camera – The Clerk confirmed that the application has been submitted to EHDC.

23/185 HCC Tree Planting Project – Cllr. Biddlecombe confirmed that the first tranche of 950 whips will be delivered for planting in the Millennium Field in January – the HMG are prepared to help with the bulk of the planting, along with any village residents who would like to be involved.

23/186 Sheet Assets

The Village Green –

- Horse Chestnut Tree - An amazingly good job has been done by Myers Tree Surgeons to cut back the damaged Horse Chestnut following the damage caused by Storm Antoni. A big thank you was expressed to Cllr. Forrest for his hard work liaising with tree specialists and surgeons, and to residents who had been so co-operative about not parking vehicles around the green on the day.

- The BT Phone Box – It was agreed to progress plans to adopt the Phone Box for use as “Ron’s Reading Room” in Ron Dark’s memory.

Mill Lane – The Clerk was asked to follow up on landownership of the riverbank via Land Registry.

The Old Billiard Room – The Clerk was asked to chase up the results of the additional bat survey carried out at the end of September.

Sheet Common – BMX Track – The Clerk was asked to seek an indication of cost for a legal agreement to be drawn up between the BMX User Group and the Council to give the User Group more responsibility for the use of the track.

Millennium Field –

- FOSS Bonfire & Firework event 2023 – The request from Friends of Sheet School to hold the annual fundraising bonfire and firework event in the Millennium Field on Saturday, 4th November (with a backup of 5th November in case of wet weather) was approved with the same conditions to be applied as in previous years in respect of clearance and re-seeding of the bonfire site.
- Car Park – Prevention of Illegal Occupation - Cllr. Plant confirmed that creation of a byelaw to evict illegal occupants did not appear to be too complex and offered to circulate template details.

Sheet Recreation Ground –

- Cllr. Forrest confirmed he is in the process of seeking quotes for installation of a new gate post.
- The request from the Pre School for a community accessible defibrillator to be sited at the Scout Hut was approved subject to funding support – the Clerk was asked to investigate funding sources.

Sheet Allotments –

- Money Claim – Cllr. Forrest reported on the outcome of the claim - rather than see this go to Court, it had been agreed via mediation to refund the deposit. It was also agreed that the £35 admin fee paid by the claimant would be donated to a Charity of her choice (Butser Homestart). The process has taught allotment representatives some valuable lessons and administrative processes will be changed.
- Data Retention – The Clerk said that the work required to keep the data up to date is too time-consuming within her current hours. This issue will be followed up with the Allotment Association to see if there is any option for a management committee to run the site. In the meantime, the Clerk’s hours will be reviewed.
- Condition of the Open Space – Quotes will be sought for the work to clear the area to the rear of the allotment site, where plots had been removed from under the tree line to be utilised for open space and parking, as it has become very overgrown. A couple of small trees need to be removed.

Sheet Village Hall – Cllr. Martin was thanked for re-planting the outdoor pots at the front of the hall for the Autumn/Winter season. The Clerk confirmed that the boiler has been repaired and serviced, and the gas safety certificate renewed.

23/187 Correspondence – E-mail correspondence regarding land adjacent to School Lane was noted and will be considered alongside input into the Parish Priorities Statement

23/188 Meetings Attended

- SDNPA On-line Forum – Unfortunately, no-one had been able to attend at short notice, following Cllr. McKinney’s resignation.

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- Future Energy Forum – None of the Council members had been able to attend, but feedback from the meeting was that it had been extremely interesting.

23/189 Date of Next Meeting – The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14th November at 7.00 p.m. at Sheet Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.57 p.m.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS
2 OCTOBER 2023**

1. Budget planning process for 2025 commences

Following the consultation process which took place over the Summer, September 2023 saw the start of the County Council's budget planning timetable.

A total of 2,935 consultation responses were received. The results show that people agree with the way we have been managing Hampshire's public finances in response to over a decade of financial pressures. Residents agree that we should continue to focus the money we do have to help the most vulnerable people in Hampshire. Residents have also told us they agree that it is central Government that needs to step in to help us balance our budget in future. We are stepping up our lobbying tactics accordingly.

We still have to address the projected 2025 budget gap of £132m which needs to be bridged. Savings proposals will be considered by individual Cabinet Members over the coming weeks. Recommendations will then go to the Cabinet in October before a final decision is made in November by the full County Council. Subject to agreement by Cabinet and the Full County Council, some proposals may then be subject to further, more detailed public consultation.

HCC costs have risen dramatically because of factors outside of our control. Inflation has pushed up prices across the board. Demand continues to rise for core public services like social care

for vulnerable children and adults. Highways have suffered due to increasingly extreme weather events.

Hampshire is in a better financial position than most other county councils, and while our finances are stable until 2025, we do need central Government to fundamentally change the way that local government services are funded, or reduce what councils are legally required to deliver.

2. HCC's Hampshire Forest Partnership goes from strength to strength

I am delighted that the HFP team are now working with Ropley, Sheet, Steep, Stroud and Liss Parishes in Petersfield Hangers on tree-planting projects. Our partnership now extends to 35 organisations including the Tree Council, EHDC and the Woodland Trust, who have proved to be keen partners. We have won a grant of £180,000 through the Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund which has meant that we have been able to recruit two more members of staff so they are now a team of three. If you would like to get in touch with the team please email treeplanting@hants.gov.uk. I would like to let you know about two new HFP initiatives which we have launched in September:

- **Shoots along the Routes.** We're offering saplings, funding and advice for tree planting projects that will create green corridors along some of Hampshire's main roads, including the A272 and A32. Tree circles, miniforests, linear woodlands, hedgerows and orchards will all be considered within 2km of the roads. Applications for planting this winter are now open. If you are interested, please send an email to the above email address.
- **Young Tree Growers Guide.** The idea behind this guide is to get kids involved in gathering seeds and planting trees. In my experience, children find this a fun and rewarding activity. Each page of the guide can be printed out or read on a mobile device. Please share this guide with schools, scouts and anyone

else you know who may be interested! Here is a link:

<https://treegrowersguide.org.uk/ytgg/>

I think that most people these days understand that trees are important for biodiversity (mammals, birds and insects) and are also good for climate change (by locking up carbon). But that is not all! Here is a list of other benefits which you are welcome to use in your newsletters. Some additional beneficial effects of trees are:

- Reducing both noise pollution and air pollution coming from the roads
- Alleviating flood risk – absorption from trees reduces run-off during heavy rain.
- Air cooling (and reflection of heat) to mitigate heat from roads (albedo effect)
- River cooling and shading for fish. Green corridors help cool river water.
- Reducing road run-off of pollutants such as oil spill residue, and tyre and brake wear from vehicles into rivers and watercourses
- Improving soil health – planting trees improves soil structure.
- Increasing visual amenity value and enhancing the landscape character.
- Improving mental health and wellbeing –by reducing stress and cortisol levels.

3. Broadband Update

In September I organised what has become an annual update meeting with the Hampshire Superfast Broadband Team for our MP Damian Hinds. It is important to understand what is meant by superfast broadband. Superfast means speeds above 30 Megabits per second (Mbps), according to OFCOM. Many of us in East Hants currently have “fibre from the cabinet”, which means we have speeds of around 16 Mbps. So we are due an upgrade.

Under the Government's £5bn Project Gigabit programme, a contract for Hampshire has been awarded to a company called City Fibre. Implementation should get underway in 2024. We will know when we start seeing City Fibre vans around the place. Meanwhile, Openreach will continue with their commercial rollout which includes most of Petersfield. This is also slated for 2024.

It is widely rumoured that Virgin Media will buy City Fibre as they have reportedly bid £3bn. Virgin Media is owned by Liberty Global and that group now includes O2 following the merger in 2021. I am optimistic that the competition between the emerging two giants (BT/Openreach and Liberty/Virgin) will be good news for rural communities.

4. HCC further increases monthly payments to Homes for Ukraine hosts

You may remember from earlier reports that HCC has been topping up the government grant to Homes for Ukraine hosts over the last two years by £200. HCC has now decided to increase that top-up to £400 which means the hosts will now receive £700 per month.

The UK Government and Hampshire County Council are doing everything we can to help Ukraine to win the war. I think we can be proud of the fact that the Longmoor Range in our area is playing a crucial part in the war effort with thousands of Ukrainian soldiers being trained there already this year and more in progress.

5. Funding for rare orchids in East Hampshire

The chalkland areas of the East Hampshire Hangers and nearby woodlands already provide a home to some of the UK's scarcest helleborine orchids, but their numbers have been in decline. You may be surprised to hear that the red helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*) is considered one of the UK's most threatened orchid species with an overall population of fewer than 20 plants recorded each year.

Here is a photo of the red helleborine:



The long-leaved helleborine (*Cephalanthera longifolia*) is also very rare. It is thought to survive at only 25 sites in England. Here is a photo of that one:



HCC has plans to preserve rare orchids on County Council sites and these plans have now been backed by Natural England with a £98,000 grant. This project will put in place measures to protect these fragile locations and nurture the threatened helleborine orchid back from the brink of extinction. Conservation work such as this is a key priority for the County Council enabling us to preserve our precious natural landscapes for wildlife, develop resilience to climate change, and ensure that the delicate ecosystems can spread and survive.

The nature recovery project aims to increase numbers of both red and long-leaved helleborines. The decline of the species in recent decades is linked to a range of factors including woodland loss, trampling by humans and deer, and grazing by molluscs. Plans to reverse the loss of the orchids include vegetation clearance to

provide more space, light and air for the plants to grow; protection for adult plants; 'artificial' hand pollination; and the introduction of measures to help seeds to germinate. The aim also is to involve a group of volunteers to assist with the project.

6. BOATs Update

As Executive Member for Countryside and Regulatory Services, I am responsible for the Countryside Service. The Service is working hard at the moment to develop a new approach to managing Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). The strategy will be published on 20 November 2023 in advance of the Universal Services Select Committee meeting on 27 November, where the paper will be scrutinised. Deputations can be made at that session. This Select Committee is chaired by Cllr Robert Mocatta who represents Petersfield Butser Division.

I will also be meeting with SDNPA Chair Vanessa Rowland shortly and I will discuss the BOATs strategy with her, including opportunities for joint working and joint lobbying of Government. I will update Parishes again on this issue in my December report.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers