

**DRAFT**

**SHEET PARISH COUNCIL**

**CHAIRPERSON:** Ron Dark

**CLERK:** Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of a Meeting of Sheet Parish Council held on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.30 p.m. at Sheet Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs. Ron Dark (in the Chair) Alan Biddlecombe Brian Bird  
Tony Clear Robin Forest Will Glancy  
Gail Martin Chris Wilton

In Attendance: Russell Oppenheimer, County Councillor (for the first part of the meeting)  
Nick Drew, District Councillor (for the first part of the meeting)  
Jenny Hollington, Clerk

There were 8 members of the public in attendance at the meeting

20/37 Apologies – None received.

20/38 Minutes – The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were approved and signed.

20/39 Matters Arising from the February Minutes

- EHDC Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan Survey – Cllr. Drew will e-mail details to the Chairman

20/40 Declarations of Interests – The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest on any item on the Agenda – none declared

20/41 Public Comment –

- Coronavirus – In response to enquiries about use of the Village Hall, the Chairman confirmed that Sheet Parish Council will follow Government guidelines when deciding whether the hall should be closed. There is currently no capacity for the Village Hall to be deep cleaned between hires.
- Sheet Street Party – The Chairman of SVCT asked whether the Parish Council would consider giving a grant towards costs? This will be considered at the April P.C. Meeting.
- Speedwatch – A speedwatch volunteer pointed out that there are still no appropriate speedwatch locations on Pulens Lane and the London Road where they are most needed – he felt it was important that new sites are found quickly – to be discussed later on the agenda.
- Village Signs – The Parish Council were asked to consider installing a village entry sign on the London Road to help to slow speeding traffic through the village – to be discussed later on the agenda
- Burglaries – There have been a spate of burglaries in the area – residents are asked to be on guard.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the District and County Councillor's reports and flooding in Mill Lane, to be discussed first, to enable attendees to leave the meeting early.

20/42 County Councillor's Report – The County Councillor's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed in greater detail:

Cllr. Oppenheimer said that recent storms have impacted road conditions during February and urged all landowner to make sure ditches and drains on their land are kept clear of leaves and vegetation which can cause blockages and flooding. Surface water or fallen trees and debris should be reported via [www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems)

The situation around Coronavirus is evolving quickly but County Councillors will be carrying on as normal until advised not to.

Cllr. Oppenheimer's full report is appended to these minutes for info.

20/43 Cllr. Drew reported on the following items

- Coronavirus – The EHDC website will be regularly up-dated to provide current information for residents <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/>
- Enforcement – Residents can now report concerns via a new on-line form. <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-enforcement-enquiry-form>
- Flood Support Team – Support for residents whose properties are at risk of flooding is available, and sandbags can be provided.
- Budget – EHDC have approved a 2% increase in Council Tax – the increased revenue will be going towards welfare to benefit those who most need it.
- “Green” Initiatives – £50,000 has been allocated for green initiatives, and each District Councillor now has an extra £1,000 to support green initiatives within the community.
- Crime – A number of incidents have been reported in the Petersfield area and EHDC are in contact with the local community police to monitor the situation
- EHDC Templates – If Councils need of appropriate wording for policies and procedures, EHDC are happy to share. The Chairman asked if EHDC were able to offer advice on the new website accessibility legislation and Cllr. Drew said he would investigate.

20/44 Mill Lane –

**Flooding** – The River Rother burst its banks during the recent storms, causing flood damage to properties closest to the Riverbank in Mill Lane. Consequently, the sandbags in the flood pod have now all been used and need to be replenished. Residents said that more sandbags would be needed in future (50 x 6 bags are required for each resident whose property floods) and the Clerk was asked to re-order double the number of synthetic sandbags. In the meantime, residents said it is unclear whose responsibility it is to dispose of the used bags which have been left in the car park, and the road closure signage? Cllr. Oppenheimer said that HCC is the lead flood authority but devolves a lot of the work to EHDC – sandbags will be collected by EHDC, but signage and barriers fall between District and County – he said he would investigate and arrange for the signage to be collected. The Clerk was asked to circulate the Sheet Flood Plan to all residents of Mill Lane for future use (once GDPR checked). Cllr. Clear said he thought it would be straightforward to create a diversion of the River to prevent future floods and had produced a diagram to illustrate his idea. It was agreed that Cllr. Martin would contact the Environment Agency to discuss the proposal in greater detail.

20/45 Planning – Current applications were discussed

SDNP/19/0 5985/CND	<b>Variation of conditions to allow amendments to the appearance and size of the dwelling, additional info pertaining to include erection of shed and greenhouse to the rear and installation of solar panels and air source heat pump unit</b>	41 Pulens Lane, Sheet GU31 4BZ	No Objection
SDNP/20/0 0679/HOUS	<b>Single storey side extension and 2-storey rear extension</b>	20 Inmans Lane, Sheet GU32 2AN	No Objection
SDNP/20/0 0779/HOUS and 00780/LIS	<b>Listed Building Consent – Rear single storey extension following demolition of existing flat roof double garage</b>	Broadlands House, Ramshill, GU31 4BA	No Objection
SDNP/20/0 0781/HOUS and 00782/LIS	<b>Listed Building Consent – Detached garage with self-contained ancillary accommodation above to include 2 dormers to front (revised application to 35188/002)</b>	Broadlands House, Ramshill, GU31 4BA	No Objection

20/46 Audit 19-20 – Documents had been circulated prior to the meeting for review:

- (a) The Risk Register – Item 13 b (deposit efficiency) will be looked at in more detail and therefore coloured amber “Action Outstanding”. Cllr. Wilton will research options and feedback details at the next meeting. The Parish Resilience and Flood Plans will be included under Provision of Services and coloured amber “Process in Place” while the Clerk obtains appropriate permission re GDPR. Following these amendments, the Risk Register was approved.
- (b) Asset Register 2019-20 - The sandbags currently included will be removed as they are not a fixed asset. With this amendment, the Asset Register was approved.
- (c) Financial Regulations – No changes have been made during the year and so, with a minor typo correction, the Financial Regulations were approved.
- (d) Standing Orders – There have been no changes during the year, and the Standing Orders are considered appropriate to Sheet Parish Council’s requirements – the document was therefore approved.
- (e) Statement of Internal Control – There have been no changes during the year, and the document was approved.

20/47 Finance

- (a) The Chairman confirmed he had completed the survey on the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance – the document’s availability for reference was noted.
- (b) Quarterly figures to end of December 19 had been circulated prior to the meeting for review. Actual spend is currently broadly in line with budget in most areas – a small discrepancy under maintenance on the Village Green, Recreation Ground and Mill Lane was noted but is due to cost allocation and the inclusion of tree works and will therefore be appropriately adjusted prior to financial year end.
- (c) A grant application received from the Trustees of the Petersfield Outdoor Pool was considered and a contribution of £500 towards the cost of replacing pipework was approved, as this amenity is used by residents of the parish.
- (d) The February bank reconciliation was approved and signed.
- (e) Cheques for March payment were approved as follows:

Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
301063	£150.36	Contract Natural Gas	V. Hall - gas
301064	£166.99	SSE	V. Hall - electricity
301065	£197.00	Business Stream	Waste water - V. Hall
301066	£1,605.00	J.C. Fifield	Window Repair - V. Hall
301067	£84.74	DNE jServices	Door hinges and handle - V. Hall
301068	£180.00	Frank & Bill	Plot Clearance - Plot 4 - allotments
301069	£72.00	Elite Playground Inspections	BMX Track and Rec
301070	£521.00	Sheet Music	Caretaking/cleaning - V. Hall
301071	£84.74	HMRC	Tax & NI - Clerk - March
301072	£732.09	J. Hollington	Clerk - March
301073	£500.00	Petersfield Open Air Pool	Grant towards repair of leak
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,293.92</b>		

20/48 Website Accessibility – The Chairman and Clerk have arranged to meet with the website Manager to discuss the new accessibility requirements.

20/49 Roads and Traffic

- (a) Narrowing Village Street and Farnham Road/School Lane Junction – Plans are being progressed by HCC.
- (b) Speed Reduction on the London Road – Nothing further has been heard but it is understood that traffic monitoring is to be carried out to establish the cause of recent accidents.
- (c) Speedwatch – A new speedwatch location on Pulens Lane, at Barnfield Road, caught 11 speeding cars in 1 session. However, new locations are still required nearer to the junction and London Road.
- (d) Road Signage – A proposal for a “welcome to Sheet” sign to be installed on the London Road on the east bound side, just above the bridge, with the aim of slowing traffic through the village, was discussed – Cllr. Martin undertook to follow this up with Ian Janes and feed back at the April Meeting.

20/50 Mill Lane

- (a) Access for emergency vehicles – Cllr. Martin has now heard back from the Ambulance Service, who have noted on their access system that Mill Lane is a windy, narrow, country lane. The Police have responded to say that they are confident they are able to access the lane. However, the Fire Service have yet to respond.
- (b) Blocked culvert – It is hoped that work to clear the culvert will be progressed within the next few weeks.
- (c) Sewerage Overflow – This has occurred several times over the past few weeks and impacts 3 residences as well as Mill Lane and the River Rother. Residents have agreed that they will all call the Environment Agency emergency number each time it happens so that they put pressure on Southern Water.
- (d) Receding Riverbank – Cllr. Martin has reported the issue to the Environment Agency who will be sending someone out to offer advice.

20/51 Resilience Plan – GDPR compliance is required, before the document can be advertised on-line – the Clerk is progressing this.

20/52 Recreation Ground - One more quote is required for the shed repairs – the Clerk will ask DNE Services to provide a quote.

20/53 Millennium Field – There have been several complaints about the number of “professional” dog walkers using the field, and the amount of dog waste that is not picked up. Currently there is a dual bin provided in the Millennium Field Car Park and it was suggested that the Clerk liaise with PTC to establish whether they would empty a bin if positioned within the field, and the additional cost implication.

20/54 Sheet Allotments – The suggestion at the last meeting that all plastics should be banned from the allotments was felt to be a non-starter that would not be supported by plot holders.

20/55 Sheet Common –

**Refurbishment of the gate** – The gate will be painted in the coming weeks. The sign is being mended and will be replaced as soon as possible.

**Volunteer Work** – Cllr. Biddlecombe had produced and circulated a report setting out the extent of the voluntary work carried out on Sheet Common over the years, to improve the area for residents. The report is appended to the Minutes and will also be made available via the Parish Council website for information. Members of Sheet Parish Council expressed their appreciation of the impressive amount of work and dedication of the volunteers, and the improvements they have made.

20/56 Sheet Village Hall –

**Windows** – The windows have been repaired and now need decorating – the Clerk will ask DNE for a quote.

**Photo Competition** – Cllr. Biddlecombe is waiting to hear back from the Chairman of SCVT about the proposal for a village photo competition to be linked into the Village Street Party.

20/57 Village Pond – The land on the corner of Long Lane, site of a former village pond, is possibly to be sold. It was agreed that the Chairman should contact the Agent and express the Parish Council’s interest in purchasing the land for the purpose of either restoring the pond (now filled with rubble and waste), or for providing School parking. It was suggested that the land/pond initiative might be a suitable Community Asset and the Clerk was asked to investigate this via EHDC.

20/58 Annual Parish Assembly – It was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Assembly on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 p.m. and invite the speaker from Bedales, recommended by village residents, to talk about Climate Change.

20/59 Correspondence – The following items of correspondence were noted:

- SDNPA – Sustainable Construction Survey – The Chairman has reviewed the document

20/60 Forthcoming Meetings

- EHAP&TC – Terena Plowright will be talking to Town & Parish Council representatives about the Greening Campaign – Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March – Physic Garden Room

20/61 Date of Next Parish Council Meeting – The next meeting of Sheet Parish Council will be on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

## **Work carried out on Sheet Common from 2014 to March 2020.**

Sheet Common is an area to the north east of the parish of about 5 hectares. It is about two thirds tree covered and one third open. The wooded area consists of oak, sycamore, silver birch, beech, scots pine, holly, field maple (few), small leaved lime (few) Rowan/Mountain Ash (few). There is also honeysuckle and wild clematis. The area is abundant with lichen and fungi.

In 2014 the wooded area had a ground cover of 100% Himalayan balsam and bracken.

**Himalayan Balsam** (classed as invasive-non native) completely covers the ground with shade, and growing up to 2.6metres in height it smothers smaller indigenous plants. Each plant produces hundreds of seeds, that, when ripe, are projected out of the seed pod when touched. It is very prolific and can cover an area such as ours within three to four years. Although nectar collecting insects tend to like the flower, it provides sustenance for only a limited period. It harbours ticks. Beside rivers it quickly throws roots into the bank, but when it dies off in the autumn the banks are weakened and erode quickly, not a problem with the common, but we need to eliminate a source of seed.

That year we made a start on the balsam reducing firstly with South Downs National Park Volunteer Ranger Service, and then once the majority of it had been cleared, by vigilance and hand pulling. Now the problem has been virtually eliminated, with only 2 individual plants found last year.

**Bracken** (classed as invasive) is allelopathic; releases chemicals that inhibit both the growth of other plants as well as mycorrhizal development. It also forms its own micro climate which helps to harbour deer ticks that pass on lyme disease to dogs and humans. The spores of bracken are reported to be carcinogenic. Having said that, it does provide cover for small animals and birds, so we may maintain a small area for the good of nature.

Three years ago we had contractors spray the bracken with 'Asulox' - a targeted pesticide that is quickly inert after spraying. This was very successful reducing the majority of the cover, and subsequently we have been cropping the small shoots as they appear.

Steps were built four years ago, in conjunction with Hampshire Rights of Way, SDNP Volunteers, and the Parish Council, at the south east part, adjoining the field on path 27, as the previous route ran along the top of a bank that was becoming eroded, this has encouraged walkers to visit the common, rather than just walking by.

Also to encourage the use of the amenity, we have provided a BBQ and table. This is now becoming well used, after a slow start. There is also a bench looking over to the South Downs, the blocking silver birch and ash have been cleared. Unfortunately this does attract visitors who frequent the benches at night and indulge in using NO<sub>2</sub> canisters, and leave fast food wrappings, marijuana wrappings, the effects of fires and various bottles. At least they are showing an interest in being outside!

Last year we let the grass area grow during the spring and summer months to encourage invertebrates, and I have noticed that with the lengthened grass stems and sorrel, there seemed to be a massive number of grasshoppers and crickets during July and August, this is also good for butterflies. This obviously provides a food source for birds.

Having obtained the relevant permit for felling trees from the Forestry Commission, we have removed several large sycamore and a few silver birch.

The 'brash' (small branches) obtained from these large trees is normally burnt, but because of the sensitive nature of the site, we in the 'Hampshire Monday Group' (clearing up the debris from the professional tree contractors), decided to build a dead hedge around the BMX track. This provides a barrier for the track, and a natural habitat. Using rotting wood at the base to encourage invertebrates, we have made stakes from this material and filled in-between with the brash and thinner trees. Hopefully, birds will eventually nest within the hedge as they get used to it, and we may help the hedgehog and small rodent populations. Already I have seen wrens and robins rooting around inside.

Posts have been put into the path adjoining the Midhurst Road to discourage the use of vehicles on the site.

We have had a couple of surveys carried out on the state of the wooded area.

The main points were:

- a) Reduce the bracken
- b) Reduce the bramble
- c) Reduce the holly
- d) Thin silver birch
- e) Reduce sycamore that was threatening the oak canopy
- f) Provide a glade to the south west part

To date we have carried out all of the above suggestions, except the bramble and holly control and further silver birch thinning. This we hope to do this in the coming couple of years with the help of 'HMG' who are skilled at conservation tasks, working directly with Hampshire Rights of Way, Hampshire Countryside, and wildlife conservation projects.

Other future projects include:

- 1) Providing nesting boxes for bats and birds
- 2) Taking an inventory of tree species and numbers
- 3) Surveying ground flora and recording the progress without the bracken and balsam cover
- 4) Getting visitors to clear rubbish up after them, and not light fires
- 5) Getting the EHDC to clear the rubbish from the adjoining laybys

Wildlife observed by me there has been; roe deer, foxes, pipistrelle bats, various butterflies, barn owls, green woodpeckers (sadly decreasing but may come back with increasing invertebrate population), great woodpeckers, tree creepers, thrushes, buzzards, wrens and robins.