



*representing
the civil parish
of Shalford,
Peasmarsh
and Chilworth*

SHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman's Report - Annual Assembly - 16th May 2014

Welcome to everyone this evening - to the Councillors, Local representatives and members of the public. Thank you for attending.

I would like to report on the activities and business of the Council over the past 12 months to the end of March 2014.

This has been my second year as Chairman and it has been an active year for all members of the Council and I would like to thank them all for their diligence and their contribution. I wish particularly to record our thanks to Jay Punatar for his excellent contribution over many years until he had to stand down due to the pressure of other commitments. Since Jay stood down we have not been able to replace him on the Council but we are hopeful of being able to co-opt a new member shortly.

The Council is responsible for a number of activities which continue unseen - the maintenance and repair of our street lighting, our bus shelters, the running of the cemetery and the maintenance of St Mary's churchyard, maintenance of 4 playgrounds within the parish and the running of our 2 allotment sites. In addition we review all planning applications within the parish and comment upon them as we determine is appropriate.

In addition to these routine activities there have been significant additional projects. Firstly we have continued the works on making the cemetery chapel dry and secure in accordance with our obligation to maintain the building as a listed building and the entrance gateway and door to the chapel have been much improved. It remains our intention to seek to bring the chapel building into productive use and further works are planned on the interior of the chapel and we are intending to have an open day later in the year to stimulate potential interest in the use of the chapel. The bulk of the expenditure in the year was met from Council funds with some grant funding from Guildford Borough Council.

Last year we reported on the fact that the allotments at Bradstone Brook and Peasmarsh had suffered from some neglect and we had embarked on a programme of improvements in order to get a higher take up of the unused allotments. This work has continued in the current year and we have succeeded in letting more of the vacant allotment space but vacancies remain and any enquiries should be addressed to the Parish Clerk.

Following the identification of funding known as Section 106 funds last year we have been able to replace some of the playground equipment during the year. It is somewhat frustrating that this equipment is rather expensive but safety is clearly of paramount concern and this is the major determinant of the cost.

Following the successful petition to Surrey County Council last year Surrey Highways installed the new crossing on the King's Road. Whilst this has been generally welcomed it did lead to the loss of 3 vital car parking spaces and we remain concerned that the exit from the slip road is dangerous and that a Stop sign would be preferable at the end of the slip.

Miracle of miracles we were finally able to install the new village signs for Peasmarsch and Shalford to give a better sense of identity as people drive into our villages and I hope may also give us some small sense of pride as to where we live.

The Council has maintained good relations with the local police who regularly report on any matters of concern at the monthly council meetings.

The Parish Council had a marquee at the Shalford annual fete continuing to raise the profile of the council locally. The Chilworth Community Association continue to be supported by a regular grant to assist them with their valuable work at the Brookwood pavilion and sports field.

However all of these issues have been overridden during this year by concerns about the Guildford Borough Council Local Plan and it's potential impact upon our community. There have been a huge volume of "evidence" documents to review and the focus has narrowed on to proposals for "insetting" of the villages in our parish and three PDAs (Potential Development Areas). There were PDAs in each of the villages and each of our three communities were proposed to be "inset" with the consequence that Green Belt protection would be lost within the proposed inset settlement boundaries.

Your council consulted widely within the parish and meetings were held with GBC councillors including a public meeting, with CPRE and other special interest groups. The council submitted a 16 page response to GBC's Issues and Options document. Where are we now?

This is a lengthy process which is targeted to result in an approved Local Plan by September 2015. There is now a Draft Local Plan which was reviewed by the GBC Scrutiny Committee last evening and I will ask James Palmer to comment on this. However in this Draft Plan two of the three PDAs had been withdrawn. The Peasmarsch proposal for development adjacent to the industrial estate and the Chinthurst Lane proposal for 174 new homes in Shalford are no longer in the plan. I will ask James to elaborate. However the proposal for a new housing development of 80 homes on land adjacent to Hornhatch Farm remains in the Plan despite the arguments advanced against this proposal.

In the Draft Plan there have also been changes to the settlement boundaries of each of our communities and these will need further review and comment by the council.

A further period of consultation will begin when the Draft Plan is issued shortly and we will consult with local residents before responding to GBC.

Alongside all of the deliberations about the Local Plan we, together with all parish and town councils throughout the land, have been encouraged to look at the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a major task for a community as it is designed to dovetail the planning needs of a local community into the overall framework of the borough Plan. The process requires a group of willing locals to volunteer their time to consult within the community, to prepare the plan and then take that plan to a referendum of their community. The anticipated time span to achieve this is thought to be about 2 years and it is a community task NOT a parish council task. A handful of communities have successfully produced such plans and had them approved by the Inspectorate. At this stage we have not been able to identify any enthusiasm for such a plan within this community. However this evening Chris Bowden of Navigus Planning will try to explain the concept of a Neighbourhood Plan and another "lighter" alternative of a Parish Plan which the council believes could be more relevant and useful to our community.

It has been a challenging and difficult year and I wish both personally and on behalf of all the Council to thank our Parish Clerk, Nuala Livesey, for guiding us through our tasks in such a positive and efficient manner.

Thank you.