

SHERBORNE ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL Chairman's Report May 2017

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the 2017 Sherborne St John Parish Council AGM and Annual Meeting.

A copy of this report will be put onto the SSJ PC website

This report provides detail on first year of tenure of this iteration of the Parish Council and like previous years, we continue to be busy

At this point appropriate to introduce your Parish Councillors

Natasha Rougier – Vice Chair and Planning
Linda Agnew - Chair of Planning
Carl Davies – Treasurer
Rose Cooper – Everything else !!

And of course our erstwhile clerk, Penny Mayo

There are a number of topics, some new, some recurring, where it is appropriate we review the last year's activities and anticipate progress for this year.

I'll provide a brief summary of each subject hoping i) to give you the highlights and ii) to then give you the opportunity to ask any further questions after you've heard all of the various reports/updates from my fellow councillors.

Neighbourhood Plan

There will be a separate report on this later

Chute

A lot of work on the Chute over the last year, most of it funded by grants that our Clerk seems to have an almost magpie like ability to find the detail of and then get hold of the matching funds.

We have refurbished the tennis courts, thanks to the tennis club for their contribution. All works for the Chute have been completed and anticipated schedule of works for the next 5 years is now in place. There is a defibrillator on the wall as your approach the main entrance (and another at the village hall) – again grant funded

We have a new caretaker/site manager, Terry Buller, - thanks to Terry for his enthusiasm in maintaining and improving the general state of the building.

There are still a small number of remaining works to do e.g. it would be good to locate a mirror at the exit to the site so that any approaching traffic could easily be seen.

Financially the Chute is self sufficient.

Infrastructure

An on-going bug bear and not likely to get better. HCC planned for 19% cuts in government grants but the actual figure was 39%. Even this year's relaxation re: the allowed for percentage increase in council tax from 2% to 4% did not help (the additional funds being focussed on social care) and we have to accept that road repairs will not be completed as quickly as anticipated, etc. At the wider level cuts to school transport and the like have been implemented.

This not planned for reduction also means that schemes the PC would like to see implemented such as 20 mph limit in the centre of the village and speed humps or the like on entry to the village from the Bramley area and the A340/West end , are way down the list, if on the list at all.

Jam tomorrow but the thought has to be will there be any jam left to share

Finances

Given what we've spent over the last year the Parish finances are in an embarrassingly good state. The Treasurer will provide his report later.

I/we make no apologies for raising the precept for Band D by 3.5% this year – less than 5p per week. The village is lucky in having a lot of well-maintained infrastructure which is well used e.g. the Chute and/or requiring regular maintenance. For example the Chute roof has a life expectancy of 25 years and might then have to be replaced – we are currently at year 20.

We successfully passed last year's Parish audit and I expect to be able to report the same re: this year's audit next year.

As I stated at the beginning of this report a significant percentage of all the works completed in the village this past year have been grant funded or funded by the related organisations e.g. the Tennis Club, somewhere in the order of 75% plus.

Transport

Simple statement, use it or lose it.

Hats off to Ted Wilkinson for his dogged engagement with Stagecoach which has resulted in Stagecoach providing the number 22 service which loops around the village and then into town via the hospital. However there have been logged journeys where only 1 person has been on the bus, travelling with a pass so essentially no revenue for Stagecoach

I've seen e-mails detailing some failings of the service e.g. buses not turning up and these have been reported to Stagecoach

And there is the weekly bus to Chineham on a Friday which I understand is well used.

But the message is simple, use it or lose it.

Mobile Shop

In the Village Hall car park on a Monday and Friday afternoons but alas no post office. The PC did discuss a mobile post office with the post master at the Baughurst post office which runs a mobile facility but the PO offered him just over £2k a year to visit SSJ - derisory. This was based on the number of counter transactions at the old SSJ sub-PO. In any event had this service gone ahead it would have only offered a simple service, effectively stamps and the like, not payment of pensions or like financial transactions.

Planning

Apart from the normal applications currently there is nothing 'big' in the pipeline.

It goes on and will go on as the government appear to be easing the planning laws to facilitate new applications.

Manydown is going ahead, some 3,000 houses and there will be an impact on SSJ with increased traffic thru the village which, as outlined above, prompts the PC to ask for improvements to road, etc. which HCC then effectively tell us no to.

Beaurepaire House – the works continue.

Speedwatch

As reported last year - we have our own Speedwatch equipment, managed by Becky Jones. The hope is that with the village potentially being used more and more as a rat run then this summer will see a resurgence of your friendly local speed watch team

Website

We have a new much improved web site - many thanks to Cllr. Davies for getting this over the finishing line. The link is <http://www.sherbornestjohn-pc.gov.uk/>

Village Party

On the village green on the 8th July – bring your own food, drink, gazebo and good humour. Everything else will be laid on by the PC.

And this year the village fete, courtesy of the village hall committee, has been resurrected – I know as our house has been visited by health and safety folk concerned as to the rumoured sweat shop producing bunting. The date is the 17th June.

Allotments and Rabbits

The first are in good shape, the second are perhaps not so.

Comings and Goings

We welcome Rhydian Vaughan as the new county councillor and say a fond farewell and many thanks to Keith Chapman.

Also thank you to

- John Edwards (the younger !!) for all his efforts re :our infrastructure improvement plan - the report on the village roads and footpaths, the planting of the trees
- Ted Wilkinson - for taking on the management of our allotments and badgering Stagecoach to maintain and improve bus services in and around the village.
- Mrs Janine Butler - our litter picker
- Julian Crawley – for his continued advice and chairmanship of the NP process.

A thank you to Penny Mayo, our Parish Clerk. Sergeant Major like she kept myself and the council 'honest' with regard to some of our more wilder flights of fancy. I think it appropriate to note that Penny has faced some serious health concerns this year but even from her hospital bed was sending me messages telling me when I had to open up the Chute !

Thank you to my fellow councillors over this last year.

What our immediate concerns for the future?

- Odds and sods such a seat near the duck pond and further minor improvements around the village.
- Planning applications this year will I think be a battle
- Keep enjoying it

Thank you

RKM 15/05/2017