

**MINUTES OF SHERFIELD ENGLISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**Held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Parish Cllrs Leigh (in chair), Dovey, Cook, R Noble, J Noble, Billett and Griffiths.

Also, in attendance were Borough Councillor Nick Adams King, John Hartley, Ursula Gooding, and Clerk to the Council, Sue Holder.

**Apologies received:** None

**Chairman's Report 2020/21**

This has clearly been a year unlike any other. We have experienced a number of issues but the work of the parish council has continued through virtual meetings. This is not a substitute for face to face meeting but it has enabled a least some level of normal communication. The Parish Council has continued to deal with ongoing and standard agenda items such as highways, village maintenance and planning. As always planning issues have often generated debate and divided opinion. The use of virtual Zoom meetings has at least allowed fair and equitable debate on these matters. There are some additional success stories which I believe warrant mention, and recognition given to those people who have taken an active role in making them happen. During the first lockdown in particular, Joe Billet was responsible for organising and managing support to those parishioners who were, for various reasons, shielding or unable to get to shops for essential supplies. Volunteers were organised to pick up and deliver food and medical supplies. Credit for the success of this is directly attributable to Joe and his team of volunteers. John Hartley has continued his tireless efforts in developing our Neighbourhood Plan. I don't believe that we would be anywhere near as advanced in this enterprise without Johns continued work and expertise. Ursula Gooding has taken an active role in both footpath improvements and improved Broadband access. In addition, she has been instrumental in developing the ecology aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan.

One of the success stories has been the work carried out by the Lengthsman in maintaining paths etc. Julia Noble has been responsible for both initiating and managing these activities and I believe this has been a major improvement for village maintenance. Julia has also taken on responsibilities for walking the village footpaths to ensure signage etc is in order. The village website has had a complete makeover and I would like to thank Katherine Clarke for all her efforts on this. St Edwards School has kindly been printing our SEDCA newsletter for the last 10 years with the only charge being the cost of materials and this is a much appreciated act. In December they were unable to print SEDCA due to a Covid case at the school. Richard Stratton however came to the rescue and printed the Christmas edition, and our thanks go to him for his help. I would also recognise the contribution of all the other groups in the village who have kept going through a very trying year. SEDCA, SERP, Village Hall committee, Children's Gardening Club, St Leonard's Church and the Sherfield English School Trust. My apologies to any group I have inadvertently missed. I would also thank all my fellow parish councillors for all their efforts, our parish clerk Sue and Nick Adams-King and Gordon Bailey for their support. Hopefully we now have some light at the end of what has been a long tunnel and we can all look forward to an improved year ahead.

**County Councillor, Roy Perry – not in attendance**

**Borough Councillor Report, Nick Adams King**

During the pandemic, Test Valley Borough Council has supported the following communities:

- Provided £440,000 of council tax support to more than 2,000 households who may have lost jobs or were furloughed.
- Collected 56,363 bins per week - that's 2,705,424 bins since lockdown began in March. This continued service was only possible with the help of other departments stepping in to help cover sickness and self-isolation.
- Paid out £56m of grants and rate relief to support over 3,200 local businesses.
- Suspended parking charges for 181 days to support people picking up supplies and families at home.
- Provided £23,124 to 54 community groups to help them deliver food supplies and prescriptions to residents.
- Worked with at least 1,966 volunteers providing vital support to their local communities.
- Personnel from The Lights in Andover and the Leisure Centres were redeployed, responding to almost 80,000 customer enquiries.
- Assisted 440 households helped into housing, many of whom were rough sleepers and are now in permanent accommodation.

Cllr Adams King offered his thanks to the communities of Test Valley for supporting one another during the pandemic and to Cllr Joe Billett for setting up a team of volunteers to support Sherfield English.

## **Neighbourhood Plan – Report by John Hartley**

*Recap: The purpose of the NDP is to get a section specific to Sherfield English into the Borough's Local Plan. The NDP follows on logically from the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement, both of which are available on the village web site, [www.sherfieldenglish.org.uk](http://www.sherfieldenglish.org.uk).*

### **SUMMARY**

This has been a year of solid progress for the NDP. We have passed two milestones - obtaining grant support and developing a draft set of formal policies. We are on schedule to produce a draft of the final NDP document in the autumn. This has to be approved by a government inspector and then goes to a parish referendum before formal adoption, which should be achievable before next year's APM.

### **PROGRESS IN THE PAST YEAR**

**1. Grants:** We gained approval for a grant of approximately £10,000 from the Government's 'Locality' scheme. This was received in the autumn and was used to fund work by consultants through to the end of March this year. We are now applying for a second round of funding at a similar level for 2021-22.

#### **2. Professional Consultants**

- a. We short-listed two consultancies, and chose Bluestone Planning Partnership LLC, principally because they were already working with Wellow, and were highly recommended. The recommendation has proved to be well-founded.
- b. Separately, Locality funded a formal Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), carried out by Locality's preferred consultants for this purpose, AECOM. This was received and accepted after amendment in January.

- c. Bluestone subsequently produced a set of Policies for the NDP in the form required for adoption into the TVB Local Plan. These form the heart of the NDP. These, and the HNA, have been carefully reviewed by the NDP Steering Committee, which comprises two Parish Councillors, Julia Noble and David Griffiths, and the appointed local Coordinator, John Hartley. We have also had valuable input from Ursula Gooding, particularly on issues involving ecology and habitats.
- d. We had to make several requests for amendment to the HNA, but the Policies have been well-drafted with relatively little need for editing. Further improvements can, of course, be added as we progress.

### **3. Current work**

- a. We have detailed picture of what remains to be done, thanks to Bluestone's experience with several other NDPs.
- b. Our past work on the VDS helps a lot at this stage and will be drawn more or less verbatim into an appendix called the Design Code. Another appendix on Parish Character Appraisal will also draw extensively on past work going back to the Parish Plan.
- c. Most of the text for these will be produced by our consultants, ensuring that it is in a form that will be acceptable to TVBC and the government inspector.

*There is a continuing need to spread information about what is happening as widely as possible. We ask everyone in the village to bring the NDP up in conversation with others and encourage them to get in touch via the village web site, the Facebook page, email or (even better) talking to one of the Parish Councillors.*

### **Children's Gardening Club**

It was reported that the Children's Gardening Club had not met during the pandemic and may be inviting members from the wider community in the future.

### **SERP 2000 – Report by Cllr Dovey**

The past year, with the pandemic lockdown, has seen little sport being played on the Sports field. This has, however, allowed some work to be undertaken in and around the pavilion. The clubhouse end was decorated, the kitchen area completed, and flooring laid pre lockdown. The outside toilet has been erected and made weatherproof, plasterboard erected and plastered ready for painting. Next step is to lay flooring then the sanitary ware and baby changing table can be installed and electrical supply connected. To the rear of the pavilion the area has been cleared and fencing has been erected around the treatment plant and the electricity pole further into the car park area. This work was carried out with the help of grants from the Parish Council, the School Trustees, SEDCA, TVBC Community funding with thanks to the volunteers who have given their time and expertise. New fencing was also installed around the Children's play area. Hill Farm Campsite have kindly agreed to sponsor the upkeep of this area. The annual RoSPA inspection for the children's play equipment is due this month. Michael Eastwood initiated the purchase of a WW1 memorial bench which was funded by the Parish Council and sits in front of the pavilion. With a lack of income, we reviewed our outgoings, and the decision was made to change our ground maintenance supplier. We thank Ben Armstrong and Richard Hamblin for their work over the past years, the field has been kept in excellent condition. Michael Eastwood has taken over this work and continues to maintain to ground to a high standard. The Bowls & Croquet club maintains a full membership and continue to make improvements to the green and their facilities. Our Treasurer, Rosemary Penn-Newman, maintains a good grip of the finances.

All fund-raising events were postponed over the year, so we were grateful for the business rates covid grant, via TVBC application, which has allowed us to keep going during these difficult times.

SERP 2000 APPRECIATES THE CONTINUED SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, SCHOOL TRUSTEES, SEDCA, TVBC AND VILLAGERS; HELPING US TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

### **St Leonard's Church Report – Read by Cllr J Noble**

We at St Leonard's are grateful for this opportunity to speak about the life and work of our church, which, like all parish churches is also your church as residents of the parish. This is why it is right and proper that we should be available for you as individuals, families and of course as a community at times of national events, like Remembrance Sunday. The churchyard is also of course the village cemetery, and we are grateful that this is recognized by the Parish Council with the contribution that is made to its upkeep.

St Leonard's Church functions because of the commitment and work of many volunteers, including the Churchwardens Julia Noble and Clare Durham the Parochial Church Council, and many others. As I looked at the report I wrote for you in 2018, reviewing the previous year, I was struck, inevitably, by the absence of all social activities since last March and the first lockdown. This has been a great sadness but inevitable as we have of course had to keep to government guidelines during the pandemic. Having said that, and unlike nearly all churches in the Romsey area, we have apart from last spring and early summer kept a Sunday service going, albeit without hymn singing. For this, great credit should go to Julia and Clare and a dedicated congregation, including several regulars from St Margaret's, which because of its size has been closed for most of the past year. Scrupulous distancing and hand cleansing is enforced as well as mask wearing. Sue Brown kindly nominated St Leonard's for the Hampshire Hero award and I think this was well deserved. For the first part of the present lockdown I absented myself, thinking that I shouldn't encourage public worship. Julia, with help from others, maintained an informal "service of the word" and after several weeks I felt drawn to return. We still maintain some of the informality with a different person each week choosing an amusing or thought provoking reading (our "ditty" for the week) we enjoy listening to a piece of music and now say a hymn together. It's true to say that this experience has drawn the congregation together in a way we wouldn't have probably foreseen. On a personal note, as you all know, my life was deeply affected last June by the loss of Chris my wife. Her sixtieth birthday was marked at a benefice service in January and that will be a treasured memory. I have been very grateful and touched by the kindness of so many over this past year. As you know I am retiring in September and the future of the benefice is uncertain at present, apart from knowing that there will not again be a full time Rector for the two parishes. I have every confidence that Julia and Clare will do the very best they can to ensure that worship and many other activities continue at St Leonard's within an extended benefice, a new Rector and, we hope, a part time "House for Duty" priest based at Wellow Vicarage. I have to say though that at present, we have no guarantee of this.

My last service at St Leonard's is likely to be in mid-September and we will have more details of this in due course.

The past nine and a half years have been a very special time for me and I want

to thank you for making Chris and I welcome and wish you every blessing for the future. Thank you. Chris Pettet, Rector.

### **Sherfield English School Trust – by Michael Tennant, read by Cllr J Noble**

The Trust as presently constituted was established by a Scheme sealed by the Charity Commission on 3 August 1992. The permanent endowment derives from Sherfield English Church of England School, and now comprises investments valued at £209,865 as at February 2021. There was a credit balance of £9135.24 on the income account as at 28th March 2021. Accounts are submitted annually to The Charity Commission.

The trustees:

There are three ex-officio trustees, two Churchwardens, (Julia Noble, and Clare Durham), and the Church Incumbent, the Reverend Chris Pettet. There is one co-opted trustee (Michael H Tennant, Chairman) and one trustee nominated by the Parish Council (Sheila Cook). The Trustees normally meet in May and November in each year, but this does not preclude 'ad hoc' decisions. The trustees last met on 21st November 2019.

They did not meet in 2020 because of disruption caused by Covid 19. They transacted all business by correspondence. They trustees are due to meet again on 20th May.

Our objects are, after defraying the cost of maintaining the property of the Charity, income is to be applied in furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church in the Parish.

Subject to that, income may be applied for:

- a. the relief of the aged, impotent and poor;
- b. the relief of distress and sickness;
- c. the improvement of the conditions of life for inhabitants in the interests of social welfare of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupations;
- d. the support of educational facilities.

The administration during 2019 and to date, the trustees approved the following grants:

- Bowls Club totalling £1,500
- SERP 2000 totalling £3,500
- St. Leonard's Church £3,400

The Trustees welcome applications for funding that are within the objects of the Trust as set out above. Their present policy is to make a grant towards the total cost of a project without underwriting the whole of it, the percentage of funding depending upon the circumstances.

### **Ecology report to Sherfield English Parish Council, by Ursula Gooding**

As residents of this parish, we are all custodians of a little bit of countryside. It is beholden upon us to respect and protect this ancient environment for the benefit of all, now and into the future. That, which is every day to us, is easy to overlook. However, it gives our parish the character that we are all so lucky to enjoy. That gnarled old tree with broken limbs that may look a bit messy is a haven for wildlife; a biodiverse environment that is one of the most valuable we have. Fragments of ancient woodland hold secrets yet to be discovered in their soils. We have an abundance of red list species that we need to cherish; perhaps common to us, but on a national scale they are severely threatened.

Our parish is characterised by broadleaved mixed woodland with pockets of ancient or semi ancient woodland, grassland and arable and small areas of marsh. We are close to and within the extended zones of the New Forest SAC, Mottisfont Bat SAC, Solent SPA and have several SSSIs on our doorstep. We also have 19 TPOs covering single or groups of trees, miles of 'protected' field hedgerows and about 37 SINCs with another 6 on our borders. So, we have lots to enjoy but also lots to look after! Government is increasingly aware of the need to not only preserve but also enhance our environment, especially woodlands and hedgerows. Increasingly there is policy, guidance and law

to protect important ecological sites and also to reduce impact of new developments upon them. Ensuring that this is actually done is rather harder.... We need to adapt, change, welcome new visitors, residents, and businesses but at all times we need to remember that we will lose our character if we do not do this sensitively and balance the needs of people and the environment. We need to give the environment a little more emphasis and support wherever we can. When they are better balanced we will all benefit. What should we do?

- Knowing where our most valuable assets are is essential so that we can monitor their welfare.
- We need to increase connectivity between these pockets of importance and make sure that we not only mitigate but also enhance our environment as we live our lives in full.
- Many eco-friendly initiatives actually save money (& resources) in the longer term. Remember the three R's – reduce, reuse recycle! The trees, hedgerows might initially seem untidy or not just in the right place, but admire them and work with them. The native hedgerow will give back far more than the non-native evergreen, fence or brick wall.
- Encourage home energy efficiency and energy generation initiatives.
- Regular articles are being published in SEDCA.
- Parishioners are being asked to report interesting sightings and this data is being organised for easy access.
- An initial survey of notable trees in the parish is being carried out and we need to further engage landowners to release information from their own biodiversity surveys and action plans so that we can all work together.
- HBIC has already identified some areas that could enhance an ecological network and we need to work with our neighbouring parishes to try and establish these.
- As community leaders we can set good examples and encourage. The NDP provides an excellent framework for this, but is not yet completed. However we can take guidance from it now to actively comment on new applications and make suggestions to ensure sustainable development within the parish is achieved.
- One easy step to take is to fully embrace the fact that we are within the Mottisfont SAC and we all have Bats! Any application within the parish is likely to impact on roosting or feeding bats and therefore a phase 2 ecological study should almost always be required with the applicant providing mitigation as an essential condition of any planning permission granted.
- Roof lights and external lighting, for example, should only be installed in accordance with national guidance. If trees or hedging must be removed then don't simply replace them put in even more!
- Unfortunately even when planning conditions have been set there is very little, if any, enforcement of them. If that bat box does not appear, or the hedgerow is not maintained or enhanced or even removed then this needs to be pointed out/reported as soon as possible. As we have walked round the parish in the past year it is upsetting to see how many planning conditions have not been complied with. This is a culture that we need to try and change. I am gathering local ecology data, would welcome support and am very happy to try and answer or signpost any queries. Let's make Sheffield English even Greener!

**Legally protected areas:**

SAC – Special Area of Conservation,

SPA - Special Protection Area

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Importance

SINC – Site on Importance for Nature Conservation

HIBC – Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

**Sherfield English, April 2021 resident reports**

2 Yellow wagtails reported nesting in Broxmore Park area

Red Kites above Church Lane

Skylarks at Gambledown

Oldest tree – 800 years old

Largest Oak – 4.8m girth ->300 years old

Coppiced Ash - > 400 years old

**Better Village Broadband – Report to Sherfield English Parish Council, by Ursula Gooding**

FTTP – Fibre To The Premises (reliable infinite speeds!)

3 L4 exchange FTTP schemes successfully completed:

- Upper Doctors' Hill
- Lower Doctors' Hill & nearby part of Newtown Road as far as field gap & excluding West Wellow 3 exchange properties near A27
- Gambledown

FTTC – Fibre To The Cabinet (>10Mbps, relatively reliable and mostly sufficient)

- L4 exchange rest of Newtown Road (not West Wellow 3 exchange properties near A27)
- WW5 properties mostly northwestish of Mill Lane along A27
- Whiteparish exchange at north western end of village

Still needs Work

- West Wellow 5 properties along Mill Lane – DG in discussions
- West Wellow 3 properties, Pound Lane, Church Lane, properties East of Mill lane along A27, ends of Newtown Road & Branches lane – several attempted schemes but Openreach costings are high and well above available government vouchers. As fixed phone line speeds are generally no more than an average of 2Mbps, many properties now using 4G hubs (up to 20Mbps) instead of wired phone line connections if good enough mobile phone signal available.

**Open Forum** None

Meeting closed at 8.10pm