



SHENLEY PARISH COUNCIL

SHENLEY PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 2 MARCH 2021, AT 6.30PM
REMOTELY, VIA ZOOM

Present: Councillors Justine Ash, Annie Keen, Rosemary Gilligan, Gavin O’Sullivan, Natalie Susman, William Susman and County Councillor Morris Bright.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Anthony Spencer (the Council sent their good wishes and thoughts for a speedy recovery)

Councillor William Susman, Chair of the Parish Council formally opened the proceedings by welcoming everybody present. 24 local residents/electors were present. The Chair invited the Parish Clerk, Amanda Leboff, to record the Minutes with the agreement of the meeting.

Copies of the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 3 March 2020 had been distributed together with copies of the audited accounts for the year 2019/20 and the Balance Sheet as of 31 March 2020. It was agreed by those present to accept the Minutes as read, and with the consent of the meeting, the Chairman signed the Minutes as a true record. There were no matters arising from the above Minutes.

The Chair then proceeded to read a copy of his report on the activities of the Parish Council for the past year as follows: -

Once again, I am really honoured to be completing my sixth year as Chairman of the Parish Council and am really proud to be able to represent such a unique and vibrant village community. We are so lucky as we are of such a size that it really makes it possible for everyone to have an opinion heard and be able to influence what happens in the Village. I love my role as I know that once we make decisions there is no bureaucracy involved and we can get things done quickly.

We see the role of The Parish not just keeping the open spaces tidy and the streets swept but to facilitate community engagement and create “added value” for the residents. We want to make Shenley a Village that people aspire to live in. It’s about creating and maintaining a Village that we are proud of and to be able to create a happy and inclusive environment that will last long into the future.

It has been a really horrendous year for everyone with over 300 people in Hertsmere succumbing to COVID, some of whom who were from our Village. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all our families in Shenley who have lost loved ones over the past year. Of particular note was the passing of Bob Gough who had been, with his partner Faye, the go to couple for doing all the odd jobs around the Village. For nearly 50 years Bob had worked tirelessly for the Village.

We also saw the passing of Beryl Mackay at the age of 100. She was a real stalwart of the Village and last year received the honour of becoming an Honorary Freeman of the Parish of Shenley in recognition for the work that she had put in over the years. She was honoured by the Queen with an MBE for her work with the hospital, the school, the church, and the WI. She was a true beacon of the Shenley Spirit. Let us all take inspiration from these friends and others who we have lost over the past year and aspire to take something from their character and use it to make ourselves better people and see how we can make Shenley a more loving place to live in.

This crisis has really showed what a loving and caring community we are. Dozens and dozens of people have come out and volunteered to help and support neighbours and I don't believe that there is anyone in the Village who didn't get the help and support that they need.

A really big change for us at the Parish Council is that we have moved all our meetings to online. It has taken bit of getting used to but now I feel the change has been really positive. It is now much easier for residents to take part, give their comments and opinions and see what we do.

One of the most important things that we do as a Parish Council is improve community engagement and the events that we organise are a really important part of that. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel all but one of them this year. We are hoping that "normal" service will return again after the Summer.

One event that we were determined to run with was Remembrance Sunday back in November. We did not want to allow the COVID crisis to stop us remembering those who had given their lives for us. It meant we needed to think outside the box, clearly the usual gathering was not possible so with a little imagination and a huge amount of work from Simon Jacobs, Reverend Daniel McCarthy, and Rabbi Alan Garber we were able to produce a short film and a "live" stream on Remembrance Sunday itself. Thanks goes to all those who took part, it was a great production that will now become part of the Shenley archives.

On the positive side we have all managed to explore our local surroundings much more. I for one have walked and cycled down paths that I have never been down before in the 25 years that I have lived in Shenley. Our surroundings are absolutely stunning, and thanks must go to our local farmers who tend to the fields and keep them so beautiful. I for one am so glad that we live in such a green and beautiful village and long may it stay that way.

Talking about the charm our Village I must extend our thanks to the team of volunteers who under the guidance of Nick Beaton and Cllr Annie Keen have

worked tirelessly to collect litter and all sorts of other rubbish left behind by thoughtless individuals.

The streetlamps along Porters Park Drive were looking a little worse for wear and thanks to funding secured from our County Councillor Morris Bright's budget we have been able to have the lampposts around Porters Park Drive repainted.

We were approached by Shenley Primary School to help them fund their new library and are delighted that we were able to donate £8000 to allow them to make this project come alive. We want our children not only to learn to read but to enjoy it as well, hopefully this project will enable them to do so.

At the end of last year Hertsmere Borough Council finally adopted our Neighbourhood Plan so it is now treated as a material consideration when they are assessing any future planning applications. Hopefully, following a few more tweaks it will be robust enough to ensure that we can maintain the character of the Village and preserve our greenbelt. We now have created and adopted a formal planning committee of the Parish Council and as such if you are looking at making an application in the future then please be aware that it will come before this committee for consideration.

We have done all we can to embrace social media to reach out to as many residents as possible, but my plea is for people not to abuse social media. Some recent comments have been so nasty and vitriolic that in fact the average resident is now wary and thinks twice about putting on comments for fear of being attacked by the "keyboard warriors". This means that we are not getting balanced views. Let's be friendly and treat each other with civility and respect. What makes Shenley such a wonderful place to live is that we all have different views so let's embrace our differences and respect and celebrate them.

Once again, I feel blessed to be living in such a beautiful Village with such lovely people and if we all stick together, we will get through this horrible time and come out at the other end all the more stronger for it.

The meeting received the report on the Sir Richard Cox's charity. Thanks were given to the trustees.

The Chairman then went through the accounts. The Chair thanked Mr Jeremy Leboff for all his help in doing the Parish Council accounts every month.

There were several questions asked in advance of the meeting under 'Questions and Matters of Local Interest', these included questions relating to the Nolan Principles and the school field, which were answered in one statement by the Chair: -

The Seven Principles of Public Life outline the ethical standards those working in the public sector are expected to adhere to. Those expected to adhere to them include individuals elected or appointed to public office, nationally or locally; those appointed to work in the civil service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, Non-Departmental

Public Bodies, and in the health, education, social and care services, and it also includes those in the private sector delivering public services. Every elected representative of any tier of government including local government should always be cognisant of the Nolan Principles for Conduct in Public Life in all their undertakings. All members of the Parish Council would concur with that. Parish councillors are also bound by a code of conduct and if any resident feels a parish councillor has broken those rules, they can lodge a complaint with the Independent led Standards Committee at Hertsmere Borough Council who will investigate such accusations.

As regards the school field land, leases have been signed and the school continues to be able to use, for no charge, the whole of the land owned by the Susmans and half of the land owned by their neighbours. This transaction was negotiated and agreed with the School and the County Council and I am sure that they will be happy to answer any further questions on this if there are any.

There were several more questions asked at the meeting under 'Questions and Matters of Local Interest', these included questions relating to: -

Freedom of Information Requests – the Clerk confirmed that there have FOI requests received and answered by the Parish Council.

The Code of Conduct – Concern was raised regarding the Code of Conduct and ensuring there are no conflicts of interest.

Large vehicles through the village – the meeting was informed that in order for this to be addressed, details of large vehicles need to be taken and reported.

Tennis Courts – Suggestion of a 5 A Side pitch/mugga would be taken to Shenley Park Trust.

The Chair thanked his fellow Councillors and everybody for attending.

The meeting ended at 7.16p.m.

March 2021

Chairman