

COMPTON and SHAWFORD PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23rd APRIL 2008
IN SHAWFORD PARISH HALL COMMENCING 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr. Mr. A.Walmsley, (Chairman) Cllr.Mr. G.Beckett., Cllr. Mrs. P.Caffyn, , Cllr.Mr. N.Campbell-White, Cllr.Mrs. J.Millar, Cllr. Mr. J.Richardson, Cllr. Mrs. M.Shaw
Cllr.Mr.T.Threlfall,

In Attendance: County Councillor Charlotte Bailey
Police Inspector Kevin Baxman
District Councillor Eleanor Bell
48 members of the Public.

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman Cllr. A. Walmsley welcomed everybody to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from:

Cllr. Mr. J.Dolphin	Jo Pitt
Pat Fennel	P. & B. Marchmont
M.Hegan	

2. Approval of Minutes of the 2007 Annual Parish Assembly.

Within the Heading on Page 1, the date of the meeting was shown as "25th April 2006", it should read "25th April 2007". There were no other amendments requested.

Agreed:

The Minutes of the 2006 Annual Parish Assembly, as published together with the above mentioned amendment, were a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Mr. Bob Emmerson

Seconded: Mrs. E.Caldwell.

Vote: Unanimous.

The Chairman duly signed the Minutes of the 2007 Annual Parish Assembly.

3. Matters arising on those Minutes.

There were no Matters arising.

4. Adoption of Audited Accounts for the Financial Year 2006/2007.

The "Audited Accounts" for the financial year 2006 – 2007 were distributed to attendees of the meeting and questions were invited.

There were no questions raised on the Parish Council Accounts for the Financial Year 2006/2007.

Agreed:

The Parish Council Accounts for the Financial Year 2006 – 2007 be adopted as a true record of the Accounts for that year.

Proposed: Mr. T.Wilson.

Seconded: Mrs L.Dolphin

Vote: Unanimous.

5. Unaudited Accounts for Financial Year 2007/2008

The "Un-audited" Parish Council Accounts for the Financial Year 2007 – 2008 (income and expenditure) were distributed for information to attendees of the meeting and questions invited.

Q. – Mr. Bill Millar.

It was noted that the "Income" for the Playing Field was significantly greater during 2006 – 2007 compared to 2007 – 2008, whereas the expenditure was similar in both years, why was this?

A. – Cllr. J.Richardson – Convenor Finance and Administration Committee.

In answer, Cllr. Richardson advised that the higher "income" figure in 2006 – 2007 was as a result of receiving Grants for the work undertaken on the Jubilee Pavilion Car Park.

6. Chairman's Report.

Ladies, gentlemen and distinguished guests; it's great to see such a good turnout tonight, especially when you could have been at the Bridge Club in the Scout Hall or watching Man U take on Barcelona in the Nou Camp.

The year started and ended with good news/bad news stories. A year ago, the good news for our chairman Jeremy Dolphin was that his own company was proving hugely successful. The bad news for the Parish Council was that he therefore had to step down after only one year as chairman. When the music stopped, I found myself back in the chair, but with Jeremy taking very much a back seat due to his other commitments, we have been stretched quite thinly over the past twelve months. I'm delighted therefore that, for the Parish Council elections due to be held on May 1st, we have four new candidates to replace the four councillors who are not standing again. Since there were exactly nine candidates for the nine seats on the council, an election is not needed and all nine have been declared duly elected.

I'm looking forward to working on a reinvigorated council with all the new councillors. It's healthy to rotate roles, so I'm also hoping that someone else will take on the responsibility of chairmanship for the next year.

Ten years ago we published the first of our Annual Review documents. There were two reasons for doing this:

- To save the time at the Annual Parish Assembly those used to be taken up by individual convenors reading out long and sometimes, let's face it, tedious reports.
- More importantly, to provide a summary of the Council's activities that would go to everyone in the parish and not just those who come to the annual assembly.

Ten years ago,

- We had just sold the plot next door to provide funds for the refurbishment of this building, which the whole parish is rightly proud of,
- plans for new pavilion were evolving.
- Our School governor reported that the school was attracting students from well outside the catchment area, that they were drawing up plans for an extension to replace the temporary classrooms, a new pedestrian access had been installed by the County Council. Parking in Compton Street at school times continued to cause problems.
- We were just starting to think about how to celebrate the Millennium
- We had recently installed a seat on Shawford Down to commemorate Beryl Croker's 100th birthday,
- We were worried about vandalism
- And we mourned the loss of several notable residents including Austin Whitaker and our rector, Philip Barrett.

But that's enough about the past. So what has happened in the last 12 months? Where are we now? And what are our priorities going forward? I'll focus on a few key areas because you've all seen the Annual Report which covers more detail.

Finance - Because of the increasing amount of bureaucracy in all aspects of life, and because this seems to fall disproportionately on small Parish Councils, the percentage of our budget which we have to spend on admin is higher than we would like. However, with no major capital projects in the past couple of years, we have been able to keep our budget almost flat. And thanks to the increase in the number of properties in the parish, this has actually meant a small decrease in the amount of your council tax bill which comes to the Parish Council.

Quality Status - I reported two years ago that we needed to keep our eye on the Quality Parish Council scheme. More and more parish councils in the county are achieving Quality status. We already meet most of the requirements to become a Quality Parish Council, such as producing an annual report, and publishing our minutes and accounts in a timely fashion, but up to now we haven't seen any strong reason to apply for formal Quality status. It is always possible that there may be incentives to go for Quality status. If this happens, we will reassess our position.

Planning - Planning continues to challenge us. For the largest projects affecting our community, it has become clear that we need the combined efforts of a strong residents' group combined with representations from the Parish Council and our District Councillors. The Compton Down Society had already proved its effectiveness in earlier years but, over the last twelve months, I'd like to recognise

- the efforts, led by Peter de Wekker of the Shawford Residents, to investigate the Coulson covenants,
- the group now known as OCASSA for their leading role in responding to the developments at Four Dell Farm, and
- the Compton Village Association for producing such a strong case against overbearing developments at Old Orchard.

We do have to beware of the "law of unintended consequences". For example, various agricultural buildings have recently gone up quite near the residents at the end of Shepherds Lane. Would they have been quite so close to neighbouring properties without the campaign against the industrialisation of Four Dell Farm?

LDF - We convened a public meeting to consider the Parish Council's response to the consultation on the Local Development Framework, which will be replacing the Local Plan. The City Council is required by the government to show that it has considered all development options, even the unpalatable ones, in arriving at its final version of the LDF. So those people who criticise the City Council because it included, say, Barton Farm or Bushfield Farm, as possible development sites, simply haven't understood the issues.

If the City Council couldn't show that it had considered all the options, the government could declare its plan to be unsound, and then impose a different plan on the District. Nevertheless, I would be very disappointed if Bushfield Farm features in the post-consultation version of the LDF, since we fought so hard to keep the Park and Ride away from there.

Parking - The County very recently gave final approval to the South Winchester Park & Ride scheme on Itchen Farm (the Tarmac Site). The sting in the tail was that this could be reconsidered if the boundaries of the South Downs National Park are changed. If all goes to plan, construction will start next year and operation could start in 2010. We will continue to monitor progress and keep you informed.

Parking in Compton Street outside the school, and in Attwoods Drove and Martins Fields, continues to cause problems. There is no obvious magic wand to make the problem go away, but there may be some small measures to make things a little easier. In this respect I'd like to pay tribute to Sue Harding of the Compton Tenants' Association for the work that she's done to bring this to the attention of the City and County Councils.

In Shawford, there could be a small light at the end of the tunnel. Nick Campbell-White and I met with the County Council last Friday. We wanted to explore the possibility of making use of the level land at the foot of the down. A children's play area in Shawford has been on the wish list for several years, and this was emphasised by the results of the Parish Plan questionnaire. And you certainly don't need me to tell you that something should be done about parking in Shawford. The parking problem has got worse with the recent improvements in the train service, although I haven't heard anyone asking for the train service to be reduced. So where are we? The County seemed receptive to our suggestions that we investigate using the land at the foot for the down for a children's play area and some parking.

Much work needs to be done to see whether this is really feasible. What is clear though, is that if we simply provide more free parking it will fill up, as it does at present, and overflow onto the local roads.

We need to consult all the residents, starting in Shawford, about how parking could be controlled, in the context of any extra spaces that might be provided at the foot of the down. I hope that this will be high on the agenda of the new Parish Council which takes office on May 6th.

Parish Plan - At this meeting two years ago, Michael Widén from St Mary Bourne told us about their Parish Plan project and how it had benefited their community. Taking our inspiration from them, we established a Parish Plan committee under the chairmanship of Peter Betts, and a Village Design Statement committee under Terry Wilson. Both projects are now getting ready to deliver their final reports.

In September the Parish Plan questionnaire was delivered to all households. I thank everyone who filled it in and contributed to the amazing 76% response rate. Peter Betts, who has been driving the Parish Plan committee, shouldered a huge amount of work and deserves a big thank you from all of us. Peter will be talking to us later, so I won't steal his thunder, but a key project for the new Parish Council will be working

through the list of actions arising from the Parish Plan. However, many of the parish plan's recommendations may refer to community-style activities.

The Parish Council can't do everything by itself, so you can expect us to be coming to back to parishioners and saying "you said you wanted X, so we need some volunteers to make it happen".

Two comments from the questionnaire are worth quoting:

"We have moved into a very nice new development that has a brilliant community feel. However, when we moved in we had an unpleasant encounter with two local residents outside our home. They complained to us that they objected to our development being built and were quite aggressive.

This was very disappointing as we were just normal people moving into a new home. We did not plan/build the development and hope that existing residents think of us as equals in the parish. As a young couple the affordable housing scheme was the only way we could get on the property ladder."

I'm sure that no-one here tonight will have been guilty of being unfriendly to new residents. But it's a good reminder that we should make a special effort to be more welcoming, perhaps specially in larger developments.

Second comment:

"This is the first place I have lived where I read the Parish Magazine – I think it's brilliant. (PS please bring back the silly reports on PCC meetings – they were great!)"

The year ended as it began, with a good news/bad news story. The good news for our clerk, Mike Langford, who has been living in Norway for part of each month for some time, is that he has been offered a highly paid consultancy contract with a Norwegian Bank. The bad news for us, of course, is that we lose a clerk who has updated us from our old paper based systems into the modern world. I wanted to say that he has dragged us into the 21st Century, but Mike, with his cautious banker's approach, would only agree to the late 20th century. Either way, he has done a brilliant job of sorting out our administration and accounting. He will be a hard act to follow. Mike has very professionally agreed with his new employer that he can continue to support us on a very part time basis for the next couple of months, but this is not likely to be feasible for the remainder of his project, so we are starting to look for a new clerk.

A big vote of thanks to my fellow councillors, to CASCA and Frank Smith for making the hall available, to Joan Olson and the WI for tonight's refreshments, to PC Mark Smith whose input to Parish Council meetings is always most welcome, to our District and County Councillors for all their hard work on our behalf, and to all the others, too many to mention, who help to run the clubs, societies and other activities which flourish here and make this such an excellent place to live.

7. School Governor's Report: Councillor Mr. Jeremy Dolphin.

Cllr. J.Dolphin was not in attendance, but had submitted a written report which was read out by Mrs. J.Walmsley as follows:-

"I am pleased to be able to report that the School continues to perform well and is judged "outstanding" by its School Improvement Partner. The School Improvement Partner is an individual from the local education authority and is the main (but not the only) channel for local authority communication with the school concerning school improvement.

In my report this year I want to focus on three aspects of the school it impacts on the local community:

1. **Traffic problems in Compton Street** – Many of you will be aware of the recent local press report regarding the traffic problems caused at peak periods of the day when children are either being delivered or collected from school. I must stress that the school continues to do everything possible to mitigate these problems. However, there are physical constraints imposed by the location of the school and there is really nothing that can be done to address these constraints (short of finding a new site for the school!). I can therefore only appeal to local residents to be sympathetic to this problem and understanding of the constraints facing the school in managing this problem.
2. **Impact of further development in the catchment area of the school on admissions** – The continued popularity of the school with parents continues to place pressure on places at the school. This pressure potentially increases with the further development of residential property that has been witnessed in the Parish. Whilst the school has a clear admissions policy which is consistently applied, we live in an increasingly "claim" based society and the school has seen a

significant increase in appeals from parents whose applications for places at the school have been unsuccessful, even where this results from a strict application of the admissions policy. Regrettably, the first two appeals were successful resulting in the school facing a situation where the number of pupils would have increased above the levels set as appropriate for a school of its size and available resources. Fortunately, the appellant in one case decided not to take up the places but the school is now facing a third appeal. These circumstances have two impacts. Firstly, the appeals take up a significant amount of the time of staff and Governors to prepare arguments in defence of the admissions policy – staff time that would otherwise be devoted to teaching. Secondly, the resulting increase in class sizes places strains on the teaching staff and could impact on the continued ability of the school to continue to provide the highest quality of learning to its pupils. The Governors of the school have therefore increasingly taken a greater interest in residential planning applications in the Parish and have raised concerns on a number of planning applications with Winchester City Planning Office regarding the sustainability of extensive development in view of the constraints on available school places.

3. **Extended schools** – the Government has a policy of seeking to extend the period for which schools are open by the establishment of clubs that undertake activities at either end of the normal school day. Compton School has established a Breakfast Club to which parents are able to drop off their children on their way to work and the children are able to have breakfast and “play time” before starting school. All of these activities have to be self funding and the Compton Breakfast Club has proved to be successful with numbers exceeding the minimum levels required to break even.”

Shepherds Down School – Cllr Patricia Caffyn, as Chairman of Governors, Shepherds Down school, was asked to give a brief report on Shepherds Down School. Cllr. Caffyn reported as follows:-

- Shepherds Down School is a special school, catering for children with varying degrees of disability.
- Currently, there are 110 children attending the School.
- The Head Teacher retired last year, a new head teacher, Jane Sachs, although only having been in post for only a short time, has said that she feels supported by the Community.
- It is the intention that the School can be seen as being part of the Community and this was evidenced by the children being allowed to use the Tennis Courts at Memorial Playing Field.

8. Police Report

Police Inspector Kevin Baxman reported that policing of the Parish is undertaken by the police “Southgate Team” which currently consists of Police Constable Mark Smith and three PCSO’s. It is hoped that an additional Police Officer will be allocated to this team later this year.

Inspector Baxman reported on the crimes that had occurred in the Parish over the previous twelve months. In general, the levels of Crime had been very low.

Car Parking in Compton Street, outside of the School, when the Children arrive and depart the School, continues to be a problem. Similarly, Car Parking in Shawford Village has become a significant problem. Fixed penalty notices have been issued in Shawford.

Question – Mrs. S.Harding – What is the Police doing about a “gang” of people who are snatching handbags etc., from elderly people in Winchester?

Answer – Inspector Baxman – The police are aware of this activity which is occurring in both Winchester and Eastleigh. It was emphasised that prevention is better than cure, and therefore people need to be more vigilant.

Question – Mr. A.Witt – Now that the old Post Office premises are empty, it has been noticed that children are “bouncing” on the hedge surrounding the garden of these premises and trespassing in the Garden.

Answer – Inspector Baxman – If such activities are taking place, they should be reported to the police via 999. Such reports would be answered by police immediately attending the scene, providing resources are available.

9. Questions from Members of the Public.

Question – Mrs Sorsbie - The state of the Towpath and adjacent grass verges are considered to be in a very poor state of repair. This issue has been raised many times in the past by local residents, but nothing ever seems to be done about it. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the Towpath?

Answer – County Councillor Charlotte Bailey – Hampshire County Council are responsible for maintaining the Towpath surface. The maintenance work is currently on the “List of work to be done”, and Councillor Bailey will “chase” up the appropriate department. With regard to the grass verges etc., it is understood that the “Wildlife Trust” is responsible for part and the “Environment Agency” is responsible for the banks of the Navigation.

Question – Mr. K.Staunton – Mr. Staunton asked what action was being taken in respect of the ever increasing amount of Aircraft Noise from aircraft flying into and out of Eastleigh Airport? Also the expansion of the Airport does not necessarily mean more aircraft, but bigger and older aircraft due to the rising costs of fuel.

Answer – Chairman, Cllr. A.Walmsley – Advised that Mr. Robin Tice was the Parish Council’s representative on the Action Group who are in consultation with Eastleigh Airport.

- **Cllr. G.Beckett** – Advised that Winchester City Council are endeavouring to raise the representation of the Winchester District on the consultative body dealing with issues emanating from Eastleigh Airport, thereby giving greater influence by residents of Winchester and the surrounding Parishes in the discussions with the Airport Authority. The possible expansion of the airport in the manner described by Mr. Staunton would be borne in mind.

Question – Mrs U. Stevens – Mrs. Stevens raised the matter of the infestation of Rabbits on the Memorial Playing Fields and the danger this caused to people using the playing field due to the Rabbit Burrows, and asked what the Parish Council were doing about it?

Answer – Cllr. J Richardson – Cllr Richardson advised that this issue had also been raised by residents and the Sports Club. Investigations revealed that there were four possible avenues to explore as follows:-

- **Use of Ferrets** – not considered practical as only effective when the Rabbits are not breeding. The danger is that the Ferret may not return to the surface from the burrows, therefore having to dig them out.
- **Gassing** – **Not** considered practical as all entrances to the Burrows would need to be sealed, which is very difficult when they are located in large areas of scrub and bramble.
- **Fencing off of the Playing Field** – Very costly and not considered appropriate as in order to be effective any such fence would have to encompass the whole Playing Field – something that would not be wanted.
- **Shooting with high powered air rifles** – The most likely solution, but this cannot be totally effective.

Further investigations and discussions are ongoing. It appears that there is no simple solution to the problem.

- **Cllr. G.Beckett** – advised that the problem is cyclical, running in six year cycles and at the moment we appear to be at the peak of the problem. Disease may reduce the problem in due course.

Question – Mr. A.Witt – In addition to the matter of children trespassing in the garden of the old Post Office premises, the premises themselves are empty and have been so for some time. What is happening to these premises?

Answer – Cllr. G.Beckett – It is understood that planning permission is being sought for the premises to be converted into two dwellings.

Question – Mrs. S.Harding – Mrs. Harding asked if anything could be done to prevent “balls” being kicked/thrown out of the school playground into Compton Street?

Answer – Cllr A.Walmsley – It is evident that a higher fence needs to be erected.

Question – Mr. A.Witt – Recently, a stampede of horses were going along Compton Street, what can the Parish Council do to control horses on the roads and footpaths within the Parish?

Answer – Cllr. P.Caffyn – Foxcroft Farm have planning permission for a Livery Stable and problems reported to the Parish Council concerning horses using the Footpaths have already been reported to Foxcroft Farm.

- **Cllr. G.Beckett** – The whole question of Footpaths and Bridleways and their usage needs reviewing. However, the problem arises when enforcement of where horses are permitted has to be

undertaken.

Question – Mrs. Hazlett – What is the benefit for the Parish Council seeking and obtaining “Quality Status”

Answer – Cllr A.Walmsley – The Parish Council has considered this matter, and whilst considers itself to be a Quality Parish Council, it considered that to achieve formal accreditation was not worth all the work necessary to achieve such accreditation. The situation is being kept under review.

- **Cllr. G.Beckett** – considered it likely that at some point in the future, if a Parish Council wishes to have certain powers/functions, then that Parish Council will have to formally achieve “Quality Status”. Currently the benefits to this Parish Council do not justify the work and effort required.

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Peter Betts – Parish Plan Project.

Dr. Peter Betts, Chairman of the Parish Plan Project, gave a “slide” presentation of the work of the Parish Plan Project. The project commenced in May 2006 and the “draft” Parish Plan document was completed in February 2008.

A major part of this project was the development, publication and analysis of a questionnaire delivered to every household within the Parish. A high response rate (76%) to this questionnaire was received which enabled the project to document the wishes and desires of the Community as a whole.

When the “draft” Parish Plan document has been finalised, a copy will be distributed to every household in the Parish.

Within the final document, there will be an “Action Plan” detailing certain actions that the Community have indicated that they want to take place. As it was the Parish Council who commissioned this Parish Plan, it will be the Parish Council’s responsibility to implement the various requirements of that “Action Plan”.

Mr. Terry Wilson – Village Design Statement.

Mr Terry Wilson gave a slide presentation on the progress of the “Village Design Statement”. It was emphasised that the “Village Design Statement” is a document that will help in the management of inevitable development within the Parish, it will not serve to prevent development. Accordingly, the “Village Design Statement” will assist developers in determining what is acceptable to the Community by way of new developments.

The development of the “Village Design Statement” has been undertaken in consultation with the Planners at Winchester City Council. When it is completed, it is hoped that it will be adopted by Winchester City Council as a “Supplementary Planning Document” to be reviewed in conjunction with any subsequent Planning Applications.

The Chairman, Cllr. A.Walmsley , thanked, on behalf of the Parish, Dr. Peter Betts and Mr. Terry Wilson for all their hard work on this project over the last two years and for their very informative presentation.

The Chairman, Cllr. A.Walmsley , thanked everybody for attending this Annual Parish Assembly and closed the meeting at 9-40pm.