



Compton and Shawford Parish Council

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Record of the Annual Parish Meeting: 7.30pm Thursday 24 April 2014, Shawford Parish Hall

Present: Councillors U Stevens, (chairman), M Goulding, A Jeffrey, N Sadler, M Southgate, M Townell, A Walmsley, M Wilkinson and Mr D Drake (Clerk).

In attendance: 39 members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Mr & Mrs N Caffyn, PCSO Wilkinson.

Review of the Year

1. Councillor Stevens welcomed everyone to the meeting. It had been a busy year, which had begun with affordable housing high on the agenda. Despite extensive research into potential sites, it had become clear that none would have the support of the community and the council had decided not to pursue this issue. Thanks to the considerable efforts of Councillor Wilkinson a multi-use games area (MUGA) had been constructed at the Memorial Playing Fields (MPF), on time and within budget. Recently, as part of the Great War commemorations, the council had authorised the cleaning of the war memorials on Shawford Down. The work, for which the council will be receiving a grant from the War Memorials Trust, was now complete. She was pleased that three parishioners had received the Mayor's Award for service to the community viz., Bill Goodyear, Jean Millar and Frank Smith and that Councillor Walmsley had won an award for the best local council web site in Hampshire. He had also won two awards from the Ordnance Survey for innovative use of electronic maps. The parish had won a silver-gilt award for its entry in the South and South-East in Bloom competition but this had been achieved through the efforts of just a few people. She considered that, if the council were to enter such competitions again, it would require greater support from the community.

2. Councillor Stevens paid tribute to the contribution that Jacqui Evans had made during her time as a parish councillor. She had resigned from the council in January because of increased work commitments. She also thanked her fellow parish councillors, District Councillors Southgate and Warwick and County Councillor Phil Bailey for their support during the past year.

Police Report

3. Councillor Stevens advised the meeting that, in the past year there had been 41 reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour. While crime remained at relatively low levels, in recent months, there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour in Martins Fields and Attwoods Drove. Several parked vehicles had been damaged by children running over them and blue tack had been found in the petrol cap lock of one vehicle and tyres slashed on another. The police had organised a letter drop and the school had been made aware of these incidents. Children were also spoken to during a football coaching session on 16 April. These actions appear to have worked because there have been no reported incidents in the past three weeks.

Finance and Administration

4. Councillor Walmsley reported that the council had managed to maintain its precept (funds received from Winchester City Council) at £27,170 for the fourth consecutive year. The council continued to keep a close eye on its finances and, in a year that had included a number of large projects, resulting in expenditure £101,622.49, it had made a small surplus of £114.01 (1/10th of 1%). At the end of the financial year the council had reserves of £56,406.99 but it should be noted that these included the sinking funds for the maintenance of the Parish Hall and Jubilee Pavilion. The Finance and Administration Committee continued to be burdened with increasing demands from central government for the control of public funds, including revised financial regulations, risk assessments, standing orders etc. but, when challenged to produce such information at audits, he was pleased to say the council's record was extremely good.

5. Councillor Walmsley provided a detailed report on the work undertaken to clean the Stone and Wayside Crosses on Shawford Down. The contractor had noted that the practice of stapling poppies to the Wayside Cross was damaging the wooden cross and should be discouraged. He had suggested that alternative arrangements should be made for those parishioners who wish to provide a personal act of remembrance.

6. Finally he encouraged parishioners to use the parish web site, which was continually updated to provide the community with information that was both current and practical. He was also in discussions with Councillor Goulding about creating a Facebook page.

Playing Fields

7. Councillor Wilkinson noted that, at last year's Annual Parish Meeting, there had been a discussion on the possible procurement of additional equipment at the MPF and QEII Field before the Open Spaces Fund was closed to individual parishes. She was pleased to report that, in the past year, the council had constructed a MUGA, provided a new mower for the cricket square, upgraded the cricket nets and improved the fencing at the QEII Field. Plans for an outdoor gymnasium were well advanced and proposals for an outdoor table tennis table and golf nets would be discussed at the next council meeting on 6 May 2014. She added that, since it was recognised many people in the south of the parish made use of facilities in Otterbourne, a request from Otterbourne Parish Council, for the transfer of some funds from CSPC's Open Spaces Fund (OSF) allocation to assist with the purchase of a MUGA at the Otterbourne Recreation Ground, had received a positive response from the council. Winchester City Council OSF had been asked to transfer the sum of £15000 in support of the proposed MUGA. Future plans for the MPF included the clearance of the walkway on the north east side of the MPF and the provision of a map board at one end and a feature board at the other. She expressed her gratitude to the Sports Club committee for its continued and most welcome support.

8. Councillor Wilkinson was also pleased to say that the official opening of the MUGA on Friday 4 April 2013, by the Olympic volunteers, had been well attended. The local MP, Steve Brine, his children, and the head teachers of both schools were present. Following a competition, organised by Councillor Sadler, to rename the facility, it would in future be called the Memorial Games Area (MeGA). Prizes, kindly donated by Marwell Zoo, had been awarded to local children, who had provided some imaginative and appropriate suggestions.

Future Development within the Parish

9. Councillor Jeffrey reported that the council had received a wide variety of planning applications over the past year. They included new builds, house extensions, tree felling, improvements to the Park & Ride, classroom extensions at local schools and additional commercial activity at Four Dell & Silkstead Farms. Nineteen potential sites had been identified for affordable housing but, given community concerns, the council had decided not to pursue such development. Nevertheless the Winchester District Plan did include the possibility of housing development within the parish, including Bushfield Camp, and it was important that the council continued to monitor the situation closely. She was pleased to note that the Plan did include recommendations that the 'gaps' between Winchester and Compton and Compton & Otterbourne should be retained.

Transport

9. Councillor Southgate noted that parking in Shawford continues to present challenges for the parish, district and county councils. White lines are being applied to Shawford Road but the use of yellow lines involves a long legal process of up to three years. Hampshire County Council was trying hard to catch up with the programme to repair potholes and he was pleased to see that the bollards on Otterbourne Road, at the junction with Southdown Road, had been replaced. The HCC subsidised 63 bus service was being reduced from five to three days a week. (He had been told that the retention of the five day service would result in a subsidy of £50 per passenger.) Since the Blue Star service was not subsidised, there would be no changes to this service. South West Trains intended to continue with the hourly service on Sundays, which had been introduced for the summer season last year. However plans for a cycle track through the parish were being delayed through a lack of funding. The Lengthsman, who is funded by HCC, continues to undertake projects within the parish, primarily cutting back vegetation overhanging pavements and footpaths and the playing fields.

Open Session

10. Concern was expressed about the way information on community projects was conveyed to parishioners. It was agreed that more effort should be made to ensure that potential volunteers were made aware of such projects: the creation of a Facebook page could be helpful in this respect. Concern was also expressed about the length of time it takes to clear debris from roads and pavements, following accidents. Parishioners were encouraged to use the HCC web site to report such incidents and to telephone the highways department, if the matter was urgent and potentially dangerous. It was hoped that the future format of the civic service would continue to include a church service. The chairman noted that discussions between the three parishes involved in the civic service were continuing but, because of plans for a Great War Day commemoration, which would involve all sectors of the community, the council had decided not to organise a civic service in 2014. A request was made for the council to assist with the funding of the Great War Day. The clerk advised that there was no budget for the event but recommended that the organisers should present the council with proposals in advance of the 6 May meeting. Finally, a request was made for greater effort to be made to stop cyclists from using the tow path, many of whom ignored no cycling signs. The chairman agreed to write to HCC Rights of Way expressing concern about this practice and urging them to take appropriate measures to safeguard pedestrians.

David Drake, Clerk