

SHRAWLEY PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016-17

08.05.2017

The objectives of SPC are to seek harmony and progress in a democratic way, to best serve the interests of our community and to improve all aspects of our parish.

1 SPC comprises seven Councillors:

Peter Benkwitz Chair

Michael Partridge Vice Chair

Pip Armstrong

Anna Dorrell

Caroline Norris

Richard Tesh

Naomi Thomas

Stephen Clee Clerk

There have been six meetings held in the year and several working groups and site meetings.

2 Governance:

There have been no reported breaches of the Code of Conduct adopted in 2002 and it has again not been necessary to consult the file of Standing Orders.

The Council does not make any Councillor allowances including for the Chairman.

3 Budgets and Finance:

Opening Balance £9,808.08

Income £8,257.00 (Includes precept & income from various grants)

Expenditure £21,965.83 (Includes £10,000.00 in 31 Day Business Savings Account)

Surplus £932.83

Closing Balance Current Account at Barclays £961.11

Closing Balance 10 Day Business Account Barclays £50.10

31 Day Business Savings Account Cambridge & Counties £10,034.99

The precept was £5500 and will be the same for 2017/18, held at this level for eight years. The 2017/18 Budget is a similar model to that shown above. The closing balance is in line with common practice at 1.78 x precept.

Additionally the Lengthsman's income and expenditure was £1,800.00 for the year. Excellent internal and external audit reports were received and risk assessment and bank account relocation has been completed during the year. Richard Tesh is to be thanked for his management of this work.

4 Grants:

SPC made grants in the year to:

Friends of St Marys

The Parish Magazine

Great Witley Primary School
Abberley & Witley Brownies
Nora Parsons Day Centre

5 Custodian Trustee Role:

The Parish Council is Custodian Trustee of the Village Hall, and as such holds the deeds as owner on behalf of the community. All operating matters are delegated to the Village Hall Managing Trustees, who are responsible for all normal administration. The deeds had been securely held by the Parish Council's previous solicitors, who were liquidated in 2014.

The deeds for the Village Hall and the land known as Millennium Green were lost by previous solicitors. The Parish Council has now received new deeds registered with the Land Registry. Thanks go to Councillor Partridge who has pursued this on behalf of the council and who is still chasing the costs to avoid us paying for the mistake.

6 Speed Cameras:

The Safety Partnership cameras have been operating in both directions on the B4196 for some time now. There have been approaching two hundred prosecutions to date and it is believed that a speed calming influence is prevailing. The Vehicle Activated speed sign also continues to operate in the village.

7 Planters, Litter Bins and Xmas Tree:

Planters and signage have been erected at the three entrances to the village. Three litter bins have now been erected. The bins are emptied as part of MHDC refuse collection services. Although one has been damaged by fire.

A large Christmas Tree with lights was again erected at the Village Hall as a joint project with the Village Hall trustees - praised by all and looking very attractive on entering the village at night.

8 Planning Applications and Policy:

A number of planning applications have been dealt with during the year - some being supported and others being recommended for refusal. The Parish Council continues its fair minded policy of viewing applications in the best interests of the community as well as considering the rights of applicants.

7 properties have seen their application approved

- including one unanimously by the Northern Area Development Committee
- 2 were withdrawn by the applicant and
- 3 are pending awaiting a decision, although all have taken longer than 8 weeks.

Settlement boundary guidance is always borne in mind, but your Parish Council continues to reserve the right of flexibility where occasional applications outside the settlement boundary may be supported when exceptional merit so dictates. This policy now has to be operated alongside the new South Worcestershire Development Plan

recently published by MHDC, who also have a new planning portal and promise improvement in the whole process.

9 Shrawley Defibrillator Scheme:

The scheme is now well advanced and there will be two units, one sited externally at the Village Hall and the other at the New Inn end of the village. The scheme is a joint venture between Shrawley Parish Council and Shrawley Village Hall Trustees. The funding is by grant from the Four Acre Trust with the balance from Village Hall funds and from Bluebell Walk income. The Parish Council is administering the scheme and funding the electrical installation at the two sites.

Training – as mentioned elsewhere for these schemes to operate well it is essential to have a large number of residents trained and familiar with the defibrillators and also with the simple principles of CPR. It is then straightforward to grab a unit in emergency and perhaps save a life, maybe that of a loved one?

Operations – We have ten volunteers for training at the moment, but fifty or one hundred would be so much better. If you are shy about this, please contact Councillor Michael Partridge and have a chat to alleviate any worries you may have. It may be the best decision you have ever made! Let's make the Shrawley Defibrillator Scheme the best organised system around and yes, YOU can do this in the interests of your family, children and friends.....

10 Local Plan:

Your Parish Council had decided to embark on the creation of an updated Local Plan, to establish community views on a variety of subjects, including planning policy. This initiative is instead of a Neighbourhood Plan, but it may be converted to a NP later if so desired. This Local Plan will guide your Councillors when making strategy and decisions, with an understanding of community opinion on relevant matters.

11 Footpaths:

Shrawley Parish Path Warden Report

Over the winter Richard Pumphrey and the Shrawley Walkers have cleared undergrowth, overgrowth and fallen trees so that now all the statutory paths in the Parish of Shrawley are open for walking apart from two, clearing either of these paths is of low priority

12 War Memorial:

The war memorial was examined and proved to be in better condition than reported, so no work is considered necessary at this time, although this will be monitored. Thanks must go to John Westwood who maintains this area and keeps it looking good all year round.

13 Shrawley Telephone Box:

A sterling job has been done by local resident Peter Knott in refurbishing the telephone box, with the replacement of the top signs and some glazing panels, our grateful thanks go out to him. Work continues to incorporate the box into Shrawley plans for the future.

14 Broadband:

At last, progress has been made to better speeds and update the service on 01299 numbers to the north of the village. Concerning Ombersley exchange 01905 numbers, fast speed via optical fibre has reached Holt and forecasts are that Shrawley may benefit early next year. Meanwhile, Airband continues to give a good fast alternative solution.

15 Bus Shelter(s):

The provision of one or maybe two bus shelters, depending on costs, is under consideration.

16 Shrawley Website:

John Mills is retiring as Webmaster and Mark Burkes has taken over. Thank you to John for his excellent work and thank you to Mark for future work. The Parish Council have a new website at <http://www.shrawleyparishcouncil.org.uk>

17 Church Lane/Hillhampton Lane Speeding and HGVs:

Whilst discussions continue and speed surveys have been carried out, we are advised that at present a change in speed restrictions cannot be supported.

18 Weeds, Litter, Hedges, Verges, Effluent, Pot Holes etc:

Work goes on to keep the village looking good, it is never ending and our thanks goes to Bruce Wormington our Parish Lengthsman.

19 Notices:

* CC Election Thursday 4th May

* Parish Council AGM and election of Officers Tuesday 8th May

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for their inputs on your behalf during the year. Also, may I thank Stephen Clee, Phil Grove and Pam Cumming for their huge support and you all for taking an interest this evening.

Pete Benkwitz

Chairman

Shrawley Parish Council