

Shotteswell Parish Council

Shotteswell Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 10th May at 7.30 pm at Valley Farm Shotteswell.

Present were: Cllrs Faulkner (Chair), J Burgess, V Ingram (Clerk), M Pearson & B Zammett, Cllr C Mills (WCC) & J Feilding (SDC)

Apologies: None

Members of the Public: 13

Declaration of Interest: B Zammett planning application.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and commented on what a very difficult year it had been for everyone.

The Chairman opened the meeting by recording the Parish Council's condolences in respect of the late Duke of Edinburgh.

The Chair welcomed and congratulated Cllr C Mills on his election to the County Council.

Minutes of the previous meeting having been circulated were confirmed as a correct record Proposed by Cllr Burgess & Seconded by Cllr Faulkner.

Highways and Trees

The dangerous oak tree on the Mollington Road has been cut back the trunk remains, but poses no threat to the public.

The annual tidy up of the verges had been undertaken and the contractor apologised for inadvertently catching one of the trees along Coronation Lane, the tree is still alright and will recover from this slight accident.

It was not possible for the Clerk to accompany the driver around the village due to Covid restrictions so the cut took place as the previous year, with the exception of adding New Road hedge.

Highways: Much work had taken place behind the scenes to get some of the works undertaken to tackle the many highways issues, in particular the drainage issues affecting Bakehouse Lane. The Clerk met the drainage team and showed them the locations of the blocked drains, one of which was completely blocked by roots. Other highways issues are currently being addressed and we anticipate some progress shortly. We appreciate that with the pandemic aside from self isolation and sickness some of the workforce has been deployed to help with the county response to the pandemic.

The winter took its toll on many of the stone walls throughout the village. In particular the fallen walls into Back Hill caused some problems. The two walls were identified and the council alerted of the blockage. The Clerk made arrangements for the collection of the refuse from properties affected by the closure. Snuff Lane was missed from the collection on the first Wednesday of the closure due to the fact that at the time we did not know they intended to close Snuff lane too. The Clerk arranged for the missed rubbish to be collected on Thursday, our thanks to SDC for facilitating this.

Flower tubs, some of the tubs around the village are in need of replacement. It was agreed that as the existing tubs were full of spring bulbs that we would wait until they had gone over before replacing . The council took delivery of the replacement tubs on Tuesday last week and will begin replacing in readiness for the summer planting.

The Kissing gates have been installed on the footpath by the motorway fulfilling our commitment to both the landowner and footpath team. However, we have been made aware of problems with professional dog walkers who are not sticking to the permissive footpath and allowing dogs to run across the field. This may put into jeopardy the path use if it is not curtailed.

A road sign on the junction of Snuff Lane/ Back Hill has been requested to be repainted, this has already taken place.

Well in Snuff Lane: During an inspection it was noted that the door to the well had deteriorated significantly and to make it safe a new door was required. In view of the safety aspect the council sought quotes rapidly to replace the door and the wood behind the pump mount. This is a significant feature of the village having previously been restored in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, the door has done exceedingly well to last over 40 years. We are also very grateful to one of our residents who has cleared some of the vegetation from around the well and tidied it up making it a notable feature once more.

Parking is becoming an issue, we appreciate that parking is difficult but in particular there appears to be a problem at the junction of Middle Lane/Coronation Lane. We have received a number of complaints about the visibility being impeded by these parked cars/vans and would urge residents to please consider that it is contrary to the Highway Code to park within 32ft of a junction.

Electric Undergrounding: The Clerk had been in dialogue with the electric company about progressing the work in the Middle Lane/Snuff Lane area.

New Road: Orbit plans to have a formal deed drawn by late summer, this will save residents a considerable amount of money in not having to pay maintenance fees. A proper plan for maintenance will have to be drawn up with provision to ensure that any arisings are disposed of properly. It was reported at the meeting that residents were still being charged the Clerk would raise this with Orbit. It was agreed to monitor the grass cutting for this year to see if a volunteer rota would work. However, the grass if not mulched needed to be collected and disposed of properly. The trimming of the hedge had been added to the contractors list this year and was cut back.

Children's Playing field: It would be reasonable to say that the play area is being used a lot and by many visitors to the village, who appear to be leaving a lot of litter behind them, it was agreed that a notice be fixed to the gate reminding people to put the litter in the bin provided outside the gate. Repairs to the tree house and benches have been undertaken, it was noted that these repairs needed to be painted. Thatching had been sourced for the damaged parasols and as agreed the order would not be placed until the winter was over. Some of the exercise equipment had various rubber elements missing and an order had been placed to get these repaired along with a new seat for the zip wire at the same time the integrity of the baby swing seat was to be checked by the engineers and replaced if necessary.

Reports have been received about persons using the tree house in the evenings, although a suggestion was put forward about locking the house this in the past this has led to the door being forced and damaged. Stickers warning of surveillance have been put up and coincidentally since then no one has been observed in the evenings, it was agreed to continue to monitor the situation.

Numerous reports of dogs being taken into the field have been received and as a result regrettably a lot of dog excrement had been found in the field. A professional dog walker was observed exercising her dogs in the field and a polite appeal not to do so was made by the Clerk.

Reports have been made of lots of dog fouling incidents throughout the village Second Turn and on the Village Green seem to be bearing the brunt of it. We appreciate that there are many responsible dog owners in the village who clear up after their pets, and would encourage others to follow this example.

Request made to check the overhang of the hedge by the zip wire and to burn the bonfire. The Chair would look to check the bonfire for wildlife before setting light to it and look for a suitable opportunity.

Finance

Precept budget is normally set in January, owing to the Covid pandemic and lockdown normal occurrences were thrown into disarray. The precept has been held at £6,500 since 2019, having done the maths it appeared due to carrying forward a larger sum than normal that this rate could be maintained. A provisional sum of the same amount was put forward with the proviso that if this was deemed not enough it could be increased. The Chairman's report highlighted that Shotteswell is one of the lowest precepts in the area. The council tax demand was somewhat confusing and may have given rise to the appearance that there had been an increase but this was not the case. This was due to either empty properties or an increase in single households, who qualify for the 25% discount, this amount has to be made up by the remainder of the village.

End of year procedures accounts having been previously circulated were approved
Proposed by Cllr Pearson and Seconded by Cllr Burgess.

Payments made since the last meeting were proposed by Cllr Burgess and Seconded by Cllr Faulkner.

Kissing Gates £700	Poppy Wreath £50
Equipment repairs £1,000	Grass Cutting £1,530
Hedge Cutting £216.00	Printer £71.20
Plants for Tubs £120.94	

Correspondence Several letters from the V Hall Committee, FOI request. The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the new owner of the meadow at the bottom of the village. The new owner explained that they had recently inherited the meadow but owing to a covenant in the will they could not dispose of the land until planning permission had been achieved. The owner explained that they wished to dispose of the land and wanted to know the views of the council as to types of houses etc. The council felt that it could not comment on any proposed development at this stage and until such times as a planning application came forward. The Clerk would contact the owner reflecting these views.

The former County Councillor's report was read out and as lengthy had already been posted to the notice board. The new County Councillor had nothing to add, only being in post for a couple of days.

The District Councillor reported that a revision of a new Code of Conduct was being drafted. Owing to WDC and SDC trying to work more closely together he felt that it needed to be the same and this topic was to go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further discussion.

A provisional date for the next meeting was set for the 7th June to include the Annual Parish Meeting and the AGM. This was subject to Covid restrictions which may apply at the time but could possibly be held at the Village Hall. A further meeting was planned for mid July subject to Covid restrictions being lifted.

The meeting was then closed.