

MINUTES OF SHERFIELD ENGLISH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Parish Cllrs Griffiths, Dovey, Cook, R Noble, G Noble and Hoffman.
Also, in attendance were County Councillor Nick Adams King, John Hartley, Ursula Gooding, Julia Noble, 2 members of the public and Clerk to the Council, Sue Holder.

Apologies received: Cllr Gordon Bailey

Chairman's Report, read by Cllr Griffiths

Neighbourhood Plan – previously known as the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was prepared in draft form in December 2023. This was undertaken by consultants the Parish Council engaged with the assistance of John Hartley. Unfortunately, due to significant changes made before it was published for consideration by the Parish, the draft had to be withdrawn whilst out for public consultation in February 2024.

A new Neighbourhood Plan group was established to produce a revised draft which it is hoped will be presented to the Parish within the next few months. I must emphasise that John Hartley was not the initiator of the changes and continues to provide excellent and informed support to the new team led by Councillor Hofmann. Meetings take place on a regular basis so that the new draft can be presented to the village as soon as possible for their consideration.

Village Hall -The Village Hall provides a valuable facility for the Parish and is well used.

Many thanks to Ursula Gooding and her team for continuing to manage the Hall.

The Parish Council provided a grant covering insurance of the building for the period July 2023 - July 2024. Due to there being age related concerns about dilapidation of the structure, materials used in its construction etc., the Parish Council agreed at their last meeting that before a grant is awarded this year to the Village Hall Committee, to assist with the renewal of insurance, a copy of the electrical safety certificate, asbestos management plan and gas safety inspection will be required by the Parish Council.

In addition, a copy of the minutes of meetings and the year end accounts will be required. The Parish Council has engaged a firm of solicitors to establish legal ownership of the Village Hall and forwarded a Statement of Truth to them in September 2023. We now wait to hear from HM Land Registry. However, the Parish Council has been advised that the whole process could take up to two years.

SERP - The SERP Committee continue to maintain this valuable facility and the Parish Council was pleased to support its efforts to replace the current Children's Playground equipment with a grant of £15,000 to cover the cost of the project. It is hoped that SERP will be able to attract further grants from Test Valley BC, Hampshire CC and the Football Association in connection with work required to improve drainage of the site.

SEDCA - The monthly SEDCA Newsletter now costs more to produce as commercial printers have had to be engaged. Whilst a significant proportion of the printing costs are covered by our loyal advertisers, the Editor was grateful for a grant of £500 from Councillor Nick Adams-King's funds to assist with the additional costs.

In addition to local news, adverts, the occasional joke, church information and events, the newsletter provides the Parish Council with a platform to advise the Parish of developments, meeting times etc. and advise residents of the need to comment on, for example, the Neighbourhood Plan when requested to do so.

Defibrillators - The Parish Council funds the maintenance of defibrillators sited at The Hatchet Inn and the pavilion in the Recreation Ground. Monthly checks on their condition are undertaken. The Parish Council covers all costs associated with battery and

electrode pads replacements.

St. Leonard's Church - The Church continues to thrive with increased attendances. This must be due in no

small measure to our excellent Rector, James Pitkin, and his newly appointed assistant, Sara-Jane Stevens and our hard working church wardens, Julia Noble and Clare Durham. The Parish Council was pleased to make a £5000 grant recently towards the replacement of rainwater guttering and associated scaffolding.

Parish Council Changes - Due to work and family commitments Councillor Billett has resigned as a councillor and it was pleasing that five residents offered themselves for co-option. Candidates were interviewed by the Parish Council and a person selected. We welcome Donna-Marie Lewis from the next meeting.

Lengthsman Scheme - This continues to provide good value for money in keeping footpaths free of overhanging branches grass and undergrowth along the A27 from Branches Lane to Bunny Lane. The Lengthsman also undertakes repair work as required and keeps grips cleared of floodwater. Concerns reported by residents can normally be included in the following month's schedule.

Planning Matters- The Parish Council has considered every planning application and actively opposed plans which they believe have a detrimental impact on the village. They are not always successful in objecting to certain proposals but they have worked diligently to try to obtain the best outcomes for Sherfield English.

Thanks - During this year as Chair I have been ably supported by my colleague Councillors but I would particularly like to thank Sue Holder, our Clerk, for giving me the benefit of her extensive experience and generally keeping me along the straight and narrow!

Borough Councillor Report, Nick Adams King

Report with slides is attached.

Neighbourhood Plan – Report by John Hartley

The objective for the NP over the past year was submission of a Draft NP to TVBC under what is officially called 'Regulation 14', which is the stage for formal local consultation. This was achieved towards the end of January 2024.

The document filed had several late edits, which the Steering Group accepted amounted to unintended policy changes. They decided the best remedy was a temporary withdrawal of the Reg 14 document. A new draft is now targeted for re-submission in June. We are taking the opportunity to condense passages which essentially restate TVBC policy in order to make the document much shorter and more readable.

PROGRESS IN 2023-24

1. Professional Consultants

We continue with Bluestone Planning Partnership LLC. Over the past 4 years they have proved to be well-attuned to local objectives, and highly experienced in the process of getting Parish Plans approved.

2. Work carried out since the last APM

a. The grant funding for this year was much later arriving than previously, so we were not able to progress the document itself until November. The document we had at that stage was reviewed by Bluestone Planning, with the addition of missing items, such as the Design Code.

b. Given the number of interactions over the past 2 years we were expecting to get the document back within 3 weeks, but we subsequently learned that the document's format requirements have now changed significantly, and considerable editing was required. The new format is much shorter, which is good, but it leaves the choice of words that remain

that much more critical. Most of the editing was done by Bluestone, but they were not able to deliver the last part of the new final draft until the beginning of January. Given that it was imperative that we file the document for Reg 14 by the end of January to have any chance of completing this stage within the financial year, this placed pressure on us to finalise the submission. The Steering Group completed its review of the consultants' submission quickly, noting only minor issues. Ursula Gooding stepped up to the task of collating these and producing a polished version of the complete document, with Mike Crossfield helping with proof reading. Given that two pairs of eyes had read through the document, the Steering Group agreed that the document produced by Ursula should be filed on 28 January without a further full review. To her credit, this was achieved, but with hindsight we should have accepted that the deadline was not achievable, and should have given ourselves time for a further full review.

3. Dealing with local responses

a. After posting the Reg 14 document on our web site we received strong objections to two of the proposals for Green Space designations. We accepted that the objections were well-founded, and decided that those two areas, although very 'green' and a valuable part of the landscape, did not in fact meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements for formal designation. These were the watercress beds and the woodland following the watercourse south of the A27.

b. Other objections were that we had copied paragraphs from the Wellow NP that were needed there because their plan covers part of the National Park, but which would be inappropriately restrictive for Sherfield English. These were not in the draft sent to us by our consultants, and we are reverting to their wording. The most significant item removed was a restriction on extension and replacement building sizes. These are needed in the National Park because they have no provision for new small dwellings.

c. There were a couple of objections that there was too much emphasis on ecology, and not enough on housing. There was no objection to the principles expressed in the ecology policies, but it was pointed out that these issues were well covered by TVBC policy, and need not be restated in such detail.

d. Finally, there were several objections that the document was simply too long to be readable. Nonetheless, a straight count of responses showed that 60% were generally supportive of the plan.

4. Current work

a. The Steering Group has been enlarged to ensure a wider range of views, with one more Parish Councillor joining as Deputy Chairman (Graham Noble), and three residents, Barbara Griffiths, Julia Noble, and Julian Bosworth contributing from varying professional backgrounds, and different parts of the village. Jerome Hoffman continues as Chairman, with David Griffiths and John Hartley also continuing.

b. The new Steering Group has agreed amended policies, essentially accepting the suggestions made by our consultants, but further reducing the scope on Green Spaces to those which are unequivocally consistent with the NPPF.

c. We are now working through the document to see how much shorter we can make it without losing anything. We are probably about 70% through at present.

d. Our consultants have agreed to review our amendments and give approval, or suggest edits, for a new Reg 14 document, targeted for June.

Village Hall – Report by Ursula Gooding

The SEVH Trustees are pleased to report that The Trust is meeting its aims and objectives to provide a village hall for the benefit of inhabitants of Sherfield English and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race, political, religious or other opinions. Use for meetings, lectures and

classes, and for other forms of recreation and leisure- time occupation, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

The Trustees consider these objectives to be consistent with Charity Commission guidance on providing for the public benefit and these objectives have been pursued in the activities of the charity this year.

- Bookings increasing
- Hire charges kept the same
- External and internal redecoration programme
- New car park gates to be installed this summer to restrict access to the A27 for more vulnerable users.

Many Thanks to:

- Our trustees who keep the hall in active use for our local community
- Big Help Out volunteers last May who helped to start the external decoration programme
- Michael and Ursula Gooding & Wellow Men's Shed for finishing the external painting to front & sides.
- Michael Gooding for being volunteered to redecorate the toilets!
- Our local TVBC Borough Cllrs Nick & Gordon for their community grant towards the cost of installing gates at VH entrance to improve safety
- SE Parish Council for supporting the trust each year with a grant to cover the annual building's insurance

SEVH Trust always need volunteers for jobs big or small, inside and out, practical or administrative, regular or one-off – please offer to support your historic community building and we'll find you something to suit the skills and the time you have.

Ursula Gooding on behalf of the SEVH Trustees

SERP 2000 – Report by Cllr Hoffman

This report covers a slightly shortened year, running from January 2023 as the last AGM was delayed owing to appalling weather and an outbreak of covid.

The weather, and its after effects, have somewhat dominated our thinking in 2023 and have left us struggling with water-logging right across the pitch and down to the playground and the area surrounding the pavilion. We have had to cancel a relatively large number of football matches, the children's playground has suffered with water damage and we had to postpone one of our traditional events – the Sheffield English fireworks night. The funds required to resolve this are substantial, far in advance of what SERP can afford on its own.

We continue to explore means by which we can source funding through TVBC, the lottery fund The Football Association and so on and have made significant progress.

We have focussed initially on the playground area and are pleased to acknowledge the kind funding that we have received from a number of individual and corporate donors and the very generous funding offered by the Sheffield English Parish Council which has largely covered the cost of playground repairs. These works are now underway with a group of volunteers due to assemble to prepare the site on the weekend of the 8/9 June and the installation of the new facilities to begin in the week commencing 19 th June. The works will include new and repaired playground equipment, repairs to fences etc. and some initial work to resolve drainage.

We're pleased to report that our Coronation event for His Royal Highness King Charles was a tremendous success. We were blessed with an excellent turn out from the village and surrounds and everyone seemed very much to enjoy the live music, bar and BBQ, charity auction and a host of other entertainments along with a junior football tournament. A commemorative tree planting event made the pages of the Romsey Advertiser we would

like to extend our thanks to all those from the Committee and beyond who gave their time so generously for that event. Our next event will be a Music Day being held on August 10th which will feature 3 bands, the usual bar, tuckshop and BBQ and will seek to showcase local butchers, brewers and other producers as much as is possible.

A further point to note is that from the beginning of the next football season Sherfield English will be once again represented by a men's senior football team, due to play in the traditional village colour of green. This initiative we hope will be seen as an addition to village life and should reduce overall wear and tear on the SERP pitch without a significant reduction in income. Moreover we would hope that junior and women's teams may indeed follow this lead and provide further interest to community.

It is also pleasing to note that we have suffered no more of the vandalism which we felt compelled to mention in our last report and we most sincerely hope that those episodes are behind us.

Lastly, I should like once again to extend my own personal thanks to those on the SERP Committee who work so hard and selflessly on every aspect of the maintenance and advancement of the site.

St Leonard's Church Report – Read by Julia Noble

Following nearly two years without a Rector, July 2023 saw Revd James Pitkin become our Rector and a new benefice formed adding Sherfield English and Wellow to the Thorngate benefice of East and West Tytherley, Lockerley and East Dean now known as the Thorngate and Blackwater benefice. In February 2024 we welcomed our new associate vicar, Revd Sara-Jane Stevens, at a service at St Margaret's, Wellow and we are grateful for the Parish Council representation on behalf of the village. Sara-Jane was licenced in April 2024, lives in Wellow Vicarage and as a "house for duty" vicar works part-time. Joining a bigger group of churches offers St Leonard's parishioners the opportunity to share in many additional events and services.

The two churchwardens Julia Noble and Clare Durham continue for 2024/5 and are sworn in by the Archdeacon at a service in Romsey Abbey on 13th June and both, as qualified BCM Worship leaders, continue to take a morning prayer service each a month with the Rector and new vicar leading the Holy Communion and Family service.

St Leonard's is grateful to the many parishioners who dedicate their time by making the church work, usually smoothly, for all the services and community events which we hold. Our monthly coffee mornings bring people from Sherfield and neighbouring villages, some churchgoers and some not, but all come and enjoy this social and fundraising occasion. We held a knitted display to celebrate the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla, a Harvest Ploughman's Lunch to celebrate our Harvest Festival in October, and a Christmas Carol Service and the choir went carol singing in the Hatchet Inn.

The churchwardens led the village Remembrance Sunday Service highlighting the life story of RAF Warrant Officer Bertram Noble who was killed in 1941.

Across our benefice we helped raise over £3000 for UNICEF from holding our Soup Community "Lent" lunch in March when we hosted about 80 people over a two-hour period.

We are delighted that St Leonard's has a vibrant and oversubscribed bell ringing group and with the installation of a new computer bell ringing simulator training sessions can be arranged more frequently without bells ringing out too often. Ringers come from all over Hampshire for this experience.

In 2024 the current St Leonard's church celebrates 120 years since it was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester and in September we will welcome the

new Bishop of Winchester, Phillip Mounstephen, to lead our commemorative service on 15th September. Hopefully we will not need to wait another 120 years for another such visit! Different events celebrate our 120 years, from craft displays, quiz to wedding dress exhibition this weekend, a performance by RAODS in June, a cream tea afternoon in July and “seasons” knitted display in August. We will feel 120 by the end of the year! Sadly, our organist of nearly 40 years, Margaret Hart, will no longer play the organ for services which marks an end of an era for St Leonard’s church. Most of our services will rely on our Denon Lectern sound system but we will enlist a local organist for special services. In 2023 St Leonard’s total income was £18,872.65 which included fees from one wedding blessing, 7 baptisms, 2 funerals and 6 burial of ashes. The total expenditure was £17,956.22 which included the requested amount of £9,233 to Winchester Diocese for the services of our Rector. We are grateful to Sherfield English School Trust, Sherfield English Parish Council and Councillor Nick Adams-King for their continued support to keep St Leonard’s a functioning and well-maintained Grade II listed building for the future generations of Sherfield English residents.

Sherfield English School Trust – Julia Noble, Treasurer

The Trust as presently constituted was established by a Scheme sealed by the Charity Commission on 3 August 1992. The permanent endowment derives from Sherfield English Church of England School, and now comprises investments valued at £217,429 as at April 2024. There was a credit balance of £10,551 on the income account as at 30th April 2024. Accounts are submitted annually to The Charity Commission.

The Trustees

There are three ex-officio trustees, two Churchwardens, Julia Noble, and Clare Durham and the Rector, James Pitkin, who became Priest-in-Charge in July 2023. There is one trustee nominated by the Parish Council, Sheila Cook. There is one co-opted trustee which for many years has been Michael Tennant, also Chairman, but he moved from the village and so resigned in November 2023 and we thank him for his time and dedication as a Trustee. Michael has been succeeded by Lynne Tongs. The Trust Chairman is Sheila Cook, the Trust Secretary is Clare Durham, and the Trust Treasurer is Julia Noble.

A meeting of three trustees is quorate. The Trustees normally meet in May and November in each year, but this does not preclude ‘ad hoc’ decisions. The trustees last met on 9th November 2023 with the next meeting scheduled for 30th May 2024 with all business between meetings carried out by correspondence.

Objects

After defraying the cost of maintaining the property of the Charity, income is to be applied in furthering the religious and other charitable work of the Church in the Parish.

Subject to that, income may be applied for:

- a. the relief of the aged, impotent and poor;
- b. the relief of distress and sickness;
- c. the improvement of the conditions of life for inhabitants in the interests of social welfare of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupations;
- d. the support of educational facilities.

Administration

Between May 2023 and 22nd May 2024, the trustees approved the following grants:

- Repair of 3 stone headstone crosses at St. Leonard's church £666.00
- Purchase of 3 new bell ropes at St. Leonard's church £608.40
- Replacement of bell tower louvre mesh for 40 windows at St. Leonard's church £2,662.12

The Trustees welcome applications for funding that are within the objects of the Trust as set out above. Their present policy is to make a grant towards the total cost of a project without underwriting the whole of it, the percentage of funding depending upon the circumstances.

Open Forum

- Changes to the recycling regime proposed by the Government will not produce such a valuable end product.
- GDPR / DBS checks proposed for Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- The parish council grant application process.
- Parish Council Declaration of Interests.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm