

SHALDEN PARISH COUNCIL – Annual Parish Meeting. 23rd April 2025. Meeting held at 7pm at Shalden Village Hall

Minutes

Attending: 22 residents (including 3 Cllrs), Cllr Orme, M Ommanney, P Rankin and Cllr. Mark Kemp-Gee. Also K Horton (Clerk)

Apologies: Cllr. Tony Costigan and 1 resident

1. **Chair's welcome and introduction** – Cllr. Dave Orme. Meeting opened and residents thanked for attending
2. **Apologies.** Received from Cllr Costigan and one resident.
3. **Confirmation of minutes of last APM**, Wednesday 1st May 2024. Signed as a record of the meeting
4. **Shalden Parish Council annual report** – Cllr. Dave Orme. See Appendix One
Questions from residents.
? Side of road that has gone rather than potholes.
? Quality of repairs. What is the point of short term fixes
? Power cuts. Concern about over grown trees from Shalden Lane up to The Avenue. Will forward email. Team working on high voltage wires at back of village. Low voltage wires are more flexible and endure more.
? Appreciate updates to website and Hugo Fox. Clerk to check that access to older version has closed.
5. **Shalden Village Hall Committee report** – Mark Ommanney
 - 2024/25 has been a busy year for the Village Hall. Nov 2021 was start of legal issue – claim for injury. Claim was disputed. August 2024, case was heard at Basingstoke County Court and was thrown out. Village Hall Committee had no case to answer and claimant had no case to answer. Legal costs paid by insurance.
 - Advice given on moving Village Hall Committee to Charity Incorporated Organisation and have been supported by Hampshire Legal Services. Legal position has been tidied up and better position for Trustees. Charity Commission has approved arrangement - Shalden Village Hall CIO. Waiting on bank account. £3,000 for legal support and Parish Council thanked for grant of £1,500
 - Work on improving acoustics. EHDC have helped with financing – Cllr grant. Thanks to Ben Jones for making.
 - Beehive well attended and regular users of Hall. Social events have been huge fun – tap room night, quiz night and music quiz (Helen and Ian thanked for organising this). Fireworks organised by sub-committee and event was spectacular and team thanked. Thanks noted to Fete Committee for donation.
 - £8,785 close of year. Hampshire Legal Services to pay – exceptional event.

- Thank team – Ben, Bernard, Cathy, Steve and Debbie for all their work and time over the year.
- No questions. Ben also thanked Mark O for his work

6. Report on Church of St Peter and St Paul – Peter Rankin

- Parish Council thanked for donation to upkeep. Last Inspection in 2023 was completed. 1873 organ has been refurbished and been signed off
- Churchyard is well maintained and volunteers have removed leylandii.
- Autumn – working party will carry out work in the churchyard.
- Pastoral reorganisation took place last year. Parish BLS Church Warden, Kirsty as a lay member and Friends of Shalden Church involved. Cannon Andrew Micklefield has managed pastoral care and set up regular services.
- Andrew Micklefield moved to Winchester
- Benefice: PCCs are seeking new vicar. David Chartel from Holybourne.
- Election of church wardens will be taking place in village hall. 1st May

7. Village fête report – Peter Rankin

- Last year's fete was 16th June.
- Visitor numbers up - 388 adults paying on entry plus children.
- Donations of £4,000 to local causes.
- Grateful thanks to the Campbells for hosting and all those helping with organisation and stalls. Beehive children – decorated cobblestone. Sponsors thanked in making a successful day.
- This year's fete will be 15th June at Shalden Park Farm – adjacent field used for parking.

8. District Councillor report – Cllr. Tony Costigan. Apologies received. No report to be shared.

9. County Councillor report – Cllr. Mark Kemp-Gee

- Dec 2024. Expecting Combined Strategically Authority with elected Mayor. What was not expected that Gvt announced intention to reorganise local government in Hampshire – a distinct step to the former. Did not expect County and District Council(s) to be abolished and be replaced with three Unitary Councils - All Hampshire Districts will fit into these. It is unknown what will happen to rest of Hampshire - East Hampshire in particular. 500,000 people per Unitary Council is min requirement and this may dictate where divisions will take place.
- Hope for proper consultation on which way to go. Reorganisation going to take about 3 years. First step May 2026 election for mayor of “Greater Hampshire”. County Council elections postponed for a year so Cllr Kemp-Gee will continue to serve for that time and not retire.
- £900 million HCC spent on social care per year. 1200 children in care some with severe needs.
- £1.3 billion spend per year is total spend for Hampshire CC
- Priority of rural roads is not high. Service and quality has deteriorated.

- Increase in council tax since 2010 has been less than inflation whereas costs (eg social care) have increased at more than inflation. Govt grants being cut year on year and not renewed after three years (when service has been taken on by county council).
- Building is financing Gvts. Contradiction when trying to protect countryside.
- Humbly Grove planning permission. Marks the fact that they want another 25yr at site. Third largest gas reservoir in UK. Strategic and important site. Oil production is by product.
- Golden Pot. Knows it is a dangerous junction and has approached Highways team again to consider safety especially with development – they are minded to recommend speed limit of 40mph. Will keep informed.

10. Questions from Shalden Parish residents

11. Meeting close. Cllr Orme thanked all speakers for their updates. Residents appreciated for their attendance. Parish Cllrs want to do best for local community and looking back on what is achieved is reward enough. Residents input and questions are appreciated. Do come along to meetings.

Meeting Closed 8:06pm

Appendix One

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025, SPC CHAIR'S REPORT

- Shalden Parish. The Parish extends from the A339, up towards and over the Avenue, around the Golden Pot and down the Upper Anstey Lane and along the border with Alton. Approximately 370 residents are on the electoral roll for this parish.
- The current Cllrs (Katie Witcher, Ben Jones and Luke Taylor) have been working together for nearly two years. I would like to start off by noting thanks to them and also Rob Wood, who has recently stepped down as a Cllr, for their time and commitment to serving the community.

I am pleased to report what has been achieved by the Parish Council over the last year. This is your meeting and I am Happy to take Questions at end.

Planning

Clarify the PC's role in relation to planning?? Shalden Parish Council is consulted by the relevant Planning Authority (which is East Hampshire District Council) on all planning applications in the parish. Any views expressed by the Parish Council either in writing or in person by speaking at a planning committee, will be considered by the Planning Authority before a decision is made, providing the points made are relevant to the determination of a planning application. The final decision on any application is made by the Planning Authority, not the Parish Council.

During 2024/25 the Cllrs have reviewed 12 Planning applications submitted in the parish and lodged comments on two occasions both relating to applications at Golden Pot. Those

applications requiring comment were discussed in two Extraordinary meetings in order to meet EHDC's timeline

Golden Pot

- *The original application was 22139/016 which was to convert the existing pub/restaurant into one home and to build three others*
- *EHDC-25-0170-FUL - Planning application for the erection of an additional two storey house, driveway and landscaping at The Golden Pot, Alton site, amending planning approval 22139/016*
- *We then had EHDC-24-0032-FUL which applied to change the pub/restaurant into two homes*
- *In respect of Golden Pot site, Cllr Kemp-Gee and Cllr Costigan have both been asked by the Parish Council to add weight to the concerns the Cllrs have raised on behalf of residents.*

Over the course of the year, Cllrs have also attended briefings from EHDC on Local Plan consultations, attended a site meeting at Humbly Grove following their planning application and spoken at an EHDC Planning Committee meeting to represent the parish regarding the Golden Pot application. The time given to planning matters by the Parish Council is considerable and should not be underestimated.

Roads and Speeding

- Potholes remain a significant concern and much has been done to highlight the process residents should follow to raise issues – it is crucial that residents do report them.
- Speeding. PC have taken steps to address concerns raised by Old Odiham Road residents. By the end of June Hampshire Highways will have installed the required posts to use a SPEED LIMIT REMINDER SIGN (SLR). The PC have secured a loan from Wield PC of the SLR to understand the impact ahead of making any purchase of its own.

Maintenance of the verges and rights of way

- We routinely ensure that the parish roads, signage, salt bins, verges, ditches and drains are kept clear and tidy. When work is needed, we encourage HCC to take action as it falls under their remit to do so and generally, they have been very helpful.
- With the help of our Footpath warden, Helen Dudley, we ensure the byways remain accessible and in good condition. Working with Helen, Cllr Luke Taylor has continued on point for the PC in relation to Rights of Way and I thank them both for their work. In the past year, Shalden PC has engaged with EHDC, Countryside Access and regional PC meetings on the subject of BOATS (Byways Open to All Traffic). A scheme is under assessment to categorise BOATS called the BOP (Byways Operational Procedure) this categorises each BOAT into one of three categories, and will enable certain BOATS to be restricted to traffic at times of significant weather events or seasonally. To facilitate this Cllr Luke Taylor for SPC will be seeking an Amber or Red categorisation on the BOATS in Shalden. There is an ongoing survey of footpath furniture, styles etc identifying which are

in need of repair and working with local landowners to identify where access might be improved, the expectation is that some will be upgraded to gates later this year

- Cuts in funding with both HCC and EHDC mean the maintenance of rights of way have fallen to local communities. Taking into account, feedback from residents on the maintenance of the Parish's green spaces for aesthetic and safety reasons, the PC has taken on a Lengthsman contract whose efforts on the local rights of way was clear at the end of the season last year and will be again this year.
- **Litter**, a big thank you to residents who took part in the two recent Litter Picks.
- **Verges**. While HCC will trim dangerous 'sightlines' on request, it has substantially reduced the maintenance of the verges more generally to a single biannual cut. Thanks to local landowners who maintain the hedges and verges within the parish. A much appreciated service that they complete which makes the area more pleasant and safer for all of us.

Recreation ground

- The Parish Council oversee the maintenance of the Rec ground and Pavilion.
- The PC has tendered for works and submitted a Grant application to EHDC for funding to improve the parking and replace the Pavilion which is showing significant signs of wear and tear. Decision will be communicated by July. If not successful, the PC will review its own funding provision for 2025/26
- Glad to inform you that Alton Football Club have hired the Rec for their junior team fixtures for several years and have taken on responsibility for the majority of the mowing of the pitch reducing costs to the PC but ensuring the pitch is maintained to the AFC requirement.

Operational

- **Village Hall**. The Parish Council, through Cllr Ben Jones has worked alongside representatives of the Village Hall committee to clarify each groups' responsibilities in relation to the parish's asset. A much-needed piece of work to ensure everyone involved knows who is responsible for what legally and has also allowed the Village Hall Charity status to be refreshed. I Am sure Mark will provide more detail in his update.
- **Parish Council records**. Almost 100 yrs of minutes have been deposited with Hampshire Archives. This ensures accessibly for local historians and genealogists rather than locked away locally in a filing cabinet.
- **Communication**.
We are delighted to have residents attending every PC meeting this last year. Great to get this level of engagement and helps the Cllrs understand what is of concern. The PC also regularly contributes in The Villager and shares news via its own website.

We have tried to drive better communication across everything we do and the positive response is appreciated. I am sure there is more we can do and I would encourage as many of you as possible to attend PC meeting if and provide the support, guidance and feedback we need to become even better.

- **Devolution.** A popular and topical question at the moment. We are waiting to see what impact the plans have on the powers and responsibilities of parish councils.
- **Professionalism.** As recommended by national Gvt, the PC is also switching to a .gov.uk domain and email addresses to ensure security and professionalism more on that in the near future.

Finances

- **Donations and Grants** The PC has the capacity to make small grants and donations to activities with a local impact. This year we supported Shalden Village Hall Charity and East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau with donations totalling £1,700. The donation of £1,500 to the Village Hall allowed them to get the necessary professional advice and support in updating Land Registry, their Trustee details and re-registering as a charity.
- All of these achievements have been achieved on our low annual precept of £13,000 (collected through your Council Taxes). For 2025/26 it has been agreed that the precept should be increased to £13,500.
- Cllrs aware that this is an increase on previous years but the cost of utilities and the need to finance projects identified through discussion with residents justifies this increase. We want to be progressive moving forward, maintaining and improving our assets and services which I am sure you appreciate is not without cost. Detailed Budget and Precept information was shared at the January meeting and remains available on the website.

Final thanks

- So that's the year that was 2024/25. None of this would have been achieved without our committed team of Councillors. The many hours of meetings, briefings and research go largely unrecorded and unrewarded. Your PCs are elected in formal process however unlike government organisations above this level, donate their time and effort for free, representing you the parishioners and working hard to ensure Shalden is a delightful place to live and work. I for one am incredibly grateful for their help and pass on my sincere thanks to the current Cllrs Katie Witcher, Luke Taylor and Ben Jones.
- As I mentioned at the start, Rob Wood has stepped down as a Parish Councillor. Rob has been a great contributor to PC meetings as a Cllr over the past two years but is now moving to pastures new, I am sure we wish Rob all the very best in his new endeavours.
- As such we currently have a vital position to fill. If you would like to find out more about the role (have a desire to serve the community, contribute to the parish or be involved in local government), please speak with one of us later this evening, call us or drop an email to the Clerk

- Last but absolutely not least, a very special thank you to our Clerk Katherine who has diligently looked after all our affairs, records and constitutional requirements, regularly dragging me back on track and making sure we do things properly.
- Thank you all for attending this evening, if you have any questions, I am happy to answer them.

Dave Orme

Chair: Shalden Parish Council