

Sibford Gower

Annual Parish Meeting

Notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th March @ 7pm in Sibford Village Hall

Present: All councillors, Clerk, 9 members of the public.

1. Welcome, apologies and introduction – Cllr Allen noted that this is the Annual Parish Meeting so it is a meeting of the parishioners, not a Parish Council meeting and therefore there are no formal minutes, just notes.
2. Report from Parish Council Chairman - Current Cllrs are Cllr Mallows, Cllr Allen, and Cllr Berks. Hugh Pidgeon and Vicky Pougatch resigned in December and as yet no one has come forward to fill the vacancies.

The Parish Council (PC) make nominations to the Town Estates Charity and in July 2021 nominated Tracey Morbey who joined the trustees. There are more nominations to be made and they will be advertised at the appropriate time.

The Sibford Support Group (SSG) has remained ready to react to any further issues but there has not been the need over the last few months. It is hoped to have a thank you get together for the SSG members soon before the group closes.

This year has been a stable year in relation to business policies and website etc. The Parish Council manages the burial ground on behalf of both parish councils and up until now this has been managed by Hugh Pidgeon. Now Hugh has stood down from the council this is being transferred to the Clerk to manage with the support of the parish councillors. Thanks were expressed to Hugh for his work on managing the burial ground.

The precept for the next year has remained the same at £9350 although this may show as a slight decrease on the parish part of the council tax bill due to the number of people living in the village as their main residence having increased since last year. Some investment has taken place in the way of 4 additional dog bins, maintenance to 3 benches, and maintenance to The Jitty footpath. Subject to the permission of the landowner the footpath to the Millennium Field from Temple Mill Road will be maintained to make it less muddy.

Over the last year the council has reviewed 52 planning applications, 3 of which were withdrawn and 2 of which were refused. 30 of these applications were tree or discharge of conditions applications and 22 were full applications. The Parish Council liaise with Sibford Ferris Parish Council in relation to larger developments that are impacted by the category A status of the parishes such as the Gade Homes Development (which is likely to start any time now) and the Blue Cedar Homes application which is likely to go to the Cherwell District Council planning committee in April. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Mallows and the parishioners who helped him in putting together a robust response to the Cherwell Local Plan Review. The adoption of the plan is scheduled for July 2023.

There have been a number of community issues worked on over the last year. Based on consultation feedback the PC submitted an application for the Blaze Inn Saddles to be listed as an Asset of Community Value which was refused. A Village showcase event was held in Sep 2021 which was very successful. Two defibrillator and CPR training sessions have taken place with one more being planned. A group of parishioners have kindly completed some work to clear out the pond and have some planting planned for the future. A speeding group has been formed and a speed detection device has been purchased to be shared between both of the Sibford Parish Councils. Richard Irons is leading this and the group are awaiting training to be provided by Thames Valley Police - the scheme has been very popular so the Sibfords haven't yet got to the top of the list to receive the training. Some parking concerns were raised in recent meetings

particularly in relation to Main Street and Bonds End Lane, details of which can be found in recent minutes. Unfortunately parking is not an issue that the Parish Council has any powers to influence. The Parish Council were asked to consider supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill but after consulting with parishioners no responses were received so the Parish Council felt it could not formally support the Bill.

A parishioner noted that although the council's consultation on the CEE Bill didn't get any response there have been two successful green focused events in the Village Hall and there are now 20 members of the Hook Norton Low Carbon group from the Sibfords.

3. Upcoming Elections - A number of notices have gone out in the Scene, on Next door, on the website, and on the noticeboard making parishioners aware that there will be elections for all places on the council on 5th May 2022. Nomination forms are available from the clerk, Cherwell District Council or they can be found on the electoral commission website: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media/5016>. The forms must be submitted by hand to Cherwell District Council but they do not need to be hand delivered by the applicant. The Clerk is happy to help with any questions about filling in the forms and can provide the relevant elector numbers if required. Cllrs Allen and Mallows announced that they will not be seeking re-election in 2022.
4. Platinum Jubilee Celebrations - Keith Hicks has very kindly offered to lead a steering group to organise celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee early in June. Thanks were expressed to Keith as the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee did not have the capacity to organise this so if Keith had not offered there would not be any events taking place. Keith advised that the Sibfords have a proud history of running celebratory events as follows:

1887 - Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee

Was marked by the lighting of a bonfire and a sports evening held in a field near the Church lent by Mr. E Ainge. 15 activities included a 400 yard egg and spoon race, specialist events for women and field events. Gower led the organising committee raising £28.10s 6d. 265lbs of meat and 18 gallons of beer were provided.

Extract for the Rev. Stevens diary June 19th 1887

The Jubilee: In all parts of the country bonfires were lighted at 10 p.m. on a rocket signal from the Malvern Hills. This was answered with rockets from hill to hill through the length and breadth of the land. At 11 o'clock we saw ten or twelve bonfires and numerous rockets from the Great Elm, whither I took Frank, after the supper at Sibford Ferris.

1897 - Diamond Jubilee

Was celebrated with a sports evening held this time in Sibford Ferris in a field lent by Mr. Richard Lamb. The Sibford Brass Band played and the evening ended with a bonfire and a firework display. Ferris organised the village event raising £29 14s 4d. They paid five guineas for fireworks and 4s to two men to guard the bonfire overnight.

1921 – English Fair and Fete

With no apparent specific event to celebrate the village staged an English Fair and Fete was held over two days in July in the grounds of Frank Lascelles house and other locations throughout the Gower, Burdrop and Ferris. The programme included maypole dancing, open air ballet, dancing on the lawns, a cricket match, theatrical productions, sports, a baby, fancy dress and beauty competitions, a whist drive and special supper. The celebrations went on until 1.30 in the morning with dancing in the village hall.

1953 – Queen Elizabeth II Coronation

With no village hall, the primary school hosted most events. There were children's sports, a tea party, Social evening and the children were given a coronation coin. Village children were invited to watch the event on television at Gowers Close, the home of Leslie Baily who was a BBC broadcaster and wrote 'From Romans to Rock and Roll' – a History of the Sibfords.

1973 – The Sibford Festival & Open Village

16 days of events organised by John Stewart which included a concert by Alfred Deller, A Gymkhana, sports country games and a barbeque, performances of Country Kate by Shelia Stewart and Sibford Primary School Children, A Bride Unknown by the WI Drama Group (Petticoat Players) and The Hollow Crown by the Sibford Players. Several exhibitions were staged during the period and an open village day was held on the middle Saturday with attractions in 15 locations throughout the communities.

1977 - Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee

Four days of activities included a young people's disco, an exhibition by the primary school, torchlight procession and barbeque, country dancing, fancy dress parade and competition, children's sports and tea party, a supper and entertainment, and an Elizabethan Night.

1981 – Charles & Diana Wedding

Village sports in Sibford School grounds and Wedding Disco in the Village Hall.

1982 - Village Hall 25th Anniversary and Open Village weekend

A concert in the Church followed by supper in the Village Hall opened the celebrations. Other events included an outdoor church service, inter-village games of rounders, tennis, cricket and football, a Gymkhana, Morris Dancing, Miss Sibford Beauty competition, a Pied Piper and mice fancy dress competition, helicopter rides, open gardens and various exhibitions.

1995 - VE Day celebrations

Children's sports on the Primary School field followed by a Street Party.

2002 - Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee

The 2002 celebrations included helicopter flights over the village, a street Fayre, fireworks and beacon, a tea dance and a concert and supper at the Manor.

2012 - Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee

Four days of celebrations including Open Gardens, Village Sports and Picnic Tea, Quizzes, Disco and talent show. The weekend started with a Village Fayre and Dog Show in the grounds of the village hall. All children living in the community were presented with a commemorative mug.

The first meeting of the steering group has taken place which includes parishioners from Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower. They have come up with a number of proposals including a picnic lunch in the village hall grounds to coincide with the national lunch on Sunday (it will be a bring your own lunch and entertainment will be provided) and planting of an oak tree that afternoon in the field with a plaque to commemorate the Jubilee. The group will also be promoting the planting of trees in the Millennium Field and Pitch Hill Field – this is for those who haven't got a space within their own garden and would like to plant one for the Jubilee. There will be a church service prior to the lunch. They also hope to have beacon lighting procession from the Wykham Arms - it is hoped the Wykham Arms will run a quiz before the torch light procession. Rather than having a fireworks display there will be 70 rockets fired. They are looking into holding sports activities and a young people's disco on one of the four days. The group are planning a platinum flag competition to mirror the 'river of hope' planned in London where school children design flags and they are put down the river so we the Sibfords will do their own and the flags will be used to decorate the village hall. An exhibition will be held in the small hall to show the history of the village over the last 70 years and the school will contribute to that in some way. There will be a history walk run by a knowledgeable member of the community. The celebratory events will be funded by both parish councils (up to £500 each) and there are proposals in place for Cherwell to consider providing grant funding to parishes for this event. The Town Estates Charity are being approached in relation to trees in the Millennium Field and it was suggested that they could be approached for some additional funding if required. The group would be very grateful if as many parishioners as possible could attend to make the events as successful as the previous events over the last 100 years or so.

5. Cherwell District Council scheme to apply for 20mph speed limits within 30mph zones - The Chairman advised that he would be keen to hear the outcome of the pilot schemes before making any decisions on this. It has been suggested that councils who may be interested in taking part should register their interest

before all of the funding is allocated. The Parish Council would be interested in hearing parishioners views on this.

Comments made by parishioners:

- A parishioner stated that they do not have any issues with 20mph limits but feel that they would prefer councillors focus on getting the 30mph limit complied with rather than moving towards a new limit. *The chairman advised that this council has an identified budget to support costed, evidence-based interventions proposed by the established speeding group.*
- A parishioner stated he would support the most aggressive means of reducing the speeds of people driving through the village as many people drive through at 30mph or above despite it not being appropriate to drive at that speed with cars parked on the street and children walking nearby. The parishioner does not believe it is ever appropriate for people to be driving through the village at more than 20mph. Another parishioner agreed with this stance.
- A parishioner asked what evidence there is from other villages about whether the 20mph limits actually work. This is what the Chairman is hoping we can get from the pilot scheme.
- A parishioner advised that Portsmouth is an example of a successful scheme that the Parish Council may wish to look at to see what evidence there is. The parishioner also stated that they wonder if the Cherwell District Council funds being allocated to this could be better spent on repairing the condition of roads.

This will be discussed for a decision from the PC at the meeting on 31st March. Parishioners are welcome to attend or provide comments in the meantime to the Clerk.

6. Public forum – parishioners are welcome to raise any issues they wish to discuss subject to remaining time available - A parishioner raised concerns about the drains/gullies not being cleared which have a negative impact on the roads and can create more pot holes. The Chairman advised that he has put reports on Fixmystreet in the past and County Council did come out quite quickly and clear it. The first action required is to report things on fixmystreet. If there are a number of reports that are not being acted on by Cherwell District Council or Oxfordshire County Council the Parish Council would be happy to follow this up with the county and district councillors if made aware of it.

Meeting closed @ 8:20pm