

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 10th May 2018

This will be the third Annual Report I have written as Chairman of Shoscombe Parish Council and will possibly be one of the most significant. As you are all aware the first Parish Plan for Shoscombe was published and distributed in January this year. It had taken four years to complete with input from two different steering groups, councillors and residents who volunteered to assist. There are too many people to thank for this, but the result has been a very comprehensive document which as a Parish we should be proud of. It has given the Parish Council a clear directive of what the residents value and want protected, and ways to enhance life here in Shoscombe for us all – young and old. The council will be reviewing and updating the associated Action Plan every four months in an attempt to ensure the actions are being addressed in a timely manner.

The Village Hall

The Parish Council are the Trustees of the Village Hall, but its management and maintenance is the responsibility of the Village Hall Management Committee. We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic Committee who are working very hard, under the leadership of Ashley Brunn who took on the role in November, to raise funds to make major improvements to the Village Hall. The main tasks currently are to refurbish the roof and cladding of the hall, and to upgrade the kitchen facilities. Last year the insulation was improved, and following a lottery grant, an excellent sound system, projector, screen and hearing loop was installed. Just recently we have been told that Truespeed will be bringing fibre to premises in Shoscombe and included in that package, will be free WiFi for both the Village Hall and the School. This will make our hall an even more attractive venue to hire. The VHMC have also organised various fund-raising activities including table-top sale, film shows, discos and entertainment for children and adults. The Village Day and Flower and Vegetable Show have now become an annual event. All this takes a great deal of effort and commitment – well done to you all.

Members of the Village Hall Committee and Parish Council are working together to bring improvements and extra amenities to the recreation field. In March a team of volunteers installed two picnic tables. One table has been dedicated to the memory of Brenda Whitchurch, a member of the current Parish Council who sadly passed away last year. Yet more volunteers worked hard at lowering the nearby hedge, which has exposed far-reaching views of our parish and beyond. The cricket nets have been replaced and repairs have been done to the play area. I would especially like to thank John Cloutman who does not actually live in this parish, for volunteering to assist with repairs to the play area and village hall. The Parish Council is also investigating purchasing goal posts. It is hoped children and adults will use the field more for sporting activities. The incidence of anti-social behaviour- littering and loitering in the village hall car park has decreased now, due mainly to following advice from the Community Special Police Officers and the regular locking of the gate by volunteers.

The Church

The Friends of Foxcote Church Souper Tuesday lunches are becoming increasingly popular and are providing another opportunity for residents to meet up. Thanks must go to Carole Stevenson and Margaret Coles and her band of helpers. A Community Choir has been set up under the direction of Bob Goode and meets weekly in the School. Other community activities include book groups, weekly table tennis sessions, talks, walks and visits organised by the Shoscombe Local History Group and Ramblers and regular Jazz Jam sessions held at the Village Hall.

The School

Links between the residents and the School are being forged and there are now more opportunities for residents to partake in events with the children. Ruth Noall, the newly appointed headteacher, is keen to encourage this. Children at Shoscombe School helped again with the village litter-picking event, which took place in the early Spring. The safety of the children arriving and leaving the school is still an issue. In May last year, as Chairman of Shoscombe Parish Council, I was invited to speak at

a meeting of the Community, Transport and Environment Panel held in the Guildhall to give reasons why it was necessary to have the advisory 20mph speed limit upgraded to statutory especially in the vicinity of the School and this is under consideration. The Parish Council are keeping a record of any traffic incidents reported to them involving pedestrians and cyclists and have also advised residents to report any incidents of antisocial behaviour by road users to the police. The school is investigating ways to alleviate parking issues and as well as the walking bus every morning (children are dropped off in the Village Hall car park and under supervision are walked down to the school), the School has now implemented a 'drop and go' system in the morning. B&NES have had discussions with the School regarding the possibility of a safer route to the School.

Highways

Highways have investigated the problem with the drain on White Hill and last year carried out repairs, which have helped to reduce the flow of surface water. Many smaller repairs have been carried out on potholes and would urge residents to report any problems themselves to the Council. The Council have put in a request for an additional grit bin near the top of Barn Hill, as although this section of road is gritted, there are times when additional grit is needed as was discovered during the recent snowy weather. I would like to thank Dave Craddock for digging out areas of the village that were cut off, and residents for their efforts to clear snow by spreading extra grit. At the Council's request, weight restriction signs have now been installed at the junction of Wellow Road with Hang Hill and at the top of Barn Hill.

Planning

There have been three planning applications this year with two being permitted and one still being considered. B&NES with help from Parish Councils are currently assessing the areas of land put forward by landowners for the HELAA (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) This is to identify land which could be considered for allocation in the Local Plan. As Shoscombe is washed over by the Green Belt, a large development within the housing boundary would not be considered but we do need to be conscious of the possibility of land being developed on our village boundary especially between Shoscombe and Peasedown St John.

The Environment

Again this year we have been very fortunate to have assistance from Sheila Petherbridge, the B&NES Public Rights of Way Officer and the Bath Ramblers who have helped to rectify problems with our footpaths. Just recently the bi annual check of the footpaths was organised by Lee Crowther Russell and any reported remediation needed will be reported to the Public Rights of Way Officer. Many thanks to residents who helped with this and to residents who have been alerting Sheila Petherbridge to problems themselves. The River Action Group have surveyed the banks of the Wellow Brook, which runs through the Parish for rubbish and have been liaising with Bristol Avon River Trust for advice on management. It is hoped to have a working party of volunteers to help clear the rubbish. Shoscombe is on the waiting list to control the Himalayan Balsam, which has become quite invasive in some areas along the banks. The Wildlife Action Group have been developing wildlife areas around Shoscombe There have been two litter picking events in this last year and again I would like to thank residents and the children of Shoscombe School for their assistance in clearing the litter from the lanes and footpaths around the parish. B&NES Cleansing Department have been very efficient at removing any fly tipping reported to them and have agreed to litter pick along the busier lanes on our parish boundary.

The Parish Council appreciates the work of the small groups of people involved in maintaining and improving our environment and new members who can contribute in any way are very welcome.

Communication

Communication has greatly improved with increased usage of the noticeboards and the Everything Shoscombe website. I would like to thank Diana Aiken for the time and effort she spends keeping the

website up to date, the Newsletter Team for the production and delivery of the Shoscombe Newsletter and the administrators of the Shoscombe Facebook Page. A 'Welcome Pack' for new residents has recently been compiled which gives information on local services and amenities. The Parish Council have agreed to allocate funds for its production. Newcomers to the village will be given a copy of The Welcome Pack, The Shoscombe Parish Plan, and a copy of the booklet compiled by the Shoscombe Local History Group – Shoscombe during WW11,(subject to availability). The Parish Council would like to thank the History Group under the Chairmanship of Rina Richards for their generosity in supplying a free copy of this booklet to every household in the parish at the end of last year.

The Parish Council officially adopted the BT box in the autumn and there are now plans to refurbish it and to use it to house a defibrillator. Donations to help fund this have been received by the Parish Council. A community party organised by parish councillors and volunteers is planned in the summer to help raise the outstanding amount needed to cover the cost of the refurbishment, the cabinet and the defibrillator. Residents with medical knowledge have volunteered to help with overseeing the installation and any training requirements.

The Precept

The Parish Plan that has been compiled and adopted during the last year details the medium and long-term plans of the Parish Council. Many of the planned items will involve expenditure, and although for some items external grant funding might be available, the Parish Council will need to fund most of the items.

As the Parish Precept is the significant majority of the Parish Council's income, we agreed this year to raise it slightly more than in recent years to give us the greater financial resources needed to implement items from the Parish Plan over the next few years. To comply with transparency regulations, more details of the finances of the Parish Council can be found in the Parish Council section on the village website

www.everythingshoscombe.org

We were very fortunate to co-opt Andy Bayley onto the Council in November making eight councillors in total. We still have the option of co-opting a further three councillors. If there are any residents who feel they would like to join us, please contact the Clerk for further details.

The Parish Council usually meets on the second Thursday of the month (apart from August) at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. All meetings are open to the members of the Public. The Agenda for the next meeting is displayed on the village noticeboards and on the website three clear days prior to the meeting. Anyone wishing to include an item on the agenda should contact the Parish Clerk, Jean Fossaceco (01761 431068 clerk@shoscombeparish.org) at least one week before the next meeting. Your attendance at meetings would be much appreciated.

This is my final report as Chairman of Shoscombe Parish Council, a role I agreed to take on for the first four months of the current Council and have ended up doing it for a further two years!

I have found it a challenging but rewarding role, but due to family commitments, find I can no longer allocate the time needed to carry out the position as efficiently as I would wish. I will be remaining on Shoscombe Parish Council for the remaining twelve months of this current term of office.

I would like to thank the other Councillors, Clerk and the numerous residents who have supported me as Chairman in the many initiatives the Council have taken on in the last 2+ years.

The support of Ward Councillor, Neil Butters and Vice Chair Ian Cannock have been invaluable.

Hopefully I have helped to fulfil one of my main reasons for volunteering to join Shoscombe Parish Council – a greater sense of community and prioritising the care of the unique environment we are all so fortunate to share.

Jackie Withers

Chairman Shoscombe Parish Council 10th May 2018