

Chairman's Report

It has been a challenging year for all of us and sadly the Parish Council has not been able to bring the community together with the events they had planned for the year.

However, it has been heartening to see how our community has come together at this difficult time to support one another. Friends and neighbours have rallied around to look after the most vulnerable in our community with the everyday tasks which are normally taken for granted. I wish to thank each and every one of you for all the help you have given and are continuing to give and I'm confident that together we will get through whatever lies ahead of us.

The Parish Council have carried on with their day-to-day business, meeting virtually to respond to planning applications and to the issues and concerns raised by residents.

Due to restrictions on events imposed on us by the Pandemic, some of which would normally have been supported by the Council, together with a prudent retention of funds, we have a healthy carry forward figure enabling us to retain the precept at its present level.

Village Hall

The Village Hall Management Committee have carried out a considerable amount of work during Lockdown. A survey of the Village Hall revealed that a considerable amount of remedial work was needed before cladding to the external walls could be commenced. This work included replacing the footings and floor joists. All the external works have now been completed and to help with the repair costs the Parish Council provided some financial support.

There are further plans to improve the drainage, repair the entrance door, fit new flooring to the entrance and stage area and to plasterboard the internal walls. BaNES have provided a grant to help with the costs. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with this work.

In response to complaints about the anti-social behaviour at the Village Hall car park, the Parish Council have set up a rota of volunteers to lock and unlock the gate. It is hoped that this may deter the behaviour which has caused so much concern over the years. However, for this to be sustainable, more volunteers will be needed from April 2021. If you are able to help, even for an odd day in the week, please contact me.

The Village Hall Management Committee are also looking into installing CCTV, with vehicle recognition and appropriate signage, in the hope that this will also deter some of the anti-social behaviour.

One of our Councillors has been working with the Village Hall Management Committee and discussing how the Play Area at the Village Hall can be improved. Costings for new play equipment are being considered, together with the possibility of extending the Play Area.

Shoscombe School

The Parish Council have a close relationship with the School and, although it has not been possible to work with the children face to face this year, one of our Councillors has been working with volunteers from the village to create an outdoor environment for the children to play and work in. Over the winter one volunteer has built three mud kitchens and will

shortly be building an outdoor stage. As soon as the Covid 19 restrictions have eased we are looking forward to working with the children again.

Climate Crisis and Sustainability

In March 2020 the Parish Council declared a Climate Emergency but, due to the Pandemic, it has not been possible to bring our community together to get started on any projects.

Early on, the Parish Council's moved its bank account to an ethical bank that doesn't invest in fossil fuels. The Working Group have been very active: gathering information and resources, attending webinars and conferences in preparation for the time when they can get the community together again. The next step is to set up a network of supporters to focus on specific projects and a questionnaire will shortly be delivered to every household to gather ideas.

Environmental Projects

Some Councillors have been working closely with the Tree Club, who have planted over three hundred trees and created a small woodland. Another project which is being planned is to plant more trees in the village with members of the Stroke Society. However, the Club need to find more sites within the village and, if you know of anywhere suitable, please contact the me.

The Wildlife Group has recently reformed. Their first project has been to source a local supplier to make swift boxes for residents in the village. A number of other projects have been suggested, including a Bee Friendly Community Garden, a Community Orchard and to find a suitable place for allotments. If you would like to join the Group, or you have any ideas of projects you would like to get involved in, please contact me.

Parish Plan

The Parish Council are continuing to follow the wishes expressed by residents in the Parish Plan. Many of the action points identified have already been completed. Some group activities could not take place this year because of the Pandemic, however, when Covid restrictions have been eased, these activities will be started up again. To keep you up to date with progress the Action Plan Schedule is updated every two months and is available on the website.

Roads and Footpaths

The Parish Council have been working very closely with the Highways and Footpaths Officers this year to address various problems that have arisen regarding our roads, drainage and footpaths. Many problems have been resolved and others have been included in an ongoing programme of work.

Community Projects

The Parish Council are committed to supporting projects and initiatives which benefit our community.

Last year the Hamilton Terrace Garage site was put up for private sale. A group of residents from Hamilton Terrace got together and set up the Hamilton Terrace Community Interest Company, with a view to buying the site. To help the group with their set up costs the

Parish Council provided some financial support, considering the site to be a valuable asset for the community for many years having provided parking space for residents and a 'drop off' area for the school.

Assets of Community Value

The Parish Council are currently considering other sites within the village that are considered valuable assets to the community. By registering them with BaNES as 'Assets of Community Value' the residents who make use of the sites could be given the opportunity to buy these sites should they be put up for sale.

Post Covid Celebration

A number of new families have moved into the village recently and the Parish Council and Village Hall Management Committee are planning an event to bring the community together to celebrate the end of the Pandemic!

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking my fellow Councillors and Clerk for all the hard work they carry out so freely to ensure the Council runs so well. We have recently been joined by three new members who are already making a valuable contribution to the Council.

I would also like to thank all our residents for their support over this challenging year. The strong community spirit in Shoscombe has enabled us to get through the past year and I am sure that together we can meet any challenges that lay ahead.

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Chairman
Shoscombe Parish Council

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