

Stottesdon & Sidbury Parish Council

Annual Parish meeting held via Zoom videoconferencing at 7pm 26th April, 2021 prior to the Parish Council meeting.

The meeting was Chaired by Parish Council Chairman David Young.

1. **Apologies:** Mr C Smith, Mr S Allen, Mrs K Jones (Headteacher), G Butler (purdah), J Rogers will leave the meeting at 7.45pm due to business commitment.

2. Minutes of last meeting 15th April 2019 were not available but would be approved at a later date.

3. **Chairman's Annual report:**

Despite the disruption caused by the pandemic and three lockdowns, the parish council continued to meet every month apart from April and May 2020, courtesy of Zoom.

I'm happy to report that we had no Handforth Parish Council moments -you may have seen the famous Jacqui Weaver on social media trying to keep a dysfunctional council on track! Some of you may be aware that Madge Shineton, your Shropshire Council representative for Cleobury Mortimer, will not be contesting this seat in the forthcoming election. The councillors and our clerk, Freda Morris, would like to thank her for her huge contribution to this and the surrounding parishes over many years, probably more than she would care to remember! Your sage advice, insight and knowledge will be sorely missed, Madge.

Last year we also said goodbye to two councillors who resigned, David Ferguson and Beverley Montague. I would like to thank them both for their support over the last few years. We also lost a former chairman and councillor, Brian Hamilton-Russell who died following a short illness. Brian made a very generous contribution towards the purchase of the surgery car park.

We recently welcomed a new councillor on board, John Rogers. However, we still have 3 vacancies. If you are interested or know of someone else who may be, then please get in touch with Freda.

Although we still have major problems with potholes around the parish I'm happy to report considerable improvements in road surfaces in some areas e.g the road from Prescott to Bagginswood, Walton bank and the road from the telephone exchange to Brooks Meeting bridge. More resurfacing work will be carried out shortly. The persistent flooding problem at the bottom of Moon house bank is scheduled to be fixed once and for all later this spring.

We recently decided to join a local project called RSVP (restoring Shropshire's verges project). The plan is to create mini wild flower meadows on some of our road verges. Not only will this benefit pollinators and butterflies thus increasing biodiversity but it will also enhance the visual impact of the locality. If anyone has other ideas to improve the Parish in any way then please get in touch.

Litter continues to be a problem. Can I appeal to walkers/dog walkers to carry a bag and pick up and dispose of any litter you find to help keep the Parish looking as good as it can be? I know some of you are doing this already- thank you.

Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow councillors and our Parish clerk, Freda Morris, for their continued support and valuable contributions over the last 12 months, Keep safe, David Young.

4. **Shropshire Cllr's report:**

Cllr Butler did not give a report, due to purdah, but his monthly reports can be seen in the PC minutes so any report would be a recap of these reports.

Cllr Shingleton, who is not seeking re-election, said that her report was as per the April report to the PC and added that we are all still fighting the pandemic. Health – Future Fit – a lot has been learned during this pandemic how health and other agencies can all work together.

At this point Cllr Shingleton was asked to open the envelopes delivered to her today from the Parish Council. This was a 'thank you' card and voucher for Farlow Farm Nurseries.

Madge was very grateful for this and would enjoy spending the voucher.

Madge was once again thanked for all she had done since joining the PC in 1976 and also her work as Bridgnorth District Cllr and Shropshire Cllr. – she will be very much missed at our meetings.

Madge said she would still be willing to help out at any time if required.

5. Organisation reports: All emailed to Clerk and circulated.

a) Stottesdon School/Nursery – report emailed by Mrs K Jones, Headteacher:

Stottesdon CofE Primary continues to be a thriving school (91 pupils + 23 pupils attending Nursery). Due to circumstances, it is two years since our last report. As a result, there have been quite a few changes and quite a few challenges (as there have been across the whole world) to deal with. An overview of these is set out below.

Covid 19 Measures and Impact

- The school site closed in March 2020 (lockdown 1) and launched into home learning for all (there were no keyworker requests).
- School began the phased re-opening of site on the 1st of June (quickly filling up bubbles of 15 for returning year groups, keyworkers and vulnerable as well as juggling those learning from home).
- School was open to all in the Autumn term 2020 and attendance was high.
- School was open to keyworkers and vulnerable for most of the Spring term 2021 (lockdown 3). Staff juggled roughly 50% of pupils learning at home and 50% learning on site. School evaluation (school news 16/04/21 – see website) showed, overall, the school managed this well. Further home learning information is on our website.
- The school has been open since the 8th March and attendance is high.
- Nursery, wrap around and holiday club has been open at all points (that were appropriate under the measures) for small consistent groups. Wrap around has run in the hall to enable class bubbles to be maintained before and after school.
- Although cases were known of within the school community, we only had 1 occasion where we needed to close bubbles due to cases coming into school and then isolating wider staff and pupils.
- There has been negative impact on pupil learning and social, emotional skills. This has been particularly noticeable for younger children (home learning is very challenging for our youngest ages); SEN children and children of lower ability. The school is supporting with recovery but this will take time.
- There has been negative impact on school finances due to increased costs and loss of income from Nursery and WrapAround. Budgeting is very tight as we move forward.
- The academy trust structure has been very supportive in managing challenges and changing circumstances.
- The school continues to work in an adapted way under current measures (incl staggered collection and drop off; class bubbles; hand washing; social distancing – risk assessment on website). Staff are tired but are working well to continually problem solve and move forward.

Other News

- As a school, we continue to run four classes and a Nursery (Nursery; Reception; Y1/2 (infants); Y3/4 (lower juniors); Y5/6 (upper juniors)). Since our last report this structure has been amended and all curriculum maps updated.
- The school hall was completed and opened in February 2020 (just before lockdown) and monies from the very successful Fosps Auction was used to re-landscape the early years area around the hall with volunteers in lockdown. Since re-opening this space has been an asset in keeping provision going (class bubbles; wrap around; school lunches; each bubble with its own play and toilet facilities). We look forward to a time when we can: bring our all our classes into the hall for activities (e.g. assembly); invite the community to a coffee morning to enjoy the facilities with us.



- Children have missed out so much in the last year and we are excited to return to the breadth of opportunity our school normally provides e.g. range of music lessons; sports participation; academic success; wide ranging enrichment; dramatic productions/concerts.
- Our strong links with the church have continued through the last year and children have enjoyed Reverend Daborn's assemblies on Teams or YouTube. Year 5/6 sent Christmas letters out to the community and we look forward to engaging wider as soon as we can.
- Our development plan prioritises continuing to meet children's individual needs with a particular focus on recovery following Covid 19.

Rev Daborn commented on the extra amount of work Katie and her staff had put in for the school, all carried out in good humour in order to keep the school safe and the children educated and was pleased to see the children now back at school and very happy. He also reported that he had gone up in the children's estimation as he did Youtube!

b) Chorley Village Hall – report emailed by Claire Bradley:

Despite the closures over the last year due to the Covid-19 Government Regulations the Village Hall Committee rose to the challenge ensuring that the Village Hall met the Government standards to be Covid Secure which meant that we were able to open when allowed last year for hirers of the hall which included use by the Stottesdon primary School, plus the regular weekly users for Yoga, Pilates and exercise classes.

We can't wait to open again as soon as we are able to under the Government's Roadmap out of the lockdown, to welcome everyone in the Parish back to the Village Hall for hire for parties, weddings, family & village events & for the regular classes & our monthly highlights, the Film Club, the WI & the Tea & cakes afternoons & organised walks amongst others. Due to the uncertainties surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic we have decided not to run the Chorley Show in 2021.

Meanwhile our volunteers young and old have been busy keeping walkers around the village entertained with VE day picnics, Halloween howlers, Christmas lights, a New Year's day trail, Valentines Day love letters, poems & pictures and with Easter eggstraveganzer displays as well as keeping the Hall well maintained & making progress on our new website to be launched soon. We've also contacted our local MP to support our opposition to a proposal that enables Local Authorities to consider removing discretionary rate relief from Village Halls from 2022 onwards. The Hall is a registered charity with a small financial turnover each year that is raised by fees from hall users which barely covers the running costs, so any added fees may jeopardise the Hall's future existence as the only community building in the parish. We ask that the Parish Council will support us in this matter and our new Councillors to be elected on the 6th May .

As the Government lockdown restrictions ease, we are already taking bookings and our first is for the Local Elections on the Thursday 6th May as a polling station.

For more information check out the Chorley Village Hall Facebook Page via: www.facebook.com/chorleyvillagehall/ or contact Joe on : Joe@phoenix-cottage.co.uk or Claire on claire@woulfe.org.uk

The new Chorley Village Hall Officers are: Sue Jones as Secretary, Joe Bubb as Treasurer and Claire Bradley as Chair person.

c) South Wheatland Archive Group (SWAG) given by Rosemary Abbiss:

This group is at the point of closing. The project it was formed for has been completed, (Stud on the Hill) We have arranged for the book digitalised and now the digital version is kindly hosted by Stottesdon Parish Council on their web site.

There is approximately £1,000 left in the bank account. The treasurer passed away which caused a few problems transferring the signatures on the account.

We, those that remain of the original group, were actively looking for projects to donate funds to when the pandemic hit the country, so it was shelved for a while.

We would be grateful of ideas as to where the remaining funds would benefit.

It is money that basically belongs to the parish.

Clerk asked if this money could not be split between the Church, Dr's Surgery, School and Village Hall?

A tree in memory of the SWAG group was suggested and if this was taken forward to speak to Farlow Farm Nurseries for advice.

After discussions it was suggested that people let Cllrs know of any suggestions for the next meeting.

d) WI: emailed by Clare Tibbits for Helena Hale, President

As with so many things in the 2020-2021 'Pandemic Year', the W I had to cancel the planned programme of speakers, crafting demonstrations and events, with top priority being given to the safety and wellbeing of members.

With 19 members, many of whom are elderly, widely scattered around the district our principal concern was to establish new ways of keeping everyone in touch. The committee adopted *What's App* as a new means of meeting early on, and others were linked by email and telephone ring-around. Those few without access to digital channels were kept supplied with hand-delivered Newsletters and updates from our WI and the Shropshire Federation.

Last summer, between lockdowns, socially distanced garden-yoga sessions were a popular feature of our 'keeping in touch' arrangements. We greatly missed being unable to design and display our usual exhibit for the Handicrafts Competition at The Burwarton Show which, as also for 2021, was cancelled.

Then, into Autumn and Winter, we embarked on a programme of virtual events, hosted on Zoom by our President. The diverse range of subjects included 'Climate Change', crafting 'cards with doodled patterns', 'eco-brick making' (a practical use for 2L plastic bottles which you stuff with otherwise unrecyclable plastic waste!) and a fascinating illustrated talk on the 'history of Treen' (cutlery and domestic tools handmade in whittled-wood).

Christmas celebrations were helped along with a seasonal card and a small gift (of crafting materials in a handmade bag) presented to every member.

Now, as vaccinations progress well and lockdown slowly eases, we are in good spirits – we look forward to being able to resume 'normal' activities, in a careful 'one step-at-a-time' manner, during the months to come.

e) Nightingale Nurses report given by Rosemary Abbiss:

This fund, which is a charity and relies on local fundraising, will pay for some nursing care in the home at times of a medical crisis. It covers the patients of the doctor's surgeries of, Ditton Priors, Cleobury Mortimer, Highley and the Shropshire patients of Tenbury Wells doctors practice. It is accessed through your doctor, community nurse or care agency. Unfortunately, our AGM last year was held on zoom with a promise of a public one later in the year, which did not happen as a result of COVID restrictions.

During the pandemic we have been unable to raise additional funds. Fortunately, we have received a couple of donations from families in memory of a loved one. There has been demand for us to fund some care during the year.

We will be holding a tombola when we are able to attend the Cleobury Mortimer farmers market again, if there is a slot available. Any help or suggestions of fund raising would be welcomed.

C M Bespoke Care are kindly funding a short article about NNF in the catalogue of the Farlow show and fete.

If anyone would like to know more about the fund please contact me

f) Stottesdon/Sidbury Church: Rev Mark Daborn gave the following report:

The last year has inevitably been dictated by the covid-19 pandemic. During the first lockdown in 2020, the churches were closed by the archbishops; during the second lockdown they were closed by the government; during the third lockdown, this year, churches were given the individual choice and it was decided, in consultation with the PCC officers, the archdeacon and our medical practice to close our churches. This was based on the principle of loving our neighbours by following government guidelines to stay at home and avoid gatherings. They re-opened for public worship at Easter.

During much of the lockdown time when public worship has not been permitted, the churches have been open for one day a week for private prayer. At times when public worship has been permitted, strict procedures for social distancing and hand sanitising, as

well as the mandatory use of face masks, have been observed, and records taken of church attenders for track and trace. When Holy Communion has been administered, it has been just the bread, not the wine. Congregational hymn-singing has not been allowed.

There have been, therefore, far fewer services in our churches this year, and no other fundraising or social activities have been possible; even when the churches have been open, attendance has been slightly down – we have advised regular church attenders that if they are not sure of the safety of gathering, they should stay safely at home. Innovations in church use to ensure safety have included not only the safety precautions in the building, but also using the churchyard: the Harvest Festival service at Sidbury was held outside on a beautiful sunny evening.

Funerals have been able to be held – in the churchyard or crematorium during the first lockdown, in church with restricted numbers in subsequent times; this has made grieving and celebrating a life that has closed more difficult in some ways, although has added an unexpected element of intimacy to these occasions. There have been no weddings or christenings during the year – the first time since I have been ordained that I have had no weddings in a year and no christenings in a year! The current easing is gradually opening the way to a considerable number of delayed weddings and christenings.

Pastoral visiting has been severely curtailed, and contact has been maintained by email, telephone, the dreaded 'Zoom' conferencing facility or – much better – pastoral dog walks that give the opportunity for very valuable casual conversations. 'Live' visits to schools have also had to stop.

In building matters, the pandemic has caused serious delays in the obtaining of Lottery funding for our major repair and improvement plans for Stottesdon church, and my thanks go to Chris Tibbitts, who has put in enormous amounts of time, energy and expertise in dealing with this incredibly complex process.

That has generally been what we might term the 'bad news' of the pandemic year. The good news is that we have discovered many new ways of communicating as a Church. We have been providing recorded services and reflections for over a year now, and the filming know-how has gradually improved over that time, so that they can now incorporate hymns sung by a choir and film clips put together to be published on the Stottesdon Benefice Website, Facebook page and You Tube channel. We have been able to have guest speakers to deliver the weekly reflection, including Bishop Richard.

These recorded services are reaching people who can't or don't come to church, as well as our regular worshippers during periods when the churches have been closed. Some of them have reached up to 100 people over the course of a week, and allow people to play them at a time to suit themselves, rather than being tied to a church service time. We have used the same technique for school assemblies: either recorded assemblies using the 'clothes peg' dolls to illustrate Bible Stories, or visiting school 'virtually' by means of Microsoft Teams – we used this method for the school's annual Harvest celebration and for preparation of Christingles.

Now that we are back in the churches, and gradually opening up the use of them, we are still not allowed to sing hymns, so have improved our sound systems and facilities to play wonderful choral settings of hymns and other music to accompany services – and invested in a live-streaming licence so that hymns provided by the Church of England can be downloaded and used for the recorded services.

There has been a lot of thought needed about new ways of doing church, and a lot of very positive conversations about taking faith outside the church buildings – our recorded services have largely been done ‘on location’ in fields, woodland, by streams, in churchyards and in the rectory garden, mostly accompanied by birdsong.

Back in October, Alex Daborn was licensed as a Reader by the bishop in a service in Church Stretton, and her assistance as a licensed minister in the benefice has been an invaluable support, especially in these unusual and testing times. And my thanks go to the churchwardens – Clare Tibbitts in Stottesdon and Andrew Sierakowski in Sidbury for their unfailing support and help in the church communities.

Altogether, we have learned a lot about new ways of being church that can be carried on to supplement and support the traditional ways as life becomes more like the normal we have been used to. And we have, I hope and believe, reached a lot of new people and made a lot of new friends.

g) Chorley Chapel – no report received.

h) Chorley Show – covered under Chorley Village Hall report

i) Lengthsman Scheme – Clerk reported on behalf of Mark Pearce the following:

- Re-planted plants/hedging which had died on the Surgery car park.
- Put plainings on car park surface to fill ‘dip’ off the car park onto the road.
- Cut Glebe Drive grass twice for VE day celebrations.
- Tidied up area around village notice board and where skips were at Station Road.
- Replaced fence around school car park.
- Put up and took down lamp post poppies and bunting for VE day.
- Cleared flood at bottom of Moonhouse Bank.
- Cleared drains of debris/silt around the parish following heavy rain etc.

j) Police – no report available but newsletters sent out and put on website.

6. Chairman’s closing comments:

Chairman thanked those attending and everyone who had sent in reports during this difficult time.

7. Date of next meeting: Monday 17th May Annual Parish Council meeting at Chorley Village Hall unless advised otherwise.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Signed: Chairman

Date: