

ANNUAL REPORT
OF
SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL
2013-14

Shillingstone Parish Council
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The following served as councillors during the year:

Peter Aaron

Frank Bristow (Sadly died March 2014)

Kay Farrell

Tim Kennard (Co-opted July 2013)

Clive Luther (Chairman – resigned November 2013)

Craig Oakley

Ian Paulley (Co-opted August 2013, resigned October 2013)

Phil Watts (Co-opted October 2013)

Malcolm Webberley (Chairman from December 2013)

For those of you who don't know me I'm Malcolm Webberley and I have lived at Pear Tree Cottage for 13 years. I took over from Clive Luther as Chairman last year when Clive had to resign from the Council for personal reasons. He had served on the Council for 5 years, and I would like to thank him for his hard work and commitment to the community over that period. As some of you may know, the for sale sign is a bit of a clue, my tenure may be limited as Val and I may be moving away from the village in the not too distant future or we may still be here next year. Who knows!

Councillors come and go but I would like to specially mention Frank Bristow who suddenly died in the Spring. He served the community in many ways and he will be sadly missed. We are pleased to welcome James Cooper who has just been co-opted to our merry band but we have room for more and if you'd like to play a part in village life please either chat to a councillor or to our new clerk, Malcolm Wilson – or even better, come along to a parish council meeting and see for yourself what happens.

It was an autumn of upheaval in the Council as not only did I suddenly find myself in the chair but our clerk Susie Bamforth decided that her future lay back in London and we had to recruit a new clerk. We were very fortunate to find Malcolm Wilson, who has recently moved to Dorset. He is a highly qualified clerk and has been doing the job for 8 years in two parish councils in East Sussex. He has got up to speed and fitted in remarkably quickly and I am sure he will be a great asset to us. The only downside is having two Malcolms which can be confusing.

The Parish Council was pleased that the community has decided to create a Neighbourhood Plan. John Paul is leading that and we will hear all about it from him shortly.

At last year's meeting mention was made of the parlous state of the historic Cross. A programme of repair and refurbishment has been agreed. Unfortunately we haven't been able to obtain any grant funding but have received legal advice that we can use some historic

capital reserves to fund the repairs – a sum in the region of £15,000. This has avoided the need to increase the Precept to pay for repairs. Whilst I'm sure that some people might think that this is a lot of money to spend on a monument it is an integral piece of Shillingstone's historic culture and the parish council has a responsibility to ensure its assets are safe and not a danger to the public. Work will hopefully start this summer.

The War Memorial is also due for further repairs and the names of the fallen will be restored before the end of June, well in time to mark the 100th Anniversary of the start of the Great War.

The allotments remain popular. All 18 plots are let and no-one failed to renew their tenancy when rents were collected at the end of March. There is a waiting list of 6 names.

I am keen to make more use of our website as more and more people get used to thinking of the internet as the first place to look for information. I want more information and links on it and perhaps a digital version of the Parish Magazine so when you find your copy has gone in the recycling you can still find that useful phone number. Malcolm is looking into this with the website developers.

The Recreation Ground and Pavilion continue to be one of the great assets for the village, mainly through the extraordinary work put in by so many volunteers running the sport clubs and trying to keep everything in good order. We were fortunate to get funding from Sportengland to install the new changing facilities which are now up and running after many delays. If you or I wanted to build something in Shillingstone we would probably find a builder in the village or maybe in Stur or Blandford. Sportengland in their wisdom chose one in Belfast. Not exactly on site. We are committed to making improvements to the Pavilion and we are actively trying to identify funds that could be used for this.

I would particularly like to mention the work done by Phil Watts who not only serves as a councillor but also takes responsibility for opening up the changing rooms, and the Cricket Club for the excellent job they do in looking after the grass.

We are well served with children's play areas in the village both in the Rec and in Augustan Avenue. A lot of work goes into making sure that these are kept safe and in good order.

The Parish Council continues to be enormously grateful to the Footpaths Officer, Graham Rains, for his sterling work in maintaining the footpath network across the village, both out on the ground and lobbying the County Council Rights of Way department. He regularly attends parish council meetings and gives detailed updates on ongoing work. We received some grant funding from Community Spaces for footpath maintenance and a programme of work has been agreed with the Rangers. Combined with extra funds we have found to double the hours we pay for the Lengthsman we are committed to trying to keep our verges tidy and roads swept and free of litter.

The Precept for the coming year is unchanged at £22,000. As I have mentioned funding for the lengthsman will increase and we have invested in a new accounting package specifically designed for parish councils. This will help us keep better control over what is being spent and when. Extra expenditure has been funded by reducing the paid working hours of the clerk.

I should like to thank my fellow councillors for their support and hard work. Villagers may not be aware of the time and efforts they put, into the running of the village, unpaid and often unacknowledged, which extends far beyond the monthly meetings of the Council.

We are also fortunate to have County and District councillors who take a very keen interest in Shillingstone, and again I offer my thanks to Sherry Jespersion and Deborah Croney.

Now if you have any questions on matters other than Planning and Development, which John will take, please ask away.

SHILLINGSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCILLORS		
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North Dorset District Councillor		
Sherry Jespersion		01258 860482

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