



SHERE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MINUTES

Held 3rd April 2025 Tanyard Hall, 30 Station Road, Gomshall GU5 9LF

Present: Councillors R Davey (Chair), M Keeble, M Taylor-Cotter, W Esplen, B Harrap, P Tompkins, Q Jayne, R Smith, G Reffo and T Florent.

The Worshipful The Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE.

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) Councillor B Hughes.

Clerk S Hoyland and Assistant Clerk (Maternity Cover) C Lawrence.

Seventeen members of the public.

Refreshments were served on arrival

The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced The Worshipful The Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE who gave a short talk on the following:

Plans were taking place for a New Unitary Authority to replace Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council with more powers for economic development and growth and an overarching elected Mayor. The Mayor explained how the new authority would work and that several models had been proposed for either two or three unitary authorities covering Surrey but no consistent view on how to move forward at this point. It was thought that there would be a huge financial savings for two authorities, approximately a £24 million by 2030 but less savings for three authorities. The Mayor explained that Woking and Spelthorne had huge debts and they wanted a payment holiday on the interest and the debt to pay back at a later time.

The Mayor confirmed that Parish Councils would remain in place and it was likely that powers would be devolved to the Parish Council to conduct works at a local level. She was keen to keep a Guildford Mayor, to retain the history and supported the formation of a Town Council but this was still under consideration as it would mean an extra precept for residents.

The Mayor went on to say that Shere Parish Council has good representation with fantastic innovative work and the Unitary Authority could be an excellent opportunity for the Parish Council to take on more services. She thanked the Parish Council for great work and all we did in this lovely area.

The following questions were asked:

- **What about the residents' voice?** - residents would have a stronger voice with two elected representatives on the new Unitary Authority with local accountability and responsibility
- **What will happen to the existing buildings?** – Some will be reused and some sold. It is likely there will be some redundancies
- **What will happen to local expertise, such as planning?** – This will go to the Unitary Authority
- **What will happen about the social housing difficulties?** – There are approximately 3,000 people on the GBC housing waiting list and the Unitary Authority will be responsible for this.
- **Would there be extra resources if the Parish Council took on extra services?** - They would have to be properly funded but details have not yet been considered
- **What savings could be made to Adult and Child Services as the need will remain the same?** It is unlikely the cost would shrink but there may be a reduction in staff.

Chair R Davey thanked the Mayor for coming and for the information on the Unitary Authority.

A Report given by the Chairman of Shere Parish Council on the Council's work in the past year.

Chair R Davey addressed the issue of the huge planters in Shere where the trial part pedestrianisation had taken place. He highlighted the uniformity of response over the planters; whether people wanted the part pedestrianisation or not, everyone agreed the planters were not acceptable. He confirmed that Surrey County Council has agreed to change them and the Parish Council would be asked their opinion this time.

The Chair reported that in the 2021 village consultation, some sort of small pedestrianised area (as there was during covid) was supported along with limited double yellow lines (dyls) and charging in the car park. The charging in the car park had been achieved and was hugely successful. He thanked Councillor M Keeble for his work towards the project, including his consultation with local businesses and ensuring the implementation went as planned. Concerns were addressed and as a result people were supportive and there have been very few complaints over the system.

Although dyls were not popular, they were necessary to stop poor parking, blocking buses and access for emergency vehicles, which has really helped on Upper Street, Shere. Unfortunately, parking is now happening on the bend opposite the William Bray Pub which will have to be looked at.

The devolution under a Unitary Authority may lead to the Parish Council to be able to employ their own parking enforcement.

Charging in the car park has meant the Parish Council can plan and carry out mayor projects. Projects already carried out include the improvements to the area called the Skudges next to Peaslake School, for the forest school and the repairs to the parking surface in Holmbury St Mary, opposite the garage. Plans are also being formed for the refurbishment of the Old Fire Station Public Toilets and a lift for Tanyard Hall to expand the Drop-in Centre. Funding sources have been stopped by Guildford Borough Council, so these projects would not have been possible without the charging in the car park.

The Drop-in centre and food bank continue to be very successful and well used. The Drop-in Coordinator Ang Katryniak and Assistant Drop-in Coordinator Ron Slater were praised for their work.

With the sad news that the WASP Bus was closing, The Chair confirmed that the council was looking into options.

Questions relating to the Chairman's report and on any other matters concerning the Parish of Shere from residents:

- **Tourists were given preference over residents**
- **Will the bike stands be removed by the part pedestrianisation in Shere?** - It would be looked into
- **The double yellow lines by the William Bray don't look completed?** – it would be investigated
- **Thank you to Shere Parish Council and SCC Councillor B Hughes for removing the abominable planters in The Square but the benches can be kept**

More refreshments were available and the meeting closed