

**MINUTES OF THE SHIPTON GORGE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL ON
Wednesday 13 April 2016 at 7.30pm**

There were 26 parishioners present and 7 Councillors

11.38 Chairman's introductory remarks

Welcome everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. For those that haven't attended one of these meetings previously can I briefly explain that this is not a Parish Council meeting but a general meeting of the parish where things can be discussed on any subject relevant to the parish and for an exchange of views and ideas. The Annual Parish Meeting is a much older institution than the Parish Council and is held by all villages regardless of whether they have a parish council or not.

Where a parish has is a parish council, it is required that the chairman presides.

Traditionally we invite representatives from organisations in the parish to give us a brief resume of their activities. This year we have kept these reports to the major organisations in the parish and ask that these reports but this year we are also having a presentation by **Tom Grace on the Neighbourhood Plan** which he has agreed to take forward for the parish. I won't attempt to explain how important doing a Neighbourhood Plan will be for everyone in the parish, but I'm sure Tom will enlighten us all and take any questions.

We will start with the minutes of last year's meeting. These have been on the parish website during the past year for everyone to see and so I do not propose to read them unless parishioners would like me to. However they do need to be approved by this meeting.

11.39 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Alex Drew, Cllr Barbara Chambers (who had sent in a letter of resignation from 3rd May 2016), Sally Parker, and Pam Bates

11.40 To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1st April 2015.

The meeting did not require these to be read and so were taken as read and unanimously approved. Proposed Eddy Buck. Seconded Richard Cunningham.

11.41 Chairman's Report from the Parish Council.

We had a new parish council elected last May and since then we have had a full complement of nine councillors which has made life much easier for everyone and also ensured a diversity of views and opinions which is excellent as it gives us the ability to represent the views of all residents.

Unfortunately we are about to lose two councillors .- Barbara Chambers who had committed to just one year of service and so will resign prior to our May meeting. She will be greatly missed, particularly for her work as chairman of the Playing Field committee where she has done and excellent job but I am pleased to report that John Porter will be taking over this role from May. We are also losing Alex Drew who many of you will know is moving away from the village. Although Alex hasn't been a councillor for long he has been able to represent the younger element in the village and so also will be missed. If you, or anyone you know, might be considering becoming a councillor then please do let either myself or the clerk know and we'd be pleased to explain what is entailed.

*We only have **two committees on the Parish Council** - Planning and Playing Field chaired respectively by Richard Cunningham and Barbara Chambers. They have both worked extremely hard and will be giving separate reports later on.*

Mary Boughton, Chairman

Signed... M J Boughton.....Dated.....12/4/2017.....

Although this meeting can discuss anything at all, there are a few things that I'd like to update you on before we move on:-

The gift of the Village green to the parish council. Finally I am happy to report that the transfer of the village green to the Parish Council has finally been completed and I would like to record the village's thanks for this gift to Mrs Margaret Mitchell. The fence that we agreed to erect as part of the transfer has been put up, although regrettably one end is slightly out of line and this will be rectified shortly.

The closure of Cuckoo Lane. More good news is that Cuckoo Lane was finally re-opened to one way northbound traffic just before Christmas. It had been closed since July 2012 and became a much enjoyed footpath during that time and although there have been some incidences of traffic going the wrong way and some very heavy vehicles also using it, in the main it is not heavily used and the banks are relatively stable at the moment.

Fingerposts. I know it has taken longer than expected to get these refurbished and back up. Partly due to our need to save costs where possible and so having to wait for new hardwood boards which were kindly donated to us, and then the practicalities of actually doing the work. The refurbished one at the end of Barr Lane has gone up today and the next one to be done is at the junction of Markets Lane and Brook Street. It has been more of a mammoth task than first thought and our thanks go to Chris Huxtable who has dealt with all this work singlehandedly – obtaining grants, getting parts and also doing all the painting. We are very grateful for her commitment and know they will last for years when finally all re-done. Also our thanks to Chris Hewlett who raised £275 towards the cost of the refurbishment by attending car boot sales. Thank you so much.

Resilience Plan. I must also mention the work done by both Gerry Pyke and John Porter to produce a Resilience Plan for the village. Another mammoth task which has been in preparation for some time, but is now coming to fruition. All residents will be receiving details of this shortly in the Bride Valley News.

Village website. You will all have seen that Ernie Thomas is retiring as our webmaster, after many years of dedicated work, and our thanks once again go to him. Nigel Wheeler is taking over from him and this change also coincides with a new website that will be up and live very shortly. For those that haven't met him, Nigel is here tonight and is going to give us a short report later on progress on this project.

Our **Annual Spring Clean** event will be held this year on Saturday 30th April meeting at 10am at the New Inn, and we hope that as many of you as possible will come along to help out. It doesn't take long and especially as the village is again entered in the Best Kept Village Competition this year, it will be good to see it tidied up before the summer.

I should like to express my thanks to our clerk, **Paula Biss**, who does a sterling job and without her the council would not run as smoothly as it does – thank you Paula. Also to **Peter Varney, our Internal Auditor**, who has carried out this task over the past year and we are most grateful to him.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who serve on the Parish Council. The work that you all do is not always obvious but without you taking on this voluntary role we, as a village, would be very much poorer and have little say as to what happens in our village. It really does make a difference in so many ways and enables us to determine our own future and how we want our village to be in the future. So thank you one and all.

We shall now move on with the agenda, copies of which are around the hall. There will be an opportunity for anyone to bring up any issues they would like discussed towards the end of the meeting but if there are any questions on items in my report, either myself or one of the councillors present will be happy to answer them.

Mary Boughton, Chairman

Signed... M J Boughton.....Dated.....12/4/2017.....

11.42 Playing Field – Barbara Chambers

The Chairman commented that most of the precept monies go towards maintaining the Playing Field. It is leased from DCC at a peppercorn rent and is maintained by the Parish Council. In the absence of Barbara due to sickness, the chairman read her report

Throughout the year the Playing Field has been well used by both local children and those here in Shipton on holiday with their families, which has been very nice to see.

The nets have finally been attached to the small goal posts which was welcomed by the footballers.

A second picnic table will be appearing in the field very soon, from a grant of £200, courtesy of our County Councillor Ron Coatsworth. Our thanks go to him, and I'm sure it will be well used this coming summer. It has of course arrived as a flat pack so has still to be assembled.

The roundabout is at present being given a makeover by Townsend Engineering. The metal work has been removed to their workshop, rubbed down and given a new coat of green paint whilst the hard wood top and footboards have been re-oiled by Grayham and the side panels repainted by Christine Hewlett. It will be re-assembled shortly.

It was felt by the Parish Council that the Monkey Bars in the field are not a very exciting piece of equipment and I looked at what we could perhaps replace them with. Having looked at various pieces of play equipment a Climbing Wall had unanimous approval by all councillors. It will fit in the exact space taken up by the Monkey Bars so will not encroach into the open area of the field, and will be usable by a number of children at any one time as the panels are double sided. Grants will have to be sought for the project as together with the surrounding area of safety matting required a sum in the region of £8,500 will be needed. If we are able to do this it should be the last piece of play equipment that the field will need for many years, and provide something of interest for all age groups.

Tree branches overhanging the swings have been cut back for health and safety reasons. As usual thanks go to our groundsman Grayham Rosamond, members of the PF Committee and all volunteers who have helped with tasks in the field and keeping it looking as good as possible. We are commended every year by RoSPA in their annual report on the state of the field and its equipment, and this year the outdoor exercise equipment got a special mention from the judges of the annual Village Competition. The Playing Field is being entered into this competition again by the Village Society, so I would ask everybody who uses the field to treat both it and the equipment with respect and help at any Maintenance Days that might be planned.

11.43 Planning – Richard Cunningham. *The Parish Council at present receives all the Planning Applications and holds a meeting to then send the corporate view of the application to the District Council. The Council does not have any influence on the decision of the Council, they merely take into account the their view as they do the views of anyone commenting on an application. There is new legislation soon whereby plans will not be sent to the council but all councillors will be able to access them on line before the appropriate planning meeting.*

The Parish council had tried to initiate a Neighbourhood Plan – see 11.44, which would be run by a separate committee, the Council only able to facilitate the plan but is able to apply for certain funds as applicable. The role of initiating the plan had been fortunately accepted by Tom Grace. There will be much consultation within the village and lot of hard work and for the first time the community can have input into long-term parish planning.

Dorset4You is available to all and all planning applications can be viewed and any personal comments input.

11.44 Neighbourhood Plan – Tom Grace

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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Tom Grace spoke on the Neighbourhood Plan. He commented that it is basically democracy brought into Planning. He felt the Government would be recommending future development in the village, otherwise it would stagnate, and that new buildings were inevitable. It is essential therefore that a Neighbourhood Plan with consultation and agreement of the villagers and a referendum approved by the Council, be completed rather than the Government imposing planning in the future without reference to the Village. All residents would be able to vote on the Neighbourhood Plan. If it was not in accordance with the parish the Referendum wouldn't be imposed.

Suitable places in the village could be identified and the village could expand to include affordable homes and homes for young people.

To date Tom had not formed a committee although he had several people interested in the plan. It would be his remit to sell the Neighbourhood Plan to the community. There are many plans in existence and Lodders has a plan ready for a Referendum to be approved. Cerne Abbas is already effective and Bridport (and district) are working on their plan.

Richard Cunningham confirmed the usefulness of consultation across the community and although there would be no direct input from the Parish Council they would be pleased to be able to facilitate and would have access to funds/grants to enable the plan to be completed.

Everyone should start to think about how the plan could enhance the future of Shipton Gorge. The difference between a Parish Plan (overall view of the village) and Neighbourhood Plan (mainly planning orientated) was clarified.

From 1979 to 2009 ten-yearly Parish Appraisals were carried out and the next one is due in 2019.

11.45 Reports from representatives from local organisations

New Inn Support – Ashley Harrow.

1. Successor Tenant Search

- *Marilyn is retiring at the end of September 2016, having been with us since 2012. We would like to formally thank her for her unswerving efforts and support in keeping the pub open and for providing a warm welcome to all her customers over the last four years.*
- *NISL have engaged a specialist recruiter at the beginning of March to help find a new tenant (success-only based fees)*
- *Initial response to advertising has been positive*
- *Too early to be definitive on likely outcome of search - we have an open and on-going dialogue with our specialist recruiter.*
- *We would ask for discretion of all in this recruitment matter*

2. Fundraising and use of funds

- *NISL's company accounts and tax are up-to-date*
- *We are now building NISL's capital resource – which can in due course be used to support incoming tenant's financing needs (eg necessary renovations, options around the purchase of the fixtures and fittings etc)*
- *We have undertaken multiple fundraising activities in the last six months which have been very successful and have included the following:*
 - *Monies from Bottle on the Bar*
 - *Bob Ayres talks x 2*
 - *Horseracing Evening*
 - *Grants from SGVS*
 - *Rugby raffle*

Looking forward the following events are planned:

Mary Boughton, Chairman

Signed... M J Boughton.....Dated.....12/4/2017.....

- Auction of Pledges (6th May with Oliver Letwin MP as auctioneer)
- Cream Tea
- Big Breakfast
- Skittle Tournament
- Disco and BBQ
- Christmas Raffle
- NISL is very grateful for both the monies and efforts from so many who have made the above possible
- Funds are to be applied solely to fund future tenant and pub-related expenditures.

It was queried whether monies should be used to support incoming tenants financial needs was necessary. It was intended that these monies would be available to future incoming tenants as a loan if necessary, which would be repayable and could help new tenants accept a tenancy.

3. Governance

- NISL Board currently comprises of following directors, who all work without remunerations
 - Eric Benedict (Chair)
 - Sally Parker (Events)
 - Heather Puttock (Events)
 - Ashley Harrow (Treasurer)
 - Caroline Taylor (Secretary)
 - Alex Drew (Pub Maintenance and FONIs)
- We would also like to take this opportunity to formally thank the following Board members for their contribution to NISL. These individuals have all retired from the Board since beginning of 2015:
 - Eddy Buck
 - John Kent
 - Hilary Cunningham
 - Jane Mallett
- The NISL Board remains committed to ensuring the continued trading of the New Inn, as we enter the second decade of the existing lease arrangements with Palmers

4. Relationship with Palmers

- We still enjoy a strong and good relationship with Palmers who very much support the ongoing lease arrangements that run through to 2018
- We anticipate that an incoming new tenant may ask for clarity beyond this date and anticipate positive discussion with Palmers on this matter.

5. Maintenance and FONIs

- We have an on-going programme of planned maintenance activities which are undertaken in conjunction with the FONIs
- Recent investments have included a lighting upgrade and addressing leaks and guttering at rear of pub
- We are about to undertake a reconfiguration and upgrade of the Pub's central heating and hot water supply system.

6. Company Secretary matters

- All company secretarial matters are up to date.

7. Other Matters

There are no other matters from the NISL Board

Vicky Thomas – St Martin's Church PCC, Vice Chairman

1. In May, the Reverend Canon Stephen Batty was licensed at a special service at St Mary's Church, Litton Cheney. It was good to welcome our new Rector to the Bride Valley Benefice after the long period of interregnum and Stephen has quickly become fully involved in the life of our parish, having led many of our regular and special services.

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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2. *In addition to our regular services, the special services held over the past year have been well attended. We held our customary Remembrance, Harvest and Christmas Services, as well as a Choral Evensong to celebrate Candlemas, organised by Janet Lane. On Friday May 1st there was a full peal of bells and the following day a Remembrance Service, both to honour the memory of Private Will Sanders from our village and his comrades who had made the supreme sacrifice for King and Country a century ago. During the year our memorial triptych was rededicated and a pealboard was placed in the ringing chamber to mark these events. Following our recent Good Friday Litany, it was good to see many in the congregation for our Easter Sunday service of Holy Communion, led by Revd. Philip Ringer. A beautiful Easter Garden was put together by Kate Kent in the memorial window, and coffee, biscuits and Easter eggs completed a special celebration. Our Harvest Supper differed from last year in that it was a simple ploughman's supper served with cider. Apple cake and cider had also been served as refreshments the previous day at the service of Harvest Thanksgiving. It is good to see our congregations joining together in the church after services for refreshments and a chat.*
3. *Fundraising is a very important need for the upkeep of St Martin's in a small rural parish. During the combined village celebration in August, the church – helped by Nesta Symes – held a cake stall and the church tower was open. 44 brave people climbed the 50 steps to appreciate the wonderful views. Kate Drew organised an afternoon tea party in the Village Hall; the food was delicious and the occasion very much enjoyed by all who attended. A meat raffle, held at the New Inn, together with a generous donation from the Village Society, enabled the church to purchase a new lawnmower to keep the church grounds neat and tidy. In January we held a successful soup and bread lunch which raised enough money to replace our Diocesan and Union Flags. Other fundraising events included the Dorset Historic Church Trust Ride & Stride, from which the church benefits, and also Carol Singing around the village in aid of Save the Children, which was very well attended and enjoyed by singers and listeners alike.*
4. *St Martin's Church, set upon the hill overlooking the village, always looks a picture of beauty. I should like to thank all the people who help to keep the church looking so wonderful inside and out. The flowers, arranged so beautifully and with such care by a team of dedicated flower-arrangers led by Hazel Coulter; the cleaning of the church, organised by Linda Buck; and the churchyard, kept neat and tidy by the hard work of Colin Chambers. Thanks also to Ernie Thomas, our maintenance coordinator, for the time he spends ensuring that the church is kept in a good state of repair. There is much unseen work spent on preparing specifications and faculty applications to the Salisbury Diocese. Ernie is also our Flag Captain and we are grateful to him for flying the flag on so many special occasions. Thank you to all in the village who have supported the floodlighting of St Martin's, giving such a beautiful sight on dark evenings, and many thanks to Phyl Webster for coordinating this. Thanks also to all who, in all weathers, volunteer to lock and unlock the church. This is such an important task, without which the church would remain locked which would be a shame as we have many comments in the visitors book saying how wonderful it is to find a church open for prayer and contemplation.*
5. *May I on behalf of the PCC thank all others who help St Martin's Church in so many ways. Particular thanks must also go to the members of the PCC for all their hard work. Kate Kent, our churchwarden, and Christine Huxtable, our Treasurer, are standing down from their positions and I should like to record grateful thanks for all they have done over the past years. Cathryn Johnson and Hugh King have joined the PCC and we all look forward to a successful year ahead for St Martin's Church.*

Nigel Wheeler – New Webmaster *Nigel introduced himself. He is taking over as Webmaster. He saw the advertisement in the BVN, has always been IT focussed and felt it would help him and his family become involved with the Village. He lived on a boat in Greece until the birth of his son Alfie who is now three years old. He is enjoying living in Shipton Gorge and Alfie is due to start school soon. He is keen to get to know the village and parishioners and hopes being Webmaster will help enable this. The handover from Ernie Thomas is imminent, the bulk of work having been done last May and both Damon Allen and Alex Drew have been instrumental in migrating all website contents. The process of bringing the content up to date is nearly complete and hopefully the handover will be complete by the end of the month. He would*

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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welcome any input on the possibility of how the site could be improved, the **website being vital for information to be available in the public domain.**

Shipton Gorge Village Society – Eddy Buck, Chairman

It is pleasing to start off the Report with a success story. The Village Fete in 2015 took on a new format with all village organisations being encouraged to participate and 'do their own thing' with regards to raising funds and publicising their role in the village. It was heart warming to see that they all responded in a very positive way and we are delighted to offer the same arrangement this year.

We will also be marking the Queens 90th birthday in June and hope that the Village will embrace that event also. Details are now being worked out under a team headed by Chris Griffith-Hardman and constructive comments will be welcomed.

Once again we collected prizes in Dorset's Best Small Village competition and the credit is shared by the various village organisations and our hard working Co-ordinator Simon Cleveland. I know he is already enlisting support for this years competition.

During the year our Events Manager, Sally Parker, was busy organising events including The Flower Show, The Fish and Chip Quiz, The Shoppers Trip as well as co-ordinating the Village Fete. In addition she has spent many hours, ably supported by Eileen Heaver extending the now fairly comprehensive Village Archive.

In response to comments at last year's AGM we opened our doors to 'Observers' at meetings for a six month trial period. Although not many observers came to meetings the Committee decided to continue the practice.

Expenditure during the year included support for NISL's efforts to keep the Pub open, the purchase of a sound system which can be used in the hall, the maintenance of our two marquees and a contribution towards a new mower for the Church. We also provided funding for the Village Christmas Tree.

Most of the money we were able to spend came from the hiring of our marquees to events outside of the village and we are indebted to our dedicated team of erectors who worked a total of 250 hours travelling 140 car miles to complete 25 erections.

Although my tenure as Chairman has been short I have been proud to be part of what has been a very challenging and rewarding year made possible only by the dedicated and enthusiastic support of a committee it has been a pleasure to work with.

I think we can say that 2015 was a good year for the Society and we look forward to more success in the coming year.

Simon Cleveland – Entry for Dorset's Best Small Village

Simon Cleveland reported that the village had been competing since 2006. This was the 11th year and the village had won the competition six times; three times in the category of "previous winner" The judging this year would be from 1st May – 31 July with the prizegiving in September. The parts of the village to be judged were the Church, Shipton Gorge Heritage and the Playing Field.

Homewatch – Sally Parker Written report read by the Chair

- 1) *Just to say over the last few months Crime has been very low in Shipton Gorge which is good news*
- 2) *I would like to say a big thank to the residents that help me by keeping watch on the elderly residents here and keep in touch with me and our PCSO Dave Ash when we have unwanted doorstep callers.*
- 3) *And thank you to the 55 children we have in this Village who are well behaved and cause very little problems to the residents of the village well done to them*

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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- 4) *And a message to all residents when going away please do not put your wheelie bins out days before they are to be collected as this makes it very noticeable that you not at home ask a neighbour or friend to do this for you*
- 5) *And just to say you can come and meet our PCSO Dave Ash at the hall he is there every first Thursday of the month please feel free come and have a chat and coffee with him*
- 6) *And from me can I just say thank you all for your help this is a lovely village to live in*

Shipton Gorge Village Hall – Richard Hewlett -

Shipton Gorge Heritage – Hilary Cunningham

*Shipton Gorge Ltd was set up in 2006 to manage and protect assets within the parish of Shipton Gorge so that they remain under the common ownership of residents and are managed for the benefit of the residents and according to their wishes. It became a registered charity in 2007 and subsequently its name was changed to Shipton Gorge Heritage to reflect its purpose. We have two sites, **the Orchard** which was purchased in 2006 and the **Saunders Richardson Wood** leased from the Woodland Trust in 2013.*

In the Orchard our members have worked on the upper and lower borders during the previous twelve months. In the upper border a lot of dead material has been removed, but the border is still designed to be wildlife friendly. In the lower border, 35 more bare-root native hedging plants have been planted and this will enhance the hedge both aesthetically and for wildlife. Routine maintenance in the Orchard goes on; the grass is cut by Colin, the trees are pruned under Barbara's direction and the wild life friendly borders require their regular tidy up. The poo bin continues to be extremely well used and requires frequent emptying which is undertaken by Robert Langran. As there is a public footpath through the Orchard locals and visitors have good access to the Orchard and we receive lots of positive feedback about the Orchard, so much so that we plan to install a seat. Our notice board is maintained by John Hall, and is used to advertise events and happenings. Our information board (interpretation board) is waiting to be installed.

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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During the past year, the trustees of SGH have been working with various organisations to formulate a management plan for the Wood. In May 2015 members undertook two surveys of the Wood with the assistance of Dorset Wildlife Trust; the first was to identify the flora in the Wood and the second was a nesting bird survey. Participants found undertaking these surveys good fun, informative and rewarding and the surveys have assisted with the management plan. As work in the Wood progresses these surveys will be repeated. There has only been a limited amount of work undertaken in the Wood by our members this year as we waited for the management plan, which was only completed in February. We received a grant from Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for some professional woodwork to be done, mainly that requiring the use of chain saws, and now with our management plan our members can get to work on improving the habitat of the Wood. The management plan suggested that various nesting boxes could enhance the Wood and we will be raising money for this project during this year.

Some of the hazel whips planted last year to give more material for further hedge laying around the boundaries did not survive, and in March some more were planted. Hopefully these replacement whips will survive. Walks through the Wood will continue to enable members to see the Wood in the various seasons and recording of our observations will now be kept.

I would like to thank everyone who has donated money or time to SG Heritage. This year we will doing more fund raising and have some events planned :

Wood walk on Saturday at 2pm

Robert & Liz Langran have agreed to Open their Garden and have Cream teas on Sat 4 June.

Sunday 23 Oct we will be celebrating Apple Day. We have invited other village organisations to take part in this event.

More details will follow in the BVN and on our web site.

We have accepted the Village Society's kind invitation to have a stall at the Fete as we did last year.

Our Membership has increased and new members always welcomed – membership is free but donation of time and/or money are always most welcome. I produce 3 to 4 Newsletters a year and these are sent to members to keep them up to date with what SGH is doing and feed back is positive. Our new web site is being populated, but is still work in progress. Philippa Young is now our web master.

Finally I would like to thank people for supporting SG Heritage Ltd by donating money to this village charity and assisting with our two projects. I would encourage people who shop on line to use the easy fund raising site and remember us. Thank you very much.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their reports

11.46 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

David Smith asked whether the attenuation tanks were regularly emptied and who was responsible. The Clerk confirmed Magna were responsible and that a letter would be sent to them asking for confirmation that the tanks were regularly maintained.

The Meeting ended 9.00pm and everyone was invited to join the Councillors for nibbles and a glass of wine.

Mary Boughton, Chairman

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