

WINDLESHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on

Monday 19th April 2021 at 6.30pm

Meeting held via remote conferencing using Zoom

1. **Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper welcomed everyone who had joined the online meeting.

2. **To appoint a Clerk for the meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Malcaus Cooper and agreed to appoint Sarah Walker, Clerk to the Council, to clerk the meeting.

3. **Chairman's Report**

Cllr Malcaus Cooper, Chairman of the Parish Council gave a presentation, highlighting the work and achievements of Council over the last year, as detailed in the annual report that had been produced by the Clerk.

4. **Mayoral Update**

Cllr Pat Tedder gave an update about her mayoral year. Cllr Tedder commented it had been a year like no other and that the country was already in the grip of the pandemic and under lockdown when she was elected Mayor. She felt as though 2020 was the year of the "Ghost Mayor" but that despite the restrictions, she had still been able to attend some smaller face to face gatherings for Armistice Day, Armed Forces Day and VJ Day. She had also been able to lay wreaths of Remembrance at both Valley End and Chobham and turn on Christmas lights in Windlesham.

5. **Surrey Heath Borough Council update**

Cllr Victoria Wheeler took the opportunity to thank the volunteers of Windlesham Caring and volunteers in Windlesham and to thank WPC for providing funding to support the volunteer groups with their efforts during the pandemic. Cllr Wheeler commented that she felt that cross-party working had been very strong and that all village representatives had worked very well together.

Thanks were also extended to all volunteers across the villages who had stepped up during the course of the pandemic.

6. **Report from County Councillors**

County Councillor Mike Goodman gave a comprehensive county update.

Cllr Goodman stated he has served the residents of Windlesham, Bagshot and Chobham for the last 2,900 days and this would be his last report before standing down on May 6th.

Cllr Goodman paid tribute to Prince Philip and the service he provided to both the Queen and Country. He will be remembered as a very special man who lived for a while in Windlesham.

Cllr Goodman further paid tribute to the work of the NHS, the government, local councils, and the host of volunteers that have helped deal with the unprecedented pandemic. The true spirit of our parish had been demonstrated through networks of volunteers helping the community, from delivering medicines, shopping, helping and caring for those in need and the great efforts at Christmas to help and provide for families, children and the elderly.

Cllr Goodman commented that the role of a County Councillor is about serving residents to the best of their ability. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to achieve everything they would like, and they do not always get it right. There have been difficult decisions to make during the past eight years but every decision made was trying to achieve the right outcome for residents. Accepting not everyone will agree with every decision, they were all made with honesty and the right intention.

Cllr Goodman reported the following relating to highways:

In the last 8 years a number of improvements to roads have been made - bollards to improve safety along Chertsey road, chicanes at Kennel Lane that has reduced speeds along this road and gateway features at entrances to the village sign post motorists to acknowledge they are entering a village. The reduction of HGV tonnage in the centre of Windlesham has reduced the number of HGV's going through the village.

In Bagshot halo lighting was installed at the two pedestrian crossings and numerous pavements and carriageways have been resurfaced in Bagshot and Windlesham. The centre of Bagshot was completed last year, and this space can now be used by businesses and others. Many of the schemes were achieved by the Parish working closely with County.

At the last meeting of the Local Area Committee, it was agreed that average speed cameras would be considered along the A30 in an effort to control speeds. This is very much in line with the work SCC and the Police have been engaged in and will have a positive impact in slowing traffic along this important road.

In Windlesham a new 20 MPH zone is part of village rejuvenation plan together with further improvements to the feel of the centre. Much of Chertsey road has been resurfaced along with the anti-skid area in the centre. Having resurfaced in excess of 400 miles of roads since 2011, a further £200m is being invested over the next five years. The A322 junction on to the M3 is an important junction and agreement is needed as to what actions need to be taken.

Cycling in Bagshot has been improved with the cycle lane from the American roundabout to Waitrose, but more schemes are needed to link up the villages and make it easier to encourage cycling.

Cllr Goodman next reported on the environment stating it remains the most important issue facing us all. Surrey were the first Council to adopt a formal Climate Change strategy and action. This commits the Council to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. A tree strategy has been adopted that will plant 1.2m trees by 2030. Surrey County Council also are leading the way in recycling and were the third best two-tier authority regarding recycling in 19/20 and Surrey Heath are amongst the best second tier Council, demonstrating commitment to recycling. Surrey have invested in LED lighting which reduces energy costs by 40% and decreases emission.

Travellers were stopped from entering the Common when SCC obtained a court order. This has ensured that travellers have been kept away from the common. Illegal travellers remain a concern and through the excellent work of Cllr Rebecca Jennings Evans other potential areas of potential incursion have been identified in the villages and the Parish is considering what measures can be taken to improve security.

Surrey has been working to tackle health inequality by increasing focus on addressing mental health and accelerating health and social care integration to reduce demand on services, while improving health outcomes for residents. Mental health has become a key concern for many during lockdown and this work is essential. By partnership working with Surrey Heartlands NHS, we are now delivering seamless, effective care when people leave hospital.

SCC have a fire service to be proud of and when they were called upon to tackle the Chobham fire last August their professionalism was superb. The fire service now tackles fewer fires and there was a near 8% fewer incidents in 2020 compared to 2019. The fire service has invested £2.2m in more equipment including 7 new fire engines. The service has recruited 46 operational staff in 2020 and recruiting continues.

Schools have improved with 94% now either good or outstanding compared to 78.7% in 2013 which is great for our children. Surrey have also invested £100m in Surrey schools and £80M in special needs.

Housing development has been and will remain a challenge for the Parish. Several larger developments have been agreed and these developments will continue to put pressure on infrastructure. Housing is needed, particularly for the young, but development must be appropriate and in the right place with the right level mitigation.

Cllr Goodman finally reported that partnership working has helped us achieve so much from roads, environment and planning. It should never be underestimated how strong we are when we all work together. We won't always think the same but having direct contacts with both County and Borough enables this Parish to achieve so much more.

Cllr Goodman took the opportunity to thank all the officers who have helped achieve so much including officers at County and Surrey Heath but special thanks to Parish staff Sarah, Jo and Sarah who have helped deliver so much.

7. Presentation from Surrey Heath Borough Commander Alick James

The Borough Commander gave an insightful presentation regarding policing in Surrey Heath and specifically addressed the trends seen in the villages, particularly during the pandemic. There notably had been a 12% reduction in notifiable offences during the pandemic and a 52% reduction in burglaries across Surrey Heath during this time.

Following his presentation, the following questions were raised:

Cllr Malcaus Cooper asked why reporting was important and if there was a formula for deciding which incidents will or won't be attended and how gathered intelligence feeds in to local policing?

The Borough Commander replied that the team at Surrey Heath were very good at getting back to people but that it was not always possible to address every single report with Police attendance so he understood why people felt frustrated at a perceived lack of action. Where

multiple reports are made over a period of time it helps to build an overall plan for policing eg. Patrols, interventions etc and so it was really important that people reported each and every incident as without that intelligence resources cannot be directed in the best way. Susan Fell, local resident raised two questions. Firstly, how van theft is being tackled, as people are losing their livelihoods when vans with equipment are stolen.

The Borough Commander replied that people needed to be encouraged to mark their property and there were several ways to do this. The key for Police is to gather community intelligence and he would like to understand more about the issue, such as where are stolen items being sold on from as this all helps to build the bigger picture.

Secondly, Ms Fell asked a question regarding what can be done about a neighbour who smokes cannabis all day, to the extent that she cannot open windows or spend time in her garden.

The Borough Commander replied that it should be reported as it is affecting her quality of life. There is the possibility that anti-social behaviour warnings can be used if the smell of cannabis is detrimentally affecting neighbours and then escalation can be quite quick if warnings are breached.

Robert Hardless, Windlesham resident, asked a question regarding catalytic converter theft and what is the recommended course of action for anyone who witnesses this type of theft.

The Borough Commander replied that as a crime is in action, call 999. This particular issue is linked to serious organised crime and currently high on the priority list. Next will depend on how confident a witness feels to challenge the actions of the perpetrator. If it were safe to do so, videoing the event would help with evidence gathering, confrontation may stop the theft taking place but should only be considered if the witness is comfortable with it.

Cllr Peter Barnett commented that hate crime was one of the current police targets so could the Borough Commander explain what the nature and scale of this type of crime is within Surrey Heath?

The Borough Commander replied that a lot of work had taken place to tackle hate crime – in Surrey Heath the hotspot is Camberley town centre. Victims are often people who work in shops/bars/restaurants and they are targeted due to race, religion and sexual orientation. Premises have been visited and hate crime explained to the employees and how they should report it. 50% of people won't report a hate crime because they believe the Police won't act on it.

Cllr Jennings-Evans raised a query regarding an issue with light pollution, whereby Environmental Health had recommended that the Police be contacted due to the nature of the issue. However on contact, the Police had said they would not take an interest in the issue.

The Borough Commander replied that he didn't know why that response was given and he believed there may be a course of action they could take. He asked Cllr Jennings-Evans contact him directly to look into the matter.

Cllr Pat Tedder commented that lots of planning applications were being received for brick walls and gates and asked the Borough Commander if he thought they worked as a deterrent for householders against burglary.

The Borough Commander replied that it would add another layer of security to make a property less attractive to a burglar but there is no one sliver bullet and sadly if a burglar is determined enough to break into a property then they will, in spite of any deterrents in place.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper asked whether it was possible to report crimes on social media.

The Borough Commander replied that on the Police Facebook page, there was the ability to report using Facebook messenger and that a dedicated social media desk picked up reports made using this method.

Open Meeting with questions from the public

Tony Murphy, Windlesham resident asked the following question and also expressed his disappointment at the level of attendance of residents at the meeting:

"If a definition of being a Parish Councillor/elected representative is "to represent your electorate and to advocate for them through the upper tiers of government". This may appear to be limitless but are there limitations and therefore the question - what are the limitations of representation imposed on our elected representatives?"

A number of Parish Councillors gave their thoughts as follows:

Cllr Goodman – felt that the limitations of a Parish Councillor is the limitations of Parish Council responsibilities.

Cllr Jennings-Evans – felt that the question highlights the need for collaborative working across the tiers.

Cllr Halovsky-Yu – commented that Councillors were also part of the communities they represented and each brings to the role their own skills, experience and individuality.

Cllr Galliford – commented that it is about open communication, cross party working and multi-tier working to make things happen.

Cllr White – commented that it is important to know your own limitations and don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for help if needed and be open and honest.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper – commented that engagement with the community was key.

Cllr Victoria Wheeler asked under the new committee structure will meetings be held in public and in each specific village.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper responded that all village committee meetings will be held in public and there will be the opportunity for public questions. The Council has been looking at different locations to meet in the villages and this will need to be investigated further.

Jonathan Quin (Parish candidate in upcoming by-election) asked how North Windlesham would be represented under the new committee structure.

Cllr Malcaus Cooper commented that it would be a case of waiting to see who was elected, see what their motivations are and go from there.

The meeting closed at 20.55.