



## **THE ANNUAL SANDRIDGE PARISH MEETING**

Held via Zoom conferencing on  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021 at 7.00 pm

- PRESENT:** Councillors Janet Churchard, Geoff Churchard, John Foster, John Hale (Chair), Graham Leonard, John Newton-Davies, June Reid, Jenny Roberts, Neil Harris, Lyn Bolton, Jon Hegerty, James Lancaster, Patsy Cann
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Claudio Duran
- OFFICERS:** Simon Thwaites, Parish Clerk  
Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk  
Rebecca Pannese, Project and Amenities Officer
- IN ATTENDANCE:** 1 member of the public

### **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There was none

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019, having been previously circulated, were taken as a correct record and it was:

#### **Resolved**

That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Recently, I have read a number of reports about the last 12 months and one common theme is how challenging the year has been. This report will be no different, but before I discuss the challenges I would like to remember those we have lost.

Sandridge like the rest of the country has lost residents to COVID – neighbours, friends and relatives. I doubt that there is anyone who does not know someone who has lost a loved one. Whilst current regulations restrict our activities, I hope that sometime in the future we can consider an appropriate way to remember them. I would also like to acknowledge the work of countless employees of the NHS, care homes, local councils transport companies, shops and

other businesses, as well as volunteers in many different roles, who in one way or another have helped this community during the last year.

This is a report on the activities of the Parish Council. I am pleased to report that during the last year the council has remained active despite those challenges and I would like to thank the officers for the way they have adapted to the circumstances.

Last year we did not hold an Annual Parish Meeting due to the first lockdown. Since then, we have become adept at holding meetings virtually using Zoom. If this continues into the next year, we may even consider putting them on YouTube.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

This year I am going to start by reporting on the Neighbourhood Plan, which after over five years of hard work by many volunteers has now been consulted on (twice) and examined by an independent inspector. The next stage is a referendum, which will be held on 6 May when the local elections take place. More information on the plan can be found on the parish council's website.

If approved in the referendum our Neighbourhood Plan will be an important document in determining how the parish develops over the coming years. I encourage all residents to vote.

### **Community Centres**

The community centres have been closed for most of the year and whilst we hope they will reopen during 2021 it remains to be seen which groups are able and willing to return. During the year some maintenance work has been carried out and the centres have been regularly inspected to ensure they remain in good condition so when local groups return they will be ready to use.

### **Sports and Recreation**

Conversely, I doubt if our open spaces have ever seen as much use as over the last year. This has caused issues with litter and anti-social behaviour, especially in the warmer months.

Despite the restrictions imposed as a result of COVID, the parish council has replaced the inground trampoline at Sherwood Avenue and had a new surface laid under the basket swing. We also had outdoor gym equipment installed in Spencer Meadow. We hope residents get to enjoy this equipment this summer.

In addition, a skate ramp has been installed on the Jersey Farm Open Space and over the summer was enjoyed by many of our younger residents. Regrettably more recently it has been vandalised. However, as it was well designed the damage has been limited and is repairable.

The council is looking at the installation of a bike track and following the consultation is looking at an alternate location on the Open Space to that originally proposed.

It was necessary to put some equipment out of bounds to meet the various COVID restrictions, but all the equipment should now be available.

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability means different things to different people. In Sandridge Parish the focus to date has been on our green spaces and how they can be used. However, the parish council has also looked at how we operate and what we can do to reduce our impact on the environment.

One aspect that deserves mention is the community garden at the Marshalswick Community Centre. I would like to say a big thank-you to the volunteers who have helped develop the garden over the year. Not only has it shown what can be done, it has also proved to be a pleasant outdoor spot for residents to sit and chat over a coffee. A year ago, it was a small collection of raised beds and since then additional beds and fruit bushes have been added.

The parish council has also been busy planting trees, both mature specimens on the roadside verge and whips in some of our recreational areas. This work has been supported by a bequest from a former resident and also a donation of whips by Bim Afolami MP.

The bequest has also funded the installation of a bench on House Lane near the junction with Sandringham Crescent.

We have been less successful with the installation of a new planter on the Bolling Brook roundabout. A year ago, it had been anticipated that this would have been built and planted by the summer. As I write it has been built but following an intervention from the county council work was ceased. We are waiting for the county council to make the adjustments they consider necessary. This has been very frustrating for all involved. I would like to thank the officers and Councillor Leonard for their work on this project.

### **Jersey Farm Woodland Park**

As with our other open spaces the Woodland Park has seen increased use this year. It is always a challenge to balance use by residents with creating a natural habitat.

The initial planting of the park was completed a few years ago and the work is now more related to maintenance and enhancement.

The park has once again been awarded a Green Flag.

### **Grants**

The restrictions as a result of COVID meant some organisations supported by grants in the past did not apply this year, as they were inactive. However, the parish council has supported a number of organisations including:

Wheatfields School with a grant towards a sensory room.

Harvesters Football Club to help them survive a reduction in income due to COVID.

Sandridge Scouts to help with repairs to the Scout Hut.

As well as the local Women's Institute, Sustainable St Albans, Sandridge Cricket Club and St Leonard's church.

**John Hale, Chair**

**April 2021**

**OPEN FORUM**

A question was asked regarding the quality of planning objections submitted to the Planning Authority by the Parish Council and whether the Neighbourhood Plan was referred to when formulating an objection. A brief verbal response was made by Councillor Leonard before the Chair asked the resident to submit the questions in writing in order that a full response be made.

**AUDITED ACCOUNTS**

It was noted that copies of the audited accounts for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 financial years were available on the parish Council's website.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.15pm.

**Chair** .....

**Date** .....