

**Minutes from the Annual
Parish Assembly**

**The St Mary Bourne Annual Parish Assembly was held on
Wednesday 20 April 2022 at 7:30pm
in the Village Centre**

Reports were available from

- Hampshire Constabulary
- Friends of SMB School
- SMB Village Centre
- SMB Village Shop
- Hill & Valley
- SMB United Charities
- Sustainable Bourne Valley – this report is available via their website

Welcome & introduction led by the Chairman

1. **Apologies for absence** - Cllr Fullerton, Cllr Randell, Cllr Thacker, Dodie Marsden and Chris smith
2. **Borough Councilor's Report from Cllr Samuel Carr** – There is a requirement to build 880 homes over the next 15 years in Basingstoke and Deane however Cllr Carr is pushing back as St. Mary Bourne as it has less infrastructure than Basingstoke, Overton and Whitchurch.

Spring Hill – Cllr Carr is in weekly conversations with the Lead enforcement officer to push forward resolution for the residents.

At Basingstoke and Deane there has been a recruitment drive to increase Customer service and planning officers, there is a shortage of planners but are working on 6th May on questions to follow.

Ali Madge
11/04/23

3. Annual Report from Cllr David Peart, Chair of the Parish Council

Before getting to the work of the parish council I would like to make the usual thank you to all of those who in one way or another are involved in the many activities that take place within the parish. The many clubs that are run on a regular basis, friends of the school, supporters of the Church and Village Centre and of course the many volunteers that give their time to the shop.

As for the work of the parish council, I'd like to take you through some of the on-going projects and activities that we have been involved with during the last year or so.

Highways: As has been the case over the last year or so, HCC has reduced its funding for new signage, street furniture etc. and set up a system for Community Funded Initiatives. What this means is that they will help with the feasibility and construction of any improvements that we want to make, but the pc has to find the money to pay for them. A number of improvements have already been implemented over the last couple of years, but there are some still outstanding, such as the speed indicator devices. The clearing of grips and ditches continues to be carried out as part of our Lengthsman budget. Thankfully it looks like the Lengthsman scheme is being continued by HCC for this year at least and the parish council is also getting extra revenue from this as Ben our clerk continues to be the administrator for the 14 parishes included in our cluster. I also want to mention the problems that are still plaguing the residents of Spring Hill who are not able to have their waste bins emptied due to the B&D waste lorries not being able to access the development because of the camber of the access road. There appears to be no easy solution to this problem and what has been suggested in the interim i.e., to continue with the private waste collection that is currently happening, but for B&D to pick up the cost, is not acceptable to them. Cllr Carr has been very active in liaising with all concerned to try and get a workable solution and I thank him on behalf of the residents and near neighbours for his continuing efforts.

Grounds Maintenance: The parish council oversee the maintenance of the Recreation Ground, Lake and War Memorial etc. Scofell Commercial Landscapes who have looked after our ground's maintenance work for the last three years has had their contract extended for a further two years. Premier Grounds and Garden Maintenance will continue to carry out the Parish Lengthsman work. Our footpaths are generally in a good state of repair, but if you come across any problems with paths being blocked or damage to stiles and signs, please make Ben aware so that they can be dealt with.

Flood & Emergency Group: The recently completed riverbank restoration work alongside the lake should help the flow during times of high water. I would like to thank the residents along this stretch of the Bourne who gave their consent and co-operation for the work that took place on their side of the river. Thankfully this completes the remedial work identified by the Hampshire C.C. Pathfinder Project which was undertaken following the flooding down the valley during the winter of 2013/14. The combination of which has made a big difference towards preventing flooding from the river. The only issues we have experienced in recent years are ground water infiltration into the main sewer, which we have discussed with Southern Water on several occasions to try and find a solution. Thankfully the rainfall was such that this problem did not occur during last winter!

Lake and Recreation Ground: The Lake committee continues with its aims of actively managing the lake environs for the parish in particular to promote habitat enrichment and the Hants & IOW Wildlife Trust and the Wessex Chalk Stream & Rivers Trust continue to support the committee in developing a management plan to meet these objectives. Last year the Recreation Committee co-opted two parents of children who regularly use the play area to look at updating the equipment and also the feasibility of relocating the play area to a safer location. The two co-optees, Laura Davis and Amelda de Segundo, have carried out a lot of preparatory work and they have been advising on their progress in the Hill & Valley and elsewhere. I'd like to thank them for the efforts so far and hopefully they will be able to make better progress this year as things such as grant availability gets back to some sort of normality.

Village Shop: As I'm sure we are all aware by now, there are plans to increase the size of



the shop in order to incorporate a cafe area. The Parish Council own the land that the shop is on, but not the building and we are currently in discussions with the shop committee regarding updating the lease to incorporate the changes that are planned. I think everyone wishes the project well and hope that it will be a great success and an asset to the community. The only thing currently standing in the way of this is the need to raise the funds to pay for it which is estimated to be £250,000. It is hoped to achieve this mainly by a Share Offer Scheme and there are brochures available explaining how it will work. There is also a lot of information on the shop website.

Finance and the Precept: Ben will present the accounts in summary later. However, I feel there may be some questions regarding the increase in the precept for this year so I will try and deal with that now. This has been done reluctantly in order to slow the reduction in our reserves, so we do not fall below the reserve threshold generally accepted to be required to ensure continuity of service. The parish council's aim is to cover our core running costs with controllable income. Since 2012 those core running costs have increased 25%, compared to an increase in general inflation of 20% and so the increase this year goes some way towards catching up. We have undertaken some significant projects in the last year or two, particularly the flood prevention work as described earlier and whilst these projects are principally funded by grants, there is always an element of contribution required by the council. This has driven the aim to fund core costs to ensure that reserves are available to meet these contributions. The parish council has also renewed its grounds maintenance contract for the next two years from 1 April and as you will appreciate, grounds maintenance represents a significant proportion of the core running costs. I hope that has gone some way to explaining the need for the increase in the precept which at 14.4% appears to be a big jump, but in real terms it relates to approximately £6 for the year out of a total rate increase, in my case, of £60.

Platinum Jubilee in June: There is lots planned for the bank holiday weekend and Karen Crofts has put together an updated report for publication in the May issue of the Hill & Valley

And finally, A few thank Yous. Firstly, to our Borough and County Councilors for their work on your behalf and the support they continue to give to the parish council. Can I also remind you that there are Borough Council elections taking place on Thursday 5th May as well as for the Parish Council. Unlike in 2018, thankfully this time in the parish we have enough candidates standing to force an election. I believe it is important that the parish council has a mandate from the parish and that it is the parish who decide who they want to represent them on the council. Thank you to all of the candidates who have put themselves forward for election.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Alan Marden and Tony Grunsell who sadly passed away since our last Annual Parish meeting. They were both long standing members of the pc with Alan also being chairman for a number of years. They were good friends to this village and are greatly missed by all.

In closing I would like to thank all of your parish councilors and also Ben as Clerk for the support they've given to me over the past year and for giving their time, effort and dedication in trying to keep our parish the special place that it is.

4. **A Presentation of the 2020-21 Accounts** was given by Ben Sawyer, Clerk to the Parish Council this will be also made available online.
5. **Questions from parishioners** - Katie Dixon reported on the Sustainable Bourne Valley Group AGM which was held the previous evening. There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 19.55.

DM 11.04.23