

Sparsholt Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting 22 April 2023
Village Hall 10am

Present: County Cllr J Warwick, City Cllr C Horrill, Susan Simmons (HIWWT), Malcolm Hewson, Sue Woodd, Alastair Barron, Liz Hanratty

Sparsholt Parish Council: Cllr S Wood, Cllr J Cooper, Cllr J Little, Cllr D Brown, Cllr L Gibson. Cllr M Himbury
In attendance: Nicky Breen, Clerk and 6 members of the public

Apologies:
Cllr A Osmond, Cllr J Walthoe, Andrew Page (Memorial Hall)

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and noted apologies as above.

2. Report from County Councillor Jan Warwick

Cllr Warwick delivered her report, a copy of which is attached. In addition she outlined why potholes have been such a problem, with over 40000 having been repaired already this year.

3. HIWWT Susan Simmonds. Biodiversity and local 'Wilder' group.

Cllr Cooper pointed out that April 22 is 'Earth Day' and that it seemed fitting to have the Biodiversity talks today. He said how lucky Sparsholt is with its open spaces and that it is important that these areas are protected for future generations to enjoy. He mentioned that Sparsholt Parish Council has its own climate change programme. He introduced Susan Simmons from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Susan gave a very interesting slide presentation on how to encourage biodiversity in both small and large areas – ranging from planting window boxes to leaving areas unmown in the garden. Surveys show that gardens with the most biodiversity are those with both mown and unmown regions.

**4. Ham Green Malcolm Hewson – Overview
Sue Woodd – Biodiversity**

Cllr Cooper introduced the speakers.

Malcolm Hewson gave an overview of the Ham Green group which was started 30-40 years ago. Ham Green is common land and there are 15 volunteers who help with the upkeep. Their work includes keeping the footpaths and byways clear. Following the felling due to ash die back Hampshire County Council are due to carry out a tree survey in May.

Sue Woodd gave a comprehensive talk on the biodiversity at Ham Green (report attached). She noted that Ham Green is a Site of Interest to Nature Conservation and Crab Wood is a biological Site of Special Scientific Interest. Sue has been recording the wildflowers in the area for many years. There have also been surveys of the small mammals and butterflies.

5. Reports from Village Organisations

St Stephens Alastair Barron

Alastair said that Rvd Jax is still recovering from a serious fall.

Resources are limited and there are now two services a month. Services are also held in the other four churches in the benefice.

There have been several good fundraising events – the church fete at Jubilee celebration, the harvest supper and auction of promises.

He highlighted the good relationship between the church and the school.

Finance is an ongoing issue. Friends of St Stephens supports repairs to the fabric of the church. A network of volunteers are involved with the church. Alastair Barron is the safeguarding officer.

Shop Alastair Barron

The shop is an important focal point – being in the middle of the village. It provides social cohesion and is a hub for contact/chat/ticket sales as well as being a shop and post office. There is a small team of paid staff and a larger number of volunteers, more volunteers are always welcome.

The shop has had a tough year of trading, with revenue being noticeably down this year. There are fundraising events, for example the race night.

Alastair encouraged people to use the shop.

School Liz Hanratty

Liz has been the Head since 2019. There are currently 126 pupils over 5 classes. Numbers are lower than usual as there has been low birth rates over the past two years. This has been the first ‘normal’ year of operation post COVID and the school is working hard to forge links with the community - Sparsholt College is redesigning the school pond.

A new initiative is ‘Tell Me Tuesday’ where people come into the school to talk to the children on a range of subjects.

There are a lot of clubs/activities for the children including a worship group, eco team, prefects and lunchtime leaders.

There is a staggered start in the morning to help with the traffic flow and a coach that brings children in from Crawley and Littleton. The after school clubs mean that pupils do not all finish at the same time. There is an active Friends of Sparsholt School group.

Sparsholt Memorial Hall

Andrew Page, Chair of the Village Hall Trustees, was unable to attend. He forwarded his report after the meeting.

6. Report from Sparsholt Parish Councillor Sue Wood

Cllr Sue Wood (Chair) thanked the speakers for their interesting presentations and delivered her report, a copy of which is attached.

7. Report from City Councillor Caroline Horrill

Cllr Horrill delivered her report, a copy of which is attached.

The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 12.15pm

Signed..... Date.....