



## **SAMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.15 pm.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chris Clews	Chairman
Cllr Phil Jones	Vice-Chairman
Cllr David Shaw	
Cllr Phil Bond	
Cllr Justin Kerridge	Stratford District Council (Sambourne North)
Cllr Hazel Wright	Stratford District Council (Studley with Sambourne)
Teresa Murphy	Clerk

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Pete Joynes, Cllr Clive Rickhards (WCC)

There were 11 parishioners present.

#### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3. Parish Council Chairman's Report**

The Parish Council is like a ready-made action group: we essentially get problems and concerns resolved - whether ones which we notice or others which are brought to our attention. We have a wide network of contacts and generally know who may be able to help if matters are beyond our remit. Often a proverbial "quiet word" suffices.

In other matters we rely heavily on our District and County Councillors with whom we have a strong rapport. It is reassuring that they attend most of our meetings. They care about Sambourne and what we stand for and help on many occasions. I am very grateful for this.

#### **Resignations**

There have been a couple of resignations this year.

Roy Davies resigned from the PC. I'd like to thank Roy for his management of the War Memorial restoration and his work with Sustainable Communities Group Studley PC. His detailed knowledge of planning regulations was invaluable. He has kindly continued to look after displaying of the flag on the Green. His place has been taken by Phil Bond.

The second resignation was Nick Moon – one of our two District Councillors. In his short term in office Nick showed a strong involvement with the Sambourne community and worked well with the

PC. At the ensuing election Hazel Wright was elected and is already seen as a caring and determined campaigner for the area.

### ***District and County Councillors support the PC***

I would like to thank both our District Councillors Justin and Hazel, together with Clive our County Councillor. Their efforts are invaluable and much appreciated.

***Funding and donations*** – The PC made donations to: Studley waste facility, Studley 1st Responders, The Link, The Voice, CPRE and Coughton cemetery maintenance.

***Tree maintenance*** in the safe hands of Phil Jones. Trees are a wonderful amenity to be enjoyed by all and the program, managed by Phil, ensures they are cared for.

***Public footpaths*** are also in Phil's remit. This year there has been an unusual number of problems: specifically concerning the path that passes close to Sambourne Hall Farm. This appears to have been resolved after a deal of acrimony and help from Clive, Nick Moon and the involvement of Richard Barnard (WCC footpath officer).

A number of the roadside footpaths in Sambourne have been re-surfaced by WCC.

For the first time ever Sambourne had an ***illuminated Xmas tree*** on the Green last year. This project involved the usual volunteers in Sambourne and was led by Brian Summers. Motivated by an immovable deadline, the team pulled off an amazing feat involving the installation and connection of a power cabinet. Well done everyone. Bigger plans for this year, apparently!

***The Broadband Action Group*** continued the campaign to ensure superfast broadband across Sambourne. This has involved several meetings and actions on a number of fronts.

- We gathered information on phone/internet outages to show the decrepit condition of the infrastructure.
- Contacted CSW (the quango with government funds), Nadhim Zahawi and BT. There is a meeting with BT on 10th May. They have been provided with a list of points we want to raise and questions we wish to ask.
- May 2016 application to install a DSLAM cabinet in Middletown. When commissioned, this will greatly reduce the length of the copper which is a major cause of signal attenuation and reduced the broadband speed. It is a big step forward.

After a couple of enquiries from the PC and a couple of break-ins in the village, ***Neighbourhood Watch*** has been reinvigorated. There was a well-attended meeting at the Green Dragon. Details in the PC meeting at 8:00 (item 11).

### ***Planning Applications***

It's worth noting that the Parish Plan – approved in 2014 – has been a significant factor in sustaining the PC's objection to several planning applications.

Included in the list was an application by Sambourne Trust to build a pair of semis on a spare pocket of land where the existing cottages stand. This proposal was to say the least badly received and controversial. The application was submitted but subsequently withdrawn. However, we are still left with the aftermath of a housing needs (wants) survey sponsored by the Trust.

On the topic of ***the Sambourne Trust***, the 4-year tenure of David Shaw expired this year. Normally when such a position is advertised the incumbent is unopposed. This did not happen this year and Willis Ward was the choice of the PC. In accordance with procedure this decision has been

communicated to the Trust by the clerk. I would like to thank David for his handling of the difficult job of Chairmanship of the Trust and hope he will continue to be heavily involved with the community.

**Speeding traffic** - mystery of twin-pipe deployment.

The last year has seen several floods thankfully with no serious damage to property. The one in Oak Tree lane – photographed by Adam Quinney - was spectacular and resulted in the lane being closed.

We suffered traffic chaos caused by road works in Studley. Those concerned claim no responsibility and more to come.

### **Thanks**

Roy Davies - flags

Detailed survey of problem culverts in Sambourne Lane - thanks, Graham Birley for a very useful detailed survey. More to be carried out.

There are many unsung heroes who contribute to the village – whether acting alone or contacting the PC to report any problems. They do a great job – reporting fly-tipping and other activities that could spoil our village.

Special thanks to Sue Jones whose efforts, particularly the borders on the Green, make the village look so attractive year round.

Thanks to fellow Parish Councillors and for District and County representatives for attending as frequently as possible.

Last but not least is the one who keeps us in line and aware - not just at meetings but in the time between. Our Proper Officer or Clerk. Terry, you continue to do sterling work ranging from “persuasive” emails to land owners, through the thickets of the accounts to the contents of the notice boards. Well done and a big thank you from me – you make my bit much easier!

### **4. Annual Accounts of Sambourne Parish Council for 2015/16**

The Clerk reported that the accounts for 2015/16 had been finalised and agreed by the internal auditor. The accounts and reporting statements were formally approved by the Parish Council and signed by the Chirman. The Clerk will forward the documentation to the external auditors, Grant Thornton.

### **5. Report from the Sambourne Trust – Cllr David Shaw**

The 2015/16 year has been one where a close eye needed to be kept on new legislation. The right to buy caused some concern but this right was subsequently withdrawn from almshouse properties. There were also new rules regarding rents but, again this was withdrawn. It is interesting to note that the Trust’s rents are still at the 2005 level. New rules concerning the letting of properties to immigrants must also be borne in mind though it seems unlikely that will affect the Trust.

The Trust has continued to maintain and refurbish its ten properties, two of which have had a complete replacement of the central heating systems. The remaining two are scheduled for change in our next financial year. Among many unexpected items was a wasp’s nest in the roof space of one of the properties. The communal garden has been kept tidy with the paths maintained and lit during the hours of darkness

Provision of a weekly shopping bus has continued into its 28<sup>th</sup> year to enable parishioners to access the Post Office, banks and shops in nearby Redditch. This has been well used. Lifelines have been made available to local vulnerable people together with help towards the purchase of mobility aids not NHS funded.

Where hardship has been a problem, financial help has been arranged and the annual distribution of shopping vouchers has continued to residents of 70 years and over. Grants to university students for the purchase of necessary books were given. Donations have again been made to local charities including the Myton and Shakespeare Hospices, the Friends of the Alexandra Hospital and the Air Ambulance, all of which serve the needs of the parish.

Following last year's acceptance of a section 106 agreement towards the construction of additional affording housing, plans have been prepared and submitted to SDC to build a pair of semi-detached two bedroom cottages within the area of the existing properties. Care has been taken with the design to enable them to blend sensitively and with minimal intrusion into what is a delightful and relatively unspoiled village.

Thanks to Anne, our warden, and my fellow trustees for all their help and hard work throughout the year.

**Footnote:** At the beginning of the new financial year we learned that our planning application was to be rejected and so the application was withdrawn.

## **6. Report from Cllr Kerridge – Sambourne North**

Last year saw very little activity in Sambourne North. A development at Allelly's being the most significant, perhaps only, planning application.

The SDC Core Strategy should be adopted next year, although Sambourne will notice little change. It remains an 'all other settlement' in the green belt where, in policy, only housing supported by the local community will be considered appropriate.

I hope to see the Parish Council working with the Sambourne Trust to identify suitable locations for any housing that may be needed in Sambourne parish. I think there is a need for affordable houses to buy for elderly residents downsizing and children of the village with families to move in to. The community land trust model, where houses are sold at a reduced cost in perpetuity to people with a local connection, seems a good one to base this on. I also think there may be separate needs for the village of Sambourne and Middletown and the housing adjoining Studley and around the A448.

It would be good to see the residents near Studley and around the A448 (Sambourne North) develop a stronger sense of community, perhaps through a Residents Association.

## **7. Report from Cllr Wright – Studley with Sambourne**

I was elected on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016, therefore my input is limited and the report only covers the 10 weeks in which I have been involved.

**Structure of the Administration of the Council:** Instead of a Chief Executive the Council will be run by two Executive Officers. It is anticipated that it will generate a cost saving of £111,389.

SDC have agreed to work more closely with LEP. I would hope that one of the benefits would be consideration of the capacity of the local roads and what mitigation processes could be put in place to reduce the traffic burden.

SDC have submitted to the LEP Growth Deal/Growing Places Fund one bid for £250,000 plus £50,000 to spend on improving the Co-op site.

***I raised three questions:***

***Cllr Wright*** - Referring to the aim of the Corporate Strategy to support local businesses, drew Council's attention to decisions taken by

- (a) Lloyds Bank to close its Studley branch and
- (b) Royal Mail to alter the latest post collection from 6.30 pm to 5.00 pm.

She asked the Leader of the Council what action, if any, could be taken to support local residents.

In response, the Leader of the Council indicated that, as community leaders, he would write to Lloyds Bnk and Royal Mail expressing resident's concerns over their actions.

***Cllr Wright*** referred to the decision taken by the County Council to withdraw funding to residents of sheltered homes in the district and the hardship that would be caused to tenants as a result of unexpected charges not covered by benefit payments.

The Leader of the Council assured Cllr Wright that he was aware of the situation and will take this matter up with the County Council.

**8. Report from Cllr Rickhards – WCC**

The County Council continues to try to operate with severe cuts to grants from central government.

The most significant decision over the past year was the vote to seek admission to the West Midlands Combined Authority. There had been some changes of mind on this because many became clearer on the prospects for transport and infrastructure money.

In this parish I have tried to respond to ongoing representations on drainage questions. Also some road repairs were achieved and eventually the overlong saga of damaged signposts has been resolved.

I have tried to continue the pressure to improve the broadband delivery for Sambourne and this is continuing at the present time. Hopefully we are on the brink of some real progress on this.

In the year to come there may well be some suggestions on dealing with the volume of traffic on the A435. I note Sambourne's opposition to any measures increasing traffic on the Bromsgrove Road, Node Hill stretch.

I have also tried to oppose threats to the green belt and, given changes in the planning frameworks, we all need to be vigilant on this.

**9. Other matters raised by an elector of the Parish:** No matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm