

Stourpaine Parish Council- Chair's Annual Report, May 2021.

My first wish in writing this report is to thank all those that have assisted others in the village during the long period we have shared the dreadful pandemic. As has been said on numerous occasions by many people of differing race and level in society, one death is one to many. We, the residents of Stourpaine and Dorset have missed the worst of Covid over the past sixteen months. We are all aware it is not over yet, we shall probably be living with some form of the virus for years to come.

Since last writing a report, things that have been happening in the village.

Planning Issues:

The major area here is the proposed consultation document from Dorset Council. The consultation period is now over. Your Council replied to the consultation document, the majority of which was prepared by Derek Gardiner, a resident of Stourpaine. SPC would like to thank Derek for a well thought out paper. SPC having agreed the document, it was forwarded to the required officer at Dorset Council. (It is available on the SPC website).

Stourpaine is classified as a large village. This will require us to provide land to build a number of houses over the period covered by the proposed plan. Central Government have an input into the numbers, not just based on Dorset's requirement. You will have seen over the past twelve months or more applications to build over the whole of Dorset. In villages, on Green Belt / AONB areas and outside the curtilage/boundary of the villages. The CPRE have published their reply to the DC Proposal.

2/2020/6321/OUT.

This application was discussed last year, it was for 30 dwellings on a site off Hod View, in an area of the AONB for the Cranborne Area. As it was felt to be an important site your council agreed to obtain professional advice. This was forwarded to DC along with the the opinions of many residents. The proposers of the suggested development withdrew their application after further consideration by DC. This does not mean it has gone away, it might well return at some stage in the future.

Earlier this year we had a request to meet with another potential developer, once again with land up Bottom Road. Yet again it was on land outside the village and in an AONB, SPC declined to discuss.

Norton View:

You will be aware that this site was originally proposed for 9 dwellings, SPC agreed with is proposal, feeling the number was reasonable. Others from outside the parish voiced their concern. DC agreed to 5 dwellings with some caveats. At present the house will remain, we await to see if the new owner of the site will apply for a planning change.

Russell Place:

After many years of pushing, cajoling and annoying Stonewater/ NDDC and Dorset Council the third attempt to landscape the site has been undertaken. It looks better, the jury is out, we shall review at the end of summer.

There are no further applications in Stourpaine at present. You might however be interested in the re-cycling plant application on the Blandford by-pass (SPC gave opinion) , plus the application also off the by-pass for 600 houses, 200 of which will fall into the Pimperne Parish. Pimperne had spent years in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, it was agreed both by the village and the inspector. Their figure for houses was well below 100. We await to see what will transpire. Once again SPC replied to the consultation.

Footpaths/ Trailway:

SPC made a contribution to the new gate situated at the bottom of Hod Hill on the path by the river. This makes it easier for dog walkers, the stile having been removed.

The usage of the Trailway during lock-down has been extremely high at times creating problems for villagers. My thanks for their patience; the mix of horses, bicycles and dog walkers is not the best.

The trailway in parts is showing its use by agricultural and Wessex Water vehicles. It would appear we have had more vehicles in the past twelve months than previous years. Your council have been pressing DC to improve the area from Drapers Field to the Stour Bridge. DC plea they have little money for such work.

Footpath Bushes Road:

This footpath was installed some years ago to replace the one through the allotments. It joins Bushes Road to the Trailway. A request has been made by a villager to alter its use to include horses and bicycles, thus becoming a Bridle Path. A site meeting between SPC and DC Rangers was held. The opinion of DC and the majority of Council members present was that alteration onto Bushes Road for horses would increase the danger for animals and humans. You might remember SPC had suggested to DC that we would enhance the area surrounding the path and install a picnic table. Due to the virus that has not happened.

At a NDTN Meeting some trustees felt they should consider the proposal as and when Government restrictions allow. As a trustee I will keep you informed as to the outcome.

Sadly several acts of vandalism have taken place on the Trailway over the last year. Covid signs ripped down, finger posts broken and even tacks spread on one section. Please consider all users and their animals.

Tommy Monument:

SPC would like to thank, yet again the Gardening Club for their work, keeping the above neat and tidy.

SID/ Speed Indicator Device:

As you will have seen, the indicator on the A350 purchased by SPC alternates between both ends of the village. It appears to be working well, DC report that the average speed has dropped. Yet again our thanks to Joanna & Derek Gardiner, known as Mr&Mrs Shift-it.

Snow Team:

Apart from watching the salt melt, little to report this year. Well done David.

Play Areas:

Under the watchful eyes of Peter Partridge, the Typhoon had major repairs during 2020. SPC reviewed repair / replacement, it is felt that we should get another 8 years out of it. It is getting older, like many of us.

Your council have discussed over the past two years having a gazebo built. Discussions have taken place with various groups and the Village Hall Trustees. SPC agreed to the purchase and erection of an oak -framed building 4x4m on a concrete floor with a wooden shingle roof. Work will commence at the end of April and the gazebo will be erected during May. It will eventually have fixed bench seating and a balustrade on three sides. Following regulations. I obtained three quotes, councillors agreed on a local company less than two miles from Stourpaine.

I am also pleased to say that we have invested in new picnic tables and benches at Drapers Field and Grace Upward.

Defibrillators:

During the last twelve months we have had a battery problem at the White Horse defibrillator.

Thanks to Peter Partridge we arranged a spare, all is now okay with no loss of availability.

Having discussed with the Village Hall/ Playing field and others it was agreed that SPC would provide a second defibrillator attached to the outside of the Village Hall.

I tried to get a grant for the equipment, sadly so did thousands of others. We did however manage to get a £500 reduction. The Village Hall will undertake all maintenance responsibility.

Flood Prevention:

I am pleased to say nothing to report. I think the most arduous task was a stock take.

A350/C13:

Hopefully you are aware that I sit on the committee of three that speak for all parishes on the A350, bar one, attempting to get North – South road improvement.

I mentioned the assistance of Simon Elliot last year, this continued and we/he have had several meetings with Cllr Ray Bryan. Exchange of letters has taken place with DC members & officers.

Several weeks ago. the A350 Group had a Zoom meeting to update members. Under the Chatham House Rules we had become privy to information. Three hours before our meeting, without prior knowledge it was happening DC released a press statement stating that a Cabinet Meeting in April would be asked to sanction the expenditure of £6.3 million on Dinah's Hollow on the C13. DC Councillors have been kind enough to forward further information. We will shortly be asking for further discussion and detail. This will mean the road will now close next year for 7 months.

VE Day:

Well it came and went without a balloon or drink of squash. Cancelled by Government edict, this year will go the same way. Last year the Big Lottery allowed me to carry a grant forward to 2021. Sadly we shall not be allowed to carry it forward to next year. I have been in discussion with the Big Lottery Fund and they now will allow the money to be channelled into a wider area of expense. SPC have therefore agreed a plaque for the Gazebo to commemorate VE Day, plus the opening of the said Gazebo. A percentage of the grant will go towards the fabric of the gazebo. The rest with agreement will go towards a BBQ to celebrate a form of normality returning. This is being pencilled in for the end of August, Sunday 29th. It will be held on Drapers Field, volunteers will be required to assist in decorations, erection of gazebos (canvas type) BBQ, other cooking and collection of rubbish. The Village Hall will sell wine, beer and soft drinks. The BBQ will be free for all villagers and family.

Finally, yes I have almost finished, my thanks to my fellow council member and not forgetting our new Clerk Jan, she has hit the ground running.

Scott Norman.
Chair SPC.