

SHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

For the residents of Shalford Year
2022/23



Parish Council Meetings – All are welcome.

Parish Council meetings, which are open to all, are held on the third Wednesday of the month, in the Village Hall, commencing at 7:30 PM.

Agendas are published on the notice board and website at least three clear days in advance of the meeting.

Each meeting starts with the public forum which lasts for 15 minutes and is where parishioners are encouraged to come along and share their views and concerns.

Please contact the Clerk for any further information relating to your parish council.

Contact details for the Parish Clerk

Mrs Jill Boot, clerk@shalford-essex-pc.gov.uk

01371 829305

Website <https://shalford-essex-pc.go.uk>

Meeting Attendance by Councillor

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Amanda French	Y	A	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Adrian Gurnett	Y	Y	Y	Y			A	Y		Y	Y	Y
Samantha Batt	Y	Y	A	Y			Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Andrew Merryweather	Y	Y	Y	Y			A	A		Y	Y	A
Andrew Hull	Y	A	Y	Y			Y	Y		A	Y	Y
Neil Burks	A	Y	Y	A			Y	A		A	Y	A
Peter Tattersley (District)	A	N	Y	A			Y	A		Y	Y	Y
Graham Butland (County)	N	A	Y	A			A	A		Y	Y	Y

No meetings were held in August, September, or December.

Meeting dates for 2023/2024

17th May

21st June

19th July

16th August

13th September

18th October

15th November

17th January

21st February

20th March

Chairs report 2023

Much has happened in the past year with the war in Ukraine affecting everyone. The Parish council are aware of the economic impact this has had, and we are in the fortunate position of not having to increase the precept and hope this will benefit all.

We have said goodbye to our clerk Michelle and welcome Jill our new clerk. Jill is undertaking on behalf of the Parish Council training courses to become fully qualified. We hold monthly meetings, to which all are invited.

We continue to take pride in our village and have provided dog poo bags along with dispensers for them, have our bus shelters cleaned and maintained and employ a ranger who is out and about doing jobs on our behalf. A new bench has been installed by Braintree Road.

We welcome new residents by providing a welcome pack containing information about the village together with a footpath map. We have provided funding towards the cost of the village magazine and the Jubilee Fete which was a great success. For the children we provided water bottles with the Queens jubilee logo. Thanks must go to those who organise both.

We continue to liaise with Essex County Council over Stoneley Park and have a lovely new wooden sign up. We hope to continue to work with them to improve this wonderful outdoor space that we are lucky to have.

We have supported the Village Hall through s 106 funding to provide play equipment to be installed this year. The parish Council forms part of the WASC group, and we regularly attend their meetings and have also helped fund the groups work.

We arranged last December our first Christmas light switch on, which was well attended and hope to continue with this each year. Please save the date of 2nd December 2023 for the second one.

We keep in contact with our District Councillors who provide much help and information, as well as attending meetings.

The Parish council have their own website and face book page, both containing much information for residents.

Shalford Parish Councillors



Chair Councillor Amanda French

– Planning, WASC, footpaths

(2015)



Vice Chair Councillor Adrian Gurnett

– HR, highways

(2017)

Other Councillors



**Councillor
Samantha
Batt**

(2019)



**Councillor
Andrew
Merryweather
(2021)**



**Councillor
Neil Birks
(2021)**



**Councillor
Andrew
Hull
(2021)**

District Councillors



**Councillor
Vanessa
Santomuro**



**Councillor
Peter
Tattersley**



**County
Councillor
Graham
Butland**

Annual Report to Parishes in the 3 Fields Ward by District Councillor Peter Tattersley

This will be my last report after 12 years as your Braintree District Councillor.

The role, as well as enjoyable, can be quite challenging, there are a number of residents who have genuine concerns and various opinions and viewpoints over developments and activities in the area and who look to their elected Members to represent their views. However, there are also those with self-interests rather than the wider community benefit who can be disappointed with my approach to proposals they dislike and feel that I could have done more to represent their views, and I recognise that.

I also have corporate responsibilities to the whole of the Braintree District, and act as the Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

My approach to significant proposals affecting the wider local and Braintree District communities has always been to avoid giving my personal opinion until after any formal proposals have been received and understood by the Council. Once the actual proposals, rather than conjecture and rumour are received, they will be reviewed by Officers who will carry out the necessary consultation and investigative processes, including those from myself, local individuals, lobby groups, statutory organisations and communities, before they make recommendations to the democratically elected Planning Committee and Council for a decision.

I continue to believe that is the correct and sensible approach.

However, we know that sometimes the views of the local community and Councils can be overturned by individual, unelected and remote Government appointed Planning Inspectors. Some of their decisions remain illogical and contradictory, but I cannot see much changing without a much-needed wholesale review of the planning system.

Whatever comments I receive from constituents, I have always aimed to respond to all telephone calls and emails promptly and accurately and point them to the appropriate Organisation if it is not the direct responsibility of the District Council and help whenever I can. I have done my best to keep Parish Councils advised through their Clerk of events, activities and opportunities, and where necessary help guide them through the various District Council procedures and direct them to key Officers or other organisations, they might otherwise not be aware about. I have financially supported various organisations and charities in my parishes through my Councillor Community Grant allowance.

It is tempting to look back over the past few years and consign to memory some of the difficulties we all faced during the COVID19 pandemic and its aftermath. Queuing outside supermarkets, closed schools, workplaces, pubs and restaurants, travel restrictions, inability to meet family and friends, lost loved ones, health uncertainties, vaccine availability, face masks, cancelled holidays, closed football grounds, swimming pools and other leisure activities, and many others.

I remain proud of my District and Parish Councillor colleagues, council officers and communities across the district who pulled together to recognise the problems and health issues faced by all residents and helped organise vaccines, made Covid testing kits available across the district, arranged food and prescription deliveries, provided emotional support and looking after the most vulnerable. Officers at the Council distributed many millions of pounds of grant aid to support struggling businesses. These and many other activities created many unsung and uncredited heroes, and we should all be grateful for their efforts and dedication.

Even now there are still residents cautious about leaving their homes and some who still need support.

A Braintree District Council report to the Council on the 20th of March (It is on the BDC web site) gives an update.

- The progress and achievements from the 2019-2023 Livewell Strategy, including StartWell, StayWell, FeelWell, EatWell, BeWell and AgeWell
- A summary report on the Councils Covid response, 2020-2023
- An update on the response from residents on the cost-of-living issues.
- Details of the development of the next Livewell Strategy during 2023.

I wish continued success to all the communities in the Three Fields Ward and to appropriate elected representatives who succeed me in representing the whole of the Ward, and to communities across the Braintree District, on the Braintree District Council.

The Detail of what we do

Finances

The Parish Council receives a payment from Braintree District Council each year, known as a precept. This is derived from our expected costs for the coming year which Councillors submit each January to Braintree District Council. For 2022/2023 we received £22,395. We are VAT registered and claim back VAT on valid expenditure. Each year an external financial audit is conducted.

Subscriptions

The Parish Council subscribes to the following organisations for consultation purposes.

National Association of Local Councils

Essex Association of Local Councils

Braintree Association of Local Councils

Local financial support

We have contributed £1000 towards the parish magazine, and £2150 to Wethersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee. We gave £1275 towards the Jubilee fete plus purchasing commemorative water bottles and funding the Xmas light switch on as well as buying new lights and making a donation in respect of the Xmas tree provided by Mr & Mrs Phipps.

Insurance

The Council holds insurance cover for its equipment and street furniture. It also holds public liability insurance, personal accident cover, legal fees, and employers' liability insurance. Our insurance is provided by Zurich.

Planning

The parish council is a statutory consultee under the planning legislation. As such it can make recommendations to Braintree District Council as to

whether a particular application should be approved or not, but they do not have to accept those recommendations. The parish council presided over 21 planning applications and 2 tree preservation orders last year.

Highways

The parish council liaises regularly with Essex County Council when problems occur on our roads. Speeding remains a high concern for the council, and we hope to re-establish our speed watch group in the coming year. We also hope to meet again with the team at ECC to discuss other calming options to keep our roads safe for all users.

Street Lighting

The parish council provides streetlights for which power is obtained from N- Power limited.

Footpaths / Grass Verge Cutting

Footpaths are cut by contractors employed by ECC / BDC and the parish council liaises with them on the quality of this service. Shalford parish council also employ a Ranger who is able to support when extra cutting is needed.

Bus Shelter Maintenance

The parish council contracts Mrs Barbara Keen to clean the bus shelters and empty the rubbish bins.

Dog Waste Bins

These are provided by and emptied by Braintree District Council although bags are provided in the churchyard by the parish council.

Notice Boards

The parish council provides notice boards at the village hall and in bus shelters at Clifffield, Church End and Jaspers Green.

Stoneley Park

This is managed by Essex County Council. We meet with their Land Agent regularly to discuss maintenance and options for development. This year we have had an attractive wooden sign produced and installed. There has been a lot of work gone on this year to manage the park and keep its trees healthy and thriving.

Christmas Light Switch on

This year we held our first light switch on and small event. It was very well attended and supported by many organisations in the village, and we plan to continue this event each year. This year it will be on Saturday 2nd December.

Parish Ranger

This year the council recruited a parish ranger to work on our behalf around the parish. We employ Lawrence Smith, fondly known as Lol who has made a brilliant impact straight away. Lol collects litter, maintains planters and carries out small maintenance work, cuts back overgrown footpaths and generally helps keep our village looking neat and tidy.

WASC Weathersfield Airbase Scrutiny Committee

Whilst not in our parish, we are represented at the above meetings. We have contributed financially to this group which carries out important work on behalf of all parish members to investigate and analyse the proposals for the airbase.

Finchingfield Replacement Bridge

The council have given their support to our neighbouring parish of Finchingfield in their opposition to the demolition and replacement of their historic bridge.

Welcome Packs

The parish provides a welcome pack for new residents to Shalford and Jaspers Green. This continues to be updated with key information on contacts, local groups and a Shalford walking map.

Re-Cycle

This year the parish partnered with a local charity who collected bikes for Africa. This allowed local residents to donate old unwanted bikes that could be refurbished to provide quality affordable sustainable bike transfer to people in Africa. It proved to be a great success, amassing 87 bikes, 1 balance bike, 1 scooter and 3 frames.

Defibrillators

We now have 3 defibs across our parish. The most recent at The George pub, one at the Village Hall and one in Jaspers Green. We pay for these to be checked regularly to ensure they are in working order in case of emergency.

Village Hall Playground

The council are allocated money by Braintree DC, from developers who build new houses in the parish and the Council have been working with the Village Hall Committee and Braintree District Council to allocate money to funding the new playground equipment. Lockdown caused a huge delay in this process; however, we are delighted to see this project nearing its completion.

General

Over the past year we have continued to look after planters, including planting them in beautiful colours for the jubilee, installed a new bench on Braintree Road, replaced footpath markers and installed Tour de France signs. We have also replaced two refuse bins.