

Chairperson's report for 2018/2019

Flood Warden

SMPC wishes to thank Dan Hodgson for his ongoing voluntary role as village flood warden. Dan's knowledge of water courses in the area (above and below ground) and his persistence has resulted in gullies being cleared by DDDC and the Environment Agency agreeing to dredge Dale Brook by Grove Gardens this year and then on a 6 yearly cycle.

Website

SMPC's new website has been developed and launched thanks to the commissioned work of Isobel Rogers and our Clerk Barry. The website is a community resource and SMPC is happy to promote village events and organisations through it.

Jacob's Ladder

The first consultation about changing the status of Jacob's ladder from a BOAT to a TRO closed in June, 2018 but, due to a procedural error the process had to be repeated. The second consultation closed in October, 2018 but to date, DCC has not released the results/next steps.

Village Cross

The legal work to obtain the Village Cross for community ownership continues very slowly. A small part of the monument (an area of steps) is currently being transferred from the Hancock family to SMPC ownership. However, the majority of the cross is still unclaimed. SMPC has obtained a statement from a lifelong elder of the village and a letter from PDNPA, dated 1975, both stating that the cross belongs to the village. Let's hope the Land Registry accept this as evidence.

Roman Baths/Gardens/Wood

The upkeep for this community space requires commitment but it's an area we must preserve.

Firstly, SMPC wishes to thank the Village Volunteer Group for the work they've done to upkeep the site.

Following a reported concern about the overgrowth of Yellow Flag Irises the Community Payback Team has been commissioned to dig them up/cut them back.

Also, in accordance with a report from R Claxton, Tree Specialist an Ash tree and a Beech tree have been felled for safety reasons and residents have benefitted from free logs (advertised on the website).

SMPC has also agreed to replace the Perspex in the Roman Bath windows with toughened glass. This will make the building much more secure and enable the grids over the baths to be removed for aesthetic purposes.

Allotments

Following a consultation with allotment holders the tenancy agreement has been revised to reflect some of the suggestions made. From this year, the tenancy agreement will be published on the

website and not individually issued to allotment holders. Payment of rent will be taken as acceptance of the agreement.

A number of new tenants have recently taken on plots and there is still a waiting list for vacancies.

Parking/Obstruction Issues

Parking in the village is an ongoing problem and reports of thoughtless and sometimes dangerous parking continue. DCC has extended the hatched white lines from the A623 along The Nook to stop vehicles blocking the doorways of residential properties and obstructing the turning onto/off the A623. Residents are asked to contact the Police on 111 if there is an obstruction and give the Police the vehicle registration number.

Speeding on the A623

DCC undertook speed monitoring in 2016 (in the main village area) and concluded that speeding was not a problem. SMPC did not share this view and asked the Police to undertake speed checks. CREST has undertaken checks from the layby near to Lover's Leap garage and reported:

- 58 motorists caught speeding during April, 2018
- 45 motorist caught speeding during June 2018
- 30 caught speeding on one day in March, 2019

Consequently, SMPC has asked to meet representatives from DCC Highways to raise concerns with them yet again.

Missing Gate into the Meadows

SMPC has continued to contact PDNPA regarding the missing gate and we have assurance that a gate will be fitted soon. However, thanks to PDNPA for repairing the wooden bridge over the stream in Coombs Dale very quickly last summer in time for the fell race.

Playing Field

To help to reduce reports of dogs off lead on the playing field, dog excrement and incidents of overnight parking a notice board will be erected publishing the conditions of use for the playing field to ensure all users benefit from this community resource.

SMPC has agreed that the entrance into Coombs Dale by the play area will be blocked off to discourage Badgers from coming onto the field and wreaking havoc and also encourage dog owner to enter Coombs Dale from the car park.

SMPC has also agreed to site a defibrillator on the Playing Field. Thanks to Cllr. Karen Esposito for taking responsibility for monitoring the existing defibrillator and working with the Ambulance Service regarding a new one for the playing field.

Village Watsap Group

SMPC has supported the initiative of a village Watsap group to inform residents of suspicious activity in the village with the provision that the Police should be informed first.

SMILE

In June, 2018 SMILE petitioned SMPC for permission to start building the village hall on the premise that funding was available to achieve a watertight structure which would then attract further funding/free resources to complete the project.

SMPC is not opposed to the project but all 4 conditions of the lease agreement, in place since 2006, have to be met before permission can be given. One of the conditions is that funds have to be available to fully complete the project. If SMPC was to give consent for SMILE to start the project, outside of the lease agreement, and it was left incomplete or the project was unable to be realised councillors would be held publically responsible and possibly personally liable.

However, as a concession, SMPC is waiting for SMILE to submit new building costings for a watertight structure, together with an up to date business plan to enable due legal opinion and consideration to be given to the possibility of changing the lease agreement. There is no promise that this will be possible.

Thanks

SMPC would like to thank;

Frank Sheldon for the many years he has put up, decorated and taken down the village Christmas tree. Frank has handed on this job to Dan Esposito.

The Hancock family for providing the electricity for the Christmas tree.

The Village Volunteer Group for their work in Bath Gardens.

The Community Payback Team for their work in Grove Gardens.

Adrian Heath, Michael Tinker and a host of others who clear grids on Dale Brook to ensure it flows freely at times of flood risk.

All of the contractors commissioned to undertake work in the village.

And last, but not least our Clerk for keeping us on track.

I would personally also like to thank Councillors for giving up their time freely for the benefit of the community.