

# SOUTHROP PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Parish Summary

5<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Residents

Southrop Parish Council ("SPC") normally hosts an Annual Parish Meeting in May, at which SPC activities over the previous year are reported on and other Village organisations are invited to report on their activities.

As it has not been possible, due to Covid, to host such a meeting this year, this letter has been prepared instead and is being distributed to all residents as a summary of activity since the last APM on 13 May 2019.

### **SPC Chairman's summary of SPC activities**

2019/20 was already shaping up to be a busy year before Covid, but became much busier thereafter!

#### Covid 19

It was quickly realised that a number of elderly or vulnerable residents might require help as a result of the lockdown.

Accordingly, SPC set up registers of volunteers and those who might require assistance. It was extremely gratifying that more than 30 volunteers came forward, more than sufficient as it turned out to meet the requirements of the 8 or so residents requesting help. Very many thanks to all who volunteered and apologies to those whose services were not, in the event, required!

A "buddy" system was set up whereby each resident needing help was assigned a buddy-if possible a volunteer living close by-to help. Buddies were told that if, for any reason, they couldn't on occasion help they should refer back to one of the Councillors so that alternative arrangements could be made.

The system seemed to work well in practice. Typical requirements included shopping, collecting prescriptions etc. but also, especially for those fully shielding, being kept abreast of developments in the village and locally. To that end, Cathy Brickley drafted regular letters with useful information such as local firms newly offering delivery services, goods offered by the Village Shop and much else.

These letters were distributed to all residents and, from comments received, appear to have been very much appreciated.

Should it be necessary, all these support measures can be redeployed very quickly. Of course, we all hope that will not be the case.

#### Village Hall

Based on the findings of the Village Survey conducted by SPC last year, the Village Hall emerged as the top priority for most villagers. This helped inform SPC as to how funds should be spent and, after much discussion with the VH Committee, SPC made a grant of £10,000 to the VH which was used for new windows, significant improvements to lighting, heating and the installation of a new acoustic ceiling and induction loop hearing system.

Continued.....

These improvements have been very well received and discussions are currently underway with the VH Committee as to how SPC might continue its financial support into the next phase of development. A more detailed section on the VH, prepared by the VH Committee, appears below.

## Roads

SPC has also been sharply focused over the last year or so on the poor state of roads in and around the village, especially the road leading from Southrop to the A361 near Filkins.

Peter Brickley took on the task of dealing with this and has been dogged in his determination to persuade Oxford CC to accept their responsibilities for their section of this road! Compared with a year ago, the local roads are now in far better condition though there is always room for further improvement of course.

Speeding through the village continues to be an issue, despite the 20mph zone and the efforts of the speed monitoring volunteers organised by Bob Gowland. There have been many differing suggestions over the years about what other remedies might be appropriate and so SPC decided to publish its views on this in a one page document which can be found on the website and the village noticeboards. We have recently contacted the Police Community Support Officer for our area who has agreed to consider carrying out some speed checks for us.

## Footpaths, verges etc.

There has been focus too on footpaths and verges around the village and we hope you may have noticed some improvements there. Thanks are due to some of the local farmers who have kindly kept previously unkempt verges in check FOC.

We have recently been in contact with Malcolm Higgins, the very helpful Cotswold AONB Voluntary Warden who takes responsibility for footpaths in our area. There have been improvements to signage and clearance of footpaths, thanks to Malcolm and his volunteers. Covid has hampered more major work, though this is now in progress, including the replacement of the broken footbridge alongside the river Leach by Baxter's Farm.

Many thanks also to those who participated in the annual litter pick, organised by Jerry Hibbert, which was, as ever, a very worthwhile exercise.

## Website

The existing village website was found to be non-compliant with current legislation and practice, so SPC has commissioned a new one which went live towards the end of September ([southrop.org.uk](http://southrop.org.uk)). The idea is that each village organisation will have their own secure password and easily be able to maintain their own page. It is hoped that this will mean that the village website becomes a better used resource for the community. The Facebook page also has a direct link to the website.

## Welcome Leaflet

This is the pack of useful local information which is handed out to all new arrivals in the village. It has recently been updated and can be made available to any existing residents who might like to have a copy. It will also be available to view on the website. Many thanks to Sally Parris for her help with the update and for continuing to be the link person for new arrivals in the village.

## Village Green

You will have seen that a new bench has been installed around the tree on the village green, in collaboration with the Avery family. The tree has also been pruned. Both were funded by SPC out of the Precept.

## Trees

We were successful in being awarded a pack of 420 young native trees FOC from the Woodland Trust, due to arrive at Jubilee Close in November. Volunteers will be sought to help plant them, mainly around Jubilee Close, though it is expected that some will be available to residents who would like them. Russell Giles has kindly agreed to orchestrate arrangements with Jubilee Close over this.

## SPC meetings

There have been 8 meetings over the reported period, the last 2 of which have been 'virtual' meetings, courtesy of WebEx, which have been open to residents to 'attend', should they wish. It is very much hoped that we can revert to physical, socially distanced, meetings in the near future.

Agendas and Minutes are posted on the website as well as on the noticeboards. Other information relating to Council matters are also posted on the website.

Many planning applications were considered and some commented on. Where applications were made which SPC thought might be controversial, the views of near neighbours were sought and taken into consideration.

## Precept/finances

In the year to 31 March 2020, we spent approximately £3,700 in excess of our income for that year, largely as a result of the £10,000 grant to the Village Hall mentioned above. Reserves were reduced accordingly.

The Precept for 2020/21 was increased by around 4% from £12,000 to £12,500 which should enable us to cover our requirements, including any further significant grant to the Village Hall.

## Village Party

We very much hope to be able to stage some kind of village party, once Covid restrictions allow. Details to follow in due course!

Please remember that your parish councillors are here to represent you and assist you if we can. Our contact details are on the website and also set out again below.

Tim Guest  
Chairman Southrop Parish Council

Tim Guest	850189	Rod Jones	850185
Cathy and Peter Brickley	850504	Russ Giles	850270

## **Southrop Village Hall – Annual Report - May 2019-2020**

**Fund-raising** Our fund-raising activities for the SVH2025 refurbishment project continued with a Treasure Hunt in June and a Quiz Night in October, followed by a very successful James Bond Film Night in November, at which "Dr No" and the casino proved particularly popular – many chocolate gaming chips were won or lost – and mostly eaten! Our funds also benefitted from the Fete and the Shoot last year, for which we are very grateful. Unfortunately, our planned 2020 fund-raising activities, which would have started with a Film Night a day or two after lockdown, had to be abandoned for this year.

**Funding and Grants** The speed of the SVH2025 work is, of course, dictated by the funds becoming available. Meanwhile we are reliant on the hiring income from the hall (as well as some of the funding from the Fete and Shoot) to cover the running costs for the building, so the closure of the hall in March was a big financial setback. Luckily, the efforts of our Treasurer led to a Government coronavirus grant which will cover the running costs of the hall for this year. We are also very grateful to the Parish Council for a generous grant towards SVH2025, a grant

from Gloucester County Council arranged by Ray Theodolou, our County Councillor, and a most welcome grant from the Bazley Family Trust. We have therefore been able to make some good progress with the hall refurbishment project.

**SVH2025 Progress** The hall has been equipped with new heating, lighting, a suspended ceiling and extra insulation, thereby improving both the thermal and acoustic signatures of the building. Subsequently, we have had a modern Audio-Visual System installed, which provides us with an excellent PA capability as well as film projection and presentation facilities. Finally, we have purchased 95 new upholstered chairs for indoor use and have refurbished 12 older ones. We are now beginning the process of planning and executing our intention to extend the hall in order to improve the bar, toilets, storage space, clubroom facilities and the playpark; this work is at an early stage and will include wide consultation around the village in the next few months.

**Coronavirus Impact** The lockdown and subsequent social distancing measures have had a big impact on what can take place in the hall, but the financial implications have been less severe because of the Government support grant. A big success has been the Shop which really came into its own during the lockdown. The VH Committee does not run the shop, so the credit must all go to the group of Southrop volunteers who have done the hard work to keep the shop running and to improve its offering and appeal to our local residents. We hope that part of the work to extend and develop the hall will enable the Shop/PO to be upgraded in due course.

**Future** At present, the hall remains out of use for most of the activities traditionally held there. We are hopeful that the coronavirus situation will change for the better as soon as possible so that we can re-open and use the hall in the normal way. It may prove to be essential to have a big party to celebrate the re-opening.... if we're allowed!!

Hugh Elford

Chair of Trustees

### **Report for SPC about St Peter's Church Southrop from May 2019**

In July 2019 the School leavers' service was held in church when those leaving were presented with a Bible from the PCC. Because of the restrictions of Coronavirus the 2020 service was held on the Jubilee Sports Field where the wind blew so strongly it was virtually impossible to hear what anyone was saying but all the leavers received a Bible.

Our Harvest Service produced food and money for the Cirencester Foodbank and the Fairford Luncheon Club.

We had a Carol service, Crib service and Christmas Family service and continued with the normal pattern of services in 2020 until 15<sup>th</sup> March after which the church was closed. When allowed the church has been opened on Sundays from 10am until 4pm for private prayer. We hope to resume services in church with Evening Prayer at 6pm on 6<sup>th</sup> September and then at 9.30am on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

However since March our vicar Andrew Cinnamond has recorded services from the vicarage in Lechlade and the CHQ community through Mike Stranks have also produced services. All are available via computer, tablets etc.

From a financial perspective the year has been difficult. Our total annual expenses are around £25,000, of which £14,000 is our parish share paid to the diocese. We normally can just about balance our books, but this year we have had no income from collections, church visitors and fund-raising events. The anticipated deficit is around £8500 and this will have to be paid out of our reserves which normally are held for repairs and any special projects.

Two new initiatives this year have been the provision of a card reader in the church, for visitor donations, and the setting up of a fund-raising page on EASYFUNDRAISING.

After an unexpected announcement that the CHEQS magazine from 2020 would not cover Eastleach and Southrop there was considerable upset. A meeting was called for the 5 parishes and over 30 people attended. It was agreed that the magazine should continue for the 5 villages with a new editor and representatives from each village on an editorial committee. The emphasis to be more of a community magazine but still including all church services, events and news. The new format began in January 2020 and is working well.

Margaret Davey  
Churchwarden

# **SOUTHROP C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Co-Head Teachers' Report to the Parish Council**

September 2020

Southrop School has seen a huge amount of change and upheaval this year, with a recent return to some normality. Covid-19 has tested all the school community and we are holding tightly onto our ethos statements.

Together we can fly

What if I fall?

Oh, but...

What if you fly?

"Don't be afraid; just believe."

Mark 5 verse 36



In our Christian school we treat everyone with respect and compassion.  
Our faith and friendships give us strength to persevere to achieve our aspirations.

The children started home learning in March. Teachers quickly re-mastered their planning so that it could be accessed at home, technology was updated so that we had a portal to send out and receive home learning, and story times were developed so that the children could 'meet' together safely in a virtual world! Our key worker children joined the children at Fairford School and some children remained in school throughout lock down.

At the beginning of June we welcomed back each year group and all children had at least a fortnight in school, if they wanted to. Although the government asked for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children to return, we felt it important for our children's wellbeing to encourage all children to return. In that time we settled back into our school routines, we made sure that the children were aware of the need to keep safe, we supported all the children's wellbeing and started to analyse where the children were academically.

The school still joins together for daily worship. This is done through our portal or together on the playground. The school is currently planning how we can mark the significant church events. The children are creating a harvest display which will be in the church and are collecting food for Cirencester Food Bank.

The school is very proud of the broad curriculum we offer the children. During lockdown and returning to school it became obvious that this curriculum was a great asset and the children continued their learning with the excitement and determination that we expect of them. There were no national statutory test this year, however, we have continued to assess the children;

this information has contributed to planning for this academic year and for catch up sessions for children.

The initial focus for the school this year was to introduce Restorative Practice to the school. This is a method to support children learn about different behaviours and how to choose the right one for the right situation. The children have been given strategies to help them resolve conflict through restorative meetings with each other, teachers and parents.

We have also focussed on reading and engendering the love of reading. We introduced Accelerated Reader for the Key Stage 1 and 2. The children are encouraged to read real books and then quiz on them to ensure understanding. The children have been regularly heading to the library to collect books. This led to the development of our library, as place where you would want to sit and read a book, as well as finding a book to read and share. It has been beautifully designed by a parent and painted by another, with a feature wall painted by a Southrop School family. The Key Stage 2 children wrote to authors to open our library. We had some great replies with the possibility of a visit from Anthony Horowitz or Tracey Corderoy but ... then everything had to be put on hold... everything except the children's love of reading.

There has been a great emphasis on improving the school site, with the new signs outside school, as well as repainting, new blinds and gravel for the wildlife garden. The heating system has been repaired and improved.

Music is an important part of the curriculum, and has been part of our extra-curricular opportunities too, with a wonderful music club ran by two members of staff. We have had an increase in peripatetic and whole school music lessons. This has to stop during lock down. Gloucestershire Music continued delivering weekly lessons throughout that time. Peripatetic lessons for piano, drums, guitar and ukulele have now resumed.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through healthy eating and participating in sport. No sports fixtures are currently happening at the moment however Atlas Sports are delivering two PE sessions and two after school clubs a week.

We hope this brief report has given members of the community a flavour of the range of activities that are part of the daily life of the school. It is a thriving and successful school, and we would like to feel that the whole community values having their own village school at the heart of their community.

Julia McLellan & Megan Davies  
Co-Head Teachers  
September 2020