

SHEARSBY PARISH COUNCIL



“Working to protect, connect, involve and represent the village”

COUNCIL BUSINESS Plan 2020 – 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose

The Shearsby Parish Council Business Plan is a statement of the Parish Council's vision for the parish, its purpose, values, objectives and key actions. It is a document that sets out what Shearsby Parish Council can achieve either directly or by working with Harborough District Council (HDC) or Leicestershire County Council (LCC).

The aim of the Business Plan is to give the residents of Shearsby a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it intends to focus on over the next five years. The Business Plan will be reviewed annually, and it will be used to measure how well the council does in its budgeting processes, planning of its activities and progress against key actions.

The Business Plan will provide a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way, and to be proactive rather than reactive in its decision-making. At the same time, it will help our local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does and to clarify what it doesn't do; and to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other bodies such as HDC and LCC.

The Business Plan is a statement of intent. However, Shearsby Parish Council may have to make decisions contrary to our stated commitments if events such as budget constraints, new legislation or changes in our policies make that necessary. Any changes will, however, be reflected in an updated Business Plan.

1.2 Community Involvement

To ensure this Business Plan is consistent with villagers wishes, where appropriate we will consult on its contents through our web site, community and key stakeholder event. We shall also consult with HDC and LCC to ensure that it is consistent with their goals.

2 THE COUNCIL'S MISSION STATEMENT

To protect, connect, involve and represent the village to improve the sense of community wellbeing and the quality of life for the residents of Shearsby by ensuring that it is a desirable, thriving and sustainable place in which to live.

2.1 To Achieve our Mission Statement

To achieve our mission statement the Council will continue to:

- Put in place initiatives and policies that will not only improve Shearsby but will encourage a greater sense of community involvement.
- Develop both community and council led action plans to sustain a diverse economy for the next 5 years and beyond.
- Ensure, where possible, that other service providers work effectively and in accordance with the wishes of the community.
- Provide services that are managed to a good quality standard, in an efficient, effective and responsive way and that offer best value for money.

- Conduct the business of the Parish Council by means which are transparent, sustainable, sympathetic to the environment and deliver best value for money;
- Maintain the Continuing Professional Development for the Parish Council staff and Parish Councillors to ensure they are aware of best practice.
- Be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council.
- Work with residents, local authorities and other service providers, businesses and voluntary organisations with the aim of achieving a safe, healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.
- Enhance public awareness of our role within the community and improve our communication with the community – this includes improving and regularly updating the Parish Council website.
- Be aware of grant funding opportunities and to work with partner organisations to maximize grant income for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Promote local democracy by encouraging more residents to stand for election to the Parish Council where vacancies exist, and to participate in surveys of resident’s needs and opinions.
- Ensure that the needs of all members of the community are understood and where possible addressed, to help balance the needs of all age groups.
- Ensure that the needs of older or disabled people are adequately addressed.
- Ensure that Shearsby remains a safe place to live and work.
- Continue the process of consulting with residents on the Neighbourhood Plan for Shearsby.
- Help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual cooperation.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

3.1 There are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities.

Shearsby Parish Council is the first and local tier, with an important role to play in representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. The Council sets the precept annually, manages staff and, all the Councils assets. It maintains the Village Green, including the dog bin emptying and all other open spaces. It is a statutory consultee on all planning applications lodged with HDC.

3.2 HDC is the second tier and is responsible for services including housing, and environmental services. HDC is also responsible for strategic planning policies for all development (including housing and employment sites).

3.3 LCC is the third tier and its responsibilities include highways, relating to both roads and footways (pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way, fire service, re-cycling and libraries.

- 3.4 Residents elect five Parish Councillors every four years. If there are insufficient councillors at any time the council can co-opt members of the public to fill the vacancies. The Council elects a Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May. The Council reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting. Councillors are unpaid and commit their time to improving Shearsby and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business.
- 3.5 The Parish Council owns property in the Parish, details can be found on the website, and gains income from some of it. We hold these assets on behalf of the community and are responsible for maintaining their value.
- 3.6 The full Council meets four times per annum. All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for questions before the council meeting starts. Written questions may be sent in to be answered either at the council meeting or, in writing, but must be submitted 8 days in advance of the meeting. Members of the public may record or film any public meeting.
- 3.7 The Council runs its business through committees and working groups. Working groups comprising councillors and, if needed, members of the public, support the work of committees and any recommendations made by the working groups go forward to be debated at committee or, full Council.

Councillors sit on a number of committees, and provided the meeting is quorate, the committee are able to make decisions. From time to time non-elected members of committees may be consulted, to contribute and assist with specific work, but they have no financial authority and are unable to vote.

A list of committees can be found on the Shearsby Parish Council website.

- 3.8 The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and these lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business. We have based our Standing Orders on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). We also expect Parish Councillors to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct also adopted from NALC. Committees and working groups work to terms of reference agreed in Council or in executive committees.
- 3.9 The Parish Council is consulted by HDC on local planning applications and with LCC on all highway matters.
- 3.10 The Parish does have a Neighbourhood Watch committee which meets from time to time, subject to demand for such meetings to be held.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- 4.1 Currently the Parish Council has responsibility for:
- Responding to resident enquiries and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
 - Open spaces, Village Green and play equipment.
 - Notice Boards in the Village Square.
 - Providing news updates, via the website or newsletter.

- Street furniture and dog bins that are the responsibility of the Council
- Management of the Parish Council's budget and facilities.
- Exercising, as appropriate, the General Power of Competence.
- Submitting comments on all planning applications and change of use applications in Shearsby as a statutory consultee of the Planning Authorities HDC.
- Services that meet the needs and expectations of its residents and visitors where they have the necessary authority to do so.
- Development, review and maintenance of the Five-Year Business Plan, Emergency Plan & Neighbourhood Development Plan for Shearsby

4.2 Community buildings and assets

The Councils holds certain assets on behalf of the community, and these are detailed on the website.

4.3 The Village Hall

The Village Hall is the community hub, is managed by the Village Hall Charitable Trust and is available for hire to groups both from within and outside the community.

4.4 Financial Information

The Parish Council is funded by a precept which is collected by HDC on our behalf as part of the Council Tax on residents. The precept is shown on the council tax bill each resident receives. Each year the Council publishes a breakdown of the precept on the website.

4.5 Reserves

Shearsby Parish Council is advised to hold in general reserve 50% of its working budget. Currently the council is underfunded and will need to build its reserves over the next 10 years. Reserves are used for capital or earmarked projects (funds for specific committees like Highways and Lighting) and General Reserve (emergency funding and non-earmarked capital projects).

4.6 Allowances

Councillors have previously voted not to accept the Councillors' annual allowance and are consequently unpaid volunteers.

4.7 Volunteers

The Parish Council members are volunteers and we could not complete the work we have committed to without the help of other volunteers from the community, for which the Council is very grateful.

4.8 Parish Council Governance and Communications

Shearsby Parish Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Parish Council, to be open and accountable in all it does, and to ensure the sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The objectives of the Council are to:

- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging Council members and staff to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training.
- Ensure Councillors are kept informed of new opportunities and policies.
- Provide fulfilling work opportunities for Councillors and staff to facilitate their ongoing development and contribution to Parish Council business.
- Continuously promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public within government guidelines.
- Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents.

The Parish Council recognises the role of good communication in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the parish. We will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication and find new ones.

4.9 Governance

To achieve the objectives detailed above, the Council will:

- Continuously review and update the Parish Council website to make navigation of the site, to find information, simple and easy.
- Post regular news of the Council's activities, reports of meetings, other important news and, initiatives on the website.
- Review and introduce other methods of distribution for Council news.
- Continue to provide an opportunity at each Parish Council/committee meeting for public speaking and comments.
- Make updated versions of the Parish Council Business Plan available on the Council website.
- Report at the Annual Parish Meeting the previous twelve months' activities.
- Agree and carry out a Governance Review with any recommendations for changes at each year's Annual Parish Meeting.
- Conduct a review of training needs of both Councillors and staff following any Governance changes and then review annually.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest to Parish Council/committee meetings.
- Invite members of the public with specialist skills to participate in working parties.
- Set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort.

- Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.

5. COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND ACTIONS

The Councils vision and objective centre around 4 key objectives:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Protecting Shearsby | 2. Connecting Shearsby |
| 3. Involving Shearsby | 4. Representing Shearsby |

5.1 Protecting Shearsby (our Heritage & Planning)

Shearsby is a small and quintessentially English village located in rural Leicestershire; a “chocolate box” village with a variety of pretty cottages, a well-supported church, a village hall and good pub located around a walled village green.

Some cottages in Shearsby have been built using traditional Shearsby bricks which are distinctive in a rich terracotta red colour and smaller than the average sized house bricks.

It has a small, friendly population and enjoys a busy calendar of community events to bring the population together. There is a strong sense of enduring pride in the village and an understandable wish to protect it. This is reflected in good community spirit, shared values and a notable fund-raising capacity for local causes.

The Council is mindful that the socio-economic future of the village will mean that the village cannot stand still but whenever new development is proposed in or, close to, the centre of the village, the Council will ensure that it is sympathetic to our cultural heritage.

There are a number of Listed Buildings in the village that have additional planning protection:

- Church of St Mary Magdalene
- Bean Hill Farmhouse and Garden Wall
- Cobblestones
- Lime Tree Cottage
- Rose Cottage
- Wheathill Farmhouse and Little Wheathill
- Woodbine Cottage
- Yeomans Cottage

As part of the statutory planning process, HDC has to consult the Parish Council on planning applications. All members of the Council evaluate applications and provide feedback as required to the District Council.

5.1.1. *Housing & the Neighbourhood Plan*

LCC is responsible for the provision of Health and Education services while HDC is responsible for housing. The Parish Council is a 'consultee' and as such can only lobby on these issues.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was adopted in February 2019 and brings some clarity to the need for development within Shearsby and will be supported by the Harborough District Planning Framework (HDPF) which is part of HDC's Land Supply.

- Actions :
- To ensure that any future housing is "in keeping" with the village and the NDP.
 - To oppose any plans to alter the historic street scene of the village.
 - To encourage house owners to be sympathetic to our cultural heritage so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come.
 - To resist development of sites in the village where they breach the NDP.

5.1.2 *Tree Survey and Tree Warden*

We committed to undertake a review of tree preservation and verge maintenance.

Where necessary the Council will commission a full tree survey and management plan (a five-year action and budgeting plan) of all its open spaces and will monitor the condition of the trees and advise the Council when action needs to be taken.

- Actions : To monitor the trees in all opens spaces to ensure their safe condition.

5.1.3 *The Village Green*

The Village Green is used by residents to walk dogs and for general leisure activities.

The Village Green is maintained by our contractor who has a one-year contract that commenced in January 2020. The grass is cut to an agreed schedule.

There are restrictions on the green regarding the use of barbeques and fireworks.

- Actions :
- To keep the village green open at all times for the residents, except in exceptional circumstances.
 - To maintain the green spaces.
 - To encourage residents to utilise the green for outdoor activities.

- To display suitable signs to indicate how the green may be used and by whom.
- To continue to inspect the village green and play area regularly.

5.1.4 *Play Areas*

The Council has one children's play area on the village green.

All the play areas are inspected weekly by trained staff and then annually by ROSPA.

- Actions :
- To continue to provide children's play areas and to keep them well maintained.
 - To continue to inspect all play equipment regularly.

5.1.5 *Grants*

The Council has been very successful in gaining a number of important grants over the last few years and will continue to explore opportunities.

- Actions :
- To continue to pursue grants for the benefit of the community.

5.1.6 *Litter Picking and Street Cleansing*

LCC & HDC are responsible for all other road/pavement sweeping.

We are very grateful to the volunteers who assist with the annual Litter Picking arranged by the Community Association to preserve the cleanliness of the village and its surroundings.

- Actions :
- To continue to monitor the work of any contractor who we employ to empty the litterbins, sweep the pavements and fully support our litter picking volunteers.
 - To maintain & clean signs in the village.

5.1.7 *Dog Fouling*

Shearsby has a proud record of limited dog fouling on the streets, although there are still some inconsiderate dog owners who allow their dogs to foul the streets, the Village Green, and other open areas.

- Actions :
- To continue to employ a contractor to empty dog bins located in the village.
 - To promote considerate disposal of dog excrement?

5.1.8 *Drainage Issues & Flooding*

The village has suffered with flooding in the past, although fortunately it's a rare occurrence.

There is still an issue with water down Mill Lane especially during persistent heavy rain, as existing drainage systems struggle to cope and we will continue to press LCC for a solution on this.

- Actions :
- To continue to work with LCC to ensure that the drain issues get resolved.

5.1.9 *Snow, Ice and Gritting*

LCC are responsible for gritting the B5199 and no gritting is undertaken in the village.

We have snow wardens and a number of grit bins which are situated at key points in the village. The grit bins are refilled as and when required, and can be used by residents to grit public areas such as pavements. The grit is not for use by residents to grit their own paths and driveways.

- Actions :
- To continue to maintain the grit bins.
 - To ensure snow is cleared where possible.

5.2 Connecting Shearsby

We will continue the work commenced to connect the village:

5.2.1. *Broadband for residents*

There remains dissatisfaction with the accessibility of mobile and broadband services and we will continue to seek improved connections.

- Actions :
- To continue to press for an improvement in the mobile signals and broadband services within the village.

5.2.2. *Broadband in the Village Hall*

The last survey identified that residents were keen for the Parish Council to provide support by making Wi-Fi available at the Village Hall. It was felt this may make the venue more attractive to potential hirers as well as assisting with other objectives to provide IT skills for other residents.

- Actions :
- To explore options for connecting Broadband in the Village Hall and to work with Councils who have successfully implemented this.

5.2.3 *Parish Council Website*

The Parish Council website is our primary channel of communication. We aim to develop the website further to include a mailbox facility so that e-mails can

be sent to the Council, also to produce and post newsletters on the site on a more regular basis.

- Actions :
- To continue to post information on the Parish Council website for the benefit of the community.
 - To ensure that the calendar of events is maintained.

5.2.4 *Provision of Computer Skills Training at the Village Hall*

It has previously been suggested that some villagers would benefit from some basic IT training to be provided.

- Actions :
- To determine the level of interest in such training; identify trainers, advertise and hold events where needs are identified.

5.2.5 *Local Transport*

Transport and Highways issues are not part of the Parish Council's area of responsibility. At the moment we have no bus service, although a Community Service is available on demand.

We are aware that transport is a key issue for the elderly and, with an ageing population this need will increase. The lack of transport primarily affects the ability of younger and older members of the community to participate in activities outside of the village and to travel to local towns, supermarkets and shopping centres.

- Actions :
- To ensure the Community Transport Service remains in service and to actively promote this amongst villagers.

5.2.6 *Maintain good focus on communications*

We will continue to work with other village groups to ensure that activities and initiatives are communicated.

- Actions :
- To continue to work with all groups and post information on the Parish Council Website for the benefit of the community.

5.3 Involving Shearsby

5.3.1 *Build effective partnerships with other community groups who are the "heart of the village, and who can help us to engage and involve villagers in activities and events.*

Community Events

Shearsby has a number of key community led events that not only bring the community together but raise funds for worthy causes. The Council supports these events wherever it can and is grateful for the work that these dedicated

volunteers put into events such as The Village Fete and Promises Auction both held bi-annually; Live on the Green; Christmas Carols in the Church and the various coffee mornings during the year..

Community Groups

Shearsby has a number of groups run by volunteers and we thank them for their hard work and for the enjoyment these activities provide; Table Tennis; Pilates, Keep Fit for the elderly; St Patricks Day Dance; Film Nights; Quiz Nights and Skittles.

We will continue to work with the Community Association, Shearsby Village Hall Charitable Trust, Shearsby Parochial Church Council and other key groups to support the activities.

- Actions :
- To continue to work with all groups and post information on the Parish Council Website for the benefit of the community.

5.3.2 *Develop an integrated calendar of events*

Following the development of the Parish Council Website we will continue to update the calendar with events held in and around the village

- Actions :
- To continue to work with all groups and post information on the Parish Council Website for the benefit of the community.

5.3.3 *Develop family focused evens to be held in the Village Hall or on the Village Green*

Several events have been held, such as St Patricks Day Ceilidh , Film Nights, Butty days, T-break

- Actions :
- To continue to support the activities above and explore other suitable opportunities.

5.3.4 *Develop a project which reviews and supports the needs of older residents*

T-break successfully brings together some of the older residents in the village on a monthly basis and other activities, such as Physical Training for the elderly and IT skills training are to be explored.

- Actions :
- To ensure T-break continues and to work with the Physical Activity Development officer HDC to support their initiatives and identify any new opportunities.

5.4 Represent Shearsby

5.4.1 *Develop the Shearsby Rights of Way project*

To improve the footpath and cycle networks in and around the village.

- Actions :
- To gather the views of villagers regarding the improvements required to the footpath and cycle networks
 - To work with HDC to understand how these improvements could be achieved and if appropriate, put plans in place to deliver
 - To provide regular updates to villagers, through communications on the Parish Council Website and specific events

5.4.3 *Building relationships with other local Parish Councils*

To build and develop relationships with other local Parish Councils, specifically those that fall within the Lutterworth LE17 postcode?

- Actions :
- To make contact with other local councils to help build relationships which can benefit both our village and other local councils

5.4.4 *Secure improved safety measures at the cross roads on the B5199 A5199*

To ensure Shearsby Parish Council is appropriately represented in decisions regarding improved safety measures at the cross roads on the B5199

- Actions :
- To work with HDC Highways & Planning departments, and appropriate local businesses to identify safety improvements
 - To ensure the views of villagers are adequately represented by encouraging them to comment on any proposals through appropriate HDC channels
 - To ensure we remain aware of future plans for the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground (BPG) and how these may impact any proposed safety improvements

5.4.5 *Monitor developments at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground (BPG)*

To continue to monitor developments at BPG to ensure these do not detrimentally impact Shearsby village, its residents or the surrounding countryside.

- Actions :
- To obtain, via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, details of current and planned vehicle movements in and out of the BPG site (as part of the current and future planning application)
 - To ensure we remain aware of any future plans for the BPG site
 - To work closely with HDC Highways & Planning department on related issues, specifically safety improvements to the cross roads on the B5199 (see also 5.4.4)

5.4.6 *Monitor developments regarding the proposed A46 Expressway, part of the Charnwood District Council plan 2020 to 2036*

To monitor the proposed development of the A46 Expressway.

- Actions :
- To continue to raise objections to the LCC Planning department
 - To use the South East Leicestershire Action Group (SELAG) as another platform to raise any concerns and objections

Adopted at a meeting of Shearsby Parish Council held on: _____

Chairman

Clerk & Proper Officer