

Shalfleet Parish Council Newsletter August 2025

July's Parish Council meeting took a decidedly practical turn, centred around a pressing issue affecting the Shalfleet community. The foul drainage system. We were joined by Adam Wilds, Southern Water's County Customer Manager, whose attendance had been requested out of necessity. His presence and insights proved invaluable.

Ahead of the meeting, parishioners were invited to submit questions, giving Adam a chance to address the concerns that have long troubled the village. His explanation was frank and clear. There are three main issues compromising the system.

First, fat and grease discharged by a local business are clogging pipes and causing blockages. Second, several households have connected rainwater systems directly into the foul sewer network, something those pipes and systems were never designed to handle. And thirdly, tree roots are infiltrating the sewer lines. While Southern Water responds when problems are reported, they don't carry out routine inspections; proactive work is prohibitively costly, so they wait for faults to surface before fixing them.

Yet, despite these concerns, the upcoming development at Burt Close won't burden the system. Sewage from the new homes will be pumped uphill and then allowed to flow downhill by gravity, feeding into Mill Lane's pumping station just like the rest of the village's wastewater.

Southern Water does operate a specialist team to identify illegal connections and install correct drainage systems. They're currently stationed in Wroxall, but I've asked Adam to consider how the Shalfleet area might be prioritised. If we can secure their attention, it could prevent unpleasant episodes, such as manhole covers lifting during heavy rainfall and spilling waste onto the roads.

What can we do locally? If your roof drainage or other water run off currently flows into the foul sewer, consider redirecting it to your garden. It's a small adjustment, but one that could alleviate pressure on the system and will benefit the whole community.

In essence, following Southern Water's guidance is the simplest way to help avoid future problems.

After Adam's presentation, public questions followed, touching on a range of parish matters. One asked whether Newbridge Community Centre might host future council meetings. At present, meetings are booked and paid for at Shalfleet and Wellow, but we've agreed to revisit the idea next year.

Training for councillors was also raised. We had training earlier in the year, more recently, only Jonathan and I have undergone training. This remains an ongoing process, we'll each attend courses when needed and as they become available.

We then heard from Peter Spink, our Ward Councillor, who offered a broad update. He spoke on the extension of Burt Close, the Section 106 agreement, and erosion issues on the Military Road. His thoughts on national planning changes were shared too. Details can be found via the Government's consultation site, where SPC members have already provided individual feedback.

Since Nick Stuart, our other Ward Councillor, couldn't be present, I read his report aloud. It offered recommendations for Parish Councils, notably the importance of a Housing Needs Survey something the SPC has already recognised. This will inform our strategy for future community-led housing and feed into the next local development plan. Nick also commented on the Military Road concerns and gave an update on the composted sewage cake spread near Town Lane in Corfe Road. This issue has reached the IW Council, NFU, Environment Agency, and our local MP. Full reports will be made available when SPC's new website goes live.

The Council approved a grant for Newbridge Community Centre and recognises this as an important community asset.

Several other matters came under discussion. I will be speaking with the school about how they use the car park opposite, leased from SPC. It seems underutilised, while Station Road bears the brunt of daily parking, a safety concern and an unfair burden on residents.

A resident from Withyfields raised serious concerns about the black poplars lining its southern boundary. The trees were visibly stressed, likely from excessive canopy and dry weather. We acted swiftly, and as I write this, tree surgeons are already on site. We've also arranged for surveys on the trees behind the houses to ensure their safety going forward.

From last month's agenda, two matters reached resolution. New official Parish noticeboards have been installed, and we've approved the purchase of two more. Overgrown bus stops have also been cleared, improving access and visibility.

A quote has been requested for replacement of the rotted planter adjacent the Community Centre. It would be an attractive centre piece for the village if these planters were filled and maintained by a local enthusiast in the future.

And one final encounter worth sharing—several days before the July meeting, I met the District Steward while out in the parish. He was posting a notice on an untaxed, non-MOT vehicle parked near the bus stop. I introduced myself, thanked him for his efforts in clearing overgrown stops, and raised the issue of the damaged Wellow road sign. He assured me a ticket would be raised on our behalf for repairs.

There will be no formal SPC meeting in August, but we remain available via our contact details in the Village News. If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to reach out we are all here to listen and help wherever possible. Community matters, as does working together for the good of our wonderful Parish.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, whatever it brings, we look forward to seeing you in September.

Jane Timbrell *Chair, Shalfleet Parish Council*