

THE GREEN AT SHAMLEY GREEN AND ITS' CRICKET CLUB - A HISTORY -

The Cricket Club was formed in 1840 and is one of the oldest in the County. Over the years it has been highly successful in a number of County Leagues and knockout competitions. Membership is open to any who are residents, or take a keen interest in supporting village cricket provided they pay their dues and conform to Club customs.

Since its inception the Club has been supported by a broad mix of people across the social spectrum; in the past the President & Chairman were usually members of the gentry and the vicars were regular players. At the turn of the century two families could each muster a full team from within their kith and kin, these were the Jarrard and Stevens families.

By agreement with J Sparks Esq of Woodhill who was Lord of the Manor of Rowly and with the support of residents the Club was permitted to erect moveable iron posts and chains to protect the square, on which pitches were rotated, and its immediate outfield. In return the Club kept this area in a trim and tidy condition by employing one of the club members as a groundsman. Their annual outlay on ground maintenance and equipment including machinery upkeep runs at an average over the last four years to £1660.

For many years the Club fielded a first and second eleven and sometimes a Colts team. This meant cricket was played every Saturday and sometimes both Saturday and Sunday. More recently the number of matches played has been restricted to Sundays and several of these are played away. In recent years the Club has also employed contractors to mow, mark pitches and otherwise maintain the chained area entirely at their expense. To accommodate the larger new Waverley Borough Council gang mower and in recognition of less intense use of the square, the chained area has been reduced in area since 2005. This allows young people completely free access over an even larger percentage of the public open space, in all over 90%. In 2007 the Club President has also measured and marked out a small football pitch and organised demountable goal posts in association with the revived Youth Club as one of the Village Plan initiatives.

Before a match the posts and chains are removed, tables and chairs are set up inside the Hall for teas, and chairs for the visiting players. Chairs are placed outside for players and visitors, the scoreboard is disclosed, boundary markers set out, often the pitch is rolled and the stumps are placed in situ. Crockery for teas is put in place and in addition players and helpers erect protective nets and frames to any surrounding properties in order to minimise possibilities of damage or risk. After games the process is reversed

If any balls land on houses due care is taken to note this and checks are carried out to ensure that no damage has been caused. The Club will arrange for repairs and pay for these, or if considered reasonable, accept a quotation obtained by the property owner for such repairs. Over recent years outlay on such work has amounted to less than £100 per season.

The Club was established long before cars existed. By custom drivers either sought alternative routes to avoid disturbing the field of play, or waited until the end of an over before continuing their journey on the roads across the Green. *The Club was also established before many of the houses now bordering the Green.*

Cricket has been played continuously since 1840 except during WW1 seasons 1915-18 and WW2 seasons 1940-45 though towards the end of 1945 a few matches were played. The Lord of the Manor remained as owner of Shamley Green's manorial wastes and commons all through the 70 + year era of Hambledon Rural District Council from 1895 – 1974 when Waverley District then Borough Council came into existence. When John Sims was Lord of the Manor he negotiated with Waverley for them to accept responsibilities as owners and managers of the open space known as the Green. There are some small areas which he did not own such as the patches in front of Dibdene, Dene and Appledene; the Malthouse triangle owned by the Parish Council a couple of parcels of section 9 land, a small strip of Waverley Estate land in front of Hullmead and the car park in front of the Arbuthnot Hall, but all come under the management of Waverley's Countryside Ranger Sarah Henderson.

Villagers born and bred could exercise grazing rights but all animals had to be tethered except ducks and chickens, and there was a strict limit on the extent to which the right could be used. The passing of the Common Land Act of 1990 required these rights to be registered and most lapsed. The Act updated and formalised much in relation to protection of public open spaces without breaching ongoing sporting activity arrangements such as that between the Club and the Borough's Environmental Department.

The Commons Act was updated in 2006 Statute regulations govern issues such as prohibition of parking, access easements, maintenance of easement routes, the complexities of decommissioning and requirements to provide equal area recompense for land needed for Highways etc. Commonwealth (1657) and Royal (1660) Charters granted the right to an annual fair on the Green on a day in June (officially St Barnabas Day, the 13th) This was a mixture of open farmer's market - indeed the very name Shamley may derive from Shambles a meat market - General trading and amusements. Special events involving large numbers of residents have taken place on the Green, including celebrations of Jubilee's, Coronations, Bonfire Nights, Victory celebrations, special Charity Cricket Matches and Gurkha band beating the retreat.

In addition to Statute laws there are local Byelaws. These have not been changed since the ones drawn up by Hambledon Rural District Council and Parish Councillors recently drew this to the attention of the new Chief Executive Mrs M Orton. As far as relations between the Borough and Cricket Club are concerned in large measures everything has moved along smoothly on the basis of precedent, custom and practise for many years with widespread support from residents. There has been no significant history of damage to cars or injury to individuals, that is not to say that due consideration should not be given to these issues and no doubt the Club's insurance takes such possibilities into account.

There has been discussion between the Countryside Ranger and the President about the possibility of drawing up a formal contract between the Club and the Council setting out the current understanding of previous precedent. The Borough's Legal

Department point to numerous similar but individual arrangements and seem less than enthusiastic about formalising these, though it may just be delays due to pressure of work. In law the principles of Caveat Emptor and precedent would seem to favour the Club and its supporters where any incoming residents have issues for address. In this situation the Parish Council can comment and express a view but it would be inappropriate to get involved in a legal dispute between a resident and the Club.

Close mowing over many years on the triangle of the Green which contains the cricket table has encouraged the growth of camomile, so this area has a specially protected designation.

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