



## SHERE PARISH COUNCIL

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Stuart Riddle  
Project Lead  
Public Toilets Provision Review  
Operational and Technical Services  
Guildford Borough council

Dear Stuart,

Thank you for consulting Shere Parish Council regarding the review into the grant for the public conveniences in Shere.

### Background

The building where the toilets are housed is the Old Fire Station. This is a Grade II listed building in the centre of Shere and was initially leased to the Parish Council in 1977 from Shere Manor Estate and converted to public conveniences. The listed building is important to the character of the village and the AONB. Any repairs or improvements are subject to Listed Building Consent.



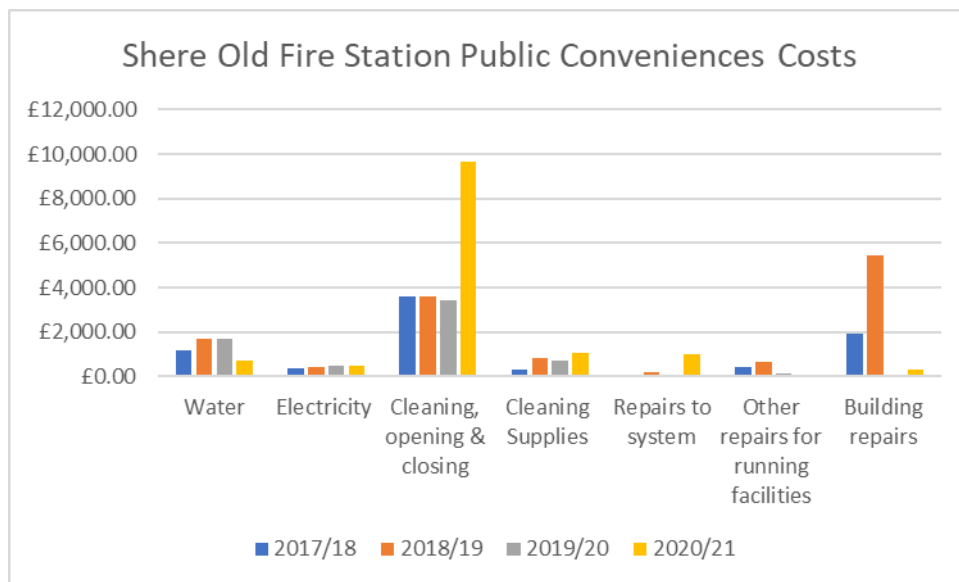
Through the access door to the ladies there is a disabled cubicle on the left and another door to the ladies which has one cubicle. From the ladies there is an access door to the storage room. Each has a sink and a hand dryer. In the gentlemen's conveniences there two urinals, one cubicle, sink and hand dryer. Both also have baby changing facilities.

Over the years the toilets have been redecorated, store room rebuilt and maintained to usable standard but they have not been refurbished in any meaningful way for decades. All facilities need upgrading and bringing up to standard, as soon as possible.

### Upkeep

It was argued many years ago that the toilets are for visitors and not for the residents of Shere Parish (four villages and half of Abinger Hammer) or from the surrounding villages. As the Parish is relatively small, no resident is more than approximately five miles from their house and as such rarely uses the conveniences. The precept received from Guildford Borough Council comes from the council tax and is to use for the benefit of the residents and community but at the moment in excess of 10% of the precept (last year 10.16%) is spent on the facilities for visitors this, amounted to £13,195.33 in 2020/21.

Please see breakdown of costs below. You will notice that our cleaning costs have increased significantly.



The current year 2021/22 is predicted to be similar – please see below

Year	Water	Electricity	Cleaning, opening & closing	Cleaning Supplies	Repairs to system	Other repairs for running facilities	Building repairs	Total	Precept	Running facilities % of precept
2021 - to Sept 2021	£486.53	£214.30	£3,750.00	£461.98	£670.99	£320.00	£490.00	£6,393.80	£140,240.00	Predicted to being similar to last year approx. 10%

Visitor numbers have increase exponentially over the last few years. Where it was once just busy weekends, now all car parks and on street parking is fully utilised throughout the week. New businesses such as Hilly’s tearoom, Dabbling Duck and Shere Delights Ice Cream Parlour, have also encouraged more visitors to the village and as a result, Shere is now seen as a tourism destination.

The village is advertised by Visit Guildford as ‘The picturesque route now follows the A25 eastwards passing through firstly **Shere**; widely considered to be one of the most quintessentially English villages in Surrey. It has a central cluster of old houses, a few shops, a tea house, art gallery, two pubs, a Norman church and a museum, with a steam running through the middle. There are also some fantastic examples of Lutyens architecture here, too - quite romantic really. Apparently, he was in love with a local girl and kept coming back to build something else to impress her! It is clear to see why Shere has been used as a location for many films.’

2012 Olympics have encouraged more cyclists to the area and Shere has one of the few public toilets throughout the Surrey Hills. It’s a regular stopping off point for cyclists to use the facilities; both on road and off-road cyclists. Events also take place throughout the year, further encouraging visitors and participants.

### Coronavirus Covid-19

During lockdown visitors from outside of the Parish frequented Shere on a regular and increased basis. With no restaurants, cinemas or holidays to entertain, Shere was inundated with visitors. For a while the toilets were shut during the first lockdown. However, it was necessary to reopen for health and safety, as human waste was found around the building and near resident’s houses. One householder was asked by a visitor to use their toilet, as they were visiting from many miles away.

Due to the coronavirus, new cleaners were engaged and it was necessary for the cleaning regime to be doubled, during the height of the virus. With additional use, there have been many more problems with the drainage which

has had to be cleared five times this year already. Previous to the last year, instances where there had been a problem with the drains, was extremely rare.

Furthermore, throughout the pandemic visitors have been calling to ask if the toilets were open, to plan their trip.

### **Summary**

There is no doubt that the toilets in Shere are vital but not for residents, they are vital for visitors. The Parish Council is finding that it is increasingly necessary to pay for works, which should be the responsibility of Guildford Borough Council or Surrey County Council – for example the new recycling bins in Shere and pavement widening in Middle Street, both of which are arguably due to the impact of visitors. It is not possible for the Parish Council to continue to support and serve our residents and community, when so much income is spent on those visiting the village. It has reached critical point with the car park, toilets, environment and traffic.

For many years Alderman Keith Childs (former GBC Councillor and Mayor) argued on the Parish Council's behalf that the toilets are the responsibility of Guildford Borough Council and this is still the case and even more so today.

The Parish Council hopes that you will continue to support running the public conveniences in Shere, for visitors to use.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Suzanne Hoyland  
Parish Clerk & RFO