

Shapwick Parish Council

Minutes of a virtual meeting held on 27 May 2020 at 7.00pm

20/21/1 Present: Brian Norris, Laura Anderson, Martin Davies, Jerome Hayes and Nigel Phillips

20/21/2 In Attendance: Sue Williams (Clerk)

20/21/3 Also Present: County Councillor David Huxtable and Mendip District Councillor Matt Martin

20/21/4 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Sally Richardson and Sue Sellick.

Villagers' Open Period

Villagers were asked to make written submissions prior to the meeting to aid the flow of the virtual meeting. Three open letters relating to HGV movements through the village to the wood chipping plant at Burtle had been received.

20/21/5 HGVs through Shapwick

Brian Norris thanked Cllr. David Huxtable and Cllr. Matt Martin for attending the meeting. It appears that South West Wood Products has ceased their wood chipping operation at Meare which has potentially led to increased activity at the Chipmunk South West site at Burtle and as a result more HGVs are coming through the village to access the site.

Open Session

Cllr. Matt Martin said that the HGV problem goes back as far as Frome and is a blight on many villages which upsets a lot of people. He felt local residents in affected villages should be represented and now is time to be proactive.

Both Cllr. David Huxtable and Cllr. Matt Martin felt that as much as possible has been done through the planning process to stop the operation and that a more evidence based approach is now needed. Cllr. David Huxtable reported that he had written to local members of Parliament to add to weight to the cause.

The HGVs are a symptom of the problem – it is the wood chipping site that is in the wrong location and this is a chance to do something about the problem.

Both offered to co-ordinate a collaborative villages (to include Burtle, Meare, Shapwick, Walton and Westhay) Lorry Watch survey to record the level and movements of HGVs. Cllr. Matt Martin said that this would only succeed with support from people on the ground.

Cllr. David Huxtable said it must be borne in mind that not all HGV traffic is going to the wood chipping plant and that there had to be an element of 'shared pain' in bearing the load.

Cllr. David Huxtable said that the County Council could write to hauliers that flout the designated freight route.

20/21/5 cont'd

7.30pm Cllr. Matt Martin left the meeting.

Closed Session

Brian Norris asked Councillors to comment.

Brian Norris said it was disappointing that members of the public who had submitted open letters had not joined the meeting to express their concerns.

Brian Norris said the PC had received some villager collated evidence of HGV movements through the village. He said it should be noted not all HGV traffic is going to the wood chipping plant. The PC has had some success with contacting hauliers and advising of the designated freight routes and suggested villagers should continue to notify the clerk and where possible include date, time and registration numbers.

Martin Davis queried over what period of time would the Lorry Watch take place – not known yet. He said the surveying is a proactive way to support the way forward.

Brian Norris said evidence gathering will be key but that it would not work without volunteers stepping forward.

Jerome Hayes said that it is important to take part but he questioned whether there would be any resolution.

Nigel Phillips reiterated the points made by Martin Davis asking how long a period would be required to build up a picture of the lorry movements over time.

Laura Anderson said she agreed with the other comments but suspected very little will change as it is harder to get a business that is operating stopped than to object to a new application.

Brian Norris proposed that the Parish Council place a statement on the Shapwick Residents Facebook page summarising current position and request volunteers to come forward to support a collaborative village approach. Seconded by Martin Davis. Unanimous.

20/21/6

County Councillor's Report

Somerset County Council is very busy dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic - ~90% of employees are working remotely. Currently the South West has a low infection rate with Somerset being one of the lowest. People must remain vigilant to avoid a second peak in winter months. Estimated cost £46m to the end August 2020.

Cllr. David Huxtable asked if there were any other issues within the village that need addressing.

Jerome Hayes reported the on-going issue with the collapsed culvert in Northbrook Road – current dispute over responsibility for repair. Recently an accident occurred at this point in the road with a cyclist sustaining a broken wrist.

Cllr. David Huxtable asked for a location map and photos of the state of repair to be forwarded to him prior to his meeting with a highways representative. Clerk to action.

Martin Davis said if Cllr. David Huxtable could organise a road closure the Parish Council could carry out the repair. Cllr. David Huxtable thanked Martin Davis for this offer and said he would report back after speaking to Highways

7.45pm Cllr. David Huxtable left the meeting.

20/21/7 Statement for Facebook

Brian Norris recapped the elements to be included in the Facebook post. He highlighted that other than this statement on the Facebook Shapwick Residents page he would encourage any further posts relating to HGVs to be placed on a separate FB page so that the Residents page can remain free for villagers to request help etc. during the pandemic.

20/21/8 Business Continuity Motion

Brian Norris proposed that Councillors present ratify the Business Continuity Motion – filed with these minutes- (previously agreed electronically (majority decision) during in the period before virtual meetings were set up and face to face meetings were not allowed). Seconded by Jerome Hayes. Unanimous.

20/21/9 Shapwick School

Shapwick School has closed and gone into liquidation. The Parish Council has been contacted by the owner – the owners want to reassure the community that they would take their time finding the right buyers for the properties. So far there is no real information on future use. The chair raised the issue of site security with the owners now that the school is empty. The owner said when he is next in the UK he would like to meet with the Parish Council.

The clerk has reported the extension to the school car park and the path across the field behind the village hall to the planning department at SDC as neither works have planning permission. SDC has advised that due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and as the matters raised do not come under current emergency criteria they will not be investigated at present.

Jerome Hayes said suggested advice from SALC should be sought before meeting the owners of the school.

20/21/10 Finance

a) Requests for Funds - None.

b) Cheques for Signature SCPCF Ltd £10.00 (Chq 884, pavilion hire), HMRC £143.00 (Chq 885, PAYE), Walton Press £66.00 (Chq 886, printing of Shapwick News), Shapwick Village Hall £56.00 (Chq 887, hall hire), Mrs S E Williams £460.71 (Chq 888, salary and expenses), Information Commissioner £40.00 (Chq 889, annual fees), BHIB £271.71 (Chq 890, insurance premium), Narked Design Ltd £150.00 (Chq 891, website annual fees) and Mrs S E Williams £405.10 (Chq 892, salary and expenses).

20/21/11 Other Items

The chair had received a report that BT were installing a new telegraph pole on the land behind the village hall obscuring the view of the dovecot. After consulting with the engineers it became apparent landowner permission had not be obtained and the pole was taken down.

Station Road name sign broken. Clerk to report.

20/21/12 Date of Next Meeting

Date of next PC meeting to be confirmed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed.....

Date.....