

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 13 December 2021
at 7.00pm at The Pavilion, Shapwick

21/22/85 Present: Laura Anderson, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, Paul Rogers and Sue Sellick

21/22/86 In Attendance: Sue Williams (Clerk)

21/22/87 Also Present: County Councillor David Huxtable
 Jason Goddard and Neil Gage (Dovecote School)
 Approx. 40 Villagers

21/22/88 Election of Chair and Signature of Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Nominations for Chair were called.

Lesley Gaskell proposed Graham Croucher. Seconded by Laura Anderson. There were no other nominations. Unanimously agreed that Graham Croucher is elected as Chair. Graham Croucher signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

Laura Anderson to remain as Vice-Chair.

Graham Croucher thanked his fellow Councillors and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Graham Croucher also thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the Parish Meeting and recent Parish Poll.

21/22/89 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sally Richardson.

21/22/90 Declaration of Interests on Agenda Items

Lesley Gaskell and Sue Sellick both declared an interest in agenda item 6b.
 43/21/00014 New Lawn, Lawn Lane, Shapwick - Erection of detached garage and single storey front (South) extension with internal and external alterations

21/22/91 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November 2021

The chair said that the meeting in November had been an unusual one with the resignation of Martin Davis and he suggested that the comments made in a statement by Martin Davis at the end of the meeting should not be included in the minutes as they did not form part of the Parish Council meeting. Paul Rogers proposed this action. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Unanimously agreed.

Graham Croucher suggested moving forward, to allow for better discussion, that if villagers wanted items to be considered for an agenda that they contact the clerk in advance of the meeting.

The minutes as amended were agreed and duly signed.

Villagers' Open Period

21/22/92

Dovecote School

Jason Goddard (CEO) and Neil Gage (headteacher) introduced themselves to those present. Rich the on-site caretaker was also introduced.

Jason Goddard said that both Neil and he had many years experience in SEN schools and SEN education and explained their plans for the school.

Dovecote School will be an Ofsted registered independent special school for pupils aged 5-18 years with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH), who have not been able to access education and thus their future will start at Dovecote School. The plan is to open the school to 20 pupils in September 2022 initially with a further 20 pupils the following September.

Being part of the local community is key to the school as is the environment – planning a small horticultural area on part of the sports field nearest the school.

The manor house is Grade II+ listed – there are no plans to change anything externally. Internal improvements such as redecoration are planned.

Currently working towards an Ofsted inspection in April by which time the school needs to be pupil ready.

An open morning/session is planned so that villagers can visit the school to see what is planned.

Open Session

Frank Barnard asked if the purchase included the school field. Jason Goddard confirmed that the field (which is subject to an overage clause) has been purchased – part will be used for a small holding (small animals only) with a community shop the remainder will be a sports field which could be used by the community.

Teresa King said the plans look very positive and asked if it would be a day or boarding school. Neil Gage confirmed it would be a day school only.

A villager asked how many pupils are needed to make the project financially viable.

Jason Goddard said the Ofsted application will be for a maximum of 70 pupils although only ever likely to be 50 on site at any one. Pupil numbers will be phased in gradually.

A concern was raised about an increase in transport. Neil Gage said it would only be at the start and end of the school day. The transport plan will become clearer with time.

Steve Champion asked if the school places are publicly funded. Jason Goddard said it is likely that the pupils will be Local Authority pupils.

A villager asked whether the local competition from similar schools would affect viability. Jason Goddard agreed there is competition in the area but went on to say that Dovecote School has a different approach/USP.

A villager asked whether there would be music and art as well as education. Jason Goddard said the arts would form an important part of education and hoped that this might lead to displays etc.

Closed Session

Graham Croucher thanked Jason Goddard and Neil Gage for attending saying the plans all sound very positive and he hoped that there would be a long term relationship with the local community.

21/22/93

Planning Applications**a) 43/21/00012 (full planning permission) and 43/21/00013 (listed building consent-alterations) – 2 Church Farm, Church Road, Shapwick - Change of use of a school building (F1) to dwelling (C3) with some minor internal alterations**

Graham Croucher read out a statement from the new owner of 2 Church Farm. In his statement Mr Isaacs explained that the property is going to be returned to a family home and that the proposals are for minor internal alterations meaning the property will remain in keeping with its surroundings.

Open Session

A villager asked if the property had now been sold. Graham Croucher said he was unable to comment.

Closed Session

Graham Croucher asked Councillors to comment.

Laura Anderson said she had no comments to make and proposed that the Parish Council support the application on the grounds that the proposals relate to internal amendments. Seconded by Sue Sellick. Unanimously agreed.

b) 43/21/00014 New Lawn, Lawn Lane, Shapwick - Erection of detached garage and single storey front (South) extension with internal and external alterations

Having declared an interest Lesley Gaskell and Sue Sellick took no part in the discussion.

Open Session

Mrs Walker said she was concerned that the proposed garage would be built right up to the property boundary beyond the current wall which, as vehicles often park on this verge, would reduce the width of Lawn Lane. She also commented that she felt the proposals were not in keeping with Village Design Statement as the grass verge would be removed completely altering the street scene.

Ben Ruffell said he was concerned about the proposed windows which would overlook his property.

Penny Jones said the outlook from her property would significantly be altered and that she would lose morning sunlight from her garden.

Closed Session

Graham Croucher proposed that a site visit be carried out. Date TBC.

c) 43/21/00016 (full planning permission) and 43/21/00017 (listed building consent-alterations) – Village School, Main Road, Shapwick - Change of use of former school house to 1no. dwelling and erection of a single storey extension to the rear (East) on site of partial demolition

Laura Anderson said she had met the owners and they are planning to revert the property to a family home maintaining the character of the property – most of the alterations will be internal. The rear extension will improve the property.

Open Session

Steve Dunster said that the rear extension will improve the aspect of Northbrook Drive and is sympathetic to the existing property.

Closed Session

Graham Croucher asked Councillors to comment.

Laura Anderson proposed that the Parish Council support the application on the grounds that the proposals relate to internal amendments and the property will be improved by the rear extension. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Unanimously agreed.

21/22/94 District and County Councillors Reports

County Councillor David Huxtable reported that once again his monthly report was dominated by Covid. Staff are being seconded to assist with the NHS vaccination programme so responses from other services such as Highways maybe slower than normal.

21/22/95 Housing Needs Survey

Sedgemoor DC has issued the final HNS report based on the survey carried out in October 2020. The survey indicates there are four households seeking affordable housing – this number varies from the initial data given in November 2020.

The Parish Council has arranged a meeting with representatives from the housing and planning departments to discuss the HNS results in relation to Shapwick being a Tier 4 settlement. The outcome of the meeting will be reported back at the January Parish Council meeting.

Open Session

John Anderson asked if the Parish Council can check with SDC as the HNS is not on their website.

Closed Session**21/22/96 Parish Poll**

The Parish Poll took place on Thursday 2 December 2021.

Villagers on the electoral roll were asked the following Yes/No question:

Shapwick is listed as a Tier 4 settlement in Sedgemoor District Council's Local Plan, due to its basic services and limited infrastructure. The plan states that any development should be appropriate to the scale, design and existing character of the village. Shapwick also has a unique and historically important north/south ladder formation, as set out in the SDC adopted Village Design Statement. As such, do you agree that any new housing development be limited to at most, small scale, in fill development which is only within the defined settlement boundary of Shapwick?*

**small scale means a development which adds no more than 5% (10 properties) to the existing stock of the village.*

The results of the poll were as follows:

Yes votes– 178

No votes – 27

Spoilt papers - 1

There were 376 eligible voters - turnout was 54.79% - the officials commented that this is a high turnout.

Sally Richardson and Lesley Gaskell attended the count on behalf of the Parish Council.

Following a SDC news release Stuart Houlet (Assistant Director - Inward Investment & Growth) emailed the Parish Council. Lesley Gaskell shared the following email with the meeting.

'Through our press office we have been made aware of the proposed Parish Poll, scheduled for the 2nd December, asking eligible voters whether they agree that any new housing development be limited to at most, small scale, in fill development which is only within the defined settlement boundary of Shapwick.

We appreciate the important role that parish polls can have in expressing the views of the electorate of the parish who have voted in the poll. However, for the avoidance of doubt we consider it important to highlight that planning law requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan (i.e. Sedgemoor Local Plan), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Whilst planning applications are judged against all relevant policies in the Local

21/22/96 cont'd

Plan, with Shapwick being a tier 4 settlement - Policy T4: 'Tier 4 settlements – Housing' (p.88 of the Local Plan) is likely to be particularly relevant to the determination of proposals for housing development. This policy supports redevelopment, infill, subdivision and conversions within the existing settlement boundaries subject to a number of criteria. It also supports affordable housing proposals on sites outside but well related to settlement boundaries, again subject to a number of criteria, such schemes could under certain circumstances include up to 50% market housing.

The local plan has been subject to extensive consultation and independent examination prior to its adoption on 2019 and it remains an up to date plan for the purposes of determining planning applications. It is important therefore that the Parish Council and local residents are aware that this will remain the basis of determining planning applications in the Shapwick area and that should there be planning applications in the parish, comments/objections would still need to be made on valid planning reasons, regardless of the outcome of the parish poll.

Nonetheless we look forward to hearing the results of the parish poll and off course would be happy to provide clarification or discuss further planning policies for Shapwick if that would be helpful.'

Graham Croucher proposed that in readiness for an anticipated planning application that Councillors familiarise themselves with key areas such as transportation, the environment, history etc. Councillors agreed this was a good idea – areas to be distributed between Councillors. Graham Croucher said this approach would also help with any planning applications received.

Open Session

Steve Champion said he understood Stuart Houlet's response to the Parish Council. He said he was pleased with the result of the Parish Poll and said that it ties in with the responses to the Front Foot Shapwick survey which showed 98% of villagers are against large scale development. He said he would like it noted that at the recent Parish Meeting 66 villagers voted against the proposed Mill Lane development and 6 villager voted for.

David Huxtable said that currently each district council operates under their own Local Plan – the forthcoming Unitary Authority is likely to have one Local Plan which is interpreted differently in different areas.

Graham Croucher asked how the current Local Plans will merge into a new one. David Huxtable said it will evolve so that we can influence what happens in our own area.

Maria Allan asked where she could get hold of the Front Foot Shapwick meeting minutes. Steve Champion said Front Foot Shapwick is now dormant – it was not a formal group so no minutes were produced.

Frank Barnard said he understands that the Parish Council cannot comment on particular proposed planning applications but asked if the Parish Council could state whether in principle it was against large scale development. Graham Croucher reminded everyone that the Parish Council needs to keep an open mind so as not to predetermine any application.

Steve Dunster said that the HNS indicates the split of the 4 affordable housing as three for rent and one for shared ownership and this does not identify with the proposals. Lesley Gaskell said that Tier 4 settlement developments have to be meet the criteria within the Local Plan – to be an exception site (outside the development boundary) requires an element of social housing. She said the forthcoming meeting with SDC will give clarity.

21/22/96 cont'd

Steve Campion said the village is not a museum – there have been changes within the village and it has evolved at the edges.

Stuart Dennes asked if the Village Design Statement could be discussed on the next agenda.

Closed Session**21/22/97 Drainage and Ditch Maintenance**

Martin Davis and Paul Rogers have surveyed the ditches and drainage around the village and produced a report. The report will be used determine work to be carried out on this year's maintenance cycle.

Paul Rogers will ask three contractors to tender for the work. It was agreed that the initial work will be carried out early in the New Year with more work maintenance later in the year before next winter. Work will be directed to areas by need. The height of the verges is to be addressed. Two farmers have come forward to help remove the spoil from ditch clearing.

21/22/98 Wessex Water Feedback

Following the recent overflowing storm drains at the bottom of the village Graham Croucher has been in contact with Wessex Water. Wessex Water reported that the system within the village, similar to most other places, is not designed to cope with the amount of sewage and surface water. Wessex Water has a licence to allow release of water into the environment and this is what is being observed at the bottom of the village. This release of surface water is electronically monitored. Wessex Water informed that there are on- going inspections in Shapwick with the potential that this may lead to more pipes being sealed– this will lead to more surface water and hence ditch/drainage maintenance will be important.

21/22/99 Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Sue Sellick volunteered to co-ordinate Shapwick's celebration of the Jubilee. She asked for people to contact the Parish Council with their ideas – a street party, mugs/something for the children of the village etc.

21/22/100 Village Community Project

Graham Croucher commented that a lot has come out of the last year or so and now is the time to bring it together.

Lesley Gaskell said that the Parish Council cannot take on the project alone and that the village need to work together with the Parish Council as the facilitator. She suggested that people come forward with ideas.

Graham Croucher said initially efforts need to be concentrated on determining the scope of the project in agreement with interested parties. It was agreed to draw up a list of interest parties to contact as the starting point. The project will be shaped from there.

21/22/101 Councillors' Reports

Neighbourhood Watch – Sue Sellick reported that the Polden NHW group has distributed Christmas Cards to every household in the village. The group are asking for a contribution towards the cost of this distribution of £39.80 (net). Councillors agreed to support.

Community Group - Lesley Gaskell reported she had met with a number of villagers before the Parish Poll. She said she understood the frustration amongst some villagers but reiterated to the group the need for the Parish Council to remain open minded until any planning applications are received.

21/22/102 Parish Councillor Vacancy

Statutory notice period ends 15 December 2021. If no election is called the vacancy will be filled by co-option. Clerk to advertise accordingly.

21/22/103 Finance

a) Cheques for Signature Mrs S Williams £395.81 (Chq 920, Salary and expenses), BWW Print Limited £83.14 (Chq 921, Defibrillator fliers), Shapwick Community Playing Field Company Limited £40.00 (Chq 922, Pavilion hire) and Woolavington NHW £49.08 (Chq 923, Contribution towards NHW Christmas card distribution)

21/22/104 Date of Next Meeting

Date of next PC meeting will be 18 January 2022 Village Hall. Planning application site visit TBC.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

