

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 18 January 2022
at 7.00pm at The Pavilion, Shapwick

- 21/22/116 Present:** Laura Anderson, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell and Moray McGowan
- 21/22/117 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 21/22/118 Also Present:** County Councillor David Huxtable
17 Villagers
- 21/22/119 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Sally Richardson, Paul Rogers and Sue Sellick
- 21/22/120 Declaration of Interests on Agenda Items**
No declarations were made.
- 21/22/121 Vacancy for one Parish Councillor to be filled by Co-option**
Graham Croucher called for nominations for co-option. Moray McGowan put his name forward and introduced himself to the meeting. Lesley Gaskell nominated Moray McGowan. Seconded by Laura Anderson. There being no other nominations it was unanimously agreed that Moray McGowan be co-opted to the Parish Council. Graham Croucher welcomed Moray McGowan to the Parish Council. Moray McGowan joined the meeting. Clerk to liaise regarding papers for completion.
- Graham Croucher informed the meeting that Sue Sellick had decided to resign from the Parish Council. He thanked Sue for her contribution whilst part of the Parish Council – in particular getting a defibrillator installed in the village. Clerk to inform SDC to start the statutory process.
- 21/22/122 Minutes of the Meetings held on 13 December 2021 and 29 December 2021**
The minutes as amended (13 December 2021) were agreed and duly signed. Proposed by Laura Anderson. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell.
- Villagers' Open Period**
- 21/22/123 Planning Applications**
a) 43/21/00018 7 Monks Drive (Shapwick Hotel), Shapwick – Change of use of the hotel element to residential forming 1no. dwelling
- Open Session**
No comments made.
- Closed Session**
Graham Croucher asked Councillors to comment.
No comments made. Lesley Gaskell proposed that the Parish Council support the application on the grounds that the proposals relate solely to change of use with no alterations to the building. Seconded by Laura Anderson. Unanimously agreed. Clerk to inform SDC.

21/22/124 District and County Councillors Reports

County Councillor David Huxtable reported that the costs for the feasibility study into the Ashcott Bypass have increased – a percentage of which has to come from SDC.

There were no questions for the County Councillor.

21/22/125 Feedback from Meeting with Sedgemoor DC

Lesley Gaskell informed the meeting that she and Graham Croucher had met virtually with Duncan Harvey and Dawn DeVries of SDC. The aim of the meeting was to gain a more comprehensive understanding on the implications of the reduced housing need in the HNS in relation to Shapwick being a Tier 4 settlement and what it might now mean for the proposed Mill Lane development.

Following the meeting an agreed joint statement was produced and this was read to the meeting and is reproduced below (in italics) as part of the minutes.

On the 16 December 2021 Graham Croucher and Lesley Gaskell talked to Duncan Harvey and Dawn DeVries of Sedgemoor District Council (SDC).

The purpose of the call was to gather information following the consultation meeting regarding the potential for development at Mill Lane Shapwick and the impact of the recent Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).

Prior to the call an email had been sent by the Parish Clerk setting out what the Parish Council would like to establish from the call. In particular the divergence in numbers from the consultation meeting when a figure of 14 houses was quoted to the recent HNS which refers to a figure of 4 houses.

It was confirmed that prior to the recent consultation no agreed or up to date housing need assessment (HNA) existed. An alternative source of possible local unmet affordable housing need was available from the Somerset wide housing register (HFS).

The HFS data is a useful insight into potential unmet local need. It is more of an expressed desire for housing, rather an actual housing need. SDC advised that the HFS data is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the Sedgemoor planning policy against which a housing proposal would be assessed. A proposal such as promoted at the recent consultation required a formal assessment in the form of a HNA, an exercise which would see a robust and more in-depth investigation of a person's actual housing need.

SDC have published the Shapwick 2021 HNA report. A copy of this report can be downloaded from the SDC website. The 2021 HNA recommends a need for 4 affordable homes in Shapwick.

Accordingly, the figure that would be used in assessing any application for development of an exception site (ie one outside of the village settlement boundary) would be the figure from the HNA of four (4).

The parcel land, the subject of the recent consultation would be treated as an exception site. Considering the HNA figure, the maximum number of houses that would be considered on a site such as the consultation site would be capped at eight (8). The developer might be allowed to build some market homes alongside the affordable homes to provide money to fund the building of the 4 affordable homes. The number of market homes could not exceed the number of affordable homes. The developer would be expected to demonstrate how many market homes would be needed to fund the 4 affordable homes. At this time, this clarity has not been provided to SDC.

The capped figure of 8 is subject to a caveat. Should the PC (and community) wish to secure additional community benefits for the parish, further market homes might be accepted to generate the funds for the community benefit. No community benefit has been identified at this time.

If the PC can identify land that would be suitable for development, then it is possible for parties to work together and Sedgemoor can assist in protecting any social housing for long term rental either through a price cap or community land trust. Any protection is subject to primary legislation overriding that protection.

The Sedgemoor Local Plan will continue to be the relevant plan for some time even following the conversion to a unitary authority in April 2023.

21/22/125 cont'd

Open Session

Graham Croucher opened the meeting to allow villagers to ask questions on this statement.

County Councillor David Huxtable said that he thought if the need for affordable housing is now only for the Mill Lane proposal, in his view, would not be viable for the developer. He advised the Parish Council against applications with planning gain.

Frank Barnard asked what the definition of an exception site is – this is land that is adjacent to the settlement boundary. He also asked how the Vestey land fits in. Lesley Gaskell said that any progress in this area is dependent on the Estate although there does appear to be genuine intent to move forward.

John Anderson said long term the village does need affordable housing and asked how the recent Blacksmith Lane application fits in with this. Graham Croucher said this was not an application for affordable housing.

Tim Cann said even affordable housing would be relatively expensive in Shapwick as the price is based on 70 to 80% of full market price.

Frank Barnard asked about the Vestey proposal. Graham Croucher said the Estate had asked for support for four properties on the land.

Mike Beale said that affordable housing needs to be protected otherwise it is lost.

David Huxtable said that using a housing association is a way of keeping affordable housing as low cost housing.

Lesley Gaskell said that protection can be built in however cannot control any future legislation brought in by future governments which may be contrary to this.

7.45pm David Huxtable left the meeting.

Closed Period

21/22/126

Village Design Statement (VDS)

Graham Croucher asked Councillors present to comment with their views on the status of the VDS and the part it plays in planning.

Moray McGowan said he felt it is an important document and useful to inform the planning process. The VDS goes back over several years and as the village moves forward it would be a mistake to see the VDS as set in stone.

Laura Anderson said although it is supplementary guidance the PC has seen that it is not always taken into account by SDC when applications are decided. She said she felt it needed some updating – it is important but doesn't take precedence. Also it does not include many of the newer properties.

Lesley Gaskell said she felt the forward had been overtaken by events. She said it has an important function but is often overruled at SDC level as the Local Plan takes precedence.

Graham Croucher said the VDS presumes development. It is useful and is used by the Parish Council when considering planning applications.

21/22/126 cont'd

Graham Croucher said there has been a move away from VDS to Neighbourhood Plans but these are generally for larger settlements. The VDS could be updated but this would need time and funding.

21/22/127 Drainage and Ditch Maintenance

Paul Rogers has started the tender process.

21/22/128 Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Plant a Tree for the Jubilee – Shapwick PC can apply for two free trees under the plant a tree initiative. St. Mary's Church has said they would be willing for two trees to be planted in the churchyard. The school and verges around the village are also possibilities. Councillors agreed that the preference is to apply for two trees for the churchyard – Clerk to complete application.

Village Celebrations – Suggestions included a picnic on the land behind the village hall (WI to be contacted) and memento for the children of the village – Moray McGowan agreed to look into options.

21/22/129 Village Community Project

The Parish Council had sent the following to village organisations/interested parties to start the process.

At the December meeting of Shapwick Parish Council the members agreed to undertake facilitation of a community led plan which would include interested parties.

The initial stage would be to discuss and determine what the aims and scope of such a plan should be.

The Parish Council believe a community led plan village plan should:

- *Reflect the views of all interested parties within our village community*
- *Identify which features and characteristics of our village people value*
- *Determine opportunities*
- *Identify local issues and problems*
- *Set out a plan of action to achieve thee aims - short term, long term*

As a starting point the Parish Council would like to know whether this is of interest to your organisation and whether a representative of your organisation would like to attend an initial exploration meeting. Members of the whole village will be more widely consulted once the plan starts to take shape.

Once replies have been received a meeting will be set up.

21/22/130 Communication with Parish Council

Graham Croucher said he wanted to encourage attendance at Parish Council meetings as well as use of the website. He recognised that not everyone is on social media and wants to make sure all villagers are included.

Graham Croucher suggested villagers contact the PC via the Clerk (via email/phone/letter) who would then circulate to all councillors.

Suggestions were offered as to how better to communicate with the village. These included: a leaflet drop to all houses as a one off, a leaflet collection box, a quarterly newsletter, better use of the website – Clerk to find out costs of modernising/updating.

Polden Post – Clerk to make sure PC represented although it was recognised that often the minutes are out of date due to timing of meetings and print deadlines.

21/22/130 cont'd

It was recognised that Facebook Shapwick Live and Shapwick Residents pages had played a very important role during the pandemic.

Graham Croucher said for the Village Community Plan to succeed there needs to be a mechanism to communicate. Laura Anderson suggested this could be part of the project.

Graham Croucher proposed a leaflet about the community led plan which could lead to regular communications. Steve Dunster offered support with delivery and John Anderson said he felt there would be willing volunteers with content.

21/22/131 Councillors' Reports

Nothing further to report.

21/22/132 Finance

a) Precept 2022/202

Councillors reviewed the previously distributed precept calculations.

It was agreed that given the current economic climate and that the 2021/2022 precept had been sufficient to allow for the continuance of the drainage maintenance work alongside other annual commitments that there was no need to make any increase in the precept for the forthcoming year.

Laura Anderson that the precept be kept at £9,000. Seconded by Moray McGowan. Unanimous. Clerk to inform SDC

b) Cheques for Signature Cheque 924 Cancelled, Sedgemoor DC £664.18 (Chq 925, Parish Poll costs), Shapwick Community Playing Field Company Limited £20.00 (Chq 926, Pavilion hire), HMRC £196.00 (Chq 927, PAYE Months 7-9), Cheque 928 Cancelled, Mrs S Williams £426.24 (Chq 929, Salary and expenses) and M & T Davies £156.00(Chq 930, Community Christmas Tree).

21/22/133 Date of Next Meeting

Date of next PC meeting will be 15 March 2022 Village Hall. Planning application site visit TBC.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed.....

Date.....