

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

22/23/49 Present: Frank Barnard, Steve Champion, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell and Paul Rogers

22/23/50 In Attendance: Sue Williams (Clerk)

22/23/51 Also Present: County Councillor Matt Martin
 Darren Coombes - Applicant
 ~60-70 Villagers

22/23/52 Apologies for Absence
 Apologies were received from Moray McGowan and Dan Fear – agent for applicant.

22/23/53 Declarations of Interest
 There were no declarations of interest.

22/23/54 Welcome and Opening Remarks from Chair of Parish Council
 Graham Croucher welcomed everyone to the meeting including County Councillor Matt Martin. Graham Croucher explained that the extraordinary Parish Council meeting had been called to discuss one item only, namely planning application 43/22/00005. Graham Croucher thanked Parish Councillors for their work to date and the Shapwick News team for helping with delivery of the meeting notice.

Graham Croucher explained that planning application 43/22/00005 relates to land west of Mill Lane and is for outline planning permission with all matters reserved. The application is for 14 dwellings 6 of which will be affordable housing. Graham Croucher reminded everyone to be kind and courteous and that every comment should be heard.

Graham Croucher explained that the Parish Council would not be making a decision at this meeting but at one to be held on 1st September 2022. The purpose of this meeting is to hear villagers' views which will be taken into to consideration. The Parish Council will continue with investigation work. The Parish Council is a consultee in the planning process and will respond to Sedgemoor District Council based on material planning considerations.

Graham Croucher informed that advice had been taken on Councillors' interests and there are no pecuniary interests.

22/23/55 Planning Application 43/22/00005 Land to the West of Mill Lane, Shapwick – Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved, for 14 dwellings

Open Session

Graham Croucher invited villagers to comment.

John Anderson said he had lived in the village for 18 years and was frustrated by the claims made in this formal application stating that matters raised by villagers at the developers meeting on 16 October 2021 had been taken into account.

22/23/55 cont'd

John Anderson recapped on the comments made at the Parish Meeting held on 8ⁿ November 2021 and reminded those present of the result of the Parish Poll. He said that the application is for outline planning permission only so the details could change. John Anderson said that the community group would like to see affordable sustainable housing. John Anderson said that an increase of 60 people into the village would invade the personal privacy of those living nearby. John Anderson stated that he is against the application.

Anthea Beale said on moving to the village many years ago she knew nothing about Shapwick as a village of importance. The 1988 Shapwick Village Project showed that Shapwick is an important village both historically and archeologically. The ladder and stream system is one of very few in the UK. Anthea Beale asked the Parish Council that the Sedgemoor District Council planners make a sympathetic decision – the Tier 4 status of the village must be honoured. Anthea Beale drew attention to the Village Design Statement which makes reference to infill development only.

Mr Bridges said that recent world developments show that food production within the village is important and that the community cannot afford to give away green land. Mr Bridges also said Shapwick does not have the infrastructure to support the expansion of village and that increased traffic in and out of the village would be a concern. Mr Bridges also commented that the internet signal to the village would be put under further strain with the addition of more dwellings.

Mrs Pritchard said she objected to the application – she had moved to the village wanting a country residence and that these proposals would see her cottage overshadowed as there would be a property close to hers and she would lose the views over the open fields. Mrs Pritchard said she was very sad for the future of the village.

Gemma Pritchard said her biggest concern was that this application will set a precedent and that other fields bordering the village could be built on. She said that the village will not have a say in what the houses look like.

Steve McAuliffe said that Mill Lane is a small lane within the village and he had safety concerns for members of the village as they move around the village – on average each house would have two vehicles which would increase the traffic movements in and around Mill Lane.

Merlenya Lee said she feared that Sedgemoor District Council would keep bringing the application back over and over and said it is not listening to what villages want or need.

Mrs Pritchard said she disagreed as other local villages had been successful in refusing applications.

Graham Croucher clarified that it is not Sedgemoor District Council that is bringing the application but the applicant.

Poppy Bishop said that removal of the hedgerow will have an environmental impact and increased traffic will cause issues. They also said that the proposed entrance is right opposite their property so all privacy would be lost. Any entrance needs to be on a wider road.

Pauline Richardson posed the question is the development really necessary.

22/23/55 cont'd

Mr Bartram said that there is only one way affordable housing can be provided and that is on the back of market housing. Mr Bartram said there are three types of affordable housing 1. Social housing (rent from Sedgemoor District Council) – housing register determines occupancy, 2. Shared Ownership and 3. Below market for sale – assuming average prices Mr Bartram said that an income of £54,000 would be required to secure a property. Houses could be 'lost' to the village for 30-40 years. Affordable housing does not always go to people with local connections.

Gemma Pritchard asked if Shapwick has a need for affordable housing how can the plans be outside the development boundary. Graham Croucher explained that under Tier 4 affordable housing can be considered on an exception site which is a site that lies adjacent to the development boundary.

County Councillor Matt Martin said he was at the meeting as an observer. He confirmed that it can be specified that affordable housing goes to someone local but in reality, because once a property becomes available it has to be allocated to someone, the likelihood is that the person will come from further afield. Mr Bartram said this has been the case with affordable housing in other local villages.

Jenny Pritchard said she was concerned about drainage as water already flows down Mill Lane during in periods of heavy rain and there is no capacity to cope with any increase in water.

Brian Norris said he was an advocate of property that is affordable to young people and was interested to see that Housing Development at Sedgemoor District Council are objecting to the application.

Graham Croucher said Duncan Harvey (Housing Development Manager at Sedgemoor District Council) is interested in fulfilling Tier 4 policies but his view is that the application does not meet the criteria laid down in the agreed statement which was produced after Graham Croucher and Lesley Gaskell had met with Duncan Harvey.

Jane Walker asked what all matters reserved means. Lesley Gaskell said reserved matters provides the details of specifics within an application. Graham Croucher said certain matters within an application can be agreed at a later date but in principle this does not work with a Tier 4 settlement.

Gemma Pritchard asked if the allotments and play area had been chosen by the applicant. Graham Croucher said the applicant had included these. Part of Tier 4 development says other elements can be added to justify additional market housing within the development.

A villager said that the scale of the development would change the character of the village. The history of the village and its archaeology are important and this scheme goes against these. The village setting would be altered. There are listed buildings close to the proposed site.

County Councillor Matt Martin asked that if there is opposition to the idea is there an alternative – this could be important when Somerset becomes a unitary authority. He said he would be interested to hear of alternative ideas. Graham Croucher referred to the Parish Poll question and said this indicates an alternative idea.

22/23/55 cont'd

Mrs Corbett asked for the proposal to be explained. Graham Croucher gave an overview of the application and said all documents can be viewed on the Sedgemoor District Council website.

Merlenya Lee asked if an ecological survey has been carried out. Graham Croucher said it had and can be seen as part of the planning documents.

Stuart Dennes said he had lived in the village for 27 years enjoying the rural life and felt that development was the thin end of the wedge. The boundary at Mill Lane is an important factor and preserves the outlook over the fields. Stuart Dennes made reference to the number of local shops that had closed and said he thought a shop opening in Shapwick is not going to happen. He said the standard of living and mental health of those living in the vicinity of the proposed development would be affected. The local bus services are under threat so there are no commuter opportunities.

Graham Croucher asked if there were any more comments.

Kate Anderson said she lived opposite the proposed site with her garden looking directly onto the site. She said her privacy would be invaded. Kate Anderson said four affordable houses are what the housing needs survey shows and that by pulling together an alternative way of providing these could be found.

Jane Lavick said as a parent everyone wants somewhere for their children to live but that with the current climate crisis sustainably constructed housing is needed. Many homes in the village use oil which put out huge emissions – electric cars are expensive and people are unlikely to purchase these so sustainable construction is important.

Stuart Dennes said children not being able to afford to move into the village they grew up in is not a new problem. He reminded everyone that this is outline permission only and all the details could change.

Poppy Bishop said that the turning will be dangerous and construction traffic will cause issues.

Graham Croucher asked if there were any further comments. He thanked everyone for their contributions.

Sue McAuliffe said that villagers should also write to Sedgemoor District Council with their concerns. Gemma Pritchard offered support with navigating the planning website.

Mike Beale thanked the Parish Council for holding the meeting.

Closed Session**22/23/56****Date of Next Meeting**

Date of next PC meeting will be Thursday 1stth September 2022 7.00pm Village Hall to consider the Parish Council response to the application.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....