Shapwick Village Green – Community Ownership Proposal

Shapwick is a small village which lies at the foot of the northern slopes of the Polden Hills, 4 miles from Street in Somerset. Shapwick is the gateway to a number of local and internationally renowned nature reserves i.e. RSPB Ham Wall, Avalon Marshes.

The village has a vibrant community with a good range of social activities for its size including regular Village Hall Events, Shapwick Runners, Shapwick & Polden Cricket Club, Starlets WI, St Mary's Church.While Shapwick has many village benefits, it does not have a pub or a shop. Adding a village green will create tremendous value, strengthening the community focus on an area sitting between two of the current centres of community activity, its ancient church and its village hall.

The Objective of the Shapwick Village Green project is :-
To purchase the freehold for an area of land, in the region of 1.7acres, that lies at the very heart of the village. By purchasing the land, and creating **"OUR OWN VILLAGE GREEN"** we will: -
1) Ensure that the Village Green is forever protected from ownership by anyone other than the Village of Shapwick
2) Further protect any as yet undiscovered archaeological and historical secrets held within it
3) Allow Shapwick to develop its own Village Green with the chosen amenities identified by public consultation within the community (e.g children's play area, allotments, see draft layout in Appendix A)

The Land: - "The Village Green"in question can be seen on the map in Appendix B (dark green areas – D32). The "Village Green" is owned by the Vestey Trust as part of the farming estate around Shapwick acquired by the Trust in 1943. In recent years the farms have been sold to the sitting tenants and other associated properties also disposed of, leaving only "The Village Green" in the ownership of the Trust. As a result of our positive discussions with the Trust a purchase price for the land has been agreed, a once in a lifetime opportunity for the village to secure this land.

The location of "The Village Green" could not be better suited as a safe and idyllic village green, next to the existing village hall. The Village Green can only only be accessed on foot or via a, rarely used, single track road which makes it a safe area for play and community activity. The existing village hall already provides car parking for visitors.

Current and Planned use of Shapwick Village Green: - The Village Green is part of everyday life in Shapwick, used by residents for walking or exercising dogs, as an informal play space, and for village celebrations such as the recent Jubilee. Moreover there are some specific events that further demonstrate its community value:-

Annual Shapwick Bunny Hop - Now in its 12th year, the Bunny Hop has established itself as a well-supported community event, attracting 150 runners from the south west and finishing on the village green. Each year it raises £500 for local charities (last year contributing to a village defibrillator). With both junior and senior runs (see pictures below), this year will form the start of an exciting partnership between Street Striders running club and Shapwick Runners in organising the event and ensuring its long term sustainability.

The Shapwick Jam – Each summer the community comes together for a one day festival on the village green. With music for all ages throughout the day, it provides a showcase for musical talent from within the village as well as a fundraiser for local initiatives.

The Queens Platinum Jubillee 2022
Celebrated by Shapwick Villagers on the "Village Green"

A happy village event, showing how a village green bring together all the generations of the vibrant Shapwick community

Appendix A: - Village Green Concept

Shapwick Village Green - Draft Layout for Community Views

Any plans will be subject to community / Shapwick PC agreement and Local Planning approval

Appendix B – from Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan

Inset Map 39: Shapwick

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Date: 02/2019

Scale: 1:5,000 at A4

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