

**Shapwick Parish Council**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on 25 May 2023**  
**at 8.10pm at Shapwick Village Hall, Shapwick**

- 23/24/1 Present:** Frank Barnard, Steve Champion, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, and Moray McGowan
- 23/24/2 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 23/24/3 Also Present:** County Councillor Matt Martin  
6 Villagers
- 23/24/4 Apologies for Absence**  
There were no apologies for absence.
- 23/24/5 Declarations of Interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 23/24/6 Election of Chairman and Signature of Declaration of Acceptance of Office**  
Nominations for Chair were called. Lesley Gaskell proposed Graham Croucher. Seconded by Moray McGowan. There were no other nominations. Unanimously agreed that Graham Croucher is elected as Chair. Graham Croucher signed the declaration of acceptance of office.
- 23/24/7 Election of Vice-Chairman**  
Graham Croucher called for nominations for Vice-Chair. Steve Champion proposed Lesley Gaskell. Seconded by Frank Barnard. There were no other nominations. Unanimously agreed that Lesley Gaskell is elected as Vice-Chair.
- 23/24/8 Apologies**  
Apologies were received and accepted from Nikki Polden and Paul Rogers.
- 23/24/9 Minutes of the Meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
The minutes were agreed and duly signed. Proposed by Lesley Gaskell. Seconded by Steve Champion.
- Villagers' Open Period**  
*For County Councillor's Report see Annual Parish Meeting minutes*
- 23/24/10 Dovecote School – Recent Projects and Planning Implications**  
Steve Champion reported that he had received representations from Orchard Way residents expressing their surprise at the extension of the car park without prior consultation or communication with nearest neighbours.  
Frank Barnard expressed concern about the extension of the car park and the newly erected pods which are sited around the Grade II listed dovecote and hoped the one that is placed in between the wall bordering the village green land and the dovecote would be moved.
- Open Session**  
Jason Goddard, CEO of Dovecote School, explained the pods have been erected to meet the needs of the autistic pupils at the school who require their own learning space within close proximity of the main school building.

**23/24/10 cont'd**

Jason Goddard explained LED Architects have been engaged to submit two retrospective planning applications: i) for the car park & cafe and ii) to cover the pods in the grounds near the dovecote. Jason Goddard went on to say his priority is the pupils at the school and he tries to look at the environment whilst meeting the needs of those pupils.

**Closed Session**

Graham Croucher reminded the meeting that he, the Vice-Chair and Clerk had met with Jason Goddard on the school site and during the discussions had reiterated that communication and dialogue between the Parish Council and Dovecote School around such issues is key. Planning applications are underway and the Parish Council will have an input at the consultation stage.

Steve Campion said he felt the pod directly in front of the dovecote is ironic considering that the Parish Council's design for the village green aims to protect the open views across to the Dovecote but the planning process would determine the outcome. Graham Croucher thanked Jason Goddard for attending the meeting.

**23/24/11****Ditch & Drainage Maintenance**

Graham Croucher and Paul Rogers still to contact local farmers to remind them of their responsibility for ditches on their land.

Lesley Gaskell has compiled a leaflet about responsibilities re. ditches/verges etc. which can be shared with the local community once Highways has agreed the content. Lesley Gaskell to liaise with Paul Rogers before consulting with Liam Gill of Somerset Highways.

**23/24/12****Highways**

White lining has been carried out throughout the village including the junction at High Lane/Shapwick Hill which has seen a number of near misses. Hopefully the newly painted lines at the junction will reduce the margin for error as it is now clearly marked.

**23/24/13****Community Group Communications**

Steve Campion raised the matter of reporting from the Community Group – some items do get reported back to the Parish Council but he questioned whether there was a need to broaden the communications to the wider community.

Graham Croucher said the group had been set up on the back of the community coming together during a recent planning application and representatives from village organisations take part in the meetings. The group, which includes Parish Council representation meets four times a year and generates ideas/projects for the benefit of the community.

Steve Campion said it would be useful if information from important issues are fed back to the Parish Council.

**Open Session**

A villagers said feedback from the meetings and from village groups which have come into being has been included in Shapwick News.

**Closed Session****23/24/14****Village Green Project**

**a) Purchase of the Land** Lesley Gaskell reported that there has been little progress since the meeting held on 25 April 2023 as the Parish Council is still waiting for the lawyers to agree the formal documents. On behalf of the Parish Council Lesley Gaskell had requested a change to the overage document as currently it states the overage can be triggered on change of use or planning application. The Trustees will not move on this

23/24/14 cont'd

clause stating that change of use could be triggered through permitted development rights but that the Parish Council would be protected around the projects planned by way of the excluded items listed.

Information regarding boundary walls has been requested for clarification. The wall adjacent to Station Road and the wall alongside the separate parcel of land would be part of the land however ownership of the school wall is unknown.

Bill Robbins was asked if a conditional contract could be put in place but the Estate lawyers see no need for this.

The only other outstanding matter is the change of name of title. The Parish Council lawyer has confirmed there are two applications pending with the Land Registry.

8.40pm County Councillor Matt Martin left the meeting.

Lesley Gaskell said that until the final documents have been seen and agreed the purchase cannot progress.

Graham Croucher suggested contacting Dovecote School to gain their view on the wall. Lesley Gaskell said it could be argued that the wall was built to enclose the Manor so would be the responsibility of the Manor owner.

#### **b) Focus Areas**

**Play Area:** No further updates

**Allotments:** Clerk had contacted Walton Parish Council (WPC) as it had purchased land which has been turned into allotments. The Clerk was advised in the first instance that WPC called a village meeting and invited anyone interested in renting an allotment/setting up an allotment society. A representative from the National Allotment Society attended and helped set up the group. The National Allotment Society helped WPC set up a formal agreement between WPC and allotment group and helped to set up the 'rules'. This would be a next step for Shapwick Parish Council once the land has been purchased.

**Open Spaces:** Several known suppliers of benches etc. has been collated.

Steve Champion asked when the time is to involve Somerset Council for advice. Graham Croucher advised once a master plan has been drawn up then this can be submitted to the Council – none of this can be actioned until the land has been purchased.

Frank Barnard said the Parish Council must be mindful of the retention of the open space nature of the land. He questioned whether allotments would only be serving a minority of the community. Lesley Gaskell reminded the meeting that the Parish Council has a statutory obligation to consider any requests for allotments and that Councillors had agreed preservation of lines of sight from the church to the Manor were important and should be maintained.

Steve Champion said one of the overall wishes of the community from the consultation events was the retention of the open space.

**c) Fundraising** Fundraising sources are constantly being researched. Funds raised through the community ~£3,500. Steve Champion has submitted a bid to the Green Spaces Community Fund – outcome should be known by end of May. Steve Champion reminded the meeting that the secured funds from a local charity are time limited.

23/24/15

**Finance**

**a) Internal Audit** The Clerk reported that Michael Dukes had inspected the books and records as an independent internal auditor and had signed the report. The report was shared with Councillors.

**b) Annual Statement of Governance** Councillors reviewed the Annual Statement of Governance and Steve Campion proposed that a 'yes' response should be given to each question. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Graham Croucher signed the Statement of Governance on behalf of the Parish Council.

**c) Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2023** the Clerk presented the previously distributed accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 together with the explanation of variances and bank reconciliation. Steve Campion proposed that the accounts be accepted. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Unanimous. Graham Croucher signed the Accounting Statements on behalf of the Parish Council.

**d) Audit Exemption 2023** The Parish Council meets the criteria for being eligible for exemption. Moray McGowan proposed that the Parish Council certifies as exempt for the year 2022/23. Seconded Lesley Gaskell. Unanimous. Graham Croucher and the Clerk as RFO signed the certificate of exemption. Clerk to send to auditors.

**e) Cheques for Signature** Information Commissioner £40.00(Chq 974, Fees), Steve Campion £58.92 (Chq 975, Drinks for Consultation Events), Graham Croucher £135.51 (Chq 976, Consultation Event cost and Coronation Celebration), BHIB £343.32 (Chq 977, Insurance), Webglu Ltd £180.00 (Chq 978, Web Hosting & Support), Graham Croucher £20.84 (Chq 979, Coronation Celebration), Steve Polden £20.98 (Chq 980, Coronation Celebration), John Anderson £155.26 (Chq 981, History Group Filming), SE Williams £457.37 (Chq 982, Salary & Expenses), Chq 983 Cancelled, Jump Design & Print Ltd (for Walton Press) £154.00 (Chq 984, Shapwick News) and Moray McGowan £96.33 (Chq 985, Coronation Celebration).

**f) Online Banking** Lesley Gaskell reported she had obtained the necessary forms to apply for online banking – Clerk and Lesley Gaskell to complete. Lesley Gaskell stressed the importance of having an audit trail of authority given for each payment prior to the payment being made. In addition a bank mandate will be completed to tidy up the account and remove any old signatories.

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**Date of Next Meeting**

Date of next PC meeting will be Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed.....

Date.....