

**Shapwick Parish Council**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on 4 September 2023**  
**at 7.00pm at the Dovecote School Car Park, Shapwick**

**23/24/31 Present:** Frank Barnard, Steve Champion, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, Moray McGowan and Paul Rogers

**23/24/32 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)

**23/24/33 Also Present:** Jason Goddard – CEO Dovecote School  
 ~30 villagers and other Dovecote School staff members

**23/24/34 Apologies for Absence**  
 Apologies were received from Nikki Polden,

**23/24/35 Declarations of Interest**  
 There were no declarations of interest.

**23/24/36 Planning Application 43/23/00006 Dovecote School - Erection of student enterprise cafe including external decking area**  
 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format of the meeting.

**23/24/37 Open Session**  
 The Chair invited Jason Goddard to explain the plans.  
 Jason Goddard explained Dovecote School opened in September 2022 with 21 pupils which has now increased to 67 pupils covering the age range 5-18 with most falling in the 8-14 age group and 75 staff many of whom live in the local vicinity. Many of the pupils have autism or anxiety and the café will offer opportunities to become more independent and will help pupils with social interaction whilst gaining enterprise skills. The café will also offer a community social space. The café will be open term time only (39 weeks of the year) between 9.00am and 3.00pm and will use local produce. The concrete pad has already been laid – it is temporary and could be moved if required. The aim is to start the café before Christmas.

The Chair invited those present to comment/ask questions.

A villager asked whether the toilet will be within the concrete pad area – Jason Goddard said it would sit outside the pad and would be screened by birch feather edged board.

A villager raised concerns about the need for pupils to cross the road to access the café – Jason Goddard said that the pupils currently cross the road to access the smallholding area and the staff have systems in place to safeguard the children. It is an important life skill that pupils learn how to cross roads safely. These comments were backed up by members of staff. Jason Goddard also said the school are in conversation with the Highways department about traffic calming measures outside the school – it is however, an involved process.

A villager commented about the speed of cyclists coming through the village as well as number of HGVs. Jason Goddard reiterated his comments regarding discussions with the Highways department.

A villager asked for clarification on opening hours – 9.00am to 3.00pm weekdays, term time only.

**23/24/37 cont'd**

A villager asked for further explanation on the term 'temporary' within the application. Jason Goddard explained that the school can only apply for temporary planning for such a structure and after 5 years it is to be renewed by a new application.

A villager asked about the drainage and sewer arrangement and whether it would put strain on the already struggling system at the north of the village. Jason Goddard said advice had been taken from Wessex Water – the sewage will be on a spur and an annual review will be carried which should help with the current situation. Steve Campion asked whether Wessex Water had advised the size of sewage pipe – Jason Goddard confirmed this.

A villager asked whether a phosphates scheme was required. Jason Goddard said he was unsure but would find out. The Chair advised that the Environmental response would take account of this if required.

Several of those present commented that they felt this would have a positive impact for the school and the community across all generations. Tracey Lockyer commented that the over the school holidays many had visited the smallholding and she felt the café would have a similar response.

A member of school staff encouraged members of the local community to visit the café and interact with the school pupils.

A villager asked whether it was possible to have a time extension to the flashing hazard lights outside the school. Jason Goddard said that as with traffic calming it is not a simple process.

A villager asked whether the number of accidents in the stretch of Station Road outside the school was known. The Chair said when the Parish Council had looked at the statistics in the past it was very few.

Steve Campion asked about the strategy behind the location of the café. Jason Goddard said due to the listed status of the Manor House siting the café on the other side of the road was not an option – also that the link to the smallholding was factor.

A villager queried why the concrete pad had already be laid. Jason Goddard apologised for his enthusiasm ahead of granted permission and recognised that engagement with the village first would have been more appropriate. Jason Goddard advised that Lesley Gaskell would be joining the advisory board and he hoped this would provide a community link with the school.

A query was raised about the car park and whether a planning application would be submitted. Jason Goddard said an application for the car park was submitted at the same time as the café application.

**23/24/38****Closed Session**

The Chair asked Councillors for their comments.

Lesley Gaskell said she accepted the reason behind the presumptive laying of the concrete pad but said it would have been appropriate if the car park application could have been considered at the same time. Lesley Gaskell said there is community support and the café would benefit the pupils at the school and is time limited so she is in support of the application.

**23/24/38 cont'd**

Moray McGowan said he recognised the positive support for application but felt valid concerns were also raised – traffic flow and its potential increase, sewage – will the system be able to cope. Steve Champion said the impact on the sewage system would be negligible. Moray McGowan said this application converts the field into another use and questioned whether the next step would be something more permanent.

Lesley Gaskell said she would have a different attitude to an application that would cause the loss of the open aspect of the field.

Moray McGowan said that although Jason Goddard reported there is an application for the car park it would not harm mentioning to Somerset Planning that currently there is no permission for the car park.

Frank Barnard said that he had concerns that the starting of the work before permission has been granted sets a precedent for steaming ahead with projects before due process has taken place. The Chair commented that the point has been raised with and accepted by Jason Goddard.

Paul Rogers said that moving forwards the correct processes should be followed and questioned whether the car park will be sufficient for predicted trade at the café and also said the café would be good for the community.

Graham Croucher proposed that the Parish Council support the application with a note detailing that work was started prior to the application and that it would have been more appropriate to wait for permission and to note the car park planning application has not yet been received. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous. Clerk to inform Somerset Planning.

**23/24/39****Concrete Pad on Village Green**

Councillors and any interested villagers moved to the concrete pad area on the village green.

The concrete pad area is showing significant signs of disrepair on the outer edges of the pad and requires remedial work as it represents a trip hazard.

A local contractor has offered his services FOC in return for advertising and a local farmer, with a waste licence, would take the hardcore spoil away for £120.00. Additional costs would be required for top soil and grass seed to make good the area.

**23/24/40****Open Session**

Nerina Scott said the village hall sometimes uses the area as a car park overspill and also that some events that take place on the green use the concrete area. Nerina Scott also asked whether the Parish Council would be repairing the wall that borders the village green and the village hall.

**23/24/41****Closed Session**

Lesley Gaskell informed the meeting that during the purchase process the Parish Council made enquiries as to the ownership of the wall as there is nothing in the title deeds to indicate that the Parish Council is the owner. Lesley Gaskell went on to say that the Vestey Trustees had stressed that they had only repaired the other section of the wall as a gesture of goodwill and not out of ownership. The ownership of the wall remains unclear.

Steve Champion asked if the village hall are the owners of the wall. The Chair said that ownership needs to be established.

**23/24/41 cont'd**

Moray McGowan suggested maybe the school can be asked for use of their car park as an overspill area.

Steve Champion said that cost effective solutions need to be found and that the Parish Council needs to review all remedial works required first before spending funds on other items.

Frank Barnard suggested buttressing the wall as a solution.

Graham Croucher proposed that a budget of £500 for remedial works to the concrete pad should be set with Paul Rogers to manage the project within that budget. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Unanimous.

**23/24/42**

**Date of Next Meeting**

Date of next PC meeting will be Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 7.00pm Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

