

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 25 April 2023
at 7.00pm at Shapwick Village Hall, Shapwick

- 22/23/142 Present:** Steve Campion, Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, Moray McGowan, and Paul Rogers
- 22/23/143 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 22/23/144 Also Present:** County Councillor Matt Martin
2 Villagers
- 22/23/145 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received and accepted from Frank Barnard and Nikki Polden
- 22/23/146 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 22/23/147 Land Behind Village Hall**
The meeting started with Councillors walking the land behind the village hall to aid the discussions later in the meeting. See minute 22/23/153
- 22/23/148 Minutes of the Meetings held on 21 March 2023**
Lesley Gaskell proposed the minutes be approved. Seconded Paul Rogers. Unanimous
The minutes were agreed and duly signed.
- 22/23/149 Land Purchase**
Lesley Gaskell proposed that due to the confidential nature of the legal elements of the contract that the agenda item be moved to the end of the meeting and the public be excluded for the item. Seconded Steve Campion. Unanimous.
- 22/23/150 Update from Meeting with Somerset Planners**
The Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk had met with Somerset Planners to discuss and understand the planning aspects of ownership of the land behind the village hall in relationship to future potential projects.
The planners advised that, as landowners, the Parish Council would have permitted development rights as set out within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 Part 12 Class A.

PART 12 Development by local authorities
Class A

Permitted development

A. The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority or by an urban development corporation of—

(a) any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers;

(b) lamp standards, information kiosks, passenger shelters, public shelters and seats, telephone boxes, fire alarms, public drinking fountains, horse troughs, refuse bins or baskets, barriers for the control of people waiting to enter public service vehicles, electric vehicle charging points and any associated infrastructure, and similar structures or works required in connection with the operation of any public service administered by them.

Interpretation of Class A

A.1 For the purposes of Class A, "urban development corporation" has the same meaning as in Part 16 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 (urban development)

A.2 The reference in Class A to any small ancillary building, works or equipment is a reference to any ancillary building, works or equipment not exceeding 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity.

22/23/150 cont'd

Some of the potential projects discussed were discussed with the planners:
 Allotments – reversion to agricultural use of land – planning permission would not be required. It would be for the Parish Council to determine the 'rules' of any allotments.
 Play Area – Somerset Council has a number of advisors that can be called upon to offer advice once a general scheme has been drawn up
 Setting Assessment – This will be up to the Parish Council but the planners were keen to stress the retention of the open nature of the land in this unique setting should be at the forefront when considering projects
 Economic development of land – Hire of land for events such as weddings etc.
 Potential sources of sources of funding were discussed.

Somerset Council has offered, once a master plan/(s) have been drawn up, to review any plans and give advice thereon.

22/23/151**Fundraising****a) Funding to Date**

Local Charity Grant £20,000

Donations from the Community £2,562

Smaller donations: Councillors agreed that perhaps not all potential donors have been reached or maybe there is not the interest. It was noted that some people had indicated they wanted to know what the funding was for before making a donation – i.e. a specific project. Councillors felt that as projects evolve and as smaller targets for projects are set these would be more attractive to donors.

b) Future Funding Sources

Councillors to keep researching potential funding sources.

22/23/152**Future Meetings**

Lesley Gaskell proposed that whilst the village green purchase and development is taking place the Parish Council move to meeting on a monthly basis. Seconded by Moray McGowan. Unanimous.

Steve Campion requested a later start time of 7.30pm. It was agreed that the later start time would commence from the June meeting.

22/23/153**Community Engagement Events and Development of Concept Plan**

Feedback from the two community events held: Good community engagement although it was noted that families with young children were not as well represented at the events as other age groups within the village

Chair has collated the feedback and views.

Lesley Gaskell said one of the overriding themes coming through was positive feedback on ownership of the land with concerns about preserving the openness of the space – only modest 'development'.

Ideas/suggestions that came from the events:

- Allotments
- Play equipment
- Seating
- Wild flower area & trees
- Retention of open space

From the walkabout of the land Councillors looked at the boundaries and considered responsibilities for boundary walls and the stream running through the land. The vista between the church and manor house was also viewed and considered to be of great importance.

22/23/153 cont'd

Allotments: Potentially the most contentious idea but also a really positive opportunity. Will need sensitive management. Councillors viewed the land adjacent to the churchyard as a potential site. Moray McGowan stressed the importance of the vistas between the two cedar trees in the churchyard and suggested that allotments should not be placed in that section but in the section nearest the footpath only.

Play Area: Lesley Gaskell said villagers had expressed concern that the equipment would dominate the central area of the land. Councillors agreed play equipment would be placed towards the periphery to maintain the openness of the space. Paul Rogers reminded Councillors that there are regulations relating to positioning of a play area in relation to residential properties and roads – this is where advice for the Parks Team at Somerset Council will be useful. Graham Croucher said one of the companies approached had suggested using the hard standing area as a starting point – Steve Champion pointed out this would be problematical for events that are held on the land.

Seating: A number of requests for benches were received. The WI will move their bench from the churchyard to the green.

Dog Walkers: Question has been raised as to whether dog walkers should be able to use the village green and how dogs could be kept off the play area.

Lesley Gaskell reminded everyone that this is a once in a lifetime chance and that it is important to take the time to get the right scheme from the start and suggested it would be a good idea to work on achieving short term gains in the first instance.

Councillors agreed to draw up a master plan which would be shared with Somerset Council for advice and then with the village community and grant funders.

Next Steps:

1. Secure purchase of the land.
2. Projects
 - a) Allotments: Lead - Steve Champion. Consider 'rules' of allotments. Clerk to contact other PC's, in particular Walton Parish Council, who have purchased land and set up their own allotments.
 - b) Play Area: Lead Paul Rogers & Nikki Polden. Research projects in other villagers – look at landscaping as well as equipment.
 - c) Open Space: Lead – Graham Croucher & Lesley Gaskell. Benches, wildflower area and trees. Upkeep of walls/boundaries.

Steve Champion suggested that following the Community Events it would be a good idea to produce a summary of feedback and next steps and circulate around the village.

Meeting closed to public to allow Councillors to consider sensitive items within the contracts in relation to the purchase of the land.

22/23/154**Purchase of the Land****a) Update on Legal Documents and Communications with Property Lawyer**

Graham Croucher proposed that the Parish Council contact its legal representation and suggest moving forward with a completion conditional on updating of legal documentation. Seconded by Moray McGowan. Unanimous. Lesley Gaskell to liaise with lawyer.

b) Approval to Transfer 10% Deposit

Lesley Gaskell proposed the Parish Council approve the transfer of £3,500 representing 10% deposit. Seconded Steve Champion. Unanimous. Clerk to organise.

22/23/155 Date of Next Meeting

Date of next PC meeting will be Tuesday 23 May 2023 7.00pm Village Hall. Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

