

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 19 September 2023
at 7.00pm at the Village Hall, Shapwick

- 23/24/43 Present:** Steve Campion, Graham Croucher, Moray McGowan, Nikki Polden and Paul Rogers
- 23/24/44 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 23/24/45 Also Present:** Councillor Abi McGuire
Jason Goddard and Neil Gage – Dovecote School
31 Villagers
- 23/24/46 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from County Councillor Matt Martin and Lesley Gaskell.
- 23/24/47 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest.
The Chair answered a query raised from the meeting held on 4 September 2023. Lesley Gaskell has been invited to join the advisory board of Dovecote School but has not yet taken up this position so there was no requirement to declare an interest in respect of planning application 43/23/00006.
- 23/24/48 43/23/00007 – Dovecote School - Formation of car park extension with speed table on Station Road and landscaping at existing entrance**
The Chair explained the format of this agenda item.
- 23/24/49 Open Session**
Jason Goddard was invited to explain the application. Jason Goddard explained this is a retrospective application, for which he apologised, citing the need for safety of staff and pupils as the reason for the work to date having been carried out. Dovecote School needs to accommodate staff vehicles as well as pupil arrivals and departures each day. The base is temporary – grey scalplings – no tarmac. The car park has been used by village organisations as well as the school – WI and Cricket Club. Part of the application includes a speed table which it is hoped will control speed around the school entrance as well as being of benefit to the community but the proximity to a listed building may well impact on the viability of this.
- The Chair opened the discussion for questions from the floor.
Frank Barnard commented that this is another example of work being carried out by Dovecote School without prior permission making reference to the pad for the café, the car park and the education pods. The Chair reminded the meeting that only the application for the car park is being discussed and only comments relevant to the application should be made. Frank Barnard said that any application which increases traffic through the village should be refused.
- Anthea Beale praised the educational work of the school but went on to comment that the application being considered is retrospective and substantial work has already been carried out to the car park which includes the making of a bund at the rear of the car park which impacts on the important vista between Glastonbury Tor and the Manor House which would be made worse if a hedge were to be planted on top of the bund. She drew attention to pages 8 and 9 in the Village Design Statement (VDS) and said that no consideration of this has been given.

23/24/49 cont'd

Anthea Beale read an email she had received from the County Conservation Officer which said the application shows a lack of knowledge for the site and its historical importance and that the arisings should all be screened for finds.

Mike Beale said he did not understand why the community had not been consulted as part of the business plan for the school as the requirement for a larger car park must have been known.

Steve Dunster said he supported the good work of the school and was pleased to see it operational again but that it must fit in with the needs of Shapwick village. He also reported that there is a noticeable increase in traffic travelling through the village at speed and asked if Dovecote School could remind staff and parents of the 30mph speed limit through the village.

Paul Rogers said he agreed that the vehicles are travelling too fast through the village.

Poppy Bishop said she hoped the application, if permission is granted, would see a reduction in speed of vehicles but felt that most of the traffic is through traffic.

John Anderson said he agreed with the concerns raised and understands why the community is concerned about future use of the field. John Anderson reiterated the importance of the vista.

Mike Beale asked if the entrance to the car park would be widened. Jason Goddard said the entrance would not be widened.

Jason Goddard said he appreciated the concerns raised – the landscaping has not been done yet so the bund could be reconditioned as he recognises the importance of the vista.

Moray McGowan asked why matting had not been used for the surface. Jason Goddard said scalping was a cheaper and quicker option – the school had not envisaged the requirement for a larger car park so soon and due to the increase in staff and pupils an immediate solution had to be found.

Moray McGowan asked about future use of the field. Neil Gage said that the 3-5 year plan is for farm land and sports field only. The Chair said future use cannot be commented on in the PC response.

Steve Campion asked about the speed table and how that was progressing with Highways. Jason Goddard said it is a protracted conversation involving a lengthy process.

23/24/50**Closed Session**

The Chair asked Councillors for comment.

Nikki Polden said she would like to see the vista maintained and therefore some agreement on lowering the bund with no planting on top before supporting the application.

Steve Campion said the previous car park had always been a flat car park which kept the views open in line with the VDS so it would be difficult to support the current application. Steve Campion said it might be worth considering grass matting. Steve Campion also commented that anything which reduces the speed of vehicles is a

23/24/50 cont'd

positive but said cyclists had not been mentioned and therefore wondered whether the table ramp is the right solution. Maybe more signage would help.

Paul Rogers said he agreed with previous comments but felt more detail is required before the application can be supported.

Moray McGowan said he had nothing further to add.

Graham Croucher proposed that the Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that the bund at the rear of the car park impacts on the openness of the space and the vista between Glastonbury Tor and the Manor House. Maintenance of the open nature of the field and the vista are important to the character of Shapwick (VDS page 8). Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous. Clerk to inform Somerset Planning.

23/24/51**Councillor's Report**

Abi McGuire introduced herself to the meeting. She is a prospective independent parliamentary candidate for the next general election in the newly formed Wells and Mendip Hills Constituency and is currently an independent councillor on Shepton Mallet Town Council. She explained she was attending in an observational capacity and was happy to talk to parishioners at the end of the meeting.

Villagers' Open Period**23/24/52****Parish Council Vacancy**

Following the resignation of Frank Barnard the statutory notice has been posted. At the end of the notice period Electoral Services will inform the Parish Council whether the vacancy is to be filled by election or co-option.

The Chair thanked Frank Barnard for his contribution to the Parish Council over the last two years.

23/24/53**Village Green Management Plan**

The Chair thanked everyone involved over the years for their input in achieving the purchase of the village green. Particular thanks were extended to Lesley Gaskell for her liaison work with the legal team at County.

The Chair explained that the village green management plan has been broken into specific areas to make discussion and actions thereon easier to manage and keep track of.

23/24/54**Village Green – Governance**

a) Development of 'Rules' - It was agreed to take the topic to the next Community Group meeting so that village organisations can have input into the development of the 'rules' Post meeting Councillors will draw up a proposal for discussion.

b) Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Lead – Graham Croucher proposed that the Parish Council accept the previously circulated Safeguarding Policy. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous. The Chair asked for volunteers to take on the Safeguarding Lead role. Prior to the meeting Lesley Gaskell had indicated she would be willing to take on this role. Graham Croucher proposed that Lesley Gaskell is the Safeguarding Lead. Seconded Nikki Polden. Unanimous.

23/24/55**Village Green**

a) Communication Plan – The Chair reminded everyone of the general concept that had arisen from the Consultation Events that the village green would include – an open central area, a play area, a natural area, a meadow area and allotments.

23/24/55 cont'd**Open Session**

The Chair gave those present the opportunity to comment in general terms on the concept. A villager asked that the Parish Council are sensitive to the proximity neighbouring properties when placing benches on the green.

A number of questions relating to the allotments were raised – see minute 23/24/58.

A villager asked if all weather paths are part of the plan – the Chair said these are not currently under consideration.

Closed Session

The communication plan has already started with a leaflet drop to every household announcing the purchase. The village green will be discussed at the next Community Group meeting. Smaller meetings with direct neighbours will be held to ensure their views are taken into consideration. The next edition of the Shapwick News will include an overall summary of current position. A wider press release is being considered.

b) Station Road Safety Gate – After discussion it was agreed to ask community groups for suggestions and then look at obtaining quotes.

c) Works to Concrete Pad – A local contractor has generously offered his services FOC to remove the damaged sections with a local farmer, with a waste licence, taking away the spoil at a cost of £120. The area will be made good with a clay based infill covered with top soil (£20/tonne). Work to commence as soon as practicable.

d) Other Repair/Remedial Work – Parish Council to carry out a survey to assess any other works required.

23/24/56**Open Central Grass Area**

a) Benches and Seating – Three quotes have been obtained. Councillors agreed, subject to viewing similar products at a local school, to purchase two tables and two benches at a cost of £1,756 (excluding vat) plus delivery. Proposed by Graham Croucher. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous.

Paul Rogers asked whether the benches would be permanently fixed. The Chair said the benches could be fixed in such a way that they can be removed and relocated if desired. A plaque will be purchase to fix to the bench purchased from funds raised at the Coronation Event.

b) Grass Cutting – Obtaining quotes from contractors for this service has been difficult. Dovecote School has very generously offered to cut the grass with only cost of cutting to be covered. Moray McGowan proposed that a cutting plan and costs be agreed with Dovecote School. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous.

23/24/57**Play Area**

a) Meeting Feedback – Members of the Parish Council had met with Scott Mason – Somerset Council Parks & Open Spaces Team Leader. Scott Mason has a wealth of expertise and has offered to help with Parish Council with design of the play area and any tendering processes.

b) Working Party – It was agreed that Nikki Polden and Paul Rogers would continue as the working party to create a Phase 1 Plan for the play area with budget of £10,000 for Phase 1. Final designs and costings to be agreed by the Parish Council. Steve Campion commented that moving forward it might be appropriate to set up a village play area association as in other villages.

c) Phase 2 – It was agreed to consider what Phase 2 might look like and obtain quotes to help with grant funding applications.

23/24/58

Allotments

a) Meeting Feedback - There is considerable interest in the village to own an allotment. Steve Campion and Graham Croucher had met with Allan Cavill of the National Allotments Society to look at the site and seek advice. Allan Cavill is local to the area and has experience in setting up allotment societies.

From his inspection of the site Allan Cavill estimates that there is room for twenty 8m by 10m plots. There will be no site parking.

b) Formation of Village Allotment Association – The next step is organise a meeting of potential allotment holders and with Allan Cavill's assistance set up an Allotment Association and draw up 'rules' for the allotments to be brought to the next Parish Council meeting. Steve Campion said the meeting should be opened to the wider community as well as those who have already expressed an interest. Proposed Nikki Polden. Seconded Paul Rogers. Unanimous. Steve Campion to liaise with Allan Cavill to find a suitable meeting date.

23/24/59

Meadow Area

It is anticipated this will be an annually cut long grass area so that over time the nutrient level will reduce to encourage wildflowers. The views of St. Mary's Church will be maintained.

23/24/60

Natural Area

It is anticipated that the area to the west of the footpath will be a natural area with a light touch management of habitats. It was agreed to put a call out for volunteers to help manage this area in the next edition of the Shapwick News.

23/24/61

True Speed – Request for Access to Land on North of Bridewell Lane

True Speed has requested from the Parish Council, as land owners, access to the telegraph pole near the school wall to connect their telecommunications apparatus. Moray McGowan drew attention to point 7 on the document referencing not interfering with access and asked whether any of the village green plans would affect this clause. Paul Rogers proposed that the Parish Council approve in principle subject to the named parties on the documentation being changed from the Vestey Estate to the Parish Council. Seconded Steve Campion. Unanimous.

23/24/62

Website

Graham Croucher, Nikki Polden and Paul Rogers had met with Steve McAuliffe to discuss the design of a new website which would include representation of village organisations as well as the Parish Council. Steve McAuliffe would provide his services for free with just charges for staff involved in the initial set up being made. Nikki Polden proposed that the website be discussed at the Community Group meeting to get feedback from village organisations before moving to the design stage. Seconded Moray McGowan.

23/24/63

Minutes of the Meetings held on 11 July 2023 and 4 September 2023

The minutes were agreed and duly signed. Proposed by Steve Campion. Seconded by Moray McGowan.

23/24/64

Finance

a) Finance Update – A village green summary was distributed. A budget update on general Parish Council funds will be produced.

b) Approval of Expenses for Payment Jump Design & Print Ltd £215.00 (Shapwick News and Village Green Communication Flyer), HMRC £108.20 (PAYE – Mths 5 and 6), Shapwick Village Hall £54.00 (Hall hire) and Mrs SE Williams £467.40 (Salary & Expenses).

23/24/65

Date of Next Meeting

Date of next PC meeting will be Tuesday 17th October 2023 7.00pm Village Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT