

Shapwick Parish Council
Minutes of a meeting held on 17 October 2023
at 7.00pm at The Pavilion, Shapwick

- 23/24/75 Present:** Graham Croucher, Lesley Gaskell, Moray McGowan and Paul Rogers
- 23/24/76 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 23/24/77 Also Present:** Neil Gage and Sam Andrews – Dovecote School
8 villagers and other Dovecote School staff members
- 23/24/78 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Nikki Polden, Steve Champion and Jason Goddard (Dovecote School).
- 23/24/79 Declarations of Interest**
Lesley Gaskell, although she has yet to take up her position on the advisory board at Dovecote School, to avoid any confusion declared an interest in item 23/24/80 and took no part in item 23/24/80-83.
- 23/24/80 Planning Application 43/23/00007 Dovecote School – Formation of Car Park Extension and Landscaping at Existing Entrance (part retrospective)**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format of the meeting. The Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting is to consider the amended plans for this application.
- 23/24/81 Open Session**
Neil Gage from Dovecote School explained that following the previous meeting held on 19 September 2023 the school had taken on board villagers' concerns and had reduced the height of the bund at the rear of the car park to 0.6m.

The Chair explained that at the request of the case officer the soil already removed would remain on site and that the originally proposed speed table would now be part of a separate planning application.

There were no comments from the floor.
- 23/24/82 Closed Session**
The Chair asked Councillors to comment.
Paul Rogers said he thought that the amended plans represent a good compromise. Moray McGowan said he was in agreement. The Chair said the Parish Council appreciate the prompt response from Dovecote School in relation to concerns raised by villagers at the previous meeting and that the extended car park would address the need at the school as well as providing an asset for village community groups. Moray McGowan said he welcomed the notion of the speed table application. Paul Rogers proposed that the Parish Council support the amended application. Seconded by Moray McGowan. Unanimous. Clerk to inform Somerset Planning.

Villagers' Open Period

23/24/83

County Councillor Report

County Councillor not present. The Chair suggested that it might be more appropriate to invite the County Councillor once a quarter and to have a 'meet the Councillor' type session where villagers would have the opportunity to ask questions about Somerset in a broader sense as well as about Shapwick.

23/24/84

Parish Council Vacancy

There was no request for an election following the statutory process after the resignation of Frank Barnard so this vacancy can be filled by co-option.

Steve Champion has also decided to resign from the Parish Council – the Chair thanked Steve for all his hard work especially the time given to launch the allotment society. It is hoped Steve will be able to return to the Parish Council in the future. Clerk to inform Electoral Services.

The Chair encouraged people to think about whether they would be willing to become a Parish Councillor. The vacancies will be advertised on the website, Facebook and in Shapwick News.

23/24/85

Village Community Group Feedback from Recent Meeting

The Chair reported that a very positive meeting has been held with several of the groups within the village represented.

Community Café – Big thank you to Wendy Anderson. This is now well established and gives a good opportunity for villagers to meet.

History Group – Very successful. Have held some interesting talks. More ideas welcome.

Affordable Housing – For the time being this has been paused due to the lack of any available funding. The Clerk said the County Councillor is still pursuing the matter of funding with County.

Footpaths – Steve Polden has taken this on and will be looking at the 1912 map to see if there are any established footpaths.

Shapwick News – A big thank you to Moray McGowan for his editorship of the News.

Sustainability Group – Looking for more people to join. It is hoped to visit properties where people have installed solar panels, heat pumps etc.

The Community Group agreed that it was not the group's responsibility to organise village events.

New PC/Village Website – Positive feedback on a dual site which can publicise village events as well as representing the Parish Council. The Parish Council has set aside ~£1,600 to complete the project. Meeting to be held with Steve McAuliffe.

A discussion took place in relation to users of the village green such as Shapwick Jam, Shapwick Bunny Hop and it was agreed that it would be business as usual and these users would not see any change to recent years. More discussion is required around access and parking. A meeting between the village hall and the Parish Council is to be set up to discuss the matter further.

23/24/86

Village Green - Governance

Working party has yet to meet. Will report back to Parish Council in due course.

23/24/87

Remedial Works Required

a) Concrete Pad – Work is planned to take place 4 November 2023 (weather permitting). Deteriorated concrete will be removed, infilled with clay (FOC) and top soil added and compacted. Parish Council will need pay for removal of spoil and topsoil.

b) Station Road Safety Gate – On hold until after discussions with village hall.

c) Boundary Walls – Paul Rogers reported that three stone masons have been contacted to assess repairs required to boundary walls: i) Wall bordering proposed allotment land – Undergrowth has been cleared. Wall in very poor state of repair with much of stone missing. Repair is required – suggestion is to lower the height to reduce costs. ii) Station Road wall – Need to make safe the edge and stones on the top. iii) Whilst not accepting any liability for ownership, the wall neighbouring the village hall car park and village green has been included in the assessment due to the fact the wall is leaning and represents a health and safety issue.

It was agreed to wait until all three quotes are available before making any further decisions.

The Chair reported that the rope put up to prevent people walking past the allotment field wall had been taken down. It was agreed to put up hazard tape so that people are alerted to the insecure wall.

The Chair asked members whether they thought the conservation officer should be consulted prior to repair of this wall. Lesley Gaskell said that the Parish Council is entitled to carry out repairs. The consensus of opinion was that there was no need to consult. The height to which the wall should be repaired was discussed – it needs to tall enough to prevent a trip hazard and to provide some security to the allotments.

d) Other Remedial Works – None identified at present.

23/24/88

Open Central Area

a) Benches and Seating – Have been ordered and are ready for delivery. To be stored under the outside covered area at the village hall until they can be fixed in place. It was agreed to put a call out for a working party to help site and fix the benches – if the take up was sufficient then the work carried can be expanded to include clearance of some of the overgrown areas.

b) Grass Cutting – Thank you to Dovecote School for agreeing to carry out this work. Parish Council to self-bill when number of cuts known.

23/24/89

Play Area Phase 1

Paul Rogers reported that potential suppliers have been contacted with the view to making up a concept plan. Scott Mason from Somerset will also attend the meetings with the suppliers. Scott Mason will help the Parish Council look for match funding which will increase the budget available. Meetings planned to take place 3 November 2023.

23/24/90

Allotments

a) Meeting Feedback - A very positive meeting was held between potential allotment holders and Allan Cavigil – regional representative of the National Allotment Society. The group discussed the formation of an allotment society, allotment design and gave some consideration to allotment rules. A number of points were raised at the meeting which the potential allotment holders would like the Parish Council to consider – reinstatement of the field gate to prevent people and/or dogs walking over the plots, whether or not the area could be extended and/or changed as the large cedar tree will create a lot of shading in the top right hand corner of the field and does not make for ideal growing conditions, installation of matting/grasscrete at the entrance. Also a lease agreement needs to be set up and operational rules of running the allotments needs to be drawn up in consultation with the allotment society.

23/24/90 cont'd

Open Session

The Chair invited comment.

Lesley Gaskell asked whether there were enough interested parties. Jo Wright said there are sufficient plots to accommodate everyone who wants a plot or half plot. Jo Wright asked whether the area currently earmarked as meadow space was set in stone or could some be used for the allotments. Stuart Dennes said this is the most productive area of the site. Poppy Bishop said this part of the field will get the best of any sunshine and that rules could accommodate any concerns of height of structures in this area.

The Chair said he had previously asked Allan Cavill about the shading and he was confident that it would not affect the site. The Chair explained that the meadow area has been left to i) maintain the open aspect between the church and the manor house and ii) have a buffer between the allotments and the owners of neighbouring properties.

Stuart Dennes said he did not think, because of the lie of the land, the views would be impacted. The Chair said the view from the village green to the church also needs to be considered. Lesley Gaskell explained that as the land has designated open space status the conservation officer was keen to minimise any impact on the view. Lesley Gaskell suggested that perhaps the land needed to be looked at again to see what could be accommodated. Jo Wright said that rules regarding all the plots could be drawn up in consultation with the Parish Council.

The Chair suggested that the working party meet on site and relook at the area before making any further decisions.

The Chair signposted the Somerset Community Foundation as a grant the allotment society might be interested in as well as contacting Gwilliams about their community fund.

23/24/91

Grant Applications

Other sources of funding for the Parish Council to investigate are Valencia for Phase 2 of the Play Area as well as lottery funding.

23/24/92

True Speed

True Speed have provided updated paperwork for signature and the pole in question has been identified.

Lesley Gaskell suggested that the Parish Council ask True Speed if there are any current permissions in place as nothing showed in the searches when purchasing the land. Additionally, Lesley Gaskell said that the Parish Council need to consider what the plan for the village green will look like before signing the paperwork as plans may mean that clauses of the contract cannot be met. Clerk to pursue the matter with True Speed.

23/24/93

Website

See Community Group Feedback.

23/24/94

Minutes of Meetings held on 19 September 2023 and 9 October 2023

The minutes were approved and duly signed. Proposed Paul Rogers. Seconded by Moray McGowan. Unanimous.

23/24/95

Finance

a) Update Finances largely in line with the expected expenses identified when the precept was set. The money set aside for village projects will fund the website project leaving a balance which is likely to be required to cover some of the boundary wall remedial works as there will insufficient funds remaining in the village green funds once the costs of benches, concrete pad repairs, gates and play equipment are met.

b) Approval of Expenses

The Clerk asked Councillors to consider granting approval for payment of Shapwick News printing invoices on receipt so long as in line with the quote given to ensure timely payment of invoices. Proposed by Moray McGowan. Seconded by Graham Croucher. Unanimous.

Expenses approved for payment were: Blue Cedar Print Works Ltd £96.80 (October edition of Shapwick News), Shapwick Village Hall £300 (Annual donation), St. Mary's PCC £500 (Chq 990, Annual donation), Mrs S E Williams £216.63 (Salary) and Somerset Association of Local Councils £137.08 (Annual Affiliation).

23/24/96

Future Meetings

a) Return to Bi-Monthly Meetings and Time of Start of Meetings Councillors discussed now that the village green purchase was complete that the Parish Council could return to bi-monthly meetings with the working parties continuing to work on the allotted areas. Time of start of the meeting was discussed – it was suggested that villagers' open period could commence at 7.15pm prior to the formal Parish Council meeting starting at 7.30pm. Moray McGowan proposed that this be voted on at the November meeting with the view to starting this new format in the New Year which would allow time to publicise in the Shapwick News. Seconded Graham Croucher. Unanimous.

b) Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Parish Council meeting will be Tuesday 21 November 2023 7.00pm Village Hall

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed.....

Date.....