

**Shapwick Parish Council**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on 23 January 2024**  
**at 7.15pm at the Village Hall, Shapwick**

- 23/24/113 Present:** Graham Croucher, Wendy Anderson, Lesley Gaskell, Tracey Lockyer, Moray McGowan and Paul Rogers
- 23/24/114 In Attendance:** Sue Williams (Clerk)
- 23/24/115 Also Present:** ~40 villagers
- 23/24/116 Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies were received from Nikki Polden.
- 23/24/117 Co-option to fill Vacancies for two Councillors**  
Nominations for co-option were called. Wendy Anderson and Tracey Lockyer had put their names forward and their applications had been distributed prior to the meeting.  
Paul Rogers nominated Wendy Anderson. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell.  
Moray McGowan nominated Tracey Lockyer. Seconded by Paul Rogers.  
There being no other nominations it was unanimously agreed that Wendy Anderson and Tracey Lockyer be co-opted to the Parish Council. Wendy Anderson and Tracey Lockyer were welcomed to the Parish Council and joined the meeting. Clerk to liaise regarding papers for completion.
- 23/24/118 Declarations of Interest**  
Lesley Gaskell declared an interest in and took no part in item 23/24/119 as she is now a member of the advisory board at Dovecote School.
- Villagers' Open Period**
- 23/24/119 Dovecote School – Church Farm**  
Jason Goddard informed those present that Dovecote School has purchased Church Farm and has submitted planning applications for change of use from dwelling to school building with some minor alterations. The Church Farm buildings will primarily be used for those pupils who are very anxious who will benefit from a smaller learning environment. Pupils will use the footpath across the Village Green to access the main school site from the Church Farm site.  
The Chair thanked Jason Goddard for engaging with the community and explaining the plans for the Church Farm site. Jason Goddard said he welcomes any private conversations villagers wish to have with the school – please call at the school office.  
The planning applications will be discussed at a meeting to be held on 5 February 2024 at 7.15pm in the Village Hall.
- 23/24/120 Planning Application 43/23/00009 53 High Lane - Erection of two-storey extension to South elevation, replacement of ground floor window to patio doors, installation of 3 No. dormers and 5No. velux windows to the roof, erection of temporary cabin on site of existing garage (to be demolished) and off street parking provision**  
Applicant not present. There are no objections from nearest neighbours.  
The Chair asked Councillors for comment.  
Paul Rogers said he supports the application. Moray McGowan drew attention to advice from Highways regarding the parking area and the highway.

**23/24/120 cont'd**

Paul Rogers proposed the Parish Council support the application – in keeping and no effect on neighbours. Seconded Moray McGowan. Unanimous. Clerk to contact Case Officer with Parish Council response.

**23/24/121 Planning Application 43/23/00017 Coppice Gate Farm - Erection of an Agricultural Building****Open Session**

Martin Davis, applicant, explained that the application is to erect a new agricultural building which will modernise and update existing buildings and accommodate the increased herd size.

**Closed Session**

The Chair asked Councillors for comment. Councillors had no objections to the plans. Lesley Gaskell proposed the Parish Council support the application. Seconded by Paul Rogers. Unanimous. Clerk to complete Parish Council response on planning portal.

**23/24/122 Planning Application 43/23/00008 Land to West of Mill Lane - Erection of 8no. dwellings (including 4no. affordable dwellings) with all associated works**

Following comments about the timing of the registration of the application and residents receiving notice over the Christmas period the Clerk clarified that the application had been registered at the end of September with Somerset Council and the delay was due to issues within the planning department and not the fault of the applicant.

**Open Session**

The Chair invited comment from the floor.

A villager asked if planning notices had been displayed. It was confirmed that planning notices had been displayed on site as well as the application being advertised in the local press. No comments were made from the floor.

Stuart Dennes read a statement from Mr Fletcher Robinson of Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) who had hoped attend the meeting but sent his apologies. Mr Robinson's report stated that the CPRE object to the application for the following reasons – 1. Large scale development is inappropriate for a Tier 4 settlement, 2. The development will cause unacceptable harm to the conservation area, 3. The cul de sac nature of the design is alien to the village layout, 4. Important views will be blocked, 5. The views of the Heritage Vision report are endorsed and 6. Referring to the Viability Assessment submitted with the application it is questionable whether it gives an accurate picture.

The Chair explained the next steps would be for Councillors to consider whether any more information needs to be gathered before the meeting to be held on 5 February 2024 at which the Parish Council's response to Somerset Planning will be decided.

John Anderson commented that some people had felt too intimidated to speak at the last meeting and asked if Councillors review villagers' responses made to the planning portal. Councillors confirmed that comments made to the portal are considered. Lesley Gaskell and Moray McGowan encouraged villagers to comment on the planning portal.

**Closed Session**

Before opening discussion the Chair reminded Councillors of the need to be open minded in their approach to the application.

The Chair reminded Councillors of the Parish Council response to the previous application 43/22/00005 (withdrawn). The Parish Council objection was primarily based on the failure to meet the criteria for a development outside the settlement boundary of a Tier 4 settlement. In addition to this other areas listed were – processes not followed, no community consultation, highway concerns, drainage concerns and change to character.

**23/24/122 cont'd**

Lesley Gaskell said her understanding in relation to drainage is that a developer is entitled to have a development connected to the main drainage of a settlement whether or not there is capacity. The Chair said that Wessex Water had provided updated spillage data which would be made available on the Parish Council website. There has been a marked increase in the number of spills, the average of which equates to 3 hours per day.

Paul Rogers said given the response from Highways work would need to be done to address the concerns around traffic and parked cars. Paul Rogers commented that it was good to see that the applicant had addressed some of the issues raised in the previous application.

Moray McGowan said he welcomed the 4 plus 4 market versus affordable housing aspect but feels there needs to be clarity on what affordable housing means. Moray McGowan said the Highway concerns are valid planning grounds and given the narrow width of Mill Lane he was not sure what could be done to make it safer. Moray McGowan questioned the two dwellings proposed for Church Road as they are of a different design and would alter the entrance to the village. Moray McGowan recognised sewage and drainage issues are still a concern. He feels that this application is moving closer to something that may be acceptable but this is not yet the case.

Lesley Gaskell said the applicant has addressed more concerns with this application but it was unfortunate that the Tier 4 requirement to consult with the community before submitting the application had not taken place. Lesley Gaskell said the concerns have been raised by Highways. Lesley Gaskell also commented that the cul de sac and the two larger dwellings are out of character with the village. Lesley Gaskell said she would like the Parish Council to make enquiries of the Case Officer regarding the affordable housing element.

Graham Croucher said on first sight this appears to be a more considered application but is disappointed that the Highways issues have not been addressed as these were cited in the previous application. Graham Croucher said he would like to know more about the drainage and whether or not the attenuation pond would reduce flooding experienced in Church Road. Graham Croucher said the people who would miss out are those who cannot find affordable rental properties in places like Shapwick - the implication is that the properties will be available for rent but it is not clear if this is definite. Graham Croucher said he felt exploration of possibilities should continue. Lesley Gaskell reminded those present that when the Community Land Trust were looking at possibilities that the viable number of units for a housing association to become involved was 8.

**Open Period**

A villager asked who would be able to rent the houses – those from inside the village or those from outside. The Chair said that the latest Housing Need Survey had shown a need within the village for rental properties for local people – more information on the properties available to rent and the management thereof is required.

John Anderson said the Wessex Water response says it is responsible for water and run off and asked what would happen when the attenuation pond floods given its proximity to the larger dwellings proposed. The Chair said a risk factor has been built into the calculations. John Anderson said the issues need to be addressed before any development takes place rather than afterwards. Steve Dunster said run off would increase if fields are built upon. Jo Wright said the pumping station overflows now so it would be worse with more properties.

**23/24/122 cont'd****Closed Session**

Moray McGowan said responses from wildlife organisations regarding potential and actual sewage overflows should be considered as well as those from Wessex Water. The Chair asked Councillors to consider actions required before decision meeting. Lesley Gaskell said an understanding of drainage needs to be confirmed and a meeting with the Case Officer to discuss affordable housing should be arranged as well as considering the impact of the Highways objections on the outcome of the application.

The agreed actions are:

1. To ascertain the impact of the Highways objection as the Parish Council would not be able to support an application Highways has said is dangerous.
2. Find out more about the affordable housing aspect and consider its longevity and whether or not it is possible to protect against a tenants right to buy.
3. Further investigation into standing water/sewage issues.

The Chair thanked villagers for their input into this planning application consultation.

**23/24/123****Allotments**

The proposed allotment agreement has been shared with Shapwick Allotment Association (SAA). SAA has raised a number of queries and Lesley Gaskell said she would work through these and provide a revised draft which could hopefully be approved at the 5 February 2024 meeting.

One of the matters raised surrounds the no dig policy. Lesley Gaskell said she had included this on the basis of the Zoom call meeting held with Mark Lidster (Conservation Officer) in relation to the D32 Open Space Policy nature of the land and the need to protect the Parish Council as a statutory body. SAA said that although many of the plot holders have expressed a desire to use no dig there will be an element of digging required such as the planting of fruit trees/bushes etc.

Lesley Gaskell said she would go back to Mark Lidster for clarification on this as well as discussing the desire to erect a shed and provide a hardcore entrance to the plots. The 'rules' will be incorporated within the agreement.

Quotes for the allotment shed have been obtained by SAA, The release of funding is conditional upon amendment of the safeguarding policy to meet the requirements of the Somerset Community Foundation.

**23/24/124****Play Area**

Still awaiting third quote. Paul Rogers will chase again and ask for a quote by the end of this week after which available quotes will be considered and a decision made.

**23/24/125****Request to use Village Green**

A discussion took place as to what documentation would be required from organisations/people using the Village Green for events not organised by the Parish Council. It was agreed to ask organisers of such events for an event risk assessment and proof of insurance of the event as well a copy of a temporary event notice if applicable.

Two requests for use of the Village Green have been received.

1. Shapwick Bunny Hop – Monday 1 April 2024
2. Shapwick Jam – Event date 8 June 2024 with set up starting 4 June 2024

Approval subject to receiving the required documentation was given.

23/24/126

**Village Green – Other**

- a) **Works to Concrete Pad** – Unfortunately the contractor's equipment had been stolen – now up and running again and it is hoped work will be completed in the next two weeks.
- b) **Work to Boundary Walls** – Obtaining quotes from three contractors is proving difficult so it was agreed to review the two received to date and work out a plan. Due to cost of works involved it is likely that it will have to be carried out in stages. Given that Dovecote School pupils will be using the footpath between the two school sites it was agreed to prioritise the wall surrounding the allotment field. The footpath across the village green will need to be inspected to assess condition. Lesley Gaskell suggested speaking to the school to ask them to consider being responsible for gritting the path in icy weather.
- c) **Station Road Gate** – To be included as part of the play equipment installation project.
- d) **Bench Padlocks** – Graham Croucher to source.
- e) **Goal Posts** – Lesley Gaskell said despite the very generous offer of goal posts from a villager she thinks that the Parish Council should decline the offer as the posts are unlikely to meet current safety standards and the Parish Council would be liable should an accident involving the posts occur. Paul Rogers said he agreed. Councillors unanimously agreed to decline the offer.

23/24/127

**Safeguarding Policy**

Amendments are required to meet the criteria set by Somerset Community Foundation before funding can be released. Lesley Gaskell will amend policy as required for approval at meeting to be held on 5 February 2024.

23/24/128

**True Speed/Western Power - Wayleave**

Wayleave enquiries relating to the posts on land owned by the Parish Council are on-going. Western Power has provided documentation but still awaiting a reply from True Speed. Lesley Gaskell contacted the solicitor but no wayleave documents arose during the purchase of the land. Lesley Gaskell suggested contacting the Estate solicitors to say the Parish Council is happy to store any relevant archived documents relating to the land purchased.

23/24/129

**Litter Pick**

Lorraine Davies has very kindly offered to organise this event again this year. Potential dates are 25 February or 3 March.

23/24/130

**Minutes of Meetings held on 21 November 2023 and 15 January 2024**

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

23/24/131

**Finance**

- a) **Precept 2024/2025** The Clerk explained the precept calculations distributed prior to the meeting. Workings for various levels of precept and the impact on Band D properties tax base were shared. Consideration for on-going commitments as well as new commitments following the acquisition of the Village Green have been taken into account. The Chair said that there are likely to be unknown costs associated with the Village Green and suggested that an increase in the precept which would add ~£10 to a band D property would be appropriate. Councillors agreed that the Parish Council faces price increases in the same way households do and it is appropriate to consider this when deciding the precept. Graham Croucher proposed an increase in the precept to £13,500. Seconded by Lesley Gaskell. Unanimous. Clerk to return paperwork to Somerset Council.

23/24/131 cont'd

**b) NJC Pay** The NJC pay award for 2023/2024 has been agreed and applied.

**c) Approval of Expenses**

Expenses approved for payment were: Somerset Council £83.62 (Emptying of dog waste bin – Oct 23 to Mar 24), Blue Cedar Print Works Ltd £114.40 (Shapwick News) and Mrs SE Williams £460.73 (Salary & expenses).

23/24/132

**Dates of Next Meeting**

The dates of the next Parish Council meeting will be Monday 5 February 2024 and Tuesday 19 March 2024 7.15pm Village Hall.

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

Signed.....

Date.....

