

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH

Held on Monday 4th May 2021 at 6:30 pm

Held remotely using Zoom software (due to the Coronavirus pandemic)

Councillors present: Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick (Chair) Cllr Andrew Rowswell
Cllr Richard Martin (Vice Chair) Cllr Rev Geoff Wade
Cllr David Bourn Cllr Ed Wakely
Cllr Sarah Brunt

Other Members of the Parish: Stella Davies, Mrs Sharon Humphries, Mr Bruce Barton, Mr Roger Cripps

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllrs Clare Lillywhite and Angie Joy, Mr Ian Rumbelow (Head Primary School), Mrs Fiona Lintern (Pre-School), Mr John Halsey (Neighbourhood Watch), Joan Kennedy (St Michaels Guild), Mrs Kate Wylie Carrick (Women's Institute), Mrs Jackie Priddle (Arts Group)

2. Report from Chairman of the Parish Council - Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick

The Chairman welcomed those who attended. Regrettably due to the Coronavirus Pandemic there was no Parish Meeting held in 2020, the last Parish Meeting being held on 20 May 2019. Since then the Parish Council has seen a number of changes; the Parish Clerk, farewell to Mrs Jane Brown and welcome to Mrs Stella Davies; Parish Councillors, farewell to Mrs Jane Bishop (former Chairperson), Mr Innis Finlay and Roger Cripps, replaced by Cllrs David Bourn and the rev Geoff Wade both co-opted as councillors.

The most significant event that impacted on Shepton Beauchamp was the lockdown restrictions imposed on everyone due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The resilience of the community was ably demonstrated by neighbours supporting each other and by the voluntary work undertaken by the SB Support Group (Innis Finlay (Chair), Richard and Karen Martin, Rev Geoff Wade, Jane Weaving, Nigel Wylie Carrick and in particular Angie Joy and Tom for providing the central hub from Angies Café). Medical prescriptions, shopping & take away meals were collected and distributed as required throughout this trying period. The council would like to thank every-one within the community for their support. It was with some sadness that we have seen the closure of Angies Café in March 2021 and the planned closure of the pre-school in July 2021. Angie and Tom have over the past few years provided an essential service to all of us in Shepton Beauchamp and they will be much missed. We would also like to thank the Pre-school Parents Committee and Fiona Linten (Chair) for their absolute and total support to the pre-school, which is now in the process of a planned closure. On a positive note, we welcome Amanda Partington & Lynn Hodge who recently opened Shepton Stores, Kitchen & Deli. We wish them every success for the future.

The Parish finances remain healthy and within budget. Our precepts are set annually to cover the Councils budget for the year. For FY 2021/22; planned Expenditure £23,795, Income £22,038, with £1,757 excess to be met out of general reserves if necessary. Our Council reserves total £48,380.31 are retained to cover General Reserves, MUGA refurbishment, Village Plan projects and future plans for the Lethbridge Pavilion.

The Council continues to support the parish with annual grants to the Village Hall, Lethbridge Memorial Recreation Ground Committee and Grass Cutting. Additional grants covered; Shepton Charity; construction of the Rec Car Park and barrier; the purchase of a Speed Indication Device shortly to be seen within the village; the use of Parish OnLine to better manage our community assets.

Work is on-going to register the Parish owned assets, namely; Head of Peace (allotments land and the Lethbridge Memorial Recreational Ground); The Fives Wall; and the Slope (former location of the War Memorial). During the course of the year we shall work with the Somerset Waste Partnership 'Recycle More' project to be introduced at the end of June 21; The Climate Emergency Working Group is planning a Carbon Footprint Survey for Jun followed by a 'Plastic free' Picnic in Cowleaze for Jul/Aug and examining the proposal for the Parish in line with Somerset Councils to Declare a Climate Emergency; consideration will be given on how to improve the Lethbridge Memorial Ground with removal of the deteriorating Leylandi wind break to the West, refurbish the dilapidated Rev Haw Memorial Shelter and benches as well as a major rebuild/refurbishment of the Pavilion. The Council will review management improvements to the Allotments.

3. To receive a report from the Parochial Church Council – Rev Geoff Wade

St Michaels Church has started services as quickly as permitted. Some members of the congregation remain a little nervous in attending live services with face masks and no singing. Finances a little precarious but with the help of generous donations the church has managed for another year. The Church Yard is open to all residents of the parish, many who have left the village wanting to be buried at St Michaels. The area is kept neat and tidy by Anthony White and his son who carry out grass-cutting twice a month if necessary. The annual cost comes to c. £2.5K per year. The Clerk agreed to send login details to the Parish OnLine to update Church Yard details.

4. To receive a report from the Shepton Beauchamp Village Hall Committee - Sharon Humphries

The past year has been a challenging one for the village hall which was forced to close due to the whole COVID-19 situation. All classes were cancelled and we had to close our doors, only opening to pre-school in accordance with government guidelines and the occasional yoga and Taijiquan class when lockdowns permitted. Pre-school and school currently use the hall and we hope to resume other activities from 17th May 2021, though perhaps not all will want to resume straight away.

We took the opportunity, whilst the hall was closed, to sort out all the emergency lighting to bring that up to date and purchased some new blinds for the windows and, with money donated to us by Shepton Seniors, we purchased some new notice boards and display boards. Our previous caretaker, Jackie Priddle resigned last summer on the grounds of ill-health and we had to find a replacement for her in lockdown. Jackie did a great job and is sorely missed. Finding a replacement for her was challenging, but we have a replacement in Ken Newman who has taking on this role and is a great asset to the hall and a help to us all.

Obviously the lack of income has impacted on us, which coupled with the requirement to buy more equipment and signage and more intense cleaning regimes to make the hall Covid secure has had a detrimental effect over the past 12 months. We were fortunate to have been able to apply for a government grant for £10,000 to combat the loss of income and received a reduction in water rates only. All other costs continued as normal, without concession. This grant has thankfully enabled us to weather the storm and to be able to help pre-school rent-wise over these difficult times in the past 6 months.

The flower show in 2020 was cancelled, so we lost income also there and is unlikely we will be able to go ahead this year, but this is under discussion and review once we see how the situation develops in this current phase of release. Going forward, we are sad that pre-school are closing at the end of the summer term and will be leaving us. It is a great loss for the village, but they have had a tough time and worked very hard and we will miss them. This will of course have an impact on the village hall, but we have some reserves in the bank and a

bright refurbished facility now and going forward, the trustees will do their best to promote and maintain this pretty village asset. We are grateful for the donation from the Parish Council at this difficult time, which is much appreciated. Sharon Humphreys, Treasurer

5. To receive a report from The Shepton Beauchamp Charity – Richard Martin

Shepton Beauchamp Charities is a small charity which receives its income from the rent paid on three parcels of land, each year the Trustees make grants to the following:

The Christmas Bonus was paid to 51 parishioners over the age of 70 who had requested it.

Educational Grants were paid to one individual and one group application (Shepton Beauchamp pre School).

Wadham Ministry The Trustees had agreed to support financially this appointment at Wadham.

6. To receive a report from Shepton Beauchamp Primary School – Ian Rumbelow

The Rev Wade reported that since being placed under Special Measures some 18 months ago, the Primary School has, under its exceptional temporary Head, Mr Ian Rumbelow has gone from strength to strength. After completing five terms in which he has achieved a remarkable turnaround, Mr Rumbelow is due to hand over to a new Head Teacher in September 2021.

The Primary School Annual Report for the Parish Meeting is attached at Enclosure 1.

7. To receive a report from Shepton Beauchamp Pre-School – Fiona Lintern

Following the announcement that the Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust would not take on the running of the Pre School, Cllr Wylie Carrick and Cllr Wade attended the Pre School Emergency General Meetings (EGM) held on 22 and 29 March to determine the future of the pre-school, namely to prepare for a planned closure or to form a new committee to take on the responsibility for keeping the school open. It was made clear at the first meeting that on current pupil numbers (five) the school faced a deficit of £4,269 rising to £6,496 by December 2021 for which the committee would be liable. The parents requested further time to re-examine the composition of a new committee, the pre-school structure and its curriculum and finances.

At the second EGM it concluded that whilst a new committee could be found, without fifteen pupils enrolled they would be unable to improve the financial outlook of the pre-school. The parents voted for the existing committee to proceed with a planned closure of the pre-school which would close at the end of term in July 2021. The committee would sit in April 21 to look at closing the school, ensure their staff redundancy package and apply for a sustainability grant to ensure all costs were covered due to the planned closure.

8. To receive a report from the Events Team – Sharon Humphries

The events team have had a very quiet time over the past twelve months, unable to put on any activities since the onslaught of Covid-19 hit us in March 2020. Up until that point, we had managed to put on The Burns Night in January and one film night, Rocket man, in February, earning £450 towards the village funds. The planned street party for the 75th anniversary of VE Day was cancelled, as well as all remaining activities for 2020, including Bonfire night, in order

to comply with government restrictions. We did our best to encourage as many people in the village to get remotely involved in the VE Day anniversary celebrations in May 2020 and fly flags and bunting and hold their own socially distanced events in driveways and we arranged for the last post to be played and two minute silence. None of this was particularly easy when working remotely and not being able to meet up. We arranged for poppies to be displayed around the village for Remembrance Sunday and the last post to be played. We organized the village Christmas tree, but other than that, sadly, we have been unable to carry out our usual functions and events.

From the funds, over this period, we had no income other than the £450 mentioned above, but we sent thank you flowers to The Duke of York and Angie's shop and tearoom from the village at Christmas to thank them for all their hard work and support to the village over the difficult months and we made a donation to pre-school to cover monthly rent. We also helped with the Christmas lunch preparation and deliveries round the village

This year, it is also looking unlikely that we can do much at all either, with the social-distancing rules in place, but we are cautiously looking ahead to see how things progress and whether we will be able to start things up again later in the year. In the meantime, we are encouraging people to fly flags and bunting for Somerset Day on 11th May 2021 and have bought a new Somerset flag to fly from the church tower. We will also see what we can arrange for the NHS Day in July and we are looking ahead to holding a street party for the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne on 4th June 2022. We have already booked some entertainment for the children, disco and some live music, but we have still more work to do on that, as we have been unable to meet.

Accounts. Our annual accounts have been given to the clerk, which detail money earned and spent over the past 12 months. Our cashbox balance is currently £406.97 and we have cash in the bank of £ 3727.61 bringing the total funds held to £ 4134.58.

The Events Team. The events team currently: - Ian Brown, Dave Burwood, Amy Cook, Tom Dawson, Sharon Humphreys, Liz Sanderson & Claire Uren.

9. To receive a report from the Lethbridge Recreation Ground Committee Bruce Barton

The End of Year Account for the Recreation Field 2021 is attached (as copied above.) As you'll see there hasn't been much activity during the year. Grass cutting continues on a regular basis, courtesy of the Parish Council grant. The football club have had some use of the field but have not had access to the pavilion, so a reduced fee was agreed for this year only. The 100 Club lottery has continued - currently with 29 participants. The sum held includes the £10,000 grant received from the National Lottery back in May 2019 in support of our plan to refurbish the pavilion etc. We had previously been turned down by Sport England but had promising discussions in hand with the District Council and other possible sources of funds for the project, as well as quotes for much of the work. It is very disappointing that the efforts that went into trying to launch this were hampered and then derailed by concerns on the potential scope and funding of the work, liability to VAT on expenditure, the registration of the land, validity of the lease and then of course by Covid 19. We were looking at becoming a CIO and had discussions with Solicitors Wellers Hedleys about all of this, before the virus brought it all to a halt.

We have continued to sanitise the play equipment, and to clean inside the pavilion for the rare occasions when access has been needed for one-off purposes. That way we have complied with the Covid guidelines issued by the Govt.

Our committee now consists of just 4 people, and hasn't had regular formal meetings recently as there has been no likely progress to discuss! We intend to hold an AGM after 21 July,

when we should have access to the Village Hall. Certain of the present team will be standing down so we will be looking for new members, to pick up the ball again when possible and get things moving again. I understand the intention is to consult via a Village Plan type of arrangement, to ensure everyone is bought-in to future activity to improve the site as a village amenity.

10. To receive a report from the Cowleaze Meadow - David Bourn

Cowleaze Meadow has been very well used this year. Its maintenance relies entirely on local community support. Currently, we have about a dozen regular volunteers, but additional support is always welcome.

Activities have been restricted to routine maintenance because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have continued to cut the paths, cleared fallen trees from the stream to reduce flood risk, pruned trees in the orchard and planted more trees. Special thanks to Mike Roberts, Tree Surgeon, for trimming and chipping up some of the larger branches overhanging the stream free of charge.

Our ride-on mower has also worked on some of the more accessible public footpaths in the Parish. The tenth anniversary of the official opening of Cowleaze Meadow will be on 21st May 2021.

11. To receive a report from Neighbourhood Watch – John Halsey

We have not had a meeting since the lockdown in February 2020.

My Annual Report has been restricted by Covid 19. I together with the deputy, Patsy Middleton continued to keep residents up to date with issues affecting our village and surrounding villages. I receive regular information from the Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood policing team which circulated to our residents. Occasionally we also receive information regarding on going issues happening in the nearby villages which are again passed onto Shepton residents.

In the last 12 months there has been a marked increase in the theft and attempted thefts of dogs in the surrounding area. The use of social media has led to some positive outcomes re these incidences.

Hopefully with the relaxation of the Covid restriction, we can restart our NHW Meetings.

12. To receive a report from St Michael's Guild - Joan Kennedy.

Sadly, we have been unable to have any meetings of St Michael's Guild this year. Hopefully we will start again when we are 'free'!

13. To receive a report from Shepton W.I. - Kate Wylie Carrick

There have been no meetings held this year, although the committee has met when social distancing rules have allowed and once by Zoom. The NFWI has sent links to Zoom talks which have been passed onto members and they have been kept engaged with Christmas and Easter gifts and communications. Renewal of membership was postponed from January to April. Nearly all members have re-joined and there is one new member for 2021/2022. The AGM will be held by Zoom on 5th May 2021.

14. To receive a report from Shepton Bell Ringing Group - Jeff & Leslie Knipe

Cllr Wylie Carrick made the following comments:

Tower Bells. A new beginners group from Barrington and Shepton Beauchamp started Bell Ringing in Aug 2018 under the expert tutelage of Jeff and Leslie Knipe, so it was with great disappointment that after only 19 months all tower bell ringing ceased in March 2020. Standards were improving to be reasonably competent in rounds and some headway was being made in change ringing. We hope to restart weekly practice sessions after restrictions are lifted post 21 Jun 2021.

Hand Bells. Although there was a pause at the beginning of the lockdown, the Martock Bells have been able to continue their sessions remotely using Zoom with wooden spoons. They are very much looking forward to restarting face to face hand bell ringing.

15. To receive a report from Shepton Singing Group

There is no report as due to Covid we have been unable to meet. However as soon as we are allowed we will be re-starting.

16. To receive a report from Shepton Art Group - Jackie Priddle

Since the start of lockdown there have been no centralised art sessions in the Village Hall. We are looking forward to showing off our work once restrictions have been lifted.

17. To receive a report from Shepton Ramblers Roger Cripps

Report from Shepton Ramblers 2020-21 Along with most other activities group walking has not been possible for the past 12 months. A new walking programme is planned to commence on 23 June 2021 (subject to no changes to the Government's Covid-19 recovery roadmap). Over the years membership of the group has diversified. Currently there are some 28 active members of which only one is from Shepton Beauchamp, plus a few who are no longer active, but often join us for a pub lunch. Most of our active members live in the local villages and towns around Shepton. Stuart Thomson, Programme Coordinator.

The Chair thanked all the organisers of the wide range of activity groups that can be found within Shepton Beauchamp. Anyone interested in joining any of the groups may contact the Parish Clerk, Mrs Stella Davies by e-mail clerk@sheptonbeauchamppc.org.uk for further information.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm