

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 18th July 2022 at 7.30pm

In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp TA19 0LQ

Councillors present: Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick (Chairman) Cllr Ed Wakely
Cllr David Bourn Cllr Sarah Brunt
Cllr Clare Lillywhite Cllr Tim England
Cllr Nick Howard

In attendance: Acting Clerk - Cllr Clare Lillywhite

Members of the public: There were 11 members of the public in attendance.

District/County Councillors in attendance: SSDC Crispin Raikes arrived at 7.30 pm and
SCC Cllr Jo Roundell Greene arrived part way through
the meeting
Apologies received from SCC Adam Dance

OPEN SESSION

During the open session the following comments were made:

- We were thanked by members of the public attending for our work on the parish council and for giving up our time as volunteers
- It was suggested by members of the public that we walk around the allotments to see that although most plots look very good there are a few that are looking a mess.
There is also waste ground at the bottom in the left-hand corner that and had not been touched for 2 years. COULD THE PARISH COUNCIL HELP TO TIDY THIS UP PLEASE?
Action – see notes further on allotments.

Report from SCC

SCC Cllr Roundell Green relayed a message from SCC Adam Dance to ask that we look after the elderly during this hot weather. Interviews had been conducted for the new CEO for SCC and they hoped to make the appointment next week. They were moving in the right direction for the new council to commence in April 2023. There would be a shortfall in the budget of £44m which was challenging, and they would have more to report in September.

Report from SSDC Cllr Raikes reported that very little was happening on the District Council

Ser Item

750. To nominate a Parish Clerk to cover the absence of the Parish Clerk

Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick proposed that Cllr Lillywhite is nominated as Parish Clerk.

Resolved. Cllr Lillywhite accepted and acted as Parish Clerk for the meeting

751. To receive apologies of absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972, s85(1))

Apologies were received from Cllr Rowswell (away) and Cllr Joy (bereavement).

Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.

752. Declarations of Interest – Members to declare any interest, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act S33 (b-e). NB this does not preclude any later declarations)
Cllr Sarah Brunt declared an interest in the Piece Lane Development and signed the book. It was noted that Cllr Edward Wakely had a vested interest but he did not need to officially declare an Interest.

753. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held of Monday 20th June 2022 (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41 (1))
Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20th June be signed as correct.

754. Planning Application 22/01618/FUL. Brimfield, Lambrook Road
Subdivision of existing dwelling to create 2 No. dwellings with associate parking. The agent for the planning application was in attendance and discussed the application.
Resolved. Unanimous decision to approve the application.

755. Piece Lane Development
To review the plans for the development and discuss with the development company

The representative from West of England Developments Ltd (and not Cherwyn Developments Ltd as on the plans) introduced himself and confirmed that they were working towards submitting a full planning application for the site. There was still the phosphate issue, but they were hoping to be able to mitigate this. He was asked if he knew what materials would be used for the development and said it was too early but that he would have more information in September after the initial consultation. They would be organising public consultation and he would urge people in the village including local residents to come along to ask questions and see more detailed information relating to the development. Piece Lane is a non-adopted road and is not maintained by the local authority. The road into the new development would be a private road and this would be maintained by the residents of this new development. Members of the public raised a concern over any damage that might be caused by machinery and lorries delivering to the new site off Piece Lane and whether the council might consider adopting Piece Lane.

Action – Clerk to write to Highways

SCC Cllr Roundell Green would also write to the Council to ask about Piece Lane adoption by Highways.

The representative assured us that a condition report would be carried out on Piece Lane and that they had employed a Highways and Transport Consultant. A local resident was concerned about parking and traffic as the entrance into the new site was single track only.

Cllr England raised a concern over flooding from the site and asked about drainage. It was confirmed that a more sustainable drainage road covering would be used together with an attenuation pond. They were not allowed to make the surface water run off worse. Percolation tests would be carried out and there would be adequate storm water drainage within the site. Cllr Wakely confirmed that he thought the 16 houses planned was less than the Lift West site at Lopen with 13 houses on a site that was about 1/3rd size of this site in Piece Lane.

The Parish Council thanked the representative for his input and for attending the meeting and we would look forward to hearing more information about the public consultation.

756. Procedures around the Leylandii felling at The Recreation Field

To review the procedures used for the felling of the Leylandii trees, including:

- **Legality**

The Parish Council has taken advice from Somerset Association of Local Councils, SSDC and The Forestry Commission with regards to the legality on cutting down the trees. It is legal to cut down trees at any time of the year providing you have had a report or assessment tree by tree before felling starts to assess birds nesting and take into consideration bats and the ecology of the area.

- **Requirement for Tree Felling Licence**

A Contractor would carry out a risk assessment on day 1 - this is a requirement for the licence. The Parish Council own the land occupied by the Leylandii trees which means they are exempt, and a Tree Felling Licence is not a legal requirement. There is no formal requirement to have a tree assessment.

The process that the Parish Council followed:

We identified concerns with the Leylandii in 2020

Two Arborists visited the site in May 2021 and concluded that the majority of the Leylandii were unsafe and that a programme of felling should be planned.

There were another 8 that were not healthy, they were over 30 years old, beyond their expected lifespan, they had been previously topped but were now brittle. Many branches had been removed over the years.

Tenders were invited. This was a large operation to fell the trees and remove the wood and debris from the site and dispose of it and remove the stumps and leave the site looking tidy. We wanted a competitive price, and we selected a contractor.

- **Transparency & Communication**

For transparency, the Parish Council discussed the felling of these trees both during meetings and during public meetings as follows:

March 2020, May on a zoom meeting with slides and proposals were given, June, July, Oct and Nov in 2021, at the AGM in 2022 when no members of the public attended. On 11th September in 2021 at the Cowleaze picnic the felling of the Leylandii trees and proposed works was on display for those attending to see and discuss. The tree felling was mentioned in the 1st and 3rd newsletters distributed to villagers. The Parish Council have held informal surgeries in the Village Hall on Saturday mornings during May, June and July which no members of the public attended to discuss the tree felling.

The Parish Council discussed areas of improvement and felt that that more information was to be put in the newsletters and to use social media via the Village Facebook page and the website. We would hope to reach more people. Councillors were concerned over the negative comments made on Facebook and we all wanted to reassure the members of the public that we were not acting in an “underhand” way and that we had followed procedures.

Resolved. The Parish Council were satisfied that due process had been followed with the procedures around the planned felling of the leylandii trees and that they would continue to do so.

Unfortunately, due to the chosen contractor now having withdrawn from the job the works planned were having to be postponed. A councillor asked if the original contractor would still do the work and it was confirmed that he would not. He had not enjoyed the experience and had withdrawn from the job due to public interest and it had been unpleasant for him.

757. Review of Lethbridge Recreational Ground – Felling of Leylandii Trees and Future Development Plans

To review the background and current situation of the Leylandii trees felling and to resolve the following:

1. Outline plans for the redevelopment of the Lethbridge Memorial Ground:

Stage 1A Felling of Leylandii Windbreaks

Stage 1B Planting of woodland and meadow wildflower planting, mixed hedge and ornamental trees

Stage 2 Refurbishment of the Pavilion

Stage 3 Refurbishment of Rev Haws Shelter & benches

Resolved. We would restart the process and were aware of concerns over the felling of the trees all at once, the suggestion of a wildlife zone, the football club with the season due to start during the middle of August. If the trees were to go on the South Side a net would be required to stop the ball from going into the field below.

The programme of works would be in stages as follows:

Stage 1 Felling

Stage 1B Improving the area with the planting of woodland, mixed hedges and wildflowers

Stage 2 Refurbishment of the Pavilion

Stage 3 Refurbishment of the Shelter, benches and further improvements to provide more of a family facility

2. Arborist Consultant Tree Report.

We have been advised to have a tree report due to the public interest in the felling of the Leylandii Trees.

Councillors were worried about the cost involved with having a report when we had already had the professional opinions of two arborists. Another contractor would carry out due diligence, provide a report and conduct a risk assessment before work commenced.

Cllr Wylie Carrick felt that in view of public interest, the Parish Council should commission a professional Tree Report on the conditions of the Leylandii trees to justify the felling plan, and for public record.

A member of the public felt that we had done everything correctly and we were now concerned due to a few negative comments on the village Facebook page.

We discussed concerns over the nesting wildlife and the ideal time would have been now, before the football season started.

We voted on having the arborist report with 4 Cllrs against and 2 Cllrs for the proposal.

Resolved. Not to proceed with the Arborist Report.

3. Felling of the West Windbreak.

There are 25 trees in the West Windbreak with a further 5 on the right-hand side that would look odd if stood alone. We discussed creating an ecology zone in this area. A member of the public raised concerns over the safety of these trees with branches falling onto the football field. They were well over 35 years old and needed to come down. There is a lovely native wooded area behind, but these Leylandii were stifling their growth and with the trees down they could grow and establish. It is a very nice environment for birds, squirrels and other wildlife. We were asked if we could remove the Blackthorn in this area as the footballs often perished if they landed there. There was a concern over the remains of an old tree house within these trees and concerns

over health and safety. Another member of the public thanked the Parish Council for what they had done to date and was saddened over what had transpired with the tree felling. There were offers of help and assistance with grants for funding to assist with the regeneration of this area. SSDC Cllr Crispin Raikes thought that there were still funds available for grants from Area North. There was also concern raised over the escalating costs for the felling of the trees now that the original contractor had withdrawn.

Resolved. Unanimously agreed to remove the trees on the West Windbreak.

Action - Clerk to investigate available grant from Area North.

4. Felling of the South Windbreak.

There are 32 trees in the South Windbreak that were topped over 30 years ago. They are a useful back stop to the goal used by the footballers and a net would be required if they were to be removed. This would be an expensive option and they do act as a windbreak. If they were to stay, they would need to be maintained and possibly topped again although this could lead to dark stumps with no greenery. Cllrs raised concerns over escalating costs and whether we could now afford to remove both Windbreaks.

It was proposed to retain the South Windbreak for the foreseeable future.

Resolved. To retain the South Windbreak and review the trees in three years (2025).

5. Football Nets.

Possible requirement for football nets behind the goal on the South Side.

Resolved. This will no longer be required due to the trees not being removed on this side.

6. Tender Advertisements.

Retender for felling contractor for felling Leylandii Trees (adverts to cost not more than £100)

Resolved. Unanimously agreed.

Action - Clerk

7. Safety Notices.

Either to tape off Leylandii or put up a warning notice (subject to tree reports)

Resolved. Unanimously agreed to put up warning notices.

Action – Clerk

8. Budget.

To approve a new felling contractor up to a maximum of £24,999 (work to be completed Sept 22 – March 24)

This is a precautionary level for budget planning only. Concerns were raised by all over the escalating costs since the original quotes.

Resolved. Unanimously agreed to approve a new felling contractor as soon as possible.

9. Routine Arborist Tree Inspection.

Introduce a routine Arborist Tree Inspection of trees in public spaces owned by the Parish Council.

Cllr Howard asked what other public spaces are owned by the Parish Council and it was confirmed it was the Recreation Field, Cowleaze (leased from Wessex Water), the slope and the Allotments.

Action – Clerk to add to the September meeting for further discussion

758. Review of Lethbridge Memorial Recreation Ground 'Rec Committee'

To consider Council support to the Rec Committee and to resolve:

- (a) The Composition of the current Rec Committee, or
- (b) Establish the Rec Committee as an Advisory Committee of the Parish Council and produce terms of reference, including frequency of meetings (which will be open to the public)

The current Chair of the Rec Committee, Bruce, discussed the ongoing issues with the current committee due to dwindling numbers with only 3 members. The committee was set up a long time ago, but no longer have regular meetings. They currently maintain the play equipment, monitor the MUGA, playing fields, pavilion, car park and tennis courts. They have been instrumental with ongoing discussions over the refurbishment of the pavilion. We discussed should they remain a stand-alone committee or be reabsorbed by the Parish Council? The Pavilion is in desperate need of refurbishment and previous quotes were ascertained and a £10,000 lottery grant received, but nothing has been done since 2019. There have been discussions over the scale of the refurbishment at pavilion and the current committee have now run out of steam and would like someone else to take over the refurbishment programme and the running of the committee.

The Parish Council thanked Bruce and the committee for all their hard work to date. The Football Club registered an interest in assisting with the Rec Committee moving forward.

If a new committee was set up to absorb the existing Rec Committee the Parish Council would be in control with a committee created to form the new Rec Committee. Any money currently held would be ring fenced, there would be minuted meetings, public would be invited, and it was recommended that 2 members of the Parish Council would join this new committee which would report to the Parish Council.

Resolved. Unanimously agreed to establish an Advisory Committee with terms of reference to be agreed. The current committee would be happy to approve the creation of a new committee.

Action – Clerk to draw up and circulate approved terms for the new committee and provisions to dissolve old Rec Committee. This may need to be added to the September agenda

759. Council Surgery – 9 July 2022

Points raised:

- Great Lane bottom drain – repair to metal grate to reduce excessive noise caused by vehicles driving over the metal grates

Action – Clerk to write to Highways to look at this issue and resolve

- Village Hall Car Park. Is it feasible to rent land to create parking spaces on north side of the village hall?

Action – it was agreed to make discreet enquiries.

760. Review the Council Surgery Trial Programme (May-Jul 22)

Following the trial of surgeries in the village hall on Saturday mornings once a month during May, June & July we only had 2 members of the public in attendance - 1 during May and 1 during July.

Resolved. Unanimously agreed to stop the surgeries due to lack of attendance from the general public but we would like all to know that we can be contacted through the Parish Clerk. Members of the public in attendance felt that they knew where to find us if they needed our help. The council to continue with the Parish Council Newsletter circulated with the Web.

761. Finance

To review the Bank Reconciliation to 30th June 2022 (previously circulated)

To approve the schedule of payments totalling £3,282.65 (previously circulated)

Resolved. The Bank Reconciliation to 30th June 2022 was approved and signed as correct by a non-cheque signatory. The payments were approved and cheques issued.

762. Reports. *For information only.*

Highways

It was reported that the verge cutting in Whitfield Lane had not been done and a member of the public had raised a concern – this has now been cut.

The mirror previously requested at the junction of Love Lane had been rejected by Highways.

Environment, Trees & Climate Change

Somerset Green Open Homes will be hosting an event on 21st July 2022 at 7pm and this would be publicised on the village Facebook page.

Ranger

The Ranger had been helping the Jubilee Garden volunteers with some heavier work. Councillors felt a priority needed to be given to tending to the public footpaths that were very overgrown around the village.

Allotments

It had been noted that some of the allotments were in poor condition and not being looked after. It was agreed by all that photos should be taken and reminders should be sent out to those who are not tending to their allotments as they should be at this time of year.

Action – Clerk to write letters to those allotment holders and ask the Ranger to trim the waste ground area in the left-hand corner.

Cowleaze & Footpaths

The working group for Cowleaze have mowed the footpath from the Cowleaze Meadow to Drove Lane and they would continue to maintain this footpath. We wish to pass on thanks to the group for taking this on and making it useable again for all. Cllr Bourn would thank the Cowleaze working group on our behalf. Wessex Water have given money to the Cowleaze Group to purchase a battery powered mower.

763. Annex A – deferred items register

This was not updated.

Meeting closed: 9.33 pm.