

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Held on Monday 16th May 2022 at 6.30 pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp**

Present: Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick (Chair)
Nick Brunton (Cowleaze Meadow volunteers)
Bruce Barton (Recreation Ground Committee)
Caroline Middleton (Shepton Beauchamp Primary School)
Cllr Andrew Rowsell
Cllr Sarah Brunt
Cllr David Bourn
Cllr Tim England

In attendance: Stella Davies (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Carole Creaser (Shepton Art Group), Angie Joy (Shepton Singing Group), Joan Kennedy (St Michael's Guild), Sharon Humphreys (Shepton Beauchamp Village Hall Committee & The Events Team), Richard Martin (The Shepton Beauchamp Charity), Kate Wylie-Carrick (Shepton Beauchamp W.I.), Connel Boyle (Shepton Beauchamp Primary School).

2. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2021

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 4th May 2021 were approved.

At this point the Chairman mentioned that 3 members of the community who were at the last meeting and played an active role in the community had sadly died over the past year – John Halsey (Neighbourhood Watch), Roger Cripps (who did so much for Cowleaze and the allotments and was a Parish Councillor for 12 years) and Jeff Knipe (the Tower Captain at St Michaels and a tremendous benefactor to this community and further afield in one way or another).

He also mentioned the closure of the Pre-School last July and thanked Fiona Linten and her committee for all they had done in the past for keeping the school running.

3. Report from Chairman of the Parish Council for 2021-22

The Chairman said that it had been a fascinating year. We had ended Covid and gone back to live meetings. We had 2 meetings of interest which had involved the community – car parking in the village and the allotments. It has also been the election year for the new Unitary Authority (110 councillors) and we have sent our congratulations to Adam Dance and Jo Randall-Greene who have been elected to represent the South Petherton and Isle Ward division. The District Council will cease to exist on 9th May 2023. The next local elections will take place in May 2027.

The Parish Council will be lighting the church tower for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event and flying a Jubilee flag from the church. There will be a street party organised by the Events Team and there will be some bell ringing on 5th June, both at Barrington and Shepton Beauchamp. The Parish Council will be setting up the Platinum Jubilee Garden on the slope and work will be starting on that in the near future.

The Parish Council has said farewell to the late Roger Cripps, and welcomed and said goodbye to Geoff Wade and more recently said farewell to Richard Martin. In their place we have welcomed David Bourn and Tim England and as a council have been re-elected on 5th May. Eight councillors of the existing council will continue and there is one vacancy which will be co-opted at the next Parish Council meeting.

During the course of the last year, we have been able to adopt the General Power of Competence as we have a qualified clerk and two-thirds of the councillors have been elected. This allows us to do what any individual can do, as long as it is within the law. We have tried to improve our contact with the community by introducing new councillor surgeries in the village hall and these have been advertised in The Web. We have also introduced a quarterly newsletter which is issued with The Web. We continue to work and improve on the website and will be updating that to remove the Coronavirus page and introduce a new planning page. Climate emergency updates will also go on the website.

In terms of finance, the accounts remain healthy. We have remained within budget this financial year. We have healthy reserves, which we are going to use some of in the coming year. Our income is limited - the main income comes from the precept. Our main items of expenditure are staff costs, the Ranger and grants which we give out to the community. We increased the precept from £21,850 to £23,500. This represents an increase of 11p per week for a Band D property from last year.

Our support to the community remains and the Chairman wanted to stress that annual grants were available from the Parish Council, as long as they supported members of this parish.

The Chairman highlighted that highways issues included car parking on Shells Lane and more recently the exit from Love Lane onto Lambrook Road, which the council will be looking at., although we understand that mirrors are no longer encouraged. The Speed Indicator Device (SID) is up and running and we have three locations at the moment. We are looking at a new site near Mountfields. SID has been effective as it definitely slows traffic down. Open Spaces – we are working on the Jubilee Garden, the allotment rules and the tenancy agreements have been revised and there was now a huge difference in the standard of the allotments. There is now only one allotment vacant.

The Chairman also highlighted the Climate Emergency Working Group, which has done outstanding work in the course of the year, organising a plastic free picnic in Cowleaze, with various stands and it was well attended. There has been a bus survey carried and we have tried to look at an air quality sensor, but this was not approved. He commended the work that they have done.

Future challenges – the main one is the Local Community Networks, which will be 10-15 local parish councils coming together and they will feed in the priorities for the local area, the funding for which will come from the Unitary Authority. This has not yet been set up in this area. We also need to look at the future of the Recreation Field Committee, which does need new members. The Leylandii trees will be removed in July/August, which will open up the ground more. We also need to look at the future of the Climate Emergency Working Group and whether we make it more formal as a committee of the council.

We are hoping to change the format of this annual meeting, which currently takes place on the same day as the annual meeting of the Parish Council. We plan to have this on a different day, with groups having displays and refreshments on offer. It is hoped this may encourage more members of the community to attend the meeting.

4. Report from The Parochial Church Council

There was no report sent.

5. Report from The Shepton Beauchamp Village Hall Committee

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

The village hall is re-opened to classes again and the hall is being used for more private functions after covid restrictions have been lifted earlier this year. The closure of pre-school has reduced the income; however, school have resumed PE and after-school clubs.

It remains to be seen what impact the rising fuel costs will additionally have on the hall finances. As such, we are monitoring the situation and do not plan any further work or upgrades in the hall for the time being.

6. Report from The Shepton Beauchamp Charity

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

This is a collection of charities for the benefit of residents of Shepton Beauchamp; some of the charities are several hundred years old. The income is generated from rent received from three small parcels of land owned by the Charity. Any resident can apply for one of two main grants.... 1. Educational, which covers students going to university, apprenticeships and any local educational establishments. 2. The Over 70's Christmas Box which is a small payment, paid in early December, to help with the cost of Christmas and is payable to residents who are 70 years old or over and have lived in the village for 3 years or more. In 2021 the charity paid out one educational grant and the Christmas box was paid out to 49 residents.

7. Report from Shepton Beauchamp Primary School

Caroline Middleton reported that staff across both classes was now permanent and secure. There are also permanent Teaching Assistants. The new headteacher started in September and has secured a budget which has been able to fund a new library that the school will have in September, new windows and an upgrade of the playground. They have a new 4-year rolling curriculum in place which has been the main focus. The website is now active and up-to-date and there is a strong Facebook presence. New laptops have been purchased, with a new ICT curriculum in place. They had the diocese SIAMS inspection earlier this year and were rated good.

8. Report from The Events Team

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

There is not much to report for the Events Team for 2022, Covid still influencing the events we are trying to put on. Aside from a couple of film nights and a bingo evening, we have had limited opportunity to fundraise - the Platinum Ball has to be cancelled due to lack of ticket sales. We will use our existing funds to put on the street party for the village to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum jubilee - all arrangements have been made for this to take place on Saturday 4th June 2022.

We will endeavour to raise funds over the coming months to be able to hold Bonfire night in November and also to now cover insurance costs going forward, which we have not had to cover to date. Despite no longer being part of the Parish council, we do hope the Parish Council will support the events team, as required, in future.

The Parish Council Chairman thanked the Events Team for the work they did, which is always much appreciated.

9. Report from Lethbridge Recreation Ground Committee

The End of Year Account for the Recreation Field 2022 is attached. It shows zero income from the football club, but this will be received in due course.

The Recreation Ground Committee report for 2021 is still relevant as there has been no substantive change in the status of events since then. We have continued with the basic maintenance of the grounds, equipment and, pavilion, the football club have used the pitch and are now able to use the changing facilities. The 100 Club Lottery has continued, currently with 60 participants.

To restart the programme for refurbishment of the pavilion, it will be necessary to recruit new members to the committee to take it forward. A notice to start this process was put out on the village Facebook last week - a meeting to assess potential uptake and review the way ahead will be held in

the Village Hall in the near future. The principal job for the enhanced team will be to revive the refurbishment project, finalise the scope, obtain new competitive quotes and confirm the funding provision.

The Chairman thanked Bruce and his committee for the work they had done.

10.Report from Cowleaze Meadow volunteers

Roger Cripps - The Parish Council is already aware of the sad passing of our former Chairman Roger Cripps in April. Roger, together with Mary Clarke, was instrumental in getting the Cowleaze Meadow Project underway some 15 years ago. He remained an active volunteer right up until September of last year, heading up our regular work parties. His contribution was huge and we are immensely grateful for all that Roger did. Cowleaze Meadow is a wonderful lasting legacy.

Committee and volunteers - Current Chairman is myself, Nick Brunton. Treasurer is Jan Pniok. We currently have 12 volunteers.

Funds and fund-raising - Funds are healthy with £2,535 in the bank as at 31 March. Of that £1,544 has been generated by our fund-raising activities, and is earmarked towards the purchase of a replacement ride-on mower. We are grateful to Branstons for their generosity in matching the funds raised by our raffle at the Village Picnic in September, and to all who have donated prizes and funds. We also held a Quiz Night in February.

Activities over the past year - We have:

- Continued to maintain the network of paths
- Cleared rubbish and debris from the stream
- Pruned the fruit trees in the orchard area
- Tidied up the willow tunnel
- Trimmed hedging and cleared fallen branches
- Sown wild flowers within the dog free zone

We have started conducting a monthly survey of the plant life. We will use the results to gain a better understanding of the biodiversity and work out whether we need to adjust our management of the Meadow. I personally want to thank all the volunteers who regularly give up their time

The Parish Council Chairman thanked Nick and the volunteers for the work they did.

11.Report from St Michael's Guild

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

I am sorry to report that we have had no meetings this past year.

12.Report from Shepton Beauchamp W.I.

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

The WI resumed meetings in August with a social evening and quiz. We were delighted to welcome many new numbers so our membership in August was 36 – an increase of 12.

Meetings were held monthly (with an additional meeting in January for this year only) with an interesting variety for talks in 6 of the months, the annual Christmas party for members only in December and a games night in January. Talks ranged from a visit from the Martock Belles Handbell Ringing Group, a postponed talk on the Burlesque, two craft talks, a wellbeing and health talk and a talk on West Country Witchcraft.

The AGM is now held at the beginning of May and we added 4 new members to the Committee and 2 departures, so the WI is in good shape for 2022. We continue to meet in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month and are delighted to welcome new members.

13.Report from Shepton Singing Group

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

Due to the pandemic and losing John Halsey, one of our members, the singing group hasn't restarted. We are hoping to restart in the very near future.

14.Report from Shepton Art Group

The following report was sent and read out by the clerk:

We are still holding Art/Craft evenings. Thursday 7-9pm. Unfortunately, the 'Group' hasn't recovered from the Covid enforced break, with only 3 or 4 persons attending each week. As the rent has been increased (£16) Even with our increased fee (£2.50- up to £3) this is still not enough to cover the basic rent. We are paying the discrepancy from our saved (Cash) monies which as to date built up to £124.83. In addition, we have our 'Group' held account £80 (Nationwide account) Also, we changed to Art & Craft instead of just Art Group, as people were doing some crafts such as knitting, Embroidery and Lino cutting. Also, to encourage more persons to join. We have a lot of 'equipment' for persons to use and try different forms of art such as Encaustic wax, oils, pastels and of course Watercolours. All these being purchased by the Group, when numbers were much higher.

We are going to put an advert in the Web to try and stir up some new members- We had two new members last time this was actioned. We would rather try to keep the Group going as it's now in its 30th year, and it would be a shame to disband it.

15.Report from Shepton Bell Ringing Group

Cllr Wylie Carrick mentioned that the loss of Jeff Knipe will be sorely felt, not only by the group, but by the whole area. The bell ringing group practice every Monday at 7.30pm. Lesley Knipe has taken over as Tower Captain and she also runs the Martock Hand Bells group, who meet on a Thursday afternoon. New members are always welcome.

The Chairman of the Parish Council closed by reminding all groups that they could apply for grants from the Parish Council, by contacting the clerk for a grant application form, as the council would be happy to support local groups within the village which were for the benefit of the local community.

Cllr Rowsell asked if the groups were publicised in The Web. The Parish Council does not currently do this nor do many of the individual groups. It was suggested that they could be publicised in a Parish Council Newsletter.

Meeting closed: 7.15 pm