

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 16th October 2023 at 7.30 pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp TA19 OLQ

Councillors present: Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick (Chairman) Cllr David Bourn (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Andrew Rowswell Cllr Sarah Brunt
Cllr Ed Wakely Cllr Tim England
Cllr Nick Howard

In attendance: Stella Davies (Clerk)

Members of the public: There were 8 members of the public in attendance
Also in attendance was Chris from West of England Developments
and Rebecca, planning agent from Polden Planning Limited.

County Councillors in attendance: Somerset Cllr Jo Roundell Greene
(arrived 7.45 pm, left 8.30 pm)
Cllr Adam Dance sent his apologies

Open Session

Banning Dogs from recreation field

Although it was noted that there was an item on the agenda to rescind the decision to ban dogs from the recreation field the following comments were made:

- How would the dog ban be enforced and would this mean an increase on the Parish Council tax?
- The majority of people using the recreation field are dog owners, while the football club only use it for 2 hours each week through the football season
- Children are playing there and dog walkers use it daily as it is the only large space in the village that allows a dog to run freely.
- Does the council have an allocation for a dog warden?
- It was suggested the gates be locked again and fence off the children's play area
- It was noted that there were comments on Facebook about this, which highlighted the fact that people had not read the minutes or the agenda for this evening's meeting

Bonfire Night

A representative of the Events Team asked the Parish Council to consider the following and respond to the Events Team following their meeting last week:

- There will be no bonfire at the recreation field this year due to a spectacular new laser display and this will be the decision for future years as well.
- As there will be no bonfire for the Recreation Field Committee to assist with, they do not wish to give the council a percentage of the profits, but would like instead a rental agreement for the use of the recreation field for the time they use it (approx. 6 – 7 hours) in the region of £15 - £20 per hour.

Report from Somerset Council

Cllr Jo Roundell Greene reported that the Council have a huge deficit and they are trying to avoid issuing a 114 notice (as a council cannot declare itself bankrupt, this is when they believe they are about to incur expenditure that is unlawful) at which point they could only carry out statutory services. This will have an impact on Parish Councils as in November Somerset will be telling Parish Councils what services they want them to undertake going forward (e.g., hedge cutting etc). These services may be able to be arranged through the LCNs. She advised that we put our precept up as much as we could to allow for this future expenditure. She was asked about the Ranger service and if the parish council may have to pay for this service in the future. She asked that the Clerk send her more information about the Ranger Service and she would try to find out.

Action – Parish Clerk

Cllr Bourn mentioned that the dog waste bins were overflowing and Cllr Roundell Greene said that all waste bins in the villages were overflowing and this was being chased.

Cllr Rowswell suggested that the parish council go ahead and get costs from alternative contractors if the ranger services were going to be stopped in the future. Although we could do this through the LCNs he suggested that we find out now what other alternatives there were. **Action – Cllr Wylie Carrick**

Ser Item

960. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972, s85(1))
Apologies were received from Cllr Joy (prior commitment) and Cllr Lilywhite (unwell)
Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.

961. 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 prior requests from members for dispensations that accord with the Localism Act s33 (b-e). (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)
Cllr Brunt declared and interest in Item 964 and signed the book.

962. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18th September 2023 (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41(1)).
Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 18th September be signed as correct.

963. Planning Application 21/00568/FUL amendment Land OS 2689 Sheep Way - Amended plans
To review amended plans submitted
Resolved. The planning application was approved unanimously.

The Clerk to inform Somerset County of the council's decision

Action – Parish Clerk

At this point Cllr Brunt left the meeting and sat in the public area

964. Planning application 23/01974/FUL at Land OS 6349 off Piece Lane Change of use of land to residential for the erection of 16 dwellings, including means of access and associated improvement, surface water drainage, landscaping, associated works and formation of an attenuation pond.
To review planning application submitted.

Resolved. The planning application was approved unanimously with the following observations:

- The access road seems extremely narrow although we understand that this is acceptable to the highways department.
- There are observations from local residents which should be taken into account.
- There is concern over the run off of water, but were assured by the developers that mitigation is in place. It was noted that all houses have a soakaway and there is also an attenuation pond. Cllr England asked who maintained that and was told that if it was not adopted by Wessex Water, it would be the management company (made up of the new householders) that was responsible.
- The affordable housing will be a benefit to the village and we understand that these will be offered to the Parish first.
- It was understood that the new householders will be part of a management committee who will pay for the maintenance of the roads within the new development, but not Piece Lane.
- There was concern over Piece Lane as there would be more traffic along there and it was currently an unadopted road. The developers said that they would carry out a detailed inspection of Piece Lane before any building work commenced and would make good any damage caused by the development.

- The council would like Piece Lane to become an adopted road. Apparently in the past it had once been shown as an adopted road, but this seems to have changed and it now shows as unadopted.

The Clerk to inform Somerset Council of the council's decision.

Action – Parish Clerk

At this point Cllr Brunt rejoined the meeting.

- 965. Outdoor playing spaces, sport & recreation planning obligations.** *For information only*
To inform the council on the proposed monies available

The Clerk said she had spoken to Somerset Council about the monies that could be available following the occupation of the proposed development at Piece Lane. These funds are held by Somerset Council and have to be applied for by the Parish Council for specific purposes. Once 25% of the properties were occupied, we could start to apply for funds towards play equipment and youth facilities.

- 966. October Newsletter**

To approve the October Newsletter for distribution with the October Web magazine at a cost of £65
Resolved. The October Newsletter was approved at a cost of £65

- 967. Recreation Field Advisory Committee meeting.** *For information only*

The last meeting was held on 2nd October

The committee looked at finances and thought that we would be overspent by about £5k by the end of the financial year. There will be profit from the 100 Club and they are arranging a bingo night at the Duke of York on Monday 20th November. They wanted to know if there could be a discretionary fund available for the committee to use without having to refer back to the parish council every time they need to spend small amounts of money. There are some problems with some of the play equipment items. There will be a working group going to the Rec to remove rotten wood from the balance beams. Someone will be approached to weld the multi play equipment as this is rusting in parts. The MUGA is rusting and needs sandblasting if possible. The committee will keep an eye on the recreation field gates. The recreation field survey was discussed and the committee wanted the parish council to reconsider their decision to ban dogs from the recreation field. It was thought an education programme was a better option. The situation with dog poo was better when the gates were shut, but that had unexpected consequences with more vehicles in Piece Lane. The bonfire was also discussed. There will be bulb planting in areas of the recreation field and it was thought that children could be involved in this so they could see the results of their efforts in the spring.

- 968. To reverse resolution made at 18th September meeting**

To resolve that the resolution made on item 947(a) be reversed following the recommendation made by the Recreation Field Committee (as per Standing Orders item 7(a))

Cllr England said that the recreation field committee had recommended that the parish council review their original decision. He said that the football club are part of the committee and were in support of reversing the decision. Part of this request by the committee was the strength of feeling that was there from the recreation field survey from both sides. They want as many people as possible to use the recreation field. Part of the problem was the amount of dog poo, which there was an improvement on, when the gates were locked. The committee thought it would be better to have signs and educate people in the first instance. We can exclude from the recreation field as other parish councils do. A better option would be to have signs to say that dogs should be under control and mess cleaned up and also to make clear that if the situation continues, we would have no option but to exclude dogs.

This was discussed in some detail by the councillors. The Health & Safety of people using the recreation field is very important and we do not want someone to fall ill due to an encounter with dog poo. CCTV was mentioned as a deterrent, but it was not thought that this would help. However, it was thought that signage and other deterrents would have no effect on irresponsible people. It was mentioned that dogs were allowed to run in the play area and this should not be allowed. Cllr Rowswell suggested that the play area be fenced off immediately and that the cut-through in that area

be fenced off. Cllr Howard suggested more dog poo bins, but the Clerk confirmed that Somerset Council currently have a hold on supplying more bins.

It was hoped that responsible dog owners might approach those who were not picking up.

It was noted that the winter was worse for people not picking up as it was dark and maybe poo was not seen. We should mention this problem in the next newsletter. There should be wooden notices at each entrance to the recreation field and by the play area as soon as possible and possibly some by the car park to say 'this area is being monitored'

Action – Parish Clerk

It was noted that the dog warden does visit the area if asked. It would be useful to know how much poo was being picked up from the football pitch before each match. The Clerk is to ask the football team to do this.

Action – Parish Clerk

Estimates are to be sought for the cost of picket fencing around the play area.

Action – Parish Clerk

Resolved. The resolution made at the 18th September meeting was rescinded unanimously. This will be reviewed again in June 2024.

969. Recreation Field Advisory Committee Terms of Reference v3

To resolve to approve and adopt the TOR v3

Resolved. The Recreation Field Advisory Committee Terms of Reference v3 was adopted and approved with the following amendments:

- Add Football Club income as funds available for use
- The penultimate paragraph under section 10 to read 'Any funds not used will be carried over in the Recreation Field Minor Improvements earmarked reserve to use in future years'

970. Staffing Committee Terms of Reference v3

To approve and re-adopt the TOR v3

Resolved. To approve and re-adopt Staffing Committee TOR v3

971. Half-Yearly Budget Report. For information only

The Clerk/RFO presented the budget report for April – September, which was reviewed by the Council.

972. Recreation Field Income and Expenditure Account. For information only

The Clerk/RFO presented the income and expenditure for April – September, which showed an overspend of £2,065.19 and this was reviewed by the Council.

973. Finance

To review the Bank Reconciliation as at 30th September 2023 (previously circulated).

To approve the schedule of payments totalling £4,611.23 (previously circulated)

Resolved. The Bank Reconciliation was approved and signed as correct by a non-cheque signatory. The payments were approved.

974. Report from Clerk/RFO. For information only

The Clerk reported that she attended the SALC playground inspection training. We were the only Parish or Town Council that did not have railings around their play area, but was told that if it was not near a main road or a river, then it was not necessary. If we do put railings up then they will need to meet the required standards. She will provide feedback on the course to Cllr England and Gareth from the recreation field committee.

She reported that the recreation field committee were concerned that not all areas of the recreation field were being cut and that a meeting should be arranged between the contractor, Cllr Wylie Carrick and possibly Cllr England. The contractor has told her that he will be at the recreation field at about 1pm this Thursday and Cllr England confirmed he could meet him as Cllr Wylie Carrick was unavailable.

975. Reports. For information only

Highways

Cllr Rowsell said he had reported the potholes.

Lethbridge Recreational Ground Committee

Nothing further to report.

Ranger

Cllr Wylie Carrick said he had spoken to Quentin at Somerset Council and he is looking at the situation and will send us a response about the ranger service in the village. The last ranger (Damien) only had part-time employment and left because he needed full time employment. It was thought that Karen might move our SID in the meantime.

Allotments

Cllr Howard said he walked around at the weekend and considering the time of year, he thought the allotments were in good condition. We still have one vacant allotment.

Cowleaze

Cllr Bourn said that Regular cutting of the footpaths and cleaning some of the areas was being carried out. They have purchased two new benches which will be installed in the next week or so.

Footpaths

It was noted that the footpath by the recreation ground had been cut. The Piece Lane footpath has grown over quite a lot. Cllr Bourn said that the footpath from the recreation field into Marsh Lane had a dead tree that had blown down, but Cllr Brunt said that this had been sorted.

976. Annex A – Deferred items register

This was reviewed.

Open Session

A question was asked about the item that had been rescinded. In June 2024 if the review resulted in the Parish Council deciding to ban dogs from the recreation field, would there be a democratic process in the form of a referendum within the village. Cllr Wylie Carrick response was that the initial response was via a survey and not through a referendum and it was the responsibility of the council to review what is best for the community overall. If we were to go via the referendum route it would cost the Parish Council a lot of money. The middle ground is that the Parish Council consider all the views and as the elected representatives of the village make the decision, however all members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and put their views forward.

Meeting closed: 9.30pm