

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 16th September 2024 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 Ed Wakely
Cllr Tim England Cllr Angie Joy
Cllr Sally Burwood

In attendance: Stella Davies (Clerk)

Members of the public: There was one member of the public in attendance.

Unitary Councillors in attendance: Somerset Cllr Jo Roundell Greene (arrived 7.40 pm, left 8.00 pm)

Report from Somerset Council

Cllr Roundell Greene reported that the highways work and volunteer information had been sent out to all local councils. It has not been well received as most Parish Councils feel it is too expensive. She will talk about this at the LCN meeting as it is fine for the town councils but not for the villages. The Council Tax reduction scheme consultation is still open. The residents survey 2024 is on the Somerset Council website until 21st October and there are hard copies in libraries.

Cllr Bourn asked if the threat of bankruptcy had dissipated. Cllr Roundell Greene said it had not gone away but they have worked really hard to stop it happening. They have a new finance officer who has started. The transformation and reorganisation has taken place and a lot of staff have taken voluntary redundancy. They will make some savings, but not as much as they had hoped.

Cllr Wakely said he had seen that regarding the selling off assets, there were some industrial units that were let on a permanent basis and wondered why these were being sold, when they generated a steady income stream. He thought that this was a short-term fix. Cllr Roundell Greene said that they had been told by the government that they were no longer supposed to be holding assets.

Cllr Wylie Carrick said that the LCN was sometimes asking us to answer surveys, but it was difficult for us as a council especially as they were on-line and we only met once a month, so the return date was very tight. Notice of two months would be much better. There should also be a facility to print off a copy, so that they could be circulated outside a meeting.

Cllr Wakely said quite a lot of verge cutting was carried out in the village recently and he thought that maybe the contractors were paid per mile, as the cutting back was atrocious. Cllr Roundell Greene asked him to email her the details and she would do something about it. This can also be reported on-line

Action – Cllr Wakely

Cllr Rowswell asked what was being done about the ditch near Lopen Head that caused the road to flood. Cllr Roundell Greene said she had contacted highways three times and doesn't know what more can be done. The ditch is actually in Seavington Parish and she said she would bring it up at their council meeting tomorrow.

Ser Item

- 1112. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972, s85(1))**
Apologies were received from Cllr Howard (away).
Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.

- 1113. 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 Rowswell declared an interest in item 1125 and signed the book.

- 1114. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 15th July 2024 (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41(1)).**
Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 15th July be signed as correct.

1115. LCN (Local Council Network)

To discuss any relevant issues that have been received from the LCN and to resolve who will attend the next LCN meeting on 25th September.

There was a meeting on 5th September from the Highways and Traffic working group. We did not send a representative. There will be another meeting on 19th September. They did raise the statutory duties clarification, Parish Council responsibilities and service management of potholes etc. It might be worthwhile if someone could attend the 19th September meeting. Cllr Bourn said if it was on-line he could attend. The Clerk will find out the time of the meeting. **Action – Parish Clerk**

The flood warden is going to do a risk and emergency flood warning session on 19th September, which can be attended on-line. No one was available to attend this. This can be discussed further as to whether a representative attends future meetings under item 1122.

The next LCN meeting on Wednesday 25th September at 6.30 pm. The main topic is health and wellbeing. No councillor was available to attend the meeting, however Cllr Wylie Carrick said that if he was available, he could attend.

1116. Dog Poo Bin in Shells Lane

To discuss the potential re-siting of the Dog Poo bin in Shells Lane and resolve what action should be taken.

Resolved. The county council have agreed to move the bin and will meet with a councillor to discuss the new site, which needs to be on highways land and in a position where they can easily empty it.

1117. Hedge at bottom of Robins Lane

To discuss the overgrown hedge at the bottom of Robins Lane and resolve what action should be taken.

It has been brought to the attention of the Parish Council that the visibility going round the corner was not good and the hedge on the left is overhanging, so cars going down Robins Lane are moving over to the right and this could cause an accident.

Resolved. The Clerk is to write to the owner and ask if the hedge could be cut back.

Action – Parish Clerk

1118. Hedges leading down to Washcross

To discuss the roadside hedges going down to Washcross and resolve what action should be taken.

Cllr Rowswell said that parts of the hedges have been cut, but they need cutting back more, to make it easier for the residents of Washcross. Cllr England said that he would ask if they could be cut back shortly, which would probably be after they have harvested the maize. **Action – Cllr England**

1119. Use of Cowleaze

To discuss the recent request to use the dog-free zone for a wedding ceremony

This was discussed by the councillors. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to the insurance company who said that an event, especially one with a bar would not be covered by our insurance, but at that stage had no details as to what the event would be. Cllr Joy initially suggested that they research public liability insurance with the broker in the village, however, it was confirmed by the applicant that it was not a wedding ceremony but a wedding blessing with a few friends and family in attendance as the legal ceremony would have taken place in June. They would then move to the pub for refreshments. There would be no bar in attendance and no loud music, so the councillors decided that this was no different than any other residents having an informal get-together.

Resolved. That Cowleaze can be used for a wedding blessing. This was unanimous.

1120. Parish Council October Newsletter

To resolve to approve the October Newsletter at a cost of £65

Resolved. The October Newsletter was approved.

1121. Enhanced Highway Maintenance Pilot

To discuss the documentation received from Somerset Council and resolve if any action needs to be taken at this stage.

Resolved. It was decided that as the cost was so high at about £685 per day during the week and rising to over £900 at weekends that we would not register an interest in taking part in the pilot scheme. The Clerk will investigate the cost of using a private contractor.

Action – Parish Clerk

1122. Emergency Response Plan

To discuss the emergency response plan sent to us by a local Parish Council and resolve if a Shepton Beauchamp Response Plan should be formulated.

Resolved. It was decided we did not need an emergency response plan to the level of the example sent, and that should there be an emergency we would call an extra-ordinary meeting to discuss. It was also thought that we should make the villagers aware of where stocks of salt, sandbags and grit were. It was suggested that an additional grit bin should be put at the top of Brimgrove Lane. The Clerk will find out the cost of a large green bin.

Action – Parish Clerk

1123. Cowleaze Volunteers nomination. For information only

To update the council on the Somerset Chair's Award for Service to the Community nomination submitted.

The Cowleaze Volunteers have been invited to the Chair's Award for Services presentation. Cllr Bourn will attend, together with Geoff, the Chairman from Cowleaze.volunteers. Cllr Wylie Carrick thanked Cllr Howard for producing the citation.

1124. SID statistics

To review the SID statistics produced by Cllr Bourn

The SID statistics were reviewed and it was decided that these should be published in the newsletter twice a year.

Action – Parish Clerk

1125. Village Shop

To discuss potential help for the village shop and resolve what action should be taken.

Cllr Bourn said that he had been contacted by a villager because the chiller cabinet in the village shop had broken down and could not be repaired further. The villager asked if the council could assist in getting a replacement. The Clerk reported that our grant policy stated that grants could not be given to

individuals or businesses. She had contacted SALC (Somerset Association of Local Councils) about this. Their suggestion was that the Parish Council purchase the chiller and put it into the shop, which the councillors were not keen to do. She therefore suggested that the council give a donation rather than a grant, as other councils had a Grant & Donations Policy, which stated that donations could not be given to individuals unless the community would directly benefit, which in this case they would.

Resolved. The council felt that as the shop was a vital commodity within the village which the whole community would benefit from, on an exceptional basis a donation of £500 be given to the village shop to put towards a new chiller cabinet.

1126. Financial Regulations 2024

To resolve to approve and adopt the new 2024 Financial Regulations

Resolved. That the Financial Regulations 2024 be adopted and approved.

1127. Finance

To review the two Bank Reconciliations as at 31st July 2024 and 31st August 2024. (previously circulated).

To approve the schedule of payments totalling £5,885.04 (previously circulated)

Resolved. The two bank Reconciliations were approved and signed as correct by a non-bank signatory. The payments were approved.

1128. Report from Clerk/RFO. For information only

The Clerk confirmed with the councillors that they wanted her to put up a co-option notice regarding the current vacancy. This will be done once the new application forms have been completed, which Cllr Wylie Carrick is in the process of compiling.

Action – Cllr Wylie Carrick

She mentioned that from 1st October the documentation on our website needs to be WCAG 2.2 compliant rather than WCAG 2.1 AA. Not all of our documents are fully compliant, but some are PDFs sent by third parties. We do have an accessibility statement on our website, which states why we are not fully compliant and so she will review this to see if it needs to be amended.

Action – Parish Clerk

She has received a letter from Adam Dance with his new contact details.

She has received an email from a resident thanking the Parish Council for their assistance in getting the new larger drain at the crossroads at the top of the village, which has helped with controlling the water flowing down into Upper Silver Street.

She mentioned that the battery on the Clerk's laptop needed to be replaced as it could not be used without it being plugged in. She asked if she could get a quote for a new battery. The councillors also suggested she find out the cost of a new laptop, as the current one was now six years old.

Action – Parish Clerk

1129. Reports. For information only

Highways

Cllr Rowsell said that potholes had been mended and he has reported kerbstones that are coming away. The Clerk said she had reported the street light bulb which needed replacing by Owlsley Cottages.

Lethbridge Recreational Ground Committee

Cllr England said that the working party had not taken place due to the weather. A couple of the dog signs have gone. He had put one back, but it has already been removed. He suggested that we look at more permanent signs so the Clerk will find out the cost.

Action – Parish Clerk

The football club have said they had to stop the last couple of games as there has been dog mess on the football pitch. It was suggested that something be put onto Facebook about this. He needs to contact the welder again as he has not confirmed when he will be coming to weld the play equipment. The committee are looking for funding to buy new equipment.

Ranger

Cllr Wylie Carrick said the grass verges are being cut and the drains are being cleared, but not dug into. Cllr Bourn asked if he could clear the footpath behind Buttle Close, but Cllr Rowswell said he could trim it.

Action – Cllr Rowswell

Allotments

The Clerk reported that we now have two more allotment holders.

Cowleaze

Cllr Bourn said the long grass had been cut down by a tractor. It is looking quite good at the moment. They will be doing more management of the meadow area to try and encourage wild flowers.

Footpaths

Nothing to report.

1130. LCN questionnaire

The LCN questionnaire was completed for submission later today.

Action – Parish Clerk

1131. Annex A – Deferred items register

This was updated.

Meeting closed: 9.30 pm