

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 17th February 2025 at 7.30 pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp TA19 0LQ

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

In attendance: Stella Davies (Clerk)

Members of the public: There were 12 members of the public in attendance.

Unitary Councillors in attendance: Somerset Cllr Jo Roundell Greene (arrived 7.30 pm & left at 8.50 pm)

Public session

Before the public session opened Cllr Wylie Carrick thanked those councillors that got involved in helping with villagers whose homes had been flooded. The Parish Council is aware of the impact that the flooding has made to everyone. By our latest estimate we had 21 properties that had internal flooding, which represents 5% of the community. There are 36 properties affected in some way which represents 12% of the community.

He proposed to name the various areas of the village and people could comment if they wished. The comments were as follows: -

Upper Middle Street – there were no comments
Sheepway / The Pound / Washcross – there were no comments
Robins Lane / Buttle Close – there were no comments

Love Lane

- They have had numerous visits from Somerset Council and contractors saying that 'work is on its way' and so they assumed they were still on their list. Cllr Wylie Carrick said when the contractors were in the village, he asked them why they weren't going into Love Lane and their response was that those drains required a different machine to unblock them.
- At the last Parish Council meeting it was mentioned that we were going to get private contractors to do the work and is this still being pursued.

Cllr Wylie Carrick said this was still being pursued and we working very hard with Jo Roundell Greene. They made this point at the local highways working group meeting and asked for a protocol that would enable us to work with local contractors that we could source when we required it. There are legal issues which have to be addressed. We hope to get that information soon so we can ensure that the new contractor is appropriately qualified to work on the roads and we can get the appropriate licence for them to do the work.

- When will the current problem be resolved? It has been 3 weeks now. Every time there is heavy rain Love Lane does flood, although the water normally recedes leaving heavy mud. He thought the drains were supposed to be cleaned on a regular basis. Cllr Roundell Greene said she had emailed Highways last week and will email them again.

Cllr Wakely said that the Parish Council found it very frustrating as they had been discussing this for a long time and had been told they could not use a private contractor. It looks as though the Parish Council are not doing very much, but their hands are tied. Hopefully with Jo's assistance this might change. Hopefully it will mean lifting of the legislation, or the approved contractor will come round more frequently. The current issue with Somerset Council is that the lorries that suck the mud from the drains are not contracted to clear (jet) the drains if there is a blocked pipe, even though they have the equipment, so this needs to be changed. Cllr Wylie Carrick confirmed that we were pushing very hard on this issue as is Adam Dance.

- When they went to the flooding meeting held by Adam Dance, they were told that the drains were regularly cleaned out. They also said people would have to clear their own drains and that the Parish Councils would have to increase the precept to pay to get alternative contractors

Cllr Roundell Greene confirmed that although the County Council did not have a lot of money, they still continue to clear the drains. She said she would fight very hard for us, but that there were a lot of areas in Somerset that had been affected.

Lambrook Road

- A resident of Lambrook Road said although they had not been flooded this time, they have been in the past. This time three people worked for an hour to clear the largest drain which prevented the houses being flooded this time, although much of the water went into the neighbour's driveway. It is believed there is a drain blocked which they will report to the County Council. The other side of Cowleaze Field there is a large ditch and it was asked if water could be directed towards that ditch. At the meeting Adam Dance held, it seemed that we do not deal with crises very well and said there should be a co-ordinated programme. Water catchment methods were mentioned and could we look at this as central government could give grants. They would like to see Somerset Council have a prevention programme in place, which the village could feed information into.

Jo Roundell Greene said that self help was very important. If you are aware that you may flood, then you could invest in a flood gate. She had leaflets about a flood recovery programme, which were distributed.

A member of the public said if you put a flood gate outside your house, you were only diverting the water onto someone else's property.

Piece Lane

- A resident said they had flooded and they were halfway up the hill. The amount of water that is coming off the back fields and coming into the row of houses. They have lived here for 10 years and on the first 4 years they flooded 5 times. They have spent money directing the water to the road drain and the drain cannot take the water away quickly enough and it is not blocked. They don't think that it is known that the area floods regularly. With the proposed planning application in the field behind the houses there are concerns that if you go online it shows as a low-risk area for flooding. Once the houses are built, with concrete roads, the water cannot soak into the land as it is at the moment. Even now the houses are being flooded. There are plans to put an attenuation pond there but they do not think it will be large enough as the planners do not appreciate the scope of what is coming off the fields. The water that is coming off the fields is full of mud and debris and manure and this has washed through the houses. Piece Lane residents need the support of the Parish Council to ensure that building the houses does not exacerbate the problem. They were told when they came to the public meeting about the development that the road was supposed to be absorbent.
- Another resident said they took photos during the flooding and that some of the local farmers were there with tractors trying to build defences because the water was running down the field at such a rate that it was overwhelming the natural course for the water. He has some photos which he will send to the Parish Clerk to keep on record. When saying the roads in the new development would be absorbent, the fields are naturally absorbent and they were overwhelmed. There are 3 or 4 houses in Piece Lane where the situation is dire and has been for a long time and putting a pond in at the bottom of a slope is not going to protect anyone. We would like the council to have on record the number of floods and what the residents are doing locally to build their own defences.
- Cllr Roundell Greene said she had emailed the planning department and needed all the information that has been sent to the Parish Council. **Action – Parish Clerk**

Cllr Wylie Carrick said they would discuss this more in agenda item 1197.

Finally, he highlighted the flood drop-in sessions which were being held in various locations in the area. There is also a 'Flood Reporting Tool' which was mentioned in the papers left on the chairs in the public area. We all need to keep an eye on the drains outside our house. Please report a blocked drain (including photos) on the Somerset Council website. Jo Roundell Greene said if more people report one blocked drain, then it moves up the list to be sorted

Silver Springs Entrance car parking. Another comment unrelated to the flooding was from a resident of Silver Springs who said that vehicles are parking too close to the entrance into Silver Springs which makes visibility difficult. This will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Report from Somerset Council

Cllr Roundell Greene reported that the Council were currently setting their budget, which has to be completed by 11th March. Most of the work she has been doing in the past few weeks has been to do with flooding. She has spent time walking around villages with the Highways officer looking at drains and has walked round Shepton Beauchamp twice in the last few months with councillors and local farmers as well, the most recent time being last November. The Council is very aware of the state of the drains and that actions need to be taken. The Highways officer was very positive about the work that could be done. She is aware of the water still in Love Lane and this is an area where it was agreed it needed another drain. It was noted that the culvert into Cowleaze was now a small pipe whereas before it had been a large ditch and that was going to be looked into and addressed. This has not yet been done, and has been chased by her and the Parish Council. All the Somerset Teams are prioritising where houses have been affected. On a positive side, the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) are giving grants of up to £20,000 to non-profit organisations to help towards the flooding.

At this point Cllr Wylie Carrick confirmed that the SRA are already funding Somerset Council to carry out annual drain clearance on the following roads: Buttle Lane, Church Street, Lambrook Road, Love Lane, Middle Street, North Street & Robins Lane. In addition, we are asking for a bid of up to £20,000 to undertake a specific project.

Cllr Roundell Greene said that the drains needed to be properly cleaned out so that the water could run freely. It is very important that every household registers if they were flooded on the Somerset Council website using the Flood Report. This will allow Somerset Council to bid for a Government Flood Relief Grant that can be distributed to those affected by flooding. It will not affect insurance (due to GDPR)..

Cllr Wylie Carrick thanked Jo on behalf of the Parish Council for the support that she has given us over the last few months.

Ser Item

- 1193. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given** (LGA 1972, s85(1))
Apologies were received from Cllr Sally Burwood (unwell).
Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.
- 1194. 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 Bourn declared an interest in item 1196 and signed the book
- 1195. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 20th January 2025** (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41(1)).
Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 20th January 2025 be signed as correct.
- 1196. Grant Application – Cowleaze Meadow**
To review the grant application from Cowleaze Meadow and resolve whether to give a grant of £500
Resolved. The grant of £500 to Cowleaze Meadow was approved unanimously.
- 1197. Piece Lane**
To discuss the concerns raised by some residents in Piece Lane following the recent flash flooding and resolve what action can be taken.

Discussion took place as to whether to contact the developers and ask what drainage plans they have in place and to confirm if they were going to feed directly into the Somerset Council drain or whether the development was going to feed into the existing drain in Piece Lane. It was thought that the planners believed that the attenuation pond would be enough. They should be asked if new drainage plans were being proposed bearing in mind the recent flooding. There was concern that false data that was online was being used rather than real time data in reporting Piece Lane as a low-risk flood area. It was also suggested we invite Chris Winter along to a meeting where he can confirm what is built into the development.

Resolved. Write formally to the planning authorities expressing our concern over the recent flooding which has occurred through Piece Lane and we would like the existing flood report that was written to

be re-examined in light of the recent information that has come through and copy this to Jo Roundell Greene and Chris Winter.
Action – Parish Clerk

1198. LCN Meeting held on 30th January

To feedback on the recent LCN meeting and update the council on any decision made concerning Parish Councils being able to use alternative contractors to clear blocked drains and gullies

Cllr Wylie Carrick said minutes had been received from the meeting. The LCN meeting followed on from the Highways meeting where it was agreed that work needed to be done to sort out for local contractors to be allowed to work on the road. He had asked for that point to be specifically raised on 30th January and it was on the agenda, but the update more about Kier working on the roads and not what the working group had been discussing. He asked about the protocol for us to use local contractors and they said we could use them and a protocol could be written. Jo Roundell Greene said she had sent several emails to ask how far forward they were with writing the protocol but had no response. She will chase again. Cllr Wylie Carrick said there was no register being held for accredited contractors and requested that Somerset Council set up a Register of accredited local contractors authorised to carry out local drainage work.

Cllr Wylie Carrick said there was low attendance from Parish Councils at the LCN meeting and that Parishes do not find the LCN forum easy to get anything done. The grouping of the LCN needs to be revisited as the Parishes would be better with a collective voice. Jo Roundell Greene said there had been a lot of complaints about the LCN as there are big towns and little villages in one group and this does not work. The structure may be reviewed in the future.

1199. Flooding Forum held on 13th February

To feedback on the recent Flooding Forum held by Adam Dance.

Cllr Bourn reported that he had no opportunity to present a formal report of our situation but ensured that Adam Dance had a hard copy of the report that Cllr Wylie Carrick and he had submitted. A representative from SRA confirmed that the Parish Council were eligible to apply for a grant for up to £20,00 for immediate mitigation measures in our area. It is an on-line application. They are looking for information on risks and mitigation, including preparatory surveys and ultimately to develop a plan. We may be able to get professional advice from organisations (e.g. Highways, FWAG, Environment Agency etc) who could contribute to the development of the plan. Jo Roundell Greene suggested the University of Exeter could be contacted as they have a lot of researchers who might be prepared to undertake a study of the land surrounding Shepton Beauchamp and how we manage the flood. It was suggested the first step would be to get the Environment Agency involved.

The first deadline for submission for an SRA Grant is 25th February with a second deadline of 27th May. We have to have specific measures that we have to identify and we would be required to match fund if we applied for the maximum amount. It was decided we would like to get any funding that was available, but that we could not produce a study by 25th February and it might be quite tight to get one produced for May. We need to approach the various organisations to see how much they would charge to undertake a study and how long it would take. **Action - Cllr Bourn / Cllr Wylie Carrick**

It was decided that we should initially ask for funding for gully/drain jetting and drain clearance and submit this by 25th February. Cllr Bourn said he would start to complete the application form, then Cllr Wylie Carrick would complete other parts of the application for the Clerk to submit to the SRA

Action – Cllr Bourn / Cllr Wylie Carrick / Parish Clerk

Jo Roundell Greene said that the Highways department had agreed that work needed to be carried out to put a new drain in at the bottom of Love Lane and that the Parish Clerk should contact Lee Norman to remind him of this.
Action – Parish Clerk

1200. Church Path

To discuss the removal of moss from the church path and resolve whether to spend £385 to clear it
Resolved. The payment was not approved. The quote had come direct to the Parish Council. It was decided that the correct route should be for the church to submit a grant application form. There was also concern that if a machine with brushes was used rather than weedkiller that some of the loose tarmac would be brought up with it. The Clerk to ask the Church to submit a grant application form.

Action - Parish Clerk

1201. Finance

To review the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st January 2025 (previously circulated).
To approve the schedule of payments totalling £4,680.43 (previously circulated)

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

1202. Report from Clerk/RFO. *For information only*

There was nothing to report.

1203. Reports. *For information only*

Highways

Cllr Rowsell has reported potholes, including the one near Branstons. Two streetlights by the Duke of York have been reported as they do not work. He has reported the storm drain at the entrance to Littlefields Lane. The flooding by the flyover has been reported but nothing has happened.

Lethbridge Recreational Ground Committee

Cllr England said the Play Equipment annual check had been carried out and the risks were all low or very low. A bingo night was held which has raised £422. They have received quotes for trees to go along the slope. They are planning to do a fund raiser at the recreation field in the summer (a Camp Out).

Ranger

Cllr Wylie Carrick said the Ranger continues to do a good job. He has asked Somerset Landscapes about cutting of footpaths and this is something they can do and will send in a quote.

Allotments

There was nothing to report.

Cowleaze

The stream has been partially unblocked, although there are still a lot of brambles there. The stream is now flowing OK. They are getting a delivery of hedging plants at the end of February which they will plant in the dog-free zone. The Council are responsible for clearing the ditch all along the back of Buttle Close, up to the bridge which goes over to Cowleaze and for the first 50 metres on the other side (where the paving stones are). They are going to get some chippings to put on the paths where they have been eroded.

Footpaths

There was nothing to report.

1204. Annex A – Deferred items register

Annex A was updated.

Meeting closed: 9.25 pm