

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Held on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7 pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp**

Present: Cllr Nigel Wylie Carrick (Chair)
Nick Brunton & Simon Clifford (Cowleaze Meadow volunteers)
Kate Wylie Carrick, Kim Lea & Cath Holloway (the W.I.)
Dave Burwood (the Events Team)
Carol Creaser (Arts & Craft Group)
Cllr David Bourn
Cllr Hugo Stearn
Julian Black (Shepton Playhouse)
Mike Hatchett & Gareth Crawley (Bell Ringing Group)

In attendance: 1 member of the public

There were display stands from: Shepton W.I.
Cowleaze Meadow Volunteers
Shepton Bell Ringing Group
Shepton Playhouse

Tea & Coffee and cakes were supplied by members of the W.I.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Angie Joy (Village Hall Committee), Sharon Humphreys (Events Team), Richard Martin (Shepton Charity), Cllr Tim England, Cllr Andrew Rowswell, Stella Davies (Parish Clerk).

2 To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22nd May 2023

The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 22nd May 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3 Report from Chairman of the Parish Council for 2023-24

The Chairman welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the Annual Parish Council Meeting. Over the past year, The Parish Council was sorry to lose two long standing councillors with the resignation of Clare Lillywhite after 11 years, and Sarah Brunt after 9.5 years voluntary service on the Parish Council. In their place, we welcomed Hugo Stearn and Sally Anne Burwood, both co-opted as members of the Parish Council.

• Council Activities.

Somerset Council has formed as a new Unitary Authority. We in Shepton Beauchamp belong to the South Petherton & Islemoor Ward with Adam Dance and Jo Randell-Green as our elected councillors. The Parish Council is a member of the Local Community Network (LCN) Area 13, (Crewkerne & Ilminster) and work collaboratively with the other 32 Town & Parish Councils in identifying priorities within the area. It is likely that the current Ward boundaries will be re-drawn for one Somerset Council councillor to represent each ward. Inevitably there is some uncertainty in delivering some of the services. The old Ranger service was discontinued in October 2023 and the Parish Council has contracted a new Ranger service with Somerset Landscapes Ltd, which has resulted in a significantly improved service. Reporting problems on the roads and footpaths is now significantly easier using the 'Report a Problem on the Road' and 'Explore Somerset' webpages. More recently, the Parish Council has established a new 'Recreational Field Advisory Committee' to manage the Recreational Field and its facilities, including the Pavilion and Play Areas. Other projects include: the Platinum Jubilee Garden now planted out by volunteer residents; a Road Safety Campaign covering the school 20MPH zone with the deployment of the Speed Indicator Device; provision of grants to Shepton Beauchamp activity groups; two allotments available to rent; Defibrillator training session to be scheduled; Piece Lane Development (on going).

- **Finance.**

Due to the impending financial crisis facing Somerset Council, all Somerset Town & Parish Councils were strongly advised to increase their precepts by 50 – 60 % to cover potential costs for local services that may be discontinued. The Council was not minded to increase our precept without proper costings from Somerset Council, currently not available, but as a precautionary measure, costs were estimated for potential charges for pothole repair, dog bins emptying, lane verges cutting and drainpipe clearance, adding an additional £6.6K onto the estimated expenditure budget. The Parish precept shows a 40.4% increase which is equivalent to an increase of 0.79p per week. The Annual Government Account Report showing our audited income, expenditure and budget will be published on the Parish Notice Board and Parish Council Website over the period 17 June – 26 July 2024.

- **Community Plan**

The excellent Shepton Beauchamp Community Plan 2005 continues to form the genesis of many of the existing Community Groups that continue to flourish within the Parish. Since then, the Parish Council has conducted three separate surveys: June 2021 'Carbon Capture Survey'; January 2022 'Bus Transport Survey'; and in July 2023 'The Recreational Field Survey', which attracted responses of 23%, 16% & 26% respectively, compared against a 75% response to the 2005 survey. In January 2024, the Parish Council discussed the option to conduct a further Community Review supported by the Community Council for Somerset, part funded by Somerset Council. It was felt that the time scale required to complete the review by November 2024, was too short to generate sufficient popular support within the parish. At the Parish Meeting there was unanimous support from those attending, that after 25 years it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to investigate a further Community Review to take place in 2025. Three members attending, indicated they would be prepared to be members of the Steering Group to manage and run the project. The Chairman thanked all those attending for their encouraging views, and subject to the availability of funding from Somerset Council and availability of Community Council Somerset undertook to investigate the feasibility of a Shepton Beauchamp Community Review for 2025.

4 Report from the Parochial Church Council

There was no report from the Parochial Church Council

5 Report from the Shepton Beauchamp Village Hall Committee

The village hall has been having a bit of a struggle lately, caused by the aftermath of covid and some regular users not returning, coupled with rising fuel and utility bill costs, increased cleaning costs and insurance.

We are glad to report that things have improved in the earlier part of this year and we have seen an increase in new classes and more private bookings. Raising the hourly rate to cover increased costs has also been a big help.

Our aim for this year is to break even financially rather than sustain losses and to this end, we have held a couple of fund-raising events, which have been very successful and helped to swell the coffers again. The April plant sale and coffee morning was very well supported and made us over £600. We plan to hold this event annually now. The bingo raised us another £350. Use of the hall as a Polling station also raises much needed income.

We have addressed all emergency lighting issues in the hall and no significant maintenance issues are planned for this year, other than the odd cosmetic improvement here and there. This will enable us to keep costs down. We do have reserves in the bank which will allow us to cover any unforeseen expenditure, case need.

We thank the parish council again for the grant, which assisted in defraying some of the cost of the heating bill.

It is our intention to have a stall at the Cowleaze Meadow event and our annual Flower show fundraiser is scheduled for 31st August.

We will be making some planting improvements in the garden and will continue to promote the hall as a valuable village asset and space for everyone to enjoy.

6 Report from the Shepton Beauchamp Charity

The Shepton Beauchamp Charity started in 1886. It is a collection of charities for the benefit of residents of Shepton Beauchamp; some of the charities are several hundred years old. The income of about £1,500 a year 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, who have been resident in the village for 3 or more years, going to university or starting an apprenticeship and any village 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 2023 the charity paid out three educational grant and the Christmas box was paid out to 46 residents.

In March 2024 the Charity purchase one item for the new school playground.

7 Report from Shepton Beauchamp Primary School

There was no report from the Shepton Beauchamp Primary School.

8 Report from the Events Team

Having put on two excellent street parties, for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and then for the King's Coronation, this year our free event for the village will be held at Cowleaze Meadow on 22nd June 2024 and we are working with the Cowleaze Meadow team and other village groups to put on a lovely afternoon, with live music, a drum workshop, Bar, BBQ, Pimms stall and some fun games for the children. Hopefully an event for all ages to enjoy and with a bit of luck the weather will be kinder to us then!

Having had to cancel the 2023 Laser Light show due to bad weather at the end of last year, we ran the risk of losing the money we had paid out in advance to the Light show company. They did however agree to us postponing the event, provided we held this in the early part of 2024. This we did, with the support of the Rec team, as a free event to the village and we ran a bar and BBQ in March to defray some of the costs involved. This was a different light show to the one we had previously and proved to be a great success with all the people who attended. It is our intention to hold another one in November this year, but this time we will need to charge an entry fee to cover the cost.

To put on two such events for the village does of course mean we have significant expenditure and so we are busy raising funds for this currently.

So far in 2024, we have had a very successful and well attended Burns Night supper, a bingo night in the pub and a couple of films, one of which was served with a ploughman's supper. We will continue after the Cowleaze event with our planned film nights, an Oktoberfest and possible race night, the laser light show and then the village Christmas market.

In 2023 we arranged for poppies to be displayed around the village for Remembrance Sunday and will do this again this year and we will organize the annual village Christmas tree again.

We continue to strive to provide activities for the village which we hope people of all ages can enjoy and at the same time raise funds for our ongoing programme of events.

Our events we will continue to advertise in the Web, on Facebook, by means of an annual leaflet drop to each house and by updating signage at the entrance to the village.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the parish council for the grant this year to cover insurance costs.

The events team currently

Ian Brown, Mark Brown, Dave Burwood, Amy Cook, Tom Dawson, Sharon Humphreys, Michele Hutchinson, Liz Sanderson & Claire Uren.

9 Report from Cowleaze Meadow Volunteers

Cowleaze Meadow is a wonderful open space in the heart of the village. Myself and 9 volunteers give up our time to maintain it on behalf of the community.

The Committee and Volunteers are:

Chairman: Nick Brunton

Treasurer: Jan Pniok

Volunteers: David Bourn; Simon Clifford; Eileen Cripps; Tony Goddard; Richard Martin; Jeff Turner; Ian Smith; Carol Youngson.

New volunteers are always welcome. We meet when tasks need doing and the weather is favourable. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Nick Brunton Nickbrunton@googlemail.com

Funds: We currently have in the bank and cash funds. £1,085

- Key items on fund raising and expenditure:
 - ◆ The volunteers donated funds to enable us to buy a memorial bench for Roger Cripps. Roger was the former chairman of Cowleaze Meadow and an active Parish councillor. His bench is on the bank just past the dog free zone.
 - ◆ We were grateful to receive a £650 maintenance grant from the Parish Council in 2023.
 - ◆ We raised £170 by hosting a quiz night in the village in February of this year.
 - ◆ Our principal expenditure this year was replacing three old wooden benches with new recycled plastic benches. This cost us £735 but we were grateful to receive a donation from the Shepton Beauchamp M.I which paid for one of the benches outright.
- Key Activities:
 - ◆ Used our rechargeable battery push and ride on mowers to maintain grass cutting along all our pathways and in the dog free zone.
 - ◆ Used our strimmer to keep the path edges clear.
 - ◆ For the first time used an Allen Scythe machine to cut the tall, rough grass areas.
 - ◆ Cleared fallen branches.
 - ◆ Organised children's events such as egg and spoon races for the 7th May 2023 village street party.
- In the next year:
 - ◆ Continue our caretaking activities.
 - ◆ Repair and replace sections of the fence that borders the stream from the dog free zone.

I would personally like to thank the villagers who came and supported our quiz night or donated prizes, Shepton Beauchamp M.I and of course all of our volunteers.

10 Report from Shepton Beauchamp W.I.

The Shepton Beauchamp WI has had a good year and membership numbers remain good with several new joiners. There has been quite a variety of events and speakers. The year started in June with a talk on the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance It was very interesting to hear the behind scenes stories and to realise that the fund raising is so vital. In July we had a talk by Michael entitled The Gift of Bread which gave us all a chance to learn about (and taste!) the benefits of baking with Spelt flour. In August we had a pudding night with prosecco and a quiz puddings quiz! September we

were entertained by Jan O'Neill who talked amusingly about her life entertaining on ships. "Down the Plughole" was the talk from Wessex Water in October with some rather graphic pictures of exactly what IS there down the plughole! Emma Duke came in November and entranced us all with her driftwood Christmas tree, so we were very much in the mood for our Christmas party in December. There was not meeting in January, as customary, and the programme resumed in February with a very entertaining talk from our very own Shepton Beauchamp Jesse Patteson ("20 years a smoker") who brought much appreciated samples for everyone. The History of Gin was the talk in March and we all enjoyed a little snifter of G&T from a variety of gins before a fascinating talk on the story of gin from 1700 onwards. In April Kim Letson talked about her experiences walking ancient trails and showed us some wonderful pictures from her walks. And then, as an extra activity, we had the most wonderfully talk at Barrington Court on the morning of 26th April from the new (ish) head gardener.

Looking ahead we have an interesting programme for the rest of the year including painting, an evening of belly dancing, a cheese and wine evening and Indian tassel making. Several of these are being led by our own Shepton Beauchamp talent! And the 7pm opening has been a great success with members enjoying socialising before the meetings. Visitors are welcome to meetings at a cost of £5 and can join at the meeting or subsequently. Agendas for the WI are usually available in the shop and meetings are advertised on the village Facebook page. The Shepton Beauchamp WI is in good shape.

11 Report from The Shepton Arts & Craft Group

We started the year on a high, after securing a grant from the Parish Council to buy supplies for the Group.

We bought basic Art supplies such as Oil/Watercolour brushes and paper. Also, supplies to do Lino Printing, supplies for Jewellery making and to do Encaustic Art. We ran workshops for all of them. We had bookings from Ilminster, and Barrington as well as Shepton Beauchamp. The workshops have proved to be very popular. And most were full to capacity. We are also doing a workshop for the WI at one of their meetings later in the year.

We have two new regular members one from outside the village, so our numbers are gradually increasing.

A couple of weeks after New Year Gill took a workshop for abstract painting, which was fully booked. We are enjoying running the workshops and have had great feedback! There are several workshops in the pipeline, such as card printing and making tassels.

We are planning to hold an exhibition of our Art and crafts later in the year (possibly September) and hope to continue the exhibitions annually, as we used to do. You are all invited to the exhibition. There will be refreshments and a raffle too.

Lastly, we have increased our fees per session to £3.50p to help with weekly costs. The price has not been raised for several years and £3.50 is very reasonable price to pay for two hours entertainment plus refreshments. We hope the Art Group will expand over time. We now have 14 members.

We have £82 in the Nationwide Building Society. Petty cash stands at £303.18p.

12 Report from Shepton Bell Ringing Group

Following on from last year's Shepton Bell Ringers report we have now formed a Winsmoor Benefice Bell Ringing Band comprising of a regular group of 14 people who commit to our Monday practice night and Sunday service ringing. In our Benefice there are a total of 38 bells in 5 towers (Shepton Beauchamp - 12 bells, Dowlish Wake 8, Barrington 6, Kingstone 6 and Puckington 6) that are hung for full circle ringing. Therefore, we need more ringers and would welcome new recruits, the younger the better (age 10 upwards).

At present we rotate our Sunday service ringing so that hopefully, all the bells are rung for services at least once a month. Our regular weekly practice is at Shepton Beauchamp between 7- 9.00pm. We are focusing on basic bell handling skills to enable all the Benefice bells to be rung safely. In addition, some of our practices are on more focussed sessions and these are aided by ringers from other towers.

We would be honoured to ring for any celebrations, i.e. weddings, funerals, birthday, anniversaries etc for a donation, some, if not all, would go into the Bell Fund which hopefully will help towards the cost of any bell maintenance that may be required in the future. For any enquiries for ringing/learning to ring at Shepton Beauchamp contact Lesley Knipe - phone 01460 241443 or email mrslesleyknipe@outlook.com

Contacts for ringing at the other Benefice towers are:

Barrington	Chris Wills	01460 57494	chrisgwills@gmail.com
Puckington	Robert Munro	01460 57626	Puckington@bath-wells.org
Dowlish Wake	Pat Hollard	01460 52779	pathollard@icloud.com
Kingstone	Maggie Rigby	01460 52311	Kingstone@bath-well.org

13 Report from The Shepton Playhouse

Last summer Bob McGarva and I decided that we would set up a drama group in Shepton. Both of us have had quite a lot of theatrical experience, both on stage and behind the scenes - in my own case starting with Bristol Youth Theatre aged sixteen, almost sixty years ago! We had no idea if we would find sufficient interest or talent in the village to succeed but we thought we would try and find out.

Having set up the structure, calling it The Shepton Playhouse, we were delighted to receive generous grants from the Parish Council and the Men's Institute. This allowed us to purchase some sound and lighting equipment and publicise a public meeting which we ran in late August here in the village hall. About twenty-five people turned up and we were able to cast a play we had agreed was appropriate – a comedy about a drama group meeting up after lockdown conveniently set in a village hall.

Rehearsals started in mid-September and we put on two performances just seven weeks later. The Events Team provided a meal and ran a bar and I am delighted to tell you that we sold out and received many positive comments from an audience who probably didn't know what to expect! We were lucky to have a terrific cast with just four speaking parts, including two actors who had never been in a play before.

We also learnt some lessons – we sold too many tickets for each night, maybe three nights less crowded would have been more sensible; we need more back stage crew particularly sound and lighting techies; the facilities in this village hall are very limiting and selection of future plays will have to allow for the lack of wings, changing facilities and the small stage.

We've also had lots of support. Your Parish Clerk, Stella Davies, who as you know is a stalwart of the Warehouse Theatre in Ilminster is also our Treasurer and Stage Manager. Through her we were able to borrow props for our first production and I hope to be able to develop the relationship with the Warehouse in the future. Lynn in the shop really helped with ticket sales and the Events Team's support enabled us to concentrate on the play while they organised food and drink.

We had hoped to put on a play this summer but that is not going to happen because of personal issues. However, I can tell you that we are already planning for the future. On the drawing board is a pantomime (oh no it isn't!) for the New Year which the committee will be discussing in a couple of weeks. It will almost certainly be Cinderella, the most traditional pantomime there is.

We will also be considering other productions for 2025 which I hope will include involvement with other organisations in the village such as the school, the Events Team and the church. We see ourselves first and foremost as a Shepton community organisation and we want lots of village folk to be involved.

For our club to be successful we need some increased technical and backstage support, so if you know anybody who would like to be involved with sound, lighting, music, set design or costumes please let me know. Plus, and most importantly, it is likely that we will need to find a younger person to play Cinders!!

Putting on any play in this village hall presents quite a challenge, a pantomime particularly so, but Bob and I believe that with the great team that already exists from our first play we can overcome the limitations of the stage and produce an entertainment which I hope you will all support.

The Chairman closed by thanking all the representative who attended the Annual Parish Meeting for their respective reports that summarized the very wide range of activities that take place within Shepton Beauchamp. In particular, he thanked those who set up their display tables: the WI for providing tea and cake on their stall; the Playhouse on their recent successful performance with plans for future productions; and to the external bellringing visitors, Mike Hatchett and Gareth Crawley representing Winsmoor Benefice Bell Ringers for their report and display on the ancient art of bell ringing now heard in all five bell towers in the benefice.

To conclude the Chairman emphasised that the Parish Council remains committed to assist, encourage and facilitate new activities of benefit to enthusiastic segments of the community. He urged those attending to spread the word and encourage their neighbours and friends, especially new members of the community, to attend next year's Annual Meeting in early May 2025 to discover the many threads of community life and activities that make up the vibrant community that is Shepton Beauchamp.

Meeting closed: 8.20 pm