

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 16th February 2026 at 7.30pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp TA19 0LQ

Councillors present: Cllr Paul Vacani (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Rowswell
Cllr Angie Joy

Cllr David Bourn (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Sally Burwood

Members of the public: There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

Unitary Councillors in attendance: Cllr Jo Roundell-Green (arrived 19:51 – left 20:07)

Open session

A member of the public raised concerns regarding drainage and flooding issues in Great Lane. It was reported that on the right-hand side of the hill some drains are flowing freely while others are blocked. It was noted that there may be one to two feet of debris and soil above the water level, with loose soil sitting on top. The member of the public queried whether the debris could be removed manually with a spade rather than engaging a contractor, particularly to clear leaves. It was decided to ask the ranger to investigate and see if they could do anything. Although the responsibility lies with Highways, clearance has reportedly not taken place due to budget constraints. It was suggested that Chapter 8 training could be undertaken if required.

Reports from Somerset Council

Cllr Roundell Green reported that the main concerns across the area are flooding and potholes. With the start of the new financial year, works are expected to be scheduled, and confirmation will be sought from Lee Norman. It was suggested that the Parish Council apply to the Somerset Rivers Authority for funding to clear culverts and drains where necessary as during a recent village visit, it was evident what works were required.

Somerset Council's request for an increase in council tax was refused and capped at 4.99%. The Council is working towards setting a balanced budget by 4th March. Cllr Roundell advised the shortfall in the Budget was being financed by a transfer from monies for Capital Expenditures to Revenue. An increase in the hardship fund was noted, with support available for residents struggling to pay their council tax.

Cllr Vacani raised the ongoing review of bus services and confirmed that he had written requesting an extension of the Number 81 bus service from South Petherton to Shepton, to enable residents to access Yeovil more easily, including the hospital and the college.

The meeting started at 19:38

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1358.	To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given (LGA 1972, s85(1))
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	Apologies were received from Cllr England. Cllr Wakeley was absent.
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	Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.
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1359.	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).
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	Declarations of Interest were received from Cllr Joy and Cllr Burwood in relation to item 1366.
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1360.	Co-option
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	The council co-opted David Linten as a new councillor.
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1361. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 19th January 2026 (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41(1)).

Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 19th January be signed as correct.

1362. Flood Resilience

Cllr Vacani reported that Adam Dance had responded and is awaiting the next meeting with Highways regarding flooding at the flyover.

A separate meeting is scheduled for 3rd March, when Highways representatives, including Lee Norman, will visit the village.

The issue of silt traps was raised again; however, funding constraints remain within Somerset Council. It was noted that the road along the top of the village was previously agreed to receive annual drain clearance, but this schedule has not been maintained or altered within Somerset Council.

1363. Cowleaze Culvert

Cllr Rowswell and Cllr England applied for funding from the Somerset Rivers Authority, but the application was unsuccessful. The culvert adjacent to Cowleaze House remains a concern. A proposal was requested for the Council to undertake the work directly, noting there may be machinery and disposal costs. Discussion also took place regarding lifting manhole covers along Lambrook Road. The pipe is reported to be 50–60% full and blocked from the field ditch backwards. It was agreed that the matter requires urgent attention due to potential impact on residents. The use of drain cameras was proposed to identify which sections require clearing. There are ongoing difficulties in securing Somerset Council's acceptance of responsibility. It was decided further information was required; Cllr Rowswell will resubmit the SRA application and contact another drain clearing company. A decision was reluctantly deferred to the next meeting.

1364. Great Lane Silt Traps

Cllr Roundell Green agreed to follow up on this matter. It was believed the work should have been scheduled within Somerset Council, but this has not yet been confirmed.

1365. Irrigation framework at the top of Silver Street

The Council discussed the irrigation pipe installed at the top of the village for the potato growing season. It was agreed that the farmer should be reminded that the pipe should be removed when not in use and that a letter be sent requesting its removal by a specified date.

1366. Grant Applications

With respect to an application for Insurance funding support, there was a misunderstanding if the application was from the Village Hall or "The Events Team". Cllr Vacani advised he was in receipt of the Parish Council's Grant Awarding Policy and that this application did not meet many of the policy requirements. It was therefore recommended suggested the Grant Awarding Policy is reviewed at the March meeting. Additionally, this grant application would be deferred and a copy of the and the current Grant Awarding Policy be sent to the applicant so it can be resubmitted in full compliance to the Policy before the March meeting. Finally, the application cited a previous agreement with the Parish Council as part justification to the Grant applied for. No recollection of such agreement was offered by any members of the Council, and the council holds no documentation specifying a previous agreement, so, further clarification will be sought from the applicant to support their citation of such an agreement..

In respect of Crimestoppers South West, further information was requested before a decision is made, including how services would specifically support Shepton, how information would be publicised, and how the organisation proposes to operate locally.

1367. Finance

The payments on the payment schedule were approved.

The bank reconciliation was approved.

1368. Report from Clerk/RFO. For information only

It was noted the clerk will be on annual leave from 18th – 26th February. Opportunities for training have been circulated and councillors are able to request to attend any sessions they wish.

1369. Allotments

The Council discussed and unanimously approved the proposed methodology for recovering water costs. It was agreed that an allotment representative should be closely involved in the process. Cllr Wakeley will be contacted regarding excavation works and it was considered there were several parishioners who might be contacted to be engaged to dig the trench and lay the pipe. The developer has confirmed that the water supply will be connected before the end of March.

The council decided the allotment holders will pay an upfront deposit. Once all deposits are received, the supply will be turned on. There will be two water bills per year which will be paid by the Parish Council, with costs recharged via email invoice to each allotment holder, payable within 30 days. Costs will be divided equally by the number of allotments rather than plot size. The use of hose pipes will be banned. A meeting with the allotment holders will be held on 9th March to explain the council's decisions and to seek their help installing this significant improvement to the Allotment facilities.

1370. Reports. For information only

Highways.

Cllr Rowswell reported that the Council is still awaiting updates regarding the flyover. A new pothole has developed in Great Lane, and all issues continue to be reported.

Lethbridge Recreational Ground Committee

No update from the committee provided.

Ranger

The Ranger has a comprehensive list of seasonal tasks and attends the village on Fridays with an assistant. Duties include clearing gully surfaces of leaves, removing weeds from streets, maintaining footpaths, and changing the SID. Councillors were asked to notify Cllr Bourn of any additional ranger tasks.

Allotments

There was little to report due to the time of year, other than that conditions remain very wet..

Cowleaze

A report of activities has been produced and shared with Wessex Water. Cllr Bourn will circulate the report and include the species list once available..

Footpaths

No significant updates were reported, although there are ongoing issues with mud and dog fouling.

Defibrillator

The defibrillator was deployed last week and will require a replacement battery soon.

Meeting closed: 20:48pm

Date of the next meeting: Monday 16th March 2026.

DRAFT