

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP PARISH COUNCIL

Held on Monday 20th November 2023 at 7.30 pm
In the Village Hall, Middle Street, Shepton Beauchamp TA19 OLQ

Councillors present: Cllr David Bourn (Vice-Chairman) Cllr Andrew Rowswell
Cllr Ed Wakely Cllr Nick Howard

In attendance: Stella Davies (Clerk)

Members of the public: There was 1 member of the public in attendance

County Councillors in attendance: Somerset Cllrs Jo Roundell Greene & Adam Dance
(both arrived at 7.50 pm, left at 8.30 pm)

In the absence of Cllr Wylie Carrick, Cllr Bourn chaired the meeting.

Open Session

The member of the public raised concerns over the excessive mud on the roads around the village., mainly between the village and West Lambrook, through Silver Street & Sheepway and then from the crossroads along the road towards Branstons. In previous years the mud had been cleared, but this year it had not been cleared after the work had been finished and so became compacted and then the rain made it dangerous. This was particularly dangerous for motor bikes. There were very few warning signs. The mud was there for days with no apparent effort to clear it up.

Report from Somerset Councillors

Cllr Dance and Cllr Roundell Greene said there were a lot of reasons why the council finances were bad. Freezing council tax for 6 years meant no additional income. The adult social care budget has not been set properly for the last few years. Care homes were sold off. The government opened up Fair Cost for Care, which showed that the amount the council were paying for care was less than a privately funded person and so the council was asked to pay the same. There are many children in the county with special educational needs which has to be paid for. If the council has to declare a 114 notice, then all services that are not statutory will disappear (such as theatres, libraries and leisure centres). They advised the parish council to increase their precept as much as they could so that there was money to pay for services which we may need to take on from the county. The Parish Councils are being asked to look at what services they do not want to lose. By the beginning of December there should be some clarity on what services parish councils will be asked to take on or fund.

Ser Item

- 977. To receive apologies for absence and to approve the reasons given** (LGA 1972, s85(1))
Apologies were received from Cllr Joy (away), Cllr England (prior commitment) and Cllr Wylie Carrick (away).
Resolved. To accept and approve the apologies given.
- 978. 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)
There were no declarations of interest
- 979. To approve as a correct record the minutes/decisions of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 16th October 2023** (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41(1)).
Resolved. That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 16th October be signed as correct.

980. Excessive mud on roads around the village

To discuss the excessive mud round the village from farm vehicles and resolve if any action can be taken.

This was discussed and Cllr Wakely said that road brushes did not clear the mud properly as it was not sand based and merely spread the mud over the road. The conditions for harvesting were very challenging at the moment as it had been a very wet year. Insurance companies do not like farmers to put signs up warning people of mud on the roads as this is admitting liability for any accident. It was thought that it would be difficult to identify which farmers had created the mud.

Resolved. It was decided to mention the excessive mud in the next newsletter.

Action – Clerk/RFO

981. Highway Land Plan For information only

To inform the council of the decision of Somerset Council regarding whether Piece Lane is an unadopted road

It was noted that we had received a response from the developer. They had been in contact with highways, who said that according to their records Piece Lane was not an adopted road and so remains unadopted.

982. Community Review Project

To resolve if the council are interested in undertaking a community review and if so to complete the expression of interest form by 30th November

Resolved. The council expressed an interest in undertaking a community review and the expression of interest form was completed. The Clerk to now complete the form online.

Action – Clerk/RFO

983. Recreation Field Grass Cutting

To update the council on the current situation and resolve what action should be taken

The Clerk reported that the current contractor who carried out the grass cutting at the recreation field had terminated his contract and so needed to be replaced. The Clerk suggested a tender be issued for 1 year only, with the possibility to extend it. There may be a problem with December cutting as the new contract would not start until 1st January.

Resolved. That a tender be issued to carry out grass cutting.

Action – Clerk/RFO

984. Asset & Service Devolution

To review the documentation sent by Somerset Council regarding devolution of services and resolve if the council should send a response.

Unresolved - It was decided to defer this item to the December meeting when there would be more councillors in attendance and more information might be available. It was suggested that this could be publicised as an open event for villagers to come along.

985. Funding for Senior's Xmas meal

To resolve if the Parish Council is willing to contribute towards the costs if necessary

Resolved. That the Parish Council will contribute towards the costs and a grant form should be submitted once the final amount is known.

986. LCN Meetings

To resolve if a rotational basis for attending the LCN meetings can be drawn up

Resolved. That a rota be drawn up so that a different councillor can attend either in person or on-line and that feedback from the meeting be added to the parish council agenda following the meetings.

The Clerk will circulate the dates as soon as they are known.

Action – Clerk/RFO

987. Risk Assessment v4

To approve and re-adopt Risk Assessment v4

Resolved. The Risk Assessment v4 be approved and re-adopted.

988. Action Plan v6

To review and approve Action Plan v6

Unresolved. The Action plan was reviewed and some items were added, but it was decided to defer this to the December meeting for further discussion.

989. National Pay Award – backdated to 1st April 2023

To approve the National Pay Award for the Clerk/RFO backdated to 1st April 2023

Resolved. That the National Pay Award for the Clerk be approved.

990. Signage for Recreation Field

To approve the cost of up to £500 to pay for signage at the recreation field regarding dog fouling and keeping dogs off the play area

Resolved. That the cost of £500 be approved.

991. Finance

To review the Bank Reconciliation as at 31st October 2023 (previously circulated)

To approve the schedule of payments totalling £1,785.57 (previously circulated)

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

992. Report from Clerk/RFO. For information only

The Clerk reported that she had yet to obtain quotes for picket fencing around the play area as she also needed to obtain costs for a self-closing pedestrian gate and a gate to allow the grass cutting contractor to access the area.

She has issued the two public notices of vacancy for the two vacant councillor positions and will be notified by Somerset Council if we can go ahead and Co-Opt.

993. Reports. For information only

Highways

Cllr Rowswell said that he had reported more potholes, and mentioned that there were leaves around Great Lane drains.

Lethbridge Recreational Ground Committee

There was nothing to report.

Ranger

There was nothing to report, but the councillors asked that SID be taken down as it was not working.

Action – Cllr Wylie Carrick

Allotments

There was nothing to report.

Cowleaze

Cllr Bourn reported that the volunteers were currently pulling up the nettles and long grass. The Men’s Institute had purchased a new bench for the area.

Footpaths

There was nothing to report. Cllr Wakely said he may try and make the footpath by his land which was sloping slightly, less slippery.

994. Annex A – Deferred items register

This was reviewed.

Meeting closed: 9.20pm