

Draft Minutes to be Approved at the next Meeting.

SHEEPWASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held in the Village Hall
on
Wednesday 12th May 2021
at 7.00pm

Minutes

Present: nine members of the public, Parish Councillors, Cllr. Ansell; Cllr. Ritson; Cllr. Wheeler; Cllr. Moys; Cllr. Crossley; Cllr. Mathews, Cllr. Hutchings; Selina Woollacott (Clerk), County Councillor James Morrish joined for part of the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Alison Ansell

Chair's Report for the year 2020/2021, The Parish Council cancelled the meeting scheduled for 18 March 2020, as the pandemic was gathering pace. All of the subsequent meetings since then, until this one, have taken place using Zoom. Welcome to Selina, who took over as Clerk on 11 March 2020.

Sheepwash Covid Support Network was established in April 2020 – orders and deliveries phone or email to the shop, PO service available by phoning in, prescription collection, info about parcel deliveries. Resident helping and checked on neighbours, elderly and vulnerable.

Highways: by July 2020 the Upcott road had been repaired in quite a major way, from Three Oaks down to the Musselbrook bridge. The road is much improved. I thanked our Devon Highways man and asked him to pass on thanks to the road gang. In March 2021 the road drains at Upcott, just near the barns, were jetted, a buried drain uncovered and ditches cleared. We've asked for potholes between Upcott Avenel and Down to be repaired. On behalf of the Bridgeland Trust, we've asked for the entrance to a field just below the ski-jump drain, to be repaired. The whoosh of water from the ski-jump drain has caused the field entrance to be eroded.

Flood warning signs – we're in touch with Highways about appropriate signs, ongoing. Cllr Helen Crossley has written an interesting report about flooding and people's attitude to risk. The report is available from the Parish Council.

Village sign at the bottom of **West Road** – knocked down by a falling tree, in touch with Highways about a replacement.

In July Dawn Rees the Chair of Highampton Parish Council contacted us asking if Sheepwash Parish was interested in helping to get the **Ruby Trail** completed by lobbying for some of the money being made available by government for promoting cycling to be used to advance the work on the Ruby Trail. Initially we supported this, but then, after due consideration, rescinded our support, as routes #3 and #27 currently intersect at Sheepwash and funnel a great many cyclists through the village. They supply valuable business for both the shop and the pub.

In September Paul Wheeler agreed to become a **Trustee of the Bridgeland Trust** on behalf of the Parish Council. All of the **hedges** in the Jubilee Park were in need of considerable work – they were overgrown, too wide and too high. Rupert Stockwin undertook this work in October and will maintain the hedges in future.

The **footpaths** have been surveyed, some repairs needed and some new signs – ongoing.

The **new play equipment** was installed at the beginning of October 2020, followed by the removal of the unsafe swings, which were replaced by a nest swing in the latter part of December. The total cost of all of the equipment was £11,407 + VAT (and we can reclaim VAT). We received £5,300 in grant funding and the balance of £6,107 was paid from the precept Selina and I made 26 applications, 7 yes's, (including Devon CC Locality Budget via Barry Parsons, TDC District Councillor budget via David Hurley and the Bridgeland Trust) 6 no's, no response from 13. Funds were not available from a considerable number of (what would usually be suitable) grant giving bodies as they have focussed their funds on Covid related projects for the time being.

The **gazebo** in the Jubilee Park is in need of replacement or repair. Initially we were looking to replace, but have opted for essential repairs – to do with cost and with the limited grant funding opportunities pointed out above. The repairs will be carried out in time for the Strawberry Tea at the end of June 2021. We are also looking in to replacing/repairing the uneven floor and fixing the roof – ongoing.

To meet with insurance requirements a Jubilee Park **checklist** is now completed on the park and equipment each month. The Parish Councillors take turns to complete the check list.

The **Bridgeland Trust and the Sheepwash Parish Hall**. Progress is being made with merging the two charities, by dissolving the Sheepwash Parish Hall charity and transferring the assets to the Bridgeland Charity. Trustees of both charities have been consulted and agree with this approach. The purposes of the combined charity will not change. The facilities offered by the Parish Hall will continue to be provided by the Bridgeland Charity, and the existing Trustees of the Sheepwash Parish Hall will become Trustees of the Bridgeland Trust. Both charities will benefit from the enhanced range of expertise provided by the expanded Board of Trustees. The purpose of the Charity will be to use its financial and physical resources to improve the social, cultural and economic life of those resident in the Parish. It will seek to pursue these goals through the care, management and improvement of Sheepwash Parish Hall and will provide financial support, where appropriate, for activities and resources which enhance the lives of those who reside in the Parish. The Charity will continue to manage the allocation and oversight of allotments and agricultural land, a task hitherto undertaken by the Bridgeland Trust. In addition, the Charity will continue to support financially such things as the community shop, infrastructure in the Jubilee Park, and improvements to the physical environment of the Parish, as funds allow. A new governing document has been drafted.

Lisa Butt, from Devon Wildlife Trust, came along to the Jubilee Park on Monday 8 March 2021, and planted a hawthorn tree in the south west corner of the park. Trouble free and no cost to the parish, this is a **Devon Wildlife Trust** project **Save Devon's treescape**.

It was suggested that all TDC Parish Councils **refuse to comment on Planning applications**, save coming up with the same standard reply to all applications that 'when TDC actually genuinely value, give weight and take into consideration local PC submissions on behalf of our local communities, we will happily again spend time to contribute, but whilst our submissions are an effective irrelevance, we won't waste our time'. We decided that we would not follow this suggestion, but would continue to respond to planning applications as David Hurley is working on this issue for us with the TDC Planning Officer.

Census Day was 21 March –we publicised this on the Sheepwash Sandwich Board, PC Facebook page and website, plus notices in the shop and on the noticeboard, encouraging people to complete the census, which is a legal requirement. We also offered to help people to complete the Census, if needed, either online or on paper.

Sheepwash Annual Parish Meeting – Covid version

Last year's Annual Parish Meeting was scheduled to take place on 25 March 2020. Lockdown came and this wasn't possible, so as an alternative the Parish Council produced and distributed a leaflet in September.

We outlined our Powers and Duties, information about Our Community, highlights from Previous Parish Surveys and Ideas & Initiatives – Emergency Aid and investigating EV Charging Points – we have put this on hold for the time being as the technology is changing so fast, but we're keeping an eye on this.

We got next to no response from parishioners to the leaflet – one or two compliments about the leaflet, then two parishioners comments follow: not to have the EV charging point in the Square, problem of parking along East Street, doing something about flood warnings, uneven floor in the gazebo, keeping the shop going somewhere else if not in its present location, exercise facilities for older folks now that we've seen to younger folks, size and speed of tractors, in favour of Speed Watch and First Aid courses.

Cllr Ritson was thanked for all his work with regard to the new play equipment.

County & District Councillor reports for the year 2020/2021. District Councillors David Hurley report read out by the Clerk as he was unable to attend. It has been over a year now since Lockdown1 came into being. Most things in everyday life changed from not going out to working from home. Torridge District Council were no different from other businesses, if I may call it that, in as much as the services that they provided had to go on. Various systems were set up from call forwarding to access to internal systems to allow staff to work from home. Plans were put in place to ensure some staff, including members of the Senior Management Team, were always available at Riverbank House. Councillors were asked not to visit the council offices unless by pre-appointment. Staff sickness was thankfully very low and that includes members of the Waste collection team who were able to provide an unbroken service to remove rubbish and recycling.

Government initiatives such as Business Rate Relief, and Grants to small businesses, were dealt with extremely swiftly and efficiently to ensure that financial help reached those that the initiatives were aimed at, as quickly as was possible. TDC was one of the swiftest acting Councils in England and received thanks from several local organisations who appreciated the help that was given in such a timely manner.

Meetings were held via Zoom or Teams, something that we all had to get used to, and after some minor teething troubles meetings were conducted, in general, without incident. The meetings were, and are, also available to be watched live on You Tube or at a later time if this is not possible. It is only now, after May 7th, that live meetings can take place. This will cause some difficulties as social distancing still has to be adhered to and finding a building big enough to accommodate around 40 people for a Full Council meeting is proving difficult.

One Plans Committee was disrupted more than most during this past year. Site visits were obviously not allowed so instead the planning officer would visit the site, take video or still images, and these would be shown via a virtual pre planning meeting so Members of the Committee were able to get a feel for the site in question. The system, while not as good as a real site visit, worked well.

The Burrows Centre at Northam has continued to be re-developed; the Old Creamery at Torrington is close to being discussed at Plans Committee and the planning application to develop Brunswick Wharf in Bideford has been passed. Things are now returning to a more settled way of life and hopefully we can get back to leading what will be seen as a normal way of life.

County Councillor Report, Cllr Morrish is the newly elected County Councillor. Taking over from Cllr Barry Parsons who has retired. Cllr Morrish informed the meeting that he is a local chap from St Giles in the Wood near Torrington and currently lives at Riddlecombe and works as an auctioneer for Kivells in Holsworthy. Holsworthy Rural is very important to him due to working in Holsworthy and other connections he has with business and people who live and work in Holsworthy Rural. Cllr Morrish explained about his time as a Torridge District Councillor and as Chairman of TDC. The main issue he will start to tackle as Council Councillor is the state of the roads in this part of Devon. The roads in the south of Devon are in a better condition than the roads in the rest of Devon. DCC does have reserved funds which Cllr Morrish feels should be used on the road network. Cllr Morrish said if the Parish Council or the public ask him to do something he will do it. He will be at as many meetings as he can be. Cllr Morrish explained the main differences between District and County Councillors.

County Councillors - education, adult and children social care, public health, roads, housing services.

District Councillors - planning, council tax, parking, housing, refuse and recycling.

He will help in anyway he can with any issues the Parish Council have.

No questions for Cllr Morrish, who then left the meeting to attend two other meetings.

Open Forum for parishioners. Member of the public commented that the Parish leaflet which was sent out due to the fact a Parish Meeting could not be held was very good. Suggested that Parish Councillors may get more feedback from parishioners face to face at events like the Bacon Bap event. Cllr Crossley replied saying that she (and possibly other Councillors) was at the Bacon Bap event.

The meeting was informed by a member of the public that a finger point signpost in the square is missing the finger point to North Street. The Parish Clerk will look into this.

Closing remarks from the Chair. Cllr Ansell thanked everyone for coming to the Parish Meeting and reminded everyone that they can contact the Parish Council at anytime to report issues or suggest improvements.

The Parish Council were congratulated for continuing to sort issues and complete projects during the Covid pandemic.

Sheepwash Parish Clerk, Selina Woollacott,
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