

# Sheepwash Parish Council

## Parish Council Meeting.

Held in the Village Hall

Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 7pm

### Minutes

**Present:** Cllr Ansell (Chairperson) Cllr Ritson, Cllr Moys, Cllr Fairall, County Cllr Morrish, District Cllr Cottle-Hunkin, District Cllr Wheatley, Selina Woollacott (Clerk), 23 members of the public.

On behalf of the Parish Council Cllr Ansell sent condolences to Anna Jones and her family after the sad death of Buster Jones. He will be greatly missed.

1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Hutching, Cllr Crossley.

2) **Declarations of Interest:**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at Torridge District Council within 28 days of the change. **None.**

3) **Public Discussion, to allow any questions, reports by members of the public on any matters relating to the agenda of this meeting, or any matters the public would like the Council to consider on a future agenda. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed 15 minutes.**

Member of the Public (MOP) has been doing research for setting up a new community shop. There are organisations which have information and grants available for setting up community shops. The Post Office van will come every Wednesday for an hour starting 31<sup>st</sup> January.

MOP2 has handed out information about John Smith, Vice Chair of Coldridge Parish Council campaign to save the mobile library, which they are planning to go to court with to save the service.

MOP3 the trees which were cut down near the bridge. A lot of branches have been left. If it floods the branches will end up in the river and cause a dam under the bridge or problems downstream. Clerk will ask the Highways Tree Safety team to remove the branches if they were not planning to.

MOP4 asked if the defibrillator work ok in the cold as there have been news reports that some do not. Cllr Ansell replied it worked Sunday night and there have been no problems with it not working so far in cold weather.

MOP5 there is a tree wedged under the bridge the other side to the branches. Worth reporting when reporting the branches.

A reminder that members of the public can speak when invited to when council is in committee.

4) **Minutes – the Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd November 2023, have been circulated by email to be approved for accuracy and signed by the Chairperson.** Cllr Ritson is not happy with the minutes. He emailed a few corrections to the Clerk. Only one was corrected. He would like the email from the landowners added to the minutes and his comments added to the minutes. All Councillors agreed to the email being added in this instance as long as the Clerk has it in writing that the landowners are happy for the email to be in the minutes. Minutes to be amended and approved at the next meeting.

5) **County & District Councillors' reports.**  
**County Cllr report,**

Thank you for bearing with me as not been well over the past few years. As a County Councillor I feel the main role is to be a voice and contact for the residents. The main issues I have been contacted on are Potholes, Mental Health, Hospitals and Police. Torrridge is a good District Council with good Councillors who will support you well. There is £55.6million invested for pensions for DCC, as I am the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee, I receive a lot of letters about where the investments should be made and not investing in company like Shell. DCC has 46 council owned farms. Council farms were set up 60 odd years ago. Council farms are the only part of the Council which brings in revenue. Emails from residents which I have dealt with about potholes, Mental Health and Community Transport. Two issues I have passed on to our MP. I would like to say how being a Parish Councillor is a very special role. Well done and thank you for doing the role.

### **District Cllr report,**

**Joint Planning and Policy Committee-** we now have a 5-year Housing and Land Supply again.

Both councils have given the go ahead to do a New joint local plan and will start visioning before the formal process starts. The last meeting highlighted the need for more traveller sites which has always been a struggle. Cllr Ansell asked what does the 5 years supply mean? Less likely to get planning permission outside of development boundary. Development boundary can be found on the Local Plan.

**Full Council-**Barbara Shaw Chief Exec of Westward Housing presented to Full Council in December with their highlights. There were 826 home improvements, 5731 repairs, with £16m invested in repairs and maintenance. Also 54 new homes for rent and shared partnership in Torrridge and they received a customer satisfaction award last year. We are aware though, of course, there are also complaints, and they will be called in for scrutiny later in the year for us to address.

**Torrridge District Strategic Plan** - Plan Consultation is now completed and the plan adopted and will be integrated into the council's business plans. There were a few additions made as a result of the consultation and the plan was adjusted accordingly, including to investigate the appetite for and feasibility of a rail link connecting Bideford and Barnstaple- it should be noted that the vast majority of that line would be within North Devon District, not Torrridge!

There was also unanimous support from district councillors to keep the mental health link centres open that DCC are proposing to close down.

**Old Torrington Creamery/Old Milk Factory/Dairy** - The demolition of the old Torrington Creamery commenced in November and is expected to last for 8 to 10 months. The project is being carried out by the joint administrators of Waterside Construction Southwest Ltd and Valley Estates Southwest Ltd (in administration) that own the site, with support of Farm Finance Ltd, TDC assistance, Devon and Cornwall Police and the Fire and Rescue Service. This move has been welcomed by Torrridge District Council. Cllr Ansell asked what is the plan for the site? Housing and retail units.

**Community Safety Partnership with North Devon Council** - there was emphasis on the importance of Street Marshalls. In North Devon this has been funded through the Safer Streets Fund but wasn't available to Torrridge. The police have said they will not fund it, and so the question is where funding will come from if we want it to continue or see more of it. There has also been success regarding a night bus between Barnstaple and Bideford and the councils are requesting they extend the routes to Torrington and Ilfracombe. It helps keep people safe by reducing drink driving, unlicensed taxis, people trying to walk home under the influence of alcohol.

**First Meeting was held recently of the North Devon Culture Board** - to deliver North Devon culture strategy for wellbeing, talent development, cultural hubs in market towns, youth and training skills. This also includes heritage and museums. There was initial discussion around a cultural directory, mapping, events and youth workshops. The board is looking for more members with specific skills in the cultural sector, including young people.

There have been reports of two big Alsatians on the loose on the roads and in the fields in and around Sheepwash. I have alerted the dog warden and local police but would encourage anyone who sees them off the lead causing potential harm to livestock to report them via the Devon and Cornwall police online system. There is an option online to click "rural crime" and then "livestock worrying" MOP, the dogs have been chasing people as well as animals.

MOP, how many people on the Westward Housing waiting list? Cllr Cottle-Hunkin TDC has 50 families on their waiting list. Westward Housing may have its own list as well.

6) **PCSO report.** No Report.

7) **Clerk Report.**

**Update on fallen tree near the bridge, play inspection, extending the 30mph speed limit, West Road, petition, bridge being hit.**

**Fallen tree near the bridge.** I reported a second tree which was leaning over near the Sheepwash to Highampton road bridge, I then had Highways Tree Safety team getting confused and saying they already have the tree reported, I had to explain this was a different tree. The two trees were cut down on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January.

**Play inspection.** The last inspection was completed March 2023, and this year inspection will be completed before March. No date yet. This is the annual inspection which is completed by a play equipment inspection company. Each month the park is checked by a Councillor. Cllr Riston asked for a new rota as the current rota finishes at the end of January, Cllr Fairall thinks it runs for longer. Clerk to check the rota and update if needed.

**Extending the 30mph speed limit, West Road.** Highway Officer sent me a google map screenshot with the potential location for the 30mph signs on West Road. This was sent to all Councillors and no Councillors could see an issue with the potential location. The Council have explained that they would like the new Sheepwash sign located with or as near as possible to the 30mph signs. I am in talks with Highways about who will be putting up the 30mph signs and if they will put up the Sheepwash sign as well. Highways Officer thinks it will be a contractor who works for Highways. Cllr Ansell asked if the 30mph signs are beyond the Community Hall site entrance. I am sure it was as this was discussed but I was unable to check during the meeting. Have checked since the meeting and it is beyond the Community Hall site.

**Petition.** I have here a petition that anyone can sign at the end of the meeting; it is from Sir G Cox MP to petition government for more funds for DCC Highways.

**Bridge being hit.** At the last meeting it was suggested putting up a camera to see who hits the bridge. I need to look into this and see if it is an option. Member of the public confirmed the bridge has not been fixed.

8) **Chair's Report.** No report.

9) **Community Hall, Section 106.**

Cllr Ansell spoke to the Planning Officer today; he is waiting for a draft Deed of Variation from the landowners. Once received by the Planning Officer it will be sent to the Parish Council. Our architect has requested a DWG file but has not received it yet. The understanding at the moment, which will be confirmed once Deed of Variation has been received, is the boundary will be where the fence is at the north of the site. The landowner will have access to the land via Luke's Farm. This is the access they want. The landowners would not accept the idea of access via the hall car park. Cllr Ritson talked to the landowners before Christmas, he does not think they have any plans to build any more houses. Cllr Ansell informed the parishioners that a meeting was held with the Leader of TDC, Head of Legal, Head of Communities & Place, Planning Officer, our District Councillors and three Parish Councillors. At this meeting they were informed that this is the only proposal on the table. A question was raised about who will be maintaining the road in Luke's Farm. The road will be adopted by Highways. MOP1 asked if the field to the north, if not housing could it be a traveller site. Cllr Morrish informed the meeting that this would not happen as it is not near to amenities and the community needs to be on side for a traveller site. The residents of Luke's Farm are up in arms about agricultural vehicles going through the estate. What about kids playing the mud and mess on the road in the estate. Cllr Ritson said mistakes were made by TDC, the sub planning committee and the landowners not just by the landowners. Cllr Ansell pointed out to Cllr Ritson that the letters regarding the s106 from the landowners are all on the

TDC planning website for anyone to read and form their own opinion. MOP asked if the land goes back to the landowner do we get the Parish Council money that has been spent back? No. Cllr Cottle-Hunkin: it looks like we have a solution to the access to the hall site but with agriculture access via Luke's Farm. Cllr Fairall: we need to look after the residents of Luke's Farm and secure the Community Hall site. Cllr Ritson: the landowner is giving the road access and giving a footpath. MOP2 why can they not give the access without the condition of them having access via Luke's Farm, they do not need agricultural access via Luke's Farm. Cllr Ansell: all of this should have been sorted in 2017 -2018 when planning and Section 106 was draw up. The Luke's Farm residents said they want the Community Hall but feel they have been screwed over as agricultural access was not referred to in any documentation when they purchased their properties. MOP3 asked why can't they be honest, let's ask them what they will be driving through the estate. I thought they were coming tonight. Cllr Ritson informed the meeting that the landowner did plan to come but have not been able to make the meeting. An MOP said that the rest of the village have to put up with tractors driving past their houses. Comments were made but they knew that when they brought their houses, and it is a bit different on a main street than in a quiet estate. MOP4 if they plan to develop the field why not say. Cllr Cottle-Hunkin it will be highly unlikely for a development to get planning permission there now. Comments on the fact the landowner has other access routes so why do they need one via Luke's Farm. Cllr Ansell: we have tried, we need to wait for the draft Deed of Variation.

**10) Parish Councillor vacancy.**

Paul Wheeler has stepped down as a Parish Councillor. This creates an opening for a Parish Councillor. If anyone is interested, please email the Clerk.

you must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union, and meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
  1. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination
  2. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination has been in the parish
  3. You have lived in the parish or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination

You cannot be a councillor if you:

- Work for the council you want to be a councillor for, you can work for another local authority as long as you are not in a political restricted post.
- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.
- Have been sentenced to prison for three months or more (including suspended sentences) during the last five years,
- Have been convicted of a corrupt or illegal practice by an election court.
- Are subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, in respect of a sexual offence.

Thank you to Paul Wheeler for all he completed and achieved as a Parish Councillor. He will be missed by the Parish Council.

**11) Planning Sub-Committee.**

The Planning Sub-Committee is now Cllr Ansell and Cllr Crossley. Cllr Ansell proposed that Cllr Fairall join the committee; he confirmed he was happy to. Cllr Ritson proposed that the Sub-Committee be

dissolved. Cllr Ritson feels that the Sub Committee has animosity towards the landowners and Cllr Fairall will add to that. Cllr Fairall replied that he strongly disagreed with that statement. Cllr Riston feels the Sub-Committee have not communicated with the landowners or the rest of the Parish Council. Cllr Ansell: the Sub-Committee have had to deal with a huge number of emails. We have kept everyone informed of the main issues. Cllr Ritson: we all need to get more involved. Cllr Ansell informed the meeting that the Parish Councillors had a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to discuss the Section 106. Everything discussed in this meeting was a confidential until the parishioners were updated at the public Parish Council meeting held on 22nd November 2023. Cllr Ritson broke the confidentiality requirement and contacted the landowners later in the evening after the 21<sup>st</sup> November meeting. Cllr Ansell: Cllr Ritson is accusing the Sub-Committee of being biased against the landowners I am accusing him of being biased for the landowners. If we dissolve the Sub-Committee all Councillors would need to be involved, that involves time for due consideration and more meetings. Cllr Moys: Some of us do not have the time so agreed to a Sub Committee. I would have liked more meetings with Highways and Steven Homes however it was not possible, I feel a lot of issues have accrued which are not the fault of the Parish Council. Cllr Moys suggested it is voted on when all Councillors are present. Cllr Ritson: I think we will find it will all be sorted soon. Cllr Moys we cannot commit to building within the time frame. Cllr Ansell replied we are discussing that point with TDC. Cllr Ansell proposed Cllr Fairall joins the Sub Committee. It was decided that Cllr Fairall joins the Sub-Committee at least until the next Parish Council meeting, when this decision will be discussed and voted on. An email to be sent to all Councillors about this outcome.

**12) Helicopter Landing Light.**

A member of the public offered to see if he would be able to change the light. Due to a certificate being needed for insurance he is not able to. The electrician will be completing the work in the next week. MOP asked do the Air Ambulance need landing lights? The Council is sure they do will check. Cllr Morrish told the Council to apply for a Locality Grant for the cost of the work needed on the landing light. Clerk will do this.

**13) P3 Funding. Footpaths.**

The application form for P3 funds has not yet been sent to Clerks. The deadline is normally mid-February. If anyone walking the footpaths sees anything which needs fixing, please let the Clerk know.

**14) PLANNING:**

**14a) Planning Applications.** None.

**14b) Planning Decisions.** None.

**15) FINANCE:**

**15a) as at 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024:**

**Main Account £4,985.31**

**Saving Account £18,116.42**

**Expenditure:**

Date	£	Detail	Transfer
23.11.2023	98.33	Selina Woollacott, Paper, Poppies, No Dogs sign	Bacs
23.11.2023	275.00	GW Architects	Bacs
23.11.2023	58.00	M Ritson. Fuel, Gazebo	Bacs
20.12.2023	162.42	M Ritson Goal Posts	Bacs
21.12.2023	433.00	Selina Woollacott Salary, Sept - Dec	Bacs
31.12.2023	18.00	Service Charge	DD
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,044.75</b>		

**Income:**

Date	£	Detail
18.12.2023	150.00	Village Quiz Donation
Total	150.00	

Cllr Ansell summarised the above information as it has been the agenda for all to read.

**16) Budget and Parish Precept.**

Clerk emailed out the budget and Precept calculator to all Councillors before the meeting and paper copies where available at the meeting. The expenditure on the 2024/2025 budget comes to £8,517.20 the Precept available with no increase to the Council Tax is £8,113 this is higher than last years £7,558 due to more properties in the Parish paying Council Tax. Adding £8,113 to the £432.42 Vat the Parish Council will be reclaiming is £8,545.42 there maybe more vat to reclaim as well as interest. Cllr Ansell proposed accepting the £8,113 precept. Cllr Moys seconded and all Councillors agreed.

**17) Grant requests,****17a) Citizens Advice.**

Clerk read out in 2022-2023 the Citizens Advice team worked with 10 Sheepwash residents with 16 issues and generated £3,215 income gain for local households. Cllr Ansell proposed £150, as £150 was granted last year. All Councillors agreed.

**17b) North Devon Record office.**

Clerk explained what records the North Devon Record office holds. A member of the public asked how the record office is funded. Grants, Government and local government. Unsure if the Records Office holds archives for Sheepwash Parish Council as current Clerk has not taken any to the Records Office. It is likely it does from years ago. Councillors agreed no grant at this time.

**17c) Sheepwash Village Hall Grant.**

The Parish Council grant once a year to the Village Hall this covers hall hire for meetings and a grant for maintenances. The past few years it has been £400. Cllr Ansell proposed £500. All Councillors agreed.

**18) Items for Information.** Items emailed out to Councillors.**19) Items to be included in the agenda for the next meeting.**

The next meeting will be held on 13th March 2024 unless a meeting is needed before. Items for the agenda - sub planning committee, co-opting a Councillor.

Meeting Closed 8.19pm

Cllr Ansell thanked everyone for coming.

Clerk: Selina Woollacott, Furze House, Shebbear, EX21 5RL  
Tel: 01409 281280 email: [clerk@sheepwashparishcouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@sheepwashparishcouncil.co.uk)

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