

Sheepwash Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting

held in the Village Hall

Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 7.00pm

Minutes

Present: Cllr Ansell (Chairperson), Cllr Moys, Cllr Fairall, Cllr Crossley, Cllr Hutching, Cllr Etherington, Selina Woollacott (Clerk), 17 members of the public.

1) **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Ritson.

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. **None.**

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 3rd July 2024 have been circulated by email to be approved for accuracy and signed by the Chairperson.** All Councillors agreed the minutes are an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr Ansell signed the minutes.

5) **County & District Councillors' reports.**

County Councillors report given by County Cllr Morrish. Good to see so many members of the public at a Parish Council meeting. I have received an email with regards to the 30mph area being extended in West Road. The Parish Council gave Cllr Morrish the background information on this as it was part of the Lukes Farm planning permission. Cllr Morrish said he will support as the Parish Council are in support it. **Devolution**, it is going to happen this means around 5 million pounds worth of decisions will be made locally and not at Westminster. Lots of decisions around SEND/education and Adult Care.

I have received six communications from this Parish in the last month. Two were about Hunting on public land. one on Social Housing. Two were items to be sent on to our MP and a concern on the environment.

Cllr Morrish told the meeting about the investments that the investments and pension committee have been making. He is receiving emails pushing that DCC should go meat free, he wants people to know there are no fancy lunches at County Hall. DCC going meat free would mean schools and care homes. He feels everyone has a choice to what they eat and this choice should continue. DCC owns Farms and Agriculture land which are rented out at about £180 an acre making DCC money.

Cllr Crossley asked how many emails he receives? About 100 emails a month. Yes, he responds sometimes with an email, sometimes with a phone call. Your District Councillor Cottle-Hunkin is very good at keeping me up to date.

District Councillors report, given by District Cllr Cottle-Hunkin.

At the most recent Full Council meeting on 15th July, we adopted a large number of strategies related to economic development. The first one was the Torridge Place Story. This has already been adopted by the Torridge Place Board. It highlighted the opportunities in Torridge including Clean Maritime, Green

Energy, Aquaculture, Innovative Agriculture, Creative and Digital Industries, and A Year-Round Sustainable Visitor Economy.

We also adopted the North Devon and Torrridge Economic Strategy. This sets out a vision for our economic future. It will help inform our policy and new local plan. It identifies 5 key sectors with net zero at the heart. There has been input from both councils (North Devon and Torrridge), business leaders, and Universities in Devon.

We also had an X-Links consultation response as a council. As you're probably all aware, these are the 4,000km sub-sea cables bringing solar energy from Morocco. The process is likely to go on for another 2 years. We are a host authority and key consultee, and we are working closely with DCC on this. We are establishing a working group to consider the community benefit package associated with this large infrastructure project. The council is taking guidance from Suffolk and Essex Councils who are also going through NSIPs (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects).

We then adopted the Torrridge Productivity Plan. This highlights the challenges including rurality and connectivity and the barriers preventing progress. This was written for central government based on the previous government and "levelling up". It will all still be useful and remains relevant, however we're unsure of exactly what is happening now in terms of the Torrridge "levelling up" partnership now that we have a new government in place...

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge feedback. The LGA team met with 85 individuals related to the council including Councillors, staff and external partners. There were 30 workshops. It's not considered to be an "inspection", but a "critical friend" approach, providing assurance and assistance to improve what we're doing. Key findings (positive):

- we're ambitious
- we understand Torrridge's challenges
- we have a highly regarded economic development team
- we proactively engage with partners

Recommendations (concerns):

- member development and behaviour, low attendance at workshops
- capacity to deliver strategic plan and major projects (huge amount of work)
- review of procedures
- financial sustainability and savings plans
- need clearer performance measures for climate change
- review of HR policies following reported inconsistencies

A review is scheduled by LGA Feb 2025.

Government increase in housing plan. For the new target to be met, this would mean 528 new houses a year for Torrridge. This is a 35% increase on the current target. This presents a huge challenge, particularly on where this development should happen. It was discussed whether there is the workforce for this to even be possible (lack of builders/tradesmen). Cllr Davis commented, Holsworthy has seen an increase in housing, but the doctor's surgery is now at capacity and unable to cope with the number of patients the schools are full. There are not enough jobs in the area for more people to live here. Cllr Salter asked what happens if the target is not hit. Planning that goes to appeal is more likely to be granted, and the local plan still needs to plan for the number of houses imposed on us by central government.

Cllr Cottle-Hunkin had a footpath to report, the gateway on the Lake Farm footpath is overgrown.

Section 106 and DOV update. I did ask the Landowners to meet with me. They did not meet with me but said they were seeing their Solicitor. I have asked again that the Parish Council getting to see the DOV before it is finalised. Cllr Fairall commented that TDC should not be agreeing to anything without the agreement of the Parish Council. This has been going on for a long time now. Cllr Ansell asks what is our next step, we need to see the DOV, the developer is still building and selling houses and no secure site for the Parish to build a Community Hall. Cllr Crossley asks Cllr Cottle-Hunkin how long do you think it will be until we see the DOV? We don't know what's in the final draft and could mean a load of costs. Cllr Cottle-Hunkin replied she has asked for the DOV to be sent to Cllr Ansell and the Clerk. During the meeting she emailed again asking for the DOV to be sent to the Parish Council. Member of the Public

said that the email Cllr Cottle-Hunkin sends needs to state that the DOV should not be signed until the Parish Council have seen the draft. Cllr Cottle -Hunkin sent this request.

The Parish Council agreed that if the final draft of the DOV is not seen by the sub committee and Clerk by Friday 13th September a letter will be sent to the developer, to DCC and to TDC to call it in and get the issue put on the agenda of a full TDC Council meeting.

Cllr Ansell thanked Cllr Cottle- Hunkin for all her work on this issue.

- 6) **Clerk's Report. Footpath at Upcott, Jubilee Park hedge trimming, West Road hedge, East Street hole.**
- Footpath at Upcott** going to Woodhead. I have contacted the landowner who has maize growing in the field which the footpath route goes through the maize is currently blocking the footpath route. He has apologised for not cutting a path for the footpath route and in future years will either not plant the footpath route or will cut the route when the plants are knee high. The whole field will be cut in the next few weeks. Member of the public stated that this has happened before. Clerk suggested a reminder phone call in July to cut a path before the plants get too tall. Another member of the public informed the meeting that there is another footpath with the same problem on the footpath which runs through Wooda Farm. Clerk will look into this one as well.
- Jubilee Park hedge trimming**, I have asked for this to be completed as soon as it can be. Members of the public have agreed to take the cuttings away.
- West Road hedge**, I reported to DCC the reply was:Whilst Devon County Council can require landowners to carry out works to cut back hedges under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980, during bird nesting we would only make such requests if the issue meets our safety defect criteria or causes a significant obstruction.
- As with many rural roads, it is expected that hedges and vegetation will be growing at the side of the road especially during summertime, however the levels of vegetation growth at present would not meet our safety defect criteria for intervention. If the issue becomes more significant or is still present once bird nesting season is over, please report this again and we will reassess the situation again at the time.
- Alternatively, if the Parish Council wishes to raise the matter informally with the landowner, Devon County Council would not object to this. It would be the responsibility of the landowner to ensure that they comply with all wildlife related requirements and do not disturb any nesting birds. The Clerk was informed who owns the hedge and will try and contact the owner as hedge are allowed to be trimmed now as outside of the bird nesting season.
- East Street hole.** This was a hole next to a manhole cover, I had an update that work has been carried out on this. Member of the public confirmed the work has been completed.
- Remembrance wreath**, £19.99 for a wreath, do the Parish Council want any more large poppies? £5 each. The Parish Council do not want or need any more large poppies. The Parish Council would like to look at different options for a wreath and may wish to give a donation to the Royal British Legion. Councillors will research different options for a wreath.
- 7) **Chair's Report. Shindig 2025.**
- The 2025 Shindig which will be held the first weekend of August 2025 in the Jubilee Park. This has been agreed by the Council.
- 8) **Community Hall, Section 106.** All updates covered on the District Councillors report.
- 9) **Meeting dates. Clerk read out the following from Cllr Ritson:**
- I want to suggest we that make regular week numbers for each month to allow
- councillors to plan beyond just two months ahead.
 - residents of Sheepwash likewise.
 - synchronising with Chronicle submission dates in a reliable manner.

Councillors at the meeting discussed this idea. Meetings are normally the 2 or 3 week of the month both of which fit in with the Chronicle deadline. It was agreed that we would continue on this basis.

10) Clerk's laptop and printer.

Laptop. The laptop is old and will only have Windows 10 support until October 2025. Mark Wadge, IT chap, who checked the laptop and the printer, can do a refurbish laptop with windows 11 and with a 1 year warranty for about £250.

New HP laptop from £349.99. The Parish Council agreed a new laptop with a budget of £400.

Printer. Shebbear Parish Council are willing to go half on an all-in-one printer copier and scanner. Shebbear are saying up to £100 or £150 with a good supply of ink. They have suggested an HP laser printer. The Parish Council agreed to go half on a printer. Councillor and members of the public suggested an Epson Eco Tank. Clerk to purchase.

11) Parish Council strimmer. Clerk read out the following from Cllr Ritson:

Council strimmer. Anyone who wishes to borrow it just for council/village purposes should attend the training course. Clerk found a training course in Devon which is for 6 people and this would be £175 +VAT person, will cost more if less than 6 people. Councillors discussed and for the amount of money to train a person/people would be cheaper to pay someone to strim areas in the village. Councillors all agreed to leave the arrangement as it is.

12) Area near and around the Parish Council Shed. Clerk read out the following from Cllr Ritson:

Can the builder please clear up the mess. We could buy a dumpy bag of matching gravel to cover the remaining eyesore. If we do that, Cllr Ritson volunteers to spread it level. Member of the public informed the meeting that the Village Hall committee will arrange for the area to be cleaned up and are looking into the cost of gravel to cover the area.

13) Village Hall and Village Shop signs in the Square.

Cllr Fairall asked the Parish Council the following on behalf of the Village Hall Committee and the Village shop: will the Parish Council allow a sign to be put on the lamp post in the Square saying Village Hall, and a Village Shop sign in the Square maybe on the bus stop or a Planter? The signs will be simple signs just saying Village Shop and Village Hall. It was suggested could have a sign saying Jubilee Park. No cost to the Parish Council. All Councillors agreed that simple signs can be put up in the Square on a lamp post, Bus Stop and Planter.

14) Play Equipment maintenance and Asset check report. Clerk read out the following from Cllr Ritson:

Play equipment. Outdoor Play, the installation company, has now filled in major cracks and smoothed splinters in tower. Cllr Ritson has repaired the benches using long screws. He is charging the Parish Council for a box of wood screws (£14.12) He used the pc glue previously bought.

In addition, the mower needed more repairs. That involved two return journeys to Hatherleigh. Please refund Mike for 4x 4.5 miles.

15) PLANNING:

15a) Planning Applications. None.

15b) Planning Decisions.

1/0519/2024/FUL Erection of balcony, 8 Lime Court, South Street, Sheepwash, the application was granted permission.

1/0370/2024/FUL Construction of agricultural building, Land At Grid Reference 247858 107490, Sheepwash, the application was granted permission.

Read out to the meeting.

15c) Planning Appeal.

1/0581/2023/FUL Appeal reference APP/W1145/W/24/3342744, Conversion of outbuilding to 1no. holiday let Outbuilding, Clinton House, North Street, Sheepwash. Update from Clerk.

The final comments date was the 30th July. No decision has been made yet.

16) FINANCE:

16a) as at the 29th August 2024:

Main Account £15,514.27

Saving Account £18,365.69

Expenditure:

Date	£	Detail	Transfer
26.07.2024	35.00	ICO	DD
30.07.2024	7.48	Clerk, Ink and A4 Wallets	Bacs
30.07.2024	22.86	M Ritson. Glue and Fuel	Bacs
Total	65.34		

Income:

Date	£	Detail
05.08.2024	10,000	Cheque from the Community Shop.
Total	10,000	

The above was read out to the meeting.

16b) Community Village Shop funds.

Cllr Ansell update the Council with the information that the Community shop company has closed. The committee decided to split the funds remaining after the closure approximately 50/50 between the Village Hall and the Parish Council.

16c) Financial Risk Assessment.

Clerk has completed a financial risk assessment on the Parish Council this will be put on the website and any actions will be completed in the following months.

17) Items for Information. Items emailed out to Councillors.

Invitation to Holsworthy Rural Community Transport 25th Anniversary Celebration Coffee Morning on Wednesday 18th September.

Temporary Traffic Notice, South Street, 18th October 2024. Between the hours of 08:30 and 15:30.

Replace a pole.

The above was read out to the meeting.

18) Items to be included in the agenda for the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in November 2024 unless a meeting is needed before.

The Councillors present agreed the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th November 2024.

Meeting Closed 8.13pm

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