

# SHEEPWASH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

## VILLAGE HALL

Wednesday 14th May 2025

at 7.00pm

### Minutes.

**Present:** Cllr Ansell, Cllr Fairall, Cllr Hutchings, Cllr Moys, Cllr Etherington, District Cllr Wheatley, Two Police Officers, Selina Woollacott (Clerk), 20 members of the public.

Cllr Ansell Chaired the Annual Parish Meeting as no one else stepped forward.

**1.Parish Council Chairperson Report for the year 2024/2025.** Report given by Cllr Ansell as the Parish Council Chairperson. New Parish Councillor: after an informal interview process Sarah Etherington was voted in as a new Parish Councillor in July 2024.

**Asset report:** a list of Parish Council assets can be found under Documents on the Parish Council website. The assets are wide ranging: metal rubbish bins, the Jubilee Park, the 'telephone' kiosk, the War Memorial and the Square, the Air Ambulance lighting columns, switch gear and cables, a lawn mower, the street furniture, two parcels of land by the river, and so on. The assets are checked each year by the Clerk and any maintenance requirements are noted and acted upon.

**Play equipment inspection:** the items in Jubilee Park are checked each year by a play equipment inspection company. This year the company repaired cracks and smoothed timbers in the tower. Mike Ritson repaired the benches in the Jubilee Park – thank you.

**Temporary chalk parking bays:** the Parish Council agreed that TDC would mark temporary (chalk) standard sized parking bays in the Square and at the back of the pub, to encourage drivers to park more carefully. This took place in October 2022. A survey in 2023 found as follows: 85% of respondents found them helpful and would like them refreshed, 2% markings helped, but don't want them redone, 11% the chalk markings didn't make any difference. As they were wearing away the chalk markings were refreshed in March 2024. Thank you to Haydn Beynon for doing this on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Moving 30mph signs on North Street and 20mph campaign stickers:** it was requested that the 30mph sign on North Road be moved further north to extend the speed limit beyond the Edgefield Houses. The process required to move a speed limit is complicated and expensive (many thousands of pounds), as this wasn't included in the planning permission for these houses. The Parish Council decided to put up '20 is plenty' signs' (thank you to Duncan Smith) to encourage drivers to slow down.

A range of '20 is plenty' signs and stickers were bought by the PC and made available to any parishioners who required them. Some are still available if needed. There is still £34 of the budget left if the Parish Council would like to buy more.

**Community Village Shop funds:** The Community Shop and Post Office in Mermaid House closed in early December 2023. We now have a mobile Post Office service – Dave and his van visit the Square from 11.30am to 12.30pm every Wednesday. At the end of April 2024, Kim and Haydn Beynon opened a new shop 'Bay and Bloom' operating from what was the rod room at the back of the pub. More details of this venture will be provided in Agenda item 4. The Community Shop company, Sheepwash PO and Community Shop CIC Ltd, was wound up and closed in July 2024. The members of the CIC Ltd decided to split the funds remaining after closure approximately 50/50 between the Parish Council and the Village Hall. The PC received £10,000.

**Landing Site Annual Survey:** the Air Safety Manager checked the landing site and light in October 2024. All is in good order, and he had no issues to report.

**Listed buildings list:** in November, TDC added an interactive map to their website showing all listed properties, bridges, and conservation areas in the district (<https://www.torridge.gov.uk/maps>). Selina prepared a list for Sheepwash Parish, which is on the Sheepwash Parish website. TDC would like the PCs to be aware of listed buildings etc in their parishes and report any unauthorised work or listed properties that are not being maintained. There are grants available for some works on listed properties.

**New laptop and printer for the Clerk:** the PC agreed a budget of £400 for a laptop and £150 for 50% of a printer (shared with Shebbear PC). In November Selina purchased an HP laptop and Epson Eco-tank printer within budget.

**Bench in the Square:** a new bench has been purchased and placed in the Square. Thanks to Pete Hayward and David Ansell for fixing it in place. It replaces that with a memorial plaque to Harry Lymath's wife. The new bench now has a memorial plaque to Harry and his wife. It has been funded by The Bridgeland Trust, with significant donations from Lymath and Moys Ltd and Pete and Jan Hayward who live in what was Harry's house.

**Sheepwash bridge hit again:** in January 2025 a member of the public reported that the bridge has been hit again. Despite regular reminders from the Clerk, Devon Highways have not yet mended the bridge (May 2025).

**Village clean up:** thanks to the group of people, led by Mike Ritson, who did some cleaning up around the village in late April. Their work included painting the village hall railings and the shed at the side of the hall.

**Finances:** in 2024/25 the precept is just over £8,100 per annum – no increase per household, but more households in the parish. We reclaimed VAT of £580 on expenditure, and we received £10,000 from the Community Shop company closure and £150 in donations towards the new bench. Interest on our savings account was £490, so total income for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 was £19,300. For the same period expenditure has been £5,620 – the biggest items being insurance, clerk's salary, clerk's laptop and printer, and Luke's Farm s106.

The total funds that the Parish Council has (in its current and savings accounts):

@ 1 April 2023	£18,920
@ 31 March 2024	£21,560
@ 31 March 2025	£35,277

**Luke's Farm s106:** on 1 September 2022 it was agreed by the Parish Council to allocate £10,000 to the project of securing the Community Hall site for the Parish. We had previously applied for a grant, but our application was not successful as most grant providers will only grant funds when building starts.

To date, 12 May 2025, £7,610 has been spent on the project.

In 2023 we received full planning permission for a Community Hall on the Luke's Farm s106 site (see TDC website reference 1/0137/2023/FUL). As at 12 May 2025, we are still waiting for ownership of the land to be transferred from the Traces to TDC, and then from TDC to Sheepwash Parish.

'Waiting' sounds as if we, the Planning Subgroup, have been sitting around idly waiting for this to happen. This is certainly not the case. An incredible amount of time has been spent trying to bring this to a satisfactory conclusion for Sheepwash Parish.

Once the land is transferred to Parish ownership the next step will be to form a Project Group – consisting of four or five members, I would think. This group will report to the Parish Council.

The purpose of the Project Group will be to assess whether or not the new Community Hall Project should go ahead.

To this end, the activities that the group will undertake will include the following:

- Public consultation with all parishioners.
- Consultations with existing VH Committee members.
- Consultations with members of current user groups (skittles, snooker, art, knit and natter etc).
- Consultations with advisor groups (eg: Devon Communities) and groups in other villages who have been through this process.
- Business plan to ensure the new hall can pay its way if and when it is operational.
- Funding sources and strategy.
- Fundraising plans.

As you'll realise from the list above, the Project Group members will need to have a range of skills and expertise and be prepared to commit to a considerable amount of work.

We'll have to decide how the members of the Project Group are chosen. Are they self-selecting or are they identified by some group as to who would be good and useful?

Member of the Public (MOP) asked if the planning permission will run out on the Hall site? No, it is on hold. MOP2 do we know how long it will take? At the moment the landowner is asking for amendment to the drains on the land transfer document, it is likely we will need to ask our solicitors to check the documents; there may be a cost associated with this. The Parish Council are in contact with Torridge District Council and Sir Geoffrey Cox to try and get this sorted and completed as soon as possible.

## **2. County & District Councillor reports for the year 2024/2025.** Report given by Cllr Wheatley.

**TDC** We are pleased to announce that the highly anticipated development of Brunswick Wharf in East-Water Bideford has taken a significant step forward as Developers, Red Earth have announced the appointment of Morgan Sindall Construction and Infrastructure Limited as the project's principal contractor.

Brunswick Wharf is set to transform a long-neglected Area of Bideford's historic riverside offering a restaurant, six retail units, more than 100 apartments, a pop-up cafe, surface level car park, and a riverside walk linked to a public open square.

The car park will also double up as an outdoor events space acting as both a hub for residents and the wider community. In addition, including a shared public space, a new riverside walk will include a shared cycle and pedestrian route that links the Tarka Trail encouraging active travel and better accessibility to the public.

**CCWG (Climate Change Working Group)** Peter Gilbert (Public Health & Community Safety Manager updated CCWG with the development for Torridge clean air quality strategy and making data more accessible to be published real-time on our website. Torridge is fortunate to have overall good air quality, though after further discussion and consideration it was agreed to meet higher standards with additional monitoring was recommended with known idling traffic areas.

Treeconomics has undertaken desk top tree mapping which identified out of 388 sites that 122 were suitable for tree planting. CCWG pleased this is progressing and Donna Sibley stated this will go to the committee for decision especially regarding funding. CCWG requested if carbon savings can be included in the figures and Donna confirmed that Treeconomics can do this and produce a protocol for public engagement. Treeconomics stated that a larger ground and maintenance team would be required.

MOP asked what is happening about water pollution? Cllr Wheatley replied what needs to happen is the treatment plants need to be upgraded, like the ones in Europe.

**3. Open Forum for parishioners.** Joined at the meeting by two local Police Officers. There is no PCSO in Holsworthy at the moment. There is a trial for a Tri- Service Officer. Crime in the area is low. A member of the public asked about thefts from farms. Thefts from farms are low in the Holsworthy and Bude area. The main issue we are having reported to us within Sheepwash is parking of vehicles near the junction and on the bus stop. The police reported that they have given the owner advice on where would be better for them to park. The police also advised that they could ticket them and anyone else who is parked incorrectly. MOP states that the car is often in the way of the bus stop. The bus stop is used by the school buses and public buses. Police Officer asked what Highways had replied with regards to marking the road as a bus stop? Highways have not been very forthcoming with this idea. Clerk to send information to Police Officer and ask Highways again. Ideally it would be good for the bus stop to be marked or double yellow lines to be put in place. Police Officer stated again we can issue tickets, but we would have to issue tickets to everybody who is parked incorrectly we do like to advise and discuss issues first with people. Police officers will continue to visit Sheepwash as and when they can. Police Officers left the meeting.

MOP passing sign down near the river has become overgrown you are unable to see that the sign says passing, Cllr Ansell said she will arrange for the vegetation to be cut back.

MOP2 there is still an ongoing issue with footpaths not being cleared and farmers ploughing right to the edge of the field and ploughing over the footpath Woodhead to Upcott and Wooda Farm. The Parish Council will report this to the local Footpath Warden.

MOP3 at a previous meeting it was discussed about whether Windsor Lane is a public right of way. It is not a public right of way however it is possible to apply for it to be as it has been used for a number of years by the public. Is this something that the Parish Council would like to look into? The Parish Council will discuss this at a later date.

**4. Village Shop.** Trial time ends soon. Report given by the owners of the Village pub who set up the shop in part of the pub. We have put our heart and soul into the pub. We didn't plan to open a shop but we were approached a number of times by a number of residents when the old community shop closed. We have three regular volunteers, and no salaries are drawn from the shop business. It is mostly an enjoyable task running the shop. One of our main challenges is fresh produce. We try to stock good quality local produce and support local talented people. There are currently 15 IOU's outstanding with an average of £35.02. We completed a survey of who is using the shop - 36.9% of people within the village, of whom 16.9% are regular customers. Residents of nearby villages and visitors make up 63.1% of our customers. The shop relies on the Half Moon and its staff. With statistics like 34% of rural pubs closing and pubs having an impact on local amenities, as well as a local pub increasing property values by up to 10 to 15% we are determined to continue with both businesses as long as they are viable. We are not just an amenity shop we want to

draw local people to the village. Thank you to all who support the shop and the pub. We are looking to put up new, more noticeable shop signs. We will pay for the signage, and we would like the Parish Council to confirm that they are happy for signs to be put up in the Square. Suggested locations have been the lamppost at the end of the pub, but this may only be visible from one way. Cllr Ansell suggested a big swinging A frame sign at the corner of the Square. These suggestions will be considered. The Parish Councillors decided to bring item 14 of the Parish Council meeting forward to this meeting: the Parish Council support signs being put up and look forward to ideas being put to them.

**5. Closing remarks from the Chairperson.** Thank you all for coming. We now follow this meeting with the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Meeting Closed 8.04pm

**Sheepwash Parish Clerk, Selina Woollacott,  
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