

## Shillingford Parish Council Meeting

### Minutes of the meeting held at the Village Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 7:30pm

**Present:** Cllr P Barwell (Chair), Cllr J Parrott (Vice Chairman), Cllr P Wareham, Cllr C Dummett  
Cllr J Taylor (from 114/21), Cllr M Saunders (from 114/21)  
Cllr A Swain (TDC), Juliette Thompson (Clerk), Four members of the public

**113/21 Welcome and apologies for absence:**

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm  
Apologies were received from Cllr A Connett.

**114/21 Co-option of New Councillors**

It was proposed by Cllr P Barwell, seconded by Cllr J Parrott and agreed by all to co-opt Jill Taylor and Mark Saunders onto the parish council. Cllr J Taylor and Cllr M Saunders signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the Parish Council.

**115/21 Declaration of Interests/Dispensations:**

None

**116/21 Open Forum:**

Clerk to report mud, blocked drains and flooding along Manstree Lane.  
Cllr J Parrott asked for an update on the Teignbridge Local plan consultations; Cllr A Swain said that no decisions will be issued for at least six months and reminded all to keep commenting.

**117/21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** It was proposed by Cllr J Parrott, seconded by Cllr P Barwell and agreed by all that were present at the meeting, that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021 were a true and accurate record. The Chair signed the minutes.

**118/21 Police, County & District Councillors Reports**

District councillor report for December

Recently there have been allegations made about the operation of Teignbridge District Council. At full council in September, an independent councillor pointed out that the constitution was changed sometime last year, apparently without consulting councillors. He raises 6 points which he believes are “material changes that erode the rights of Members of the Public and Members of the Council to scrutinise the work of this Council”. It is claimed this was deliberate and is being used to curtail their rights.

I take these allegations very seriously and as the representative of my community, I consider it my duty to investigate.

This relates to a decision the previous year which councillors did agree to, asking the monitoring officer (the council’s solicitor) to “tidy up” the constitution. The tidy up was needed and was not supposed to materially change the content. This was done, but the new constitution was posted to the web site without consulting councillors again and without announcement. This was unfortunate, but I do not believe it was a deliberate assault on democracy. The officer did what they were asked to.

In September I and other councillors voted to affirm the new constitution provided there was a mechanism to review and reverse any material changes. I have since looked in detail at the 6 points. I see changes of course, but not so major as they were portrayed.

Previously the public could ask questions relevant to “the business of the council”. This was changed to “the business of the meeting” and the power has been removed, for a Group leader to insist that a change to the constitution is major if others claim it is minor.

I also found that the tidy up had failed to update the language, so I brought a motion to full council in November proposing that the monitoring officer be asked to restore these two powers and substitute non-sexist gender-neutral language throughout.

At the full council meeting in September another independent councillor made a separate allegation, claiming to have evidence that a planning application heard at committee had been subverted by the applicant putting up ‘fake’ objectors. It was claimed that early registration for the 2 speaking slots had prevented genuine objectors from making representations.

My colleagues are still investigating this case as it is again a serious allegation. My own enquiries have revealed however, that speaking slots are not allocated on a ‘first come first served’ basis and could not be manipulated in this fashion. If they were, I would now be seeking to repair that. Applications to speak at planning must be made by noon, on the third working day before the planning committee meeting. Ward Councillors and Parish Councillors are given first priority as elected representatives. The remaining slot(s) are then offered to the other applicants. If there are insufficient slots, the applicants are instead offered contact with each other and asked to mutually agree who will speak for them. If this fails, slots can be allocated randomly but in the career of the officer I spoke to this has happened only once.

While we continue to investigate the specific case (and still await the claimed evidence) I have confirmed that the system is not broken in the way it was claimed and should provide fair representation at planning committee meetings.

As the community's representative at Teignbridge, sometimes this means challenging officers, but sometimes it means supporting them. Unfortunately lies can be told very quickly. Establishing the truth takes longer, but it is vital that we do.

#### **119/21 Village Hall Report**

Business Account £15680. Current Account £2966. Total £18,646

Income from hall hire - Oct £391, Nov £466. Income to date from Hedge Cutting £280.

50% of hedge cutting income will be paid to the Church when all payments are in.

Costs, Oct £895 (which includes the annual insurance payment of £632 and boiler fuel £227), Nov £196 (which includes a boiler service).

Village events have resumed such as the Open Door Café and the Exchange. However, after careful consideration, the Christmas Exchange planned for Saturday 18th December has been cancelled due to the latest Covid news.

One hall hirer, the National Childbirth Trust, has also cancelled their bookings due to Covid concerns and the safety of staff and attendees.

Village events such as the Open Door Café and Church events continue to benefit from not being charged for hall hire at present.

#### **120/21 Matters Arising:**

Cllr P Wareham has been in contact with the PSPO, who has put up more dog poo signs and is looking into installing a further dog poo/litter bin, which may come at a cost to the PC.

#### **121/21 Parish Matters:**

**121.1** The Chair gave thanks to C Carr who has recently stepped down from the PC: he thanked Chris for his sterling service as Chair and Councillor.

**121.2** Cllr J Parrott read out the draft response to the Teignbridge Local Plan consultation part three, which all Cllrs agreed with. One Cllr J Parrott has identified exact areas for renewable energy sites, can comments can be submitted.

Concern was raised that Dunchideock residents could be made aware of plans for their area while the PC was not active.

**121.3** Cllr C Dummett reported that the footpath committee intended to carry out a survey in Spring 2022 to establish the need for a path between the two villages.

**121.4** It was agreed to add £200 to the 2022 – 23 budget to pay for new road signs and the Chair offered to use his £300 allowance, giving a total of £500.

It was also agreed to update all four signs rather than the two previously suggested.

**121.5** Cllr C Dummett suggested a two-hour defibrillator refresher training course in Spring 2022 at Shillingford Village Hall, which will cost £175 for fifty people.

**121.6** The draft Affordable Housing Lettings agreement had been circulated for comments and passed back to TDC for finalising.

**121.7** Cllr A Connett requested that the local Highways Manager respond directly to us, regarding the concerns we raised over the resurfacing of Shillingford Lane. He did state that the county has a policy of maintaining roads so that they repair the 'not so bad' to stop them getting worse and this can have the effect that it sometimes looks like money is being wasted, as other, more important, roads in the area are left unrepaired.

Cllr A Swain suggested that the road be taken off the repair cycle.

**121.8** Cllr P Barwell reported on the water leak opposite Glebe Cottage: South West Water were waiting to proceed with repairs once ownership of the leaking pipe had been established.

**121.9** Cllr M Saunders agreed to join the Police Councillor Advocate scheme and to attend the next meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator to be invited to pc meetings to help promote the scheme.

**121.10** Cllr P Barwell attended the DCC Highways briefing and explained how funding had been drastically reduced over recent years.

**121.11** Cllr P Barwell also attended the DCC Finance briefing, which he found informative.

## **122/21 Planning:**

### **122.1 To discuss planning applications:**

21/02231/FUL – The Barton, Barton Lane, Shillingford

Siting of mobile home for farm worker

It was proposed by Cllr P Wareham, seconded by Cllr J Parrott and agreed by all that there were no objections to this proposal, provided the accommodation is restricted to agricultural workers and this restriction is established in the planning permission given.

### **122.2 To note planning decisions:**

21/01351/HOU – Fairway, Alphington

Extension and alterations and new roof, alterations and replacement roof to existing garage, new detached gym room, new detached office room and construction of pool.

Grant of conditional planning permission.

### **122.3 Planning enforcement:**

20/00220/ENF – Exeter Outdoors School, Shillingford St George.

There were no updates on planning enforcement issues.

## **123/21 Finance:**

**123.1** The monthly bank reconciliations for October and November 2021 were agreed by all and signed by the Clerk and Cllr J Parrott. The balance of accounts of £6,403.36 was noted.

**123.2** The following payments were approved:

£25.00	Royal British Legion	Annual Contribution for wreath
£614.97	Mrs J Thompson	Laptop and Expenses

**123.3** It was proposed by Cllr J Parrott, seconded by Cllr C Dummett and agreed by all to set the budget at £4,379.00 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, thereby increasing the precept by 2%.

**124/21 Clerk's Correspondence:**

HSBC has introduced a £5 monthly fee on the current account.

**125/21 Public Discussion:**

It was suggested that Cllrs contact details and responsibilities to be reviewed and publicised.

**126/21 Chairman's Remarks:**

The Chair welcomed the new councillors and said that he looked forward to working with this new parish council.

The Chair thanked all for attending.

**127/21 Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

Cllr P Wareham gave advance apologies for this meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:08 pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_ Dated