

Minutes of CAWS Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 18 May2021

The Community Action: Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) Annual General Meeting 2021 was held virtually using ZOOM, and commenced at 7.00 p.m.

1. Welcome / Apologies:

- Pippa Richardson (Chair) welcomed approx. 40 attendees (through 34 Zoom connections) including the committee, residents from the villages and representatives from Spindles Cycle shop, the Shaw & Whitley Community Hub and the Middle Farm/Corsham Road proposed development.
- An apology had been received from Nick Adsett.

2. Officer reports:

- Chair:
 - Pippa started by expressing the committee's disappointment that meeting could not be held face to face and thanking everyone for joining online.
 - She reflected on the effect of the pandemic and commended our village communities on coming together to help each other and those in need to ensure the on-going provision of services, support, and comfort. She thanked **Melksham Without Parish Council Team** for their sterling effort to coordinate volunteers, centralised services, and the help the wider community keep on top of what was needed; keeping information up to date, timely and relevant as we all adapted to a very different way of life. Pippa also thanked the **Emergency Response Group** for their continuing support and action which had avoided repeated damage to homes and other community facilities. She also thanked those in the community who took the initiative to continue to collect litter while CAWS was unable to do so.
 - Pippa explained that, due to the pandemic, many of our regular community activities had to be put on hold but that the Committee had taken a much more active role in responding to, and on behalf, of development plans for the villages including co-ordinating objections to the Ashford Homes development proposal for the field at the golf course end of Top Lane. CAWS had also input into the Neighbourhood Plan and route options for the proposed A350 Melksham Bypass where we have worked hard to try and protect the integrity and settlement boundaries of our communities.
 - The Phone Box Library on Top Lane has been a welcome and much used resource during lockdown. Pippa thanked committee members, especially Lesley Sibbald for her efforts to keep the phone box checked regularly, appropriately stocked and to remove the general household bric-a-brac that was being dumped by people clearly frustrated that the tips were closed during lockdown.
 - The committee was very pleased to contribute financially to, and now be able to celebrate, the installation of the equipment at Shaw Playing Field. It was a great collaboration effort between CAWS, the Shaw Village Committee and Melksham Without Parish Council. Our thanks especially extend to Teresa Strange, Mary Pile and Mike Booth for their tenacity and efforts to get this in place.
 - Speedwatch continues to be a core part of what CAWS activity. Pippa thanked Richard & Elizabeth Bean for continuing to provide this valuable support to the villagers and welcomed the new volunteers who have joined the team.

- Pippa then explained that, after many years of devoted service to CAWS we reluctantly said goodbye to Brian Roberts who relocated with his wife to be closer to family in Dorset. Brian had served as our treasurer since CAWS started. His support and commitment is hugely appreciated and we wish him and his family well for the future. Joan Boorer has taken over the role. We welcome her to the team and wish her well in her attempts to transfer our banking arrangements – another Covid challenge!
- Pippa then explained CAWS role on the subject of the village shop, which has been an emotional and / or divisive matter for many. Our role was to try to represent the views of the entire community. We voted as a committee, ahead of attending the Parish Council Meeting, not to stand in the way of the previous owner's desire to convert to a dwelling in light of a failed business venture. We have engaged with and participated in a variety of activities in support of various community members who are actively exploring alternative options and will continue to do so. We welcome Tom Skinner and his family to the village and look forward to supporting his venture for the premises.
- Finally, Pippa looked forward to establishing a more regular drum beat of our community activities as lockdown eases. We are always looking for new members and would welcome interest from villagers who wish to get involved and develop our activity for the betterment of us all.

- Treasurer:
 - Joan provided an overview of the accounts for 2020, as follows:
 - On the 1st January the opening balance was £5,762, broken down as follows; CAWS - £3,352. / CEG (Community Emergency Group) - £72 / Recreation Fund - £2,338.
 - During the year CAWS received a grant of £700 from MWPC - £500 to CAWS and £200 to CEG. The CEG also received a grant of from the Area Board to purchase an inverter generator for their emergency muster point at the Reading Rooms. A second-hand unit was obtained from Broughton Gifford Scout Group for £250, the remaining £20 will pay for the fuel needed to power it.
 - Other expenses in 2020 included: Insurance £292, £15 for 2-hour hire of the Reading Rooms in July, £26 for leaflets informing residents about the proposed development in First Lane, and £17 to the Garden Club to pay for compost for the planter.
 - Therefore, the closing balance on 31st December 2020 is £6,132, totals as follows: CAWS - £3,517, CEG - £277 Recreation Fund - £2,338. The new play/gym equipment at Shaw Park was installed at the beginning of this month so this money will be paid out for that.
 - Roger Hatherall has audited the accounts and certified that the above is a true record.
 - Following Brian's resignation, it became necessary to amend the bank mandate to cover the new Office Bearers. This has proved a complicated task which has yet to be resolved, despite many lengthy phone calls and much correspondence. The committee therefore agreed to close the Natwest account and open a new one with Lloyds. This is in progress and, once the Recreation Fund money has been paid, the balance will be transferred into the new account.

- Secretary:

- Lesley Sibbald reported that her normally routine secretarial duties had also changed significantly due to the pandemic. In addition to writing and distributing notes and agendas for meetings, the past year had resulted in much more information to be disseminated to the community at large. This had included- Updates on Council activities and decisions, Travel disruptions, planning & development consultations and most importantly, COVID 19 announcements.
- Lesley had also coordinated (and contributed to) several Newspaper and Connect articles during the year and had regular liaison with MWPC on issues such as the identification of work requiring attention from the parish steward / planning proposals / shaw park play equipment and the perennial problem of dog mess.
- Finally, Lesley reported on a new group that had recently started – Melksham Community Group Network – which is open to anyone involved in the management of any kind of voluntary group, club or charity in the Melksham area.

3. Reports on other CAWS Activities

- Phone Boxes / Library: Lesley confirmed that the phone box library had been a valuable resource during lockdown but had become a depository of various ‘other’ articles. Renewed notices and adverts on the Shaw & Whitley Facebook page had improved the situation. She also thanked the (unknown) resident who had started to share the task of maintaining order of the books.
- Litter Picks: Pippa hoped that CAWS would restart official litter picks in July.
- Speedwatch: Richard Bean reported that the voluntary Community Speed Watch (CSW) team, which has been active in the villages for nearly ten years, resumed the task on the 28th March when the Covid 19 restrictions were eased. During the lock-down period three volunteers completed the course to join the team.
- Richard provided the following details of recent watch sessions:
 - In April 3040 vehicles passed us while on watch.
 - Of which 508 were travelling above the 30mph limit.
 - We noted 435 were travelling at speeds between 30 and 36 mph.
 - We recorded 64 were travelling at speeds between 36 and 39mph
 - And 8 were traveling at speeds between 40 and 44mph
 - Plus 1 travelling at speed above 45mph
- As a rule, we find at least 10% cannot or do not bother to control the vehicle within the legal limit. Of course, when we are taking note of speeders other vehicles frequently slip past, unnoticed /and not recorded. But with lockdown easing, more team members fully trained and able to help, the May, June and July figures will hopefully be lower and should certainly be more accurate.
- Community Emergency Group (CEG): Jonathan Rumens provided an update on CEG activity since the last AGM. It had been another strong year, working with the council to introduce natural-flood-management and to respond to bonfire irritants during the first lockdown, which were causing difficulties for people with breathing difficulties. The CEG had successfully helped avoid flooding to the vicarage in early 2020 and were actively

involved in supporting the community during the pandemic, with help such as medicine collection and weekly shopping. Jonathan encouraged residents to use the MyWilts online app to report any problems.

- Recreation Fund – Shaw Play Park: Mike Booth explained that the provision of new equipment at the park had been a driving force in CAWS being set up. He was therefore delighted to see it coming to fruition and thanked everyone involved. CAWS funding had been matched by the council. A consultation exercise had identified a preference for equipment / activities for older children / adults.

4. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

Chairman – Pippa Richardson. Proposed by Lesley Sibbald, seconded by Joan Boorer
Treasurer – Joan Boorer. Proposed by Pippa Richardson, seconded by Maureen Hibbott.
Secretary – Lesley Sibbald. Proposed by Pippa Richardson, seconded by Ange Ferris.
Committee – The existing committee confirmed that they would continue. All in attendance were invited to consider joining the committee by emailing the CAWS email account.

5. Update and Discussion on Whitley Shop Proposals

Pippa introduced this item by explaining that the committee had invited representatives from Spindles Cycle shop, The Shaw & Whitley Community Hub and the Middle Farm/Corsham Road proposed development to talk about their proposals and respond to any questions.

- Spindles: Karen Baker explained that Spindles were really pleased to be expanding their Corsham -based business to Whitley where they planned to build, repair and sell bicycles. They also hoped to run a small coffee shop and had been working with the Community Hub to provide space for a small community shop. They planned to have a 'soft' opening soon, followed by a formal launch later.
- Shaw & Whitley Community Group: Alison Candlin shared a slide presentation on the group, including their team, mission, and their journey so far. She explained that this would be a community resource and reported that their survey indicated that 67% positive response to the concept. Note: **Alison's presentation can be seen on their webpage. [Shaw & Whitley Community Hub](#).**
- Alison finished by answering several questions as follows:
 - Q. Who will carry the loss if the project fails?
A. The company must build in protection in its business plan so that any shareholders do not suffer any financial loss. Also the Shop will trade through a limited company and like any other company any debts will be the responsibility of the company, rather than its shareholders.
 - Q. Will the Business Plan be published first?
A. The Business Plan will be included in the Share Prospectus.
 - Q. Are you looking at the option for including a Post Office?

A. The Community Hub are in dialogue with the Post Office about how services might be provided in the future.

Q. What measures are you taking to resolve parking issues?

A. The new coffee shop is unlikely to encourage as many cars from outside the villages as the Toast Office did. Also there is obviously expected to be more cyclists than before.

- Middle Farm Development: Abi and Clinton Dicks introduced themselves and explained that they had submitted (to the Wiltshire Neighbourhood Plan) an outline proposal for a small development of (approximately) 18 houses off Corsham Road. This would be the first major development in Whitley for over 35 years and would include several affordable houses. The proposal included a play area, a pedestrian crossing over Corsham Road and a purpose-built shop. The shop could include a variety of good / services, including post office / dry cleaning 'agent' / café and electric vehicle charging. The plans were still in the early stages and a community consultation would be undertaken before any firm decisions were taken.
- Abi finished by answering several questions as follows:
 - Q. Will the shop have a separate access?
A. This is still to be determined, but the initial thinking is that there will be a single entrance from the Corsham Road for the housing and the Shop but with rear access to the shop for deliveries.
 - Q. Which Developer are you using?
A. The developers have not yet been selected. Abi and Clinton are likely to manage the early stages of the process themselves before final selection of the developer.
 - Q. Will the developers be committed to building a shop?
A. Yes. This will be part of the contract with the developers.
 - Q. Is a crossing on Corsham Road practical?
A. This is judged to be practical and should help to reduce traffic speed along the Corsham Road, but this is ultimately a matter for the Highways Division to determine.
 - Q. Your illustration suggests 24 houses not 18?
A. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on approx. 18 houses. Abi was clear that the exact number had not yet been fixed and the 24 houses shown on the preliminary design was illustrative only. She said that if there were to be 18 houses, 6 would be affordable houses.
 - Q. What design style do you envisage?
A. The build style will be in keeping with the locality.
 - Q. What is your timescale.
A. We don't yet know, but 3 years is seen as the average for this type of development.

Q. The development is outside the current village boundary, is this not inviting further development?

A. This development is outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is the only such development in our community in the Plan and has had positive support from the community to date. Pippa said that CAWS had supported this development in the Plan consultation on condition that it did not create a precedent for other development outside the existing boundary. Abi said that this development would be away from the Shaw/Whitley boundaries and would be naturally limited by Westlands Lane.

Q. Would traffic calming measures on Corsham Road be considered?

A. This is possible, but the Highways Division would take the lead on this.

Q. What would CAWS role be in this development?

A. Pippa explained that CAWS role is simply to contribute to the debate on behalf of the residents of Shaw & Whitley villages. CAWS is not directly connected / involved in the project. Pippa went on to say that CAWS main role is to support the community and to help find solutions that are the best fit for its stakeholders. It has developed a proactive, supportive and positive challenge approach to development over the last few years, doing its best to reflect the voice of the community, and that approach would apply to this development.

Q. What flood prevention would be addressed?

A. The site is some way away from the floodplain around South Brook but nevertheless attention will be paid to potential flooding risk and the impact on the rest of the village in the design of the scheme. A flood survey would be undertaken as a standard procedure.

- And took note of the following:
 - Any future flyers should clarify the author, to avoid confusion with the Community Group.
 - Motorists frequently speed into Whitley from the Whites Corner direction. Safety would be improved if the entrance to the development was further down Corsham Road.

6. CAWS Committee Meetings

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 22 June at 1930, in The Head Shed, First Lane, Whitley.

NB- Date changed from 15th to allow the meeting to be held indoors.

It was agreed to defer agreement on future dates / preferred days until the first meeting.

7. Closure.

Pippa thanked everyone for attending what was certainly a longer than normal AGM but an informative one. She thanked the presenters and reminded everyone that CAWS are always looking for additional committee members.

Lesley Sibbald, Secretary
25 May 2021