

## Notes of CAWS Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 6 September 2023

**The Community Action: Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) Annual General Meeting 2023 was held at Whitley Methodist Church, commencing at 1900hrs.**

### **1. Welcome / Apologies:**

Peter Richardson (Chair) welcomed everyone.

1.1. **Attendees:** Peter Richardson, Pippa Richardson, Joan Boorer, Lesley Sibbald, Mike Booth, Dan Pike, Alison Candlin, Mary Pile, Ann Harrison, Bill Harrison, Stephen Cole, Jan Landon, Leila Sarson-Rowe, Mike Sarson-Rowe, Kevin McLaren, Caroline Clifford, Mark Clifford, Tom Skinner, Amy Whittle, Chris Buss, Julie Turner, Helen Mitchell, Melinda Adcock, Jonathan Rumens, Cllr Phil Allford, Chris Duff, Shirley Coates, John Coates, Jilly Chittenden.

1.2. **Apologies:** Maureen Hibbot, Kirsty Jamieson, Alex Lunt, Paul Hutchins.

### **2. Officer reports:**

2.1. **Chair:** With the initial backing of an audio-visual presentation, Peter provided an overview of CAWS's role in the community and a summary of what the group had achieved since the last AGM.

He explained that CAWS exists to represent local residents and businesses, achieve changes and improvements to the quality of life and wellbeing of local people, promote community cohesion, coordinate community action, increase awareness and consult on future developments, and provide a link between residents, businesses and the local authorities.

CAWS is run entirely by volunteers without formal funding and is committed to recycle any funds raised through local events etc. back into the community. CAWS has no formal authority or power.

Peter gave an overview of some of the current projects that CAWS has undertaken in the last year including the Summer Music Fair, topography signs, local history, tree planting, chatty benches, traffic calming and road safety.

He explained that he had one further year to serve in the chair, but that the role of Secretary and Treasurer would need to be elected. Peter thanked the outgoing committee and office bearers for their support since the last AGM and concluded with a plea for additional volunteers to continue the work.

**N.B. At this point in the meeting the audio-visual equipment failed. The remainder of the meeting was therefore conducted from individual speaker's notes. A copy of the full slide pack is attached for information.**

2.2. **Treasurer:** Joan provided an update on the CAWS accounts for 2021 – 2022. Full details are attached but a summary is as follows:

**Overall financial position:** On 1st January 2023 the opening balance was £3642, broken down as follows: CAWS - £3205, CEG - £437. CAWS income included £40 from PAFOS for hire of the marquee, but our greatest income came from the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fair held in June. Three donations had been made to the community: £500 to the Whitley Community Shop; £500 to Shaw Village Hall towards purchase of a new cooker; and £250 to Melksham Foodbank.

**CEG:** Income included a grant of £1400 from SSE towards the purchase of a generator. Also £85 from the sale of a pump. Expenditure included purchase of the generator for £1299, £40 for a drain rod set, and £38 for meeting fees and printing.

**Jubilee Fair 2022:** The main income included a grant of £500 from MWPC, £2581 from the raffle, £1346 from the BBQ, £455 from Traders' stalls. Generous donations included The Head Shed, Jaine Whitfield, Abi Dicks, AL King, and Spindles. Expenditure was relatively low, mostly for the BBQ hire and supplies, but this was offset by the very generous donation of burgers and sausages from Lowden Garden Centre. Overall, a profit of £4995 was realised.

**Summary:** the closing balances on 31st December 2022 were as follows: CAWS - £6367, CEG - £548. Total £6915. Roger Hatherall audited the accounts and certified that the above is a true record.

2.3. **Secretary:** Lesley gave a brief overview of her role which, included managing the CAWS email and social media accounts, preparing agendas and notes of meetings, liaison between MWPC & Committee Members and general support to the Chair and committee members. After undertaking the secretary role for 6 years Lesley explained that she would not be standing for re-election but would be very willing to help a new secretary to settle into the role.

### 3. Election of committee:

Peter confirmed that all existing members of the committee were willing to continue with the exception of Pippa Richardson.

### 4. Election of Officers:

Chairman - Peter Richardson – one year further to serve.

Treasurer - Joan Boorer.

Secretary – No volunteer.

**Post Meeting Note:** After the meeting, Dan Pike offered to take over the secretary post, if someone else covered social media. Pippa Richardson agreed to undertake this element ex committee. Dan was therefore adopted as Secretary, pending formal agreement at the next committee meeting.

### 5. Local Plan:

Councilor Phil Alford explained that Local Authorities were currently developing new policies for planning approvals across Wiltshire. These would outline what developments could be

undertaken between now and 2038 and what planning restrictions would be imposed. The plan would identify how many additional properties could be built in each area. The villages would be expected to accept a proportionate number of properties. Public consultation is scheduled to start on 27<sup>th</sup> September and will last for four months. A consultation event is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023 in Melksham.

The combined villages of Shaw & Whitley are expected to accept an additional 73 properties of which circa 5 have already been built, and a further 18 have already been allocated in the first edition of the Neighbourhood Plan. Sites for the remaining circa 50 properties will be allocated in the next edition of the Neighbourhood Plan (see below). Any objections to these proposals must be supported by new evidence.

Phil explained that there would be one significant change in that 30% of the properties must be affordable homes.

He concluded by explaining that consultation was extremely important as, once adopted by the council it would determine exactly what building could and could not take place in our villages. The completed draft plan would be subject to a referendum before implementation.

#### **6. Neighbourhood Plan:**

Peter then provided a brief explanation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Melksham Town and Without Parish Council. This plan endeavours to protect green spaces, protect individual village identities, protect local heritage, and consider the impact of climate change and the Canal Link Project. Importantly the updated Neighbourhood Plan will also allocate development sites for the housing proposed in the Local Plan (see above). The updated plan should be open for consultation soon, and Peter noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had committed to hold a consultation event in either Shaw or Whitley. He stressed that it is important that CAWS and individuals participate in the consultation and that once this was complete the plan would be subject to a referendum.

#### **7. Community Emergency Group:**

Jonathan Rumens provided an overview of the role of the CEG which had been set up in 2014 to work with external agencies to help the community deal with emergencies such as flooding, power outages or pandemics. He explained that our catchment area is a designated 'flashy' area for flooding and that the highest ever flooding had taken place in February 2020.

The CEG is grant funded and comprises a core team who meet 3-4 per annum plus around 20-30 supporters who are available to help with emergencies.

During the current year the focus has been on understanding the potential effects of emergencies and running coordinated training exercises. A recent scenario considered the implications of a UK-wide power cut lasting over a week.

CEG is always seeking new volunteers and / or contacts, especially anyone with skills such as first aid experience or willingness to provide resources such as a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

## **8. The field between Shaw & Whitley:**

Peter gave a brief outline of the current situation regarding the potential sale of the parcel of land between Whitley and Shaw, running approximately southwest from Corsham Road. The field has been advertised for sale “with development potential”, a guide price of around £150,000 and a deadline of 1200hrs on 16<sup>th</sup> September for best and final offers. Several residents had expressed a desire to secure the land for the community, but this raised the question of how it could be funded, what exactly it would be used for and how it would be governed / managed. The intention of raising it at the AGM was to agree a practical way forward.

Peter then explained that a local benefactor had recently expressed a desire to purchase the land with the intention of handing it over for community use. The benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous at this stage) would like to work with the community to determine a way forward over the next couple of years. Although this is a very welcome intervention, Peter recognised that the benefactors bid may not be successful.

### **Peter put forward the following formal proposal:**

That CAWS formally supports the local benefactor in their bid with a commitment to work with them over the next few years as to how to bring the space into community use. This was seconded by Lesley Sibbald and unanimously approved by all attendees.

## **9. Date and venue of next meeting:**

Peter confirmed that the next CAWS committee meeting would take place on Wednesday 27 September 2023, commencing at The Head Shed, First Lane. Whitley and commencing at 1900.

## **10. Closure.**

1. Peter thanked everyone for attending and supporting CAWS in their work.
2. Meeting concluded - 2030.

Lesley Sibbald,  
Secretary  
9 September 2023.