

NOTES OF THE CAWS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

The Community Action Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) was held at Shaw Village Hall commencing at 7.00pm

1. Welcome

Peter welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief outline of the programme.

2. Present / Apologies

Present: Cllr. Peter Richardson, Dan Pike, Pippa Richardson, Mike Booth, Alison Candlin, Lesley Sibbald, Melinda Adcock, Martin Evans, Daryl Floyd, Helen Edmeads, David Harris, Edwina Harris, Jilly Chittenden, Pamella Hall, Cllr. Philip Alford, Joe Exon, Ian Beveridge, Bill Harrison, Ann Harrison, Joan Boorer, Jane Sprague, Shaun Sprague, Stephen Whiteside, Peter Allan, Lorna Peaple, Angela Pogslew, R Abrahams, Margaret Roberts, Cecily Brownrigg, Sue Evans, Charlotte McKinley, Helen Mitchell, Sara Whiteside

Apologies: Maureen Hibber

3. Officers Reports

Chair – Peter Richardson:

Peter summarised the activities that CAWS had been involved with since the last AGM as follows:

- a. Community Emergency Group (CEG) was created following atrocious weather and flooding and near risk to life. It is now in its 12th year and continues to meet several times a year. Given the dry weather in the summer the team have been using the time to monitor the catchment, undertake equipment training and familiarisation, and re-order the store. CEG plan to work with the Reading Rooms to explore the possibility for grants to be used for renewable energy which might benefit the Reading Rooms and CEG given this is one of its nominated control centres.
- b. Peter then gave an overview of several planning issues that have been worked on over the last year including Brockleaze, WhistleMead and Lime Down. **See slide pack for additional information.**
- c. Peter summarised the work undertaken in the last year on the numerous roadworks ongoing in the villages, and the lack of coordination between contractors, Wiltshire Council and the Bus companies. CAWS focus has been on trying to minimise the disruption to residents.
- d. The Community Gallery opened at the end of 2025. Several exhibitions have already been installed, more are planned. Bi-annual litter picks continue and are very well attended, thank you to everyone involved.
- e. CAWS have also been proactive in trying to keep the Bradford on Avon Fire station open, especially considering the increased risk from BESS.
- f. Peter reported that, of the eight trees planted around the two villages a couple of years ago, four had been damaged, two of them twice. Some have clearly been vandalised which has been very disappointing.
- g. The Telephone Box Library continues to be well used, especially after it was repaired and repainted last year. We have replaced one of the village planters this year and are currently working with Shaw School on their travel plan.
- h. Other activities in the past year have included SpeedWatch, Broadband liaison, a replacement planter for the gardening club, defibrillator training and a visit to the Melksham Sub-station.

- i. Peter concluded by confirming that his new book on the history of the two villages will be published very soon. He then thanked the committee, and everyone involved with CAWS for their support and participation.

4. Treasurer – Joan Boorer

Joan provided an update on the key movements during the year. Costs included the hire of the HeadShed for meetings, preparation for the re-launch of The Village Voice and defibrillator training. MWPC had provided grants totalling £3354. **See slide pack for additional information.**

5. Election of Officers:

Chairman: ` Peter was willing to continue in the chair unless there were any other nominations. There being no other nominations, **Peter was duly re-elected.**

Secretary: Peter informed everyone that Dan Pike was standing down as secretary but that John Darnborough had offered to take over. There being no other nominations, **John was duly elected.**

Treasurer: **Joan was willing to continue to act as treasurer.** There being no other nominations, **Joan was duly re-elected.**

6. The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust – Iain Houghton:

Iain began his extremely useful presentation by explaining that the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust (WBVT) was introduced in the late 90s to provide a free home security service and online safety service for over 60s, 18+ with a registered disability and people experiencing domestic abuse throughout Wiltshire and Swindon. There are three Bobby Vans that provide mobile workshops to enable their operators to secure peoples' homes and also offer one to one home visits and community talks on online safety.

He then provided examples of potential risks and possible solutions, explaining that some of their services are free though some have a charge attached. Iain gave several examples of risks, including 'in person', 'online' and telephone scams. He stressed the importance of 'stop and think' before taking any actions, especially when using the internet. He also explained the difference between strong and weak passwords, together with the importance of keeping passwords safe. He concluded by stressing that we still need to live our lives, however we need to be careful about what information you're putting out there in the wild.

7. The Village Voice – Pippa Richardson

Pippa introduced herself and explained that an editorial group had been formed to launch a revived version of the Shaw & Whitley magazine - The Village Voice – which would be being popped through letterboxes within the next few weeks.

She highlighted a few of the contents, including preparation for a Commemoration Poppy Field at Pococks, more about the village history, regular updates for groups plus things that you're used to receiving. The magazine will be in colour and it is hoped that the first edition will be published on the 19th of October. Pippa thanked CAWS and MWPC for their financial support. The plan is for the magazine to be issued bi-monthly, 6 editions per year.

Advertising will be essential to maintain the magazine, so the decision had been made to require anybody who wants to buy advertising space, to commit upfront for the whole year. This should ensure funds are available to cover the first year's production.

The committee, all volunteers, have clearly defined roles and are developing our processes as they go. Interest has been encouraging; there are 12 community groups and individuals signed up as regular contributors. If year one is successful, consideration will be may be given to sider online access, but we don't want to get too ambitious.

Pippa finished with a plea for people to deliver the magazine locally and to encourage residents to suggest ideas for articles. She assured everyone that she would be happy to chat to anyone with an idea, to hear their story, and then to write up the article for them.

8. Planning Update

energy-related schemes at various stages. He Peter reported that the Neighbourhood Plan had received overwhelming support at referendum. Across the parish, it provided for more homes than Wiltshire Council required at that time. In Shaw and Whitley, it met local housing needs while protecting the rural gap and the villages' separate identities.

He explained that the withdrawal of the Local Plan, housing shortfalls, recent appeal decisions in Melksham and new planning permissions, were increasing the pressure of speculative development. Developers are seeking to reduce the weight given to the Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless the Neighbourhood Plan remains part of the development plan, and Peter emphasised that its settlement, landscape and rural gap policies continued to apply and deserved substantial weight in planning decisions.

Peter then briefly reviewed the local planning landscape, outlining housing proposals at First Lane/Folly Lane, First Lane, Top Lane and Middle Farm. He also summarised energy proposals, including Brockleaze BESS, Whistle Mead solar and BESS, Half-Way Farm BESS and the Lime Down cable route, alongside approximately 50 other noted that several planning and appeal decisions remained outstanding. Recent decisions included the dismissal of the Corsham Road housing appeal and approval of improvements at Whitley Golf Club.

Peter said that the Neighbourhood Plan should be used when looking at planning applications to identify policy conflicts, protect village identity, challenge sustainability claims and assess cumulative impacts. Wiltshire Council should also be pressed to improve housing delivery on sites already approved or with permission, provide transparent housing figures and ensure meaningful community involvement.

Turning to the new Local Plan consultation, Peter advocated supporting housing growth in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan, protecting the rural gap and the character of both villages, and ensuring that growth reflected infrastructure capacity and cumulative impacts.

Given the high number of local energy schemes, he said that the new Local Plan should address cumulative impacts across developments and the clustering of energy infrastructure around Melksham Substation. It should consider suitable brownfield sites and alternative locations, require robust battery energy storage system (BESS) safety and emergency plans, and protect water, wildlife, landscape and heritage.

Peter concluded that Wiltshire Council should be held accountable for the preparation of the new Local Plan, with clear governance to give the community confidence in the process. He acknowledged that housing pressure would remain high across the parish and that CAWS could not object to every proposal. The priority was to ensure that development took place in appropriate locations, with particular importance attached to protecting the rural gap and the distinct identities of Shaw and Whitley.

CAWS members supported a CAWS submission to the Local Plan consultation on this basis.

9. **Conclusion**

Peter drew the meeting to a close by thanking all the presenters for their contributions.

Lesley Sibbald - CAWS Minuting Secretary