

**Minutes of the Sustainable Shaftesbury Advisory Committee (SuSAC) meeting
held at 5.30pm on Thursday 4th June 2026 in the Council Chamber, Shaftesbury Town Hall**

Members Summoned and Present: Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings (arrived at 5.35pm), Cllr Lester Dibben (arrived at 5.37pm), Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch (arrived at 5.34pm), Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti (outgoing Vice-Chair), John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott (arrived at 5.33pm), Richard Thomas (re-elected Chair) and Lucy Young

Absent: Christina Strickland

Officers Present: Sarah Johnson (Office Administrator)

In Attendance: Press (1), Members of the public (0)

[Link to agenda](#)

Public Participation

- No members of the public were present.

The meeting commenced at 5.31pm

Cllr Annie Philpott arrived at 5.33pm

Jen Hirsch arrived at 5.34pm

Mike Cummings arrived at 5.35pm

Cllr Lester Dibben arrived at 5.37pm

SuS01 To elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2026/27

Officer report 0626SuS1 was received and Richard Thomas was elected to remain as Chair of the Advisory Committee for 2026/27.

Proposed by Sue Clifford and Seconded by Bernard Ede

In Favour	11	Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young
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Against	0
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Abstentions	3	Cllrs Lester Dibben, Virginia Edwyn-Jones and Annie Philpott
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MOTION CARRIED

As no Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee was elected, it was **AGREED** that, should the Chair be absent at a meeting, members would decide who will chair that meeting in his absence.

SuS02 Apologies

Officer report 0626SuS2 was received and it was **RESOLVED** to accept apologies from Christina Strickland.

Proposed by Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones and Seconded by Jen Hirsch

In Favour 13 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Lester Dibben

SuS03 Declarations of Interest

Officer report 0626SuS3 was received. It was **NOTED** that members should declare any interests if they arise.

SuS04 To approve the minutes of the meeting on 24th February 2026

Officer report 0626SuS4 was received and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on 24th February 2026.

Proposed by John Nelson and Seconded by Amber Harrison

In Favour 10 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 4 Cllr Lester Dibben, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Gideon King and Cllr Annie Philpott

MOTION CARRIED

SuS05 To review Shaftesbury Town Council's decisions from March to May and SuSAC's recommendations of 24th February 2026

Officer report 0626SuS5 was received and **NOTED**.

Members are aware that the Terms of Reference will be reviewed at a future Full Council meeting and note the third STC member Cllr Annie Philpott.

Jen Hirsch PROPOSED and Gideon King SECONDED for the STC Terms of Reference Working Group to review facilitating more frequent formal SuSAC meetings and extraordinary meetings if required, and that there is option for a Co-Chair.

Proposed by Jen Hirsch and Seconded by Gideon King

In Favour 11 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

SuS06 To consider funding proposals for 2026/27

Officer report 0626SuS06 was received and noted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the committee recommends to Full Council for the amount of £920 to be taken from Sustainable Shaftesbury's 2026-2027 budget for funding of the following items:

(1) Up to £500 towards Shaftesbury Home Grown pond project.

Proposed by Lucy Young and Seconded by Mike Cummings

In Favour 13 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson
Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

Cllr Edwyn-Jones requested that further details are provided before this item is considered at the Full Council meeting on 16th June 2026.

(2) Refund Dorset Climate Action Network £120 for joint stand and tickets for Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show in August (£60 for pitch, £60 for 4no. extra tickets for volunteers).

Proposed by Richard Thomas and Seconded by John Nelson

In Favour 13 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

(3) Pay Dorset Environmental Records Centre £300 (£250 + VAT) for Green Wheel mapping options noting that this is not an additional cost and will be taken from the Green Wheel budget previously agreed.

Proposed by Sue Clifford and Seconded by Mike Cummings

In Favour	13	Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young
Against	0	
Abstentions	1	Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

Cllr Lester Dibben pointed out that the Town Clerk will require a licence for any maps purchased.

Action: Full Council

SuS07 To receive updates from Working Groups

Officer report 0626SuS07 was received and **NOTED**.

Biodiversity:

Nature Connection North Dorset project – The Chair reported Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) reps had asked to attend the informal meeting of SuSAC on 30th June to launch the Nature Connection North Dorset (NCND) project in Shaftesbury, introduce the new project officer, Sophie Headdon, and discuss next steps. Jen Hirsch proposed the meeting on the 30th June focus entirely on the NCND project followed by a second informal meeting later. Gideon King suggested finding out how long the DWT representatives would like before a decision was made on holding a second meeting. It was AGREED that the Chair would talk to DWT and report back.

Post meeting note: DWT has asked for a 75-minute meeting on 30th June to meet the new project manager, launch the NCND project here and agree next steps. This will leave some time for any other items that also need discussing on 30th June.

The Green Wheel Project – The Chair introduced the item by reiterating that the Green Wheel project was integral to the NCND project. Bernard Ede passed around a map of the agreed 2-mile ‘green ring’ catchment area showing the ‘pizza slice’ (roughly a third of the overall circle or ‘wheel’ centred on the Town Hall and taking in most of the east side of Shaftesbury from Barratt Redrow development in the north to the Persimmon developments in the east) chosen for an initial ‘pilot study’ as containing most of the nature-depleted areas within the town boundary caused by largescale housing development and thus where the most work needs to be done. The slice also demonstrates how close the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL) comes to the town and includes areas both Dorset and Wiltshire Councils have identified for improvement in their Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). It was also noted the Green Wheel project is already included in the Shaftesbury Neighbourhood Plan, now with DC for approval, with the town’s Nature Friendly Town and Orchard Town declarations approved by STC. The Green Wheel group is focusing particularly on the eastern SUDS corridor, which is poor, and its wetland edges. One suggestion is to create a “Green Way” incorporating a cycleway and footpath along the bypass corridor to mitigate against its development for housing. The group would also like to be involved with the green space at Mampitts around the current plan to build a ‘hub’ on this space because it forms a significant part of one of the many wildlife corridors or ‘spokes’ into the town from the surrounding countryside. The Hardy Way was quoted as another example of an already existing and nationally important footpath feeding into the ‘hub’ where improvements were needed that would make a significant difference for walkers. It was suggested the GW group should consider an explanatory leaflet of what is being thought about to get feedback and that this would feed

naturally into the NCND project. Initial contact has already been made with officers involved in both the Wiltshire and Dorset LNRS to improve 'joined up thinking' over the scheme. It was also felt it would be useful if representatives from Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL) and The Great Big Dorset Hedge (GBDH) project are invited to the next Green Wheel meeting. A date for this had yet to be arranged.

Cllr Lester Dibben reported he was hoping to meet the Area Manager of Persimmon to discuss why 'they are trying to talk down the sum of money previously promised'. He said he intends to report back to residents who are thinking of forming a residents' committee. He claimed that DC have been asked to adopt this land 'for the past 10 years' but have never put forward concise requirements or proposals on the SUDS system. He also asserted he felt the Saxon Grange development would be "chopped in pieces" and not therefore able to be managed as one single entity by STC. He said there was a need to encourage Persimmon to support and assist and highlighted the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was pointed out that the NP included the Nature Friendly Town, Green Wheel and Shaftesbury Orchard Town ambitions approved by STC.

A suggestion was made that SuSAC produce a management plan for the open spaces on the Persimmon eastern development that can be put to STC. Cllr Lester Dibben reported he had requested a pre-existing management plan from DC who it was claimed had taken possession of the SUDS system from the developer. He claimed the current management plan was drawn up by STC in 2003 and adopted by NDDC as the planning authority pre-2019. It was claimed the SUDS scheme had not been built in accordance with the approved plans with the slopes to the basins north of the A30 and south of Mampitts Lane being too steep and no basins at all having been put in north of Mampitts Lane. He questioned why the planning authority had not made the developer adhere to what was approved. He also claimed management plans are set for 10 years so the management plan for the eastern development is now up for review. Mike Cummings suggested this would give the opportunity for it to be decided what remedial tasks and actions Persimmon should carry out and he offered to attend any meetings on this for Darwin Ecology to help advise.

Cllr Philpott left the meeting at 6.52pm and returned at 6.53pm

It was **RESOLVED** to formally request of STC that the Town Clerk organises a meeting with Dorset Council, to include Cllr Jeanes, to clarify the situation with the SUDS, specifically on the east side of the town, and to request a copy of the agreed Management Plan produced in 2003.

Proposed by Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones and Seconded by Jen Hirsch

In Favour	13	Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young
Against	0	
Abstentions	1	Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Full Council

Member of the Press left the meeting at 6.57pm

Open spaces management plans – Mike Cummings reported that he had walked through Castle Hill with Chris Berwick and discussed wildflower buffer zones (along back wall and under trees) and he is disappointed that grass seeding has been done. Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones clarified that the top of Castle Hill (Castle Hill Green) is under STC management, and the grounds contractor did not ‘flatten’, he merely removed weeds, and residents were advised of this work. Unmown strips were left previously but residents complained, and it was pointed out that this space is used by the community and therefore must be a practical flat space. It was confirmed that the lower part of Castle Hill is under the management of Dorset Rangers.

Members made reference to the Castle Hill Management Plan 2026-2030 signed by the Interim Town Clerk in March 2026.

Sue Clifford left the meeting at 6.59pm and returned at 7.01pm

It was **RESOLVED** for a self-contained management plan for Castle Hill Green to be put to Shaftesbury Town Council at a future meeting to provide wildflower zones in tandem with an ‘education’ package (to include wildlife surveys) to engage the interest of members of the public.

Proposed by Mike Cummings and Seconded by Jen Hirsch

In Favour 13 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Amber Harrison, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Full Council

Amber Harrison left the meeting at 7.13pm.

She reminded members of the co-creation of a Shaftesbury community nature poem taking place in the High Street on 18th June 2026, being one of the events to celebrate Independent Bookshop Week from 13th-20th June 2026.

Energy & Retrofitting: Jenny Morisetti explained the community energy initiative in more detail. She felt the ‘Power Station’ film (shown at the Town Hall on 1st June) showed how communities getting together can make things happen. It is proposed to hold a follow-up meeting to discuss forming a Shaftesbury Community Energy community interest company (CIC) and the Chair requested information about the meeting to be circulated. It is likely to be at the beginning of July at the Football Club or similar venue.

Post Meeting Note: An initial follow-up meeting, organised by Planet Shaftesbury, was held at The Grosvenor on 18th June with minimal turnout and it is still expected that a second meeting will be held at a later date at a venue yet to be decided.

Planning: Blackmore Down development – The Chair expressed his hopes that matters will be resolved now that the leader of Dorset Council is involved.

Water (rivers, streams and ponds): John Nelson confirmed there was nothing new to report.

Worksheds (community worksheds): Cllr Lester Dibben gave an update that the working group is currently dealing with a legal matter.

SuS08 To consider the ‘Climate Responder of the Year 2026’ award

Officer report 0626SuS8 was received and it was **RESOLVED** for the committee to put forward a formal proposal to Shaftesbury Town Council, for consideration at the next Full Council meeting on 16th June 2026, to enter Shaftesbury in the ‘Climate Responder of the Year 2026’ award subject to further research by Jen Hirsch on the application process.

Angela King left the meeting at 7.24pm and returned at 7.25pm

Proposed by Jen Hirsch and Seconded by Richard Thomas

In Favour 11 Sue Clifford, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 2 Mike Cummings and Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

Action: Full Council

It was PROPOSED by Sue Clifford (on behalf of Green Wheel) to enter Shaftesbury in the Wessex Water Watermark Town Initiative. The initiative is designed to be a collaborative effort between Wessex Water and town and parish councils and provides them with the necessary resources and support to implement water-saving projects and raise awareness about water usage. It also includes funding for community projects such as water butts and rainwater harvesting to further enhance water conservation efforts.

The proposal was NOT SECONDED, and it was agreed this would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting. Applications for 2027 will open towards the end of this year.

SuS09 To discuss Community Engagement with ‘The People’s Emergency Briefing’ film

Officer report 0626SuS9 was received.

It was **RESOLVED** to send a link to Shaftesbury Town Council listing venues where ‘The People’s Emergency Briefing’ film will be shown to enable all councillors and STC staff to watch the film at a venue convenient to them.

Proposed by Cllr Annie Philpott and Seconded by Jenny Morisetti

In Favour 12 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

It was **RESOLVED** to support Planet Shaftesbury's proposal to encourage maximum public support for the national organisers' request that national broadcast media show programmes based on the National Emergency Briefing event in London in November by lobbying the local MP and government.

Proposed by Lucy Young and Seconded by Richard Thomas

In Favour 12 Sue Clifford, Mike Cummings, Bernard Ede, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Jen Hirsch, Angela King, Gideon King, Jennifer Morisetti, John Nelson, Cllr Annie Philpott, Richard Thomas and Lucy Young

Against 0

Abstentions 1 Cllr Lester Dibben

MOTION CARRIED

SuS10 To note Local Community Emergency Response Plans (CERPs)

Officer report 0626SuS10 was received and **NOTED**.

The next informal meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 30th June 2026 with the next formal meeting on 25th August 2026.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7.40pm.

These minutes were adopted on 25th September 2026 under minute reference SuS13 as a true record of the decisions taken and are duly signed below by the chair of that meeting.