

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, SHEPTON MONTAGUE ON TUESDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER AT 7.30pm

Present: Mr. R Ellis (Chair), Mr P Williams, Mr. R Reed, Mrs J Robinson, Mrs. M Hill (Clerk), Mike Beech (District Councillor) and six members of the parish.

1. Apologies for absence – Anna Groskop, County Councillor
2. Declarations of Interest - none
3. Minutes of last meeting – were signed as a correct record
4. Matters Arising
 - EE had initially been in touch with Richard Reed regarding mobile phone reception but he had not heard from them since. He will follow up.
 - Members were happy to receive the SSDC weekly planning reports for Charlton Musgrove, Shepton Montague and Bratton Seymour so the clerk will continue to forward these.
 - The clerk reported that the annual accounts passed the audit without comment.
5. Co-option of new councillor – Andrew Wiley was nominated by Richard Ellis, seconded by Paul Williams and voted onto the council. It was suggested from the floor that this vacancy should have been advertised in the village but the clerk pointed out that this was not a requirement following an election where less than the full number of councillors had been elected. The co-option should have been completed within 35 days of the election so it was further suggested that this could therefore be open to legal challenge. **Action:** Clerk to check with SSDC Monitoring Officer.
6. **Planning Application: 15/03755/COU Trendle, Stoney Stoke, BA9 8HY Change of use of agricultural land to residential garden use (GT:370873/132179** Mike Beech advised that this application had already been passed by planning however members saw no objection to the proposal.
7. **Planning Application: 15/03810/FUL 3 and 4 Townsend, Higher Shepton Road, Shepton Montague, BA9 8JN Demolition of existing 2 no. dwelling houses and erection of 2 no. replacement dwelling houses (GR:367441/131695)** Council considered this proposal and took views from the floor. It was decided that the following observations should be returned to the case officer.

Council considers that the proposed houses are:

Too large for the plot, with a much bigger footprint than the existing cottages.

Too far forward (i.e. towards the road) relative to the remaining cottages and therefore taller than and overshadowing the neighbouring cottages.
(Forward of the current building line surely.)

Replacing two 2 bedroomed cottages with 4 bedroomed when what the village needs is smaller, affordable homes to keep the village alive.

*We also have concerns regarding **drainage**. The current 4 cottages are not on mains drainage but feed into a private tank. This will be overwhelmed by the proposed 8 bathrooms and 2 additional downstairs toilets in these 2 proposed houses.*

*We also have concerns regarding **parking**. Whilst each house has a double garage, 4 bedroomed family homes tend to generate many cars and therefore some condition regarding not parking in the lane would be appropriate for highway safety so near the crossroads.*

8. **Traffic in Shepton Montague and along B3081, Stoney Stoke.** Paul Williams reported that there had been 10 recent crashes on the B3081 in Stoney Stoke, between the chevrons on the sharp bend and Manor Farm House, two of which happened on one day. One accident had taken out a large section of his hedge and one took the telegraph pole out of action. This has rendered several houses in Stoney Stoke without telephone or internet since 19th August. Two residents of Stoney Stoke have already written to Highways requesting action to improve the safety on this bend. Police attending one of these incidents suggested that a thick, solid white line down the middle of the road round the bend might help. Paul will collect details (dates etc.) of these accidents and forward to the clerk who will write to Highways requesting action.

Within Shepton Montague Village the improvements to signage and lineage were agreed some two years ago and are planned for implementation in spring next year. Council felt there was little point in additional campaigning until these are done. It was reported that a Community Speed Watch was being organized by Sue Hester in the village with the help of volunteers and this has the Parish Council support.

9. **Broadband/BT signal** Residents of both Shepton Montague and Stoney Stoke have been experiencing very poor broadband and telephone service. Jo Farnworth advised the meeting that she was in communication with BT regarding the frequent drop-out of broadband signal in Shepton Montague. The potential reason for this intermittent service has been connected with Shepton Montague being an area experiencing electrical interference (REIN). Jo said that BT engineers have been working on this problem but with no resolution thus far. Several residents in Stoney Stoke were without a telephone line or broadband signal at all for 5 weeks whilst BT got round to making a repair following damage to the telephone pole. It was noted that, according to the mapping shown on the 'Connecting Devon and Somerset' website, Shepton Montague is an area where superfast broadband is now live. This is clearly not the case. Stoney Stoke is shown as an area excluded from plans to provide superfast broadband at all in the future. Some residents of Stoney Stoke also experience infuriatingly slow and frequent drop out of broadband signal and again residents are in communication with BT concerning the poor quality of telephone lines and broadband signals. **Action:** Clerk to write to BT on behalf of the community, deploring the local service and requesting improvement.

10. **Correspondence.** The clerk had received an email from Sam Winter at SALC asking if the village was experiencing particular problems with regards to tractors driving through the village centre. It was felt that tractors are a necessary part of farming and country living.

11. **a.o.b.** It was noted that the junction of East St and the main road through the village was a dangerous corner and not a safe place to park.

12. Open discussion

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.44pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____