

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, SHEPTON MONTAGUE ON FRIDAY 8TH MAY AT 7.30pm

Present: Mr P Williams, Mr. P Costen, Mr. R Reed, Mrs J Robinson, Mrs. M Hill (Clerk).

Also present were 15 members of the Parish and representatives of Hadspen Estate.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Mr. R Ellis
2. **Declarations of Interest:** Paul Williams advised the meeting that members had been invited to Hadspen and he, Richard Ellis, Richard Reed and Peter Costen had attended, to walk the Estate, hear about the development plans and partake of a glass of wine.
3. **Minutes of last meeting:** Approved and signed as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Another accident had occurred at the Stoney Stoke bend on B3081 despite the new chevrons.
 - **Planning Application: 15/01145/S73A Dr. R F Whale.** – Permission granted.
 - **Dog poo bins:** the clerk had been in touch with Highways regarding the location of the bin and they had requested a cross on a map. Members duly put a cross in the required spot. The clerk had not yet ascertained who pays to install the bin but advised that as well as purchasing the bin the Parish Council would be responsible for repairing or replacing it. **Action:** Clerk to further liaise with Highways and SSDC.



5. Planning Application: 15/01537/FUL and 15/01538/LBC Hadspen Estate

Proposed restoration and replanting of walled gardens, planting and landscape works to surrounding parkland; demolition of two brick outbuildings and Dutch barn; construction of new buildings for visitor facilities (shop, café/restaurant, toilets), garden /Estate administration and maintenance, cider production, new glasshouses; access improvements to A359 / Caryedge Lane junction, provision of new car parking areas for visitors and staff; landscape works and creation of new paths and Estate tracks; all in association with use of the gardens and parkland as a visitor attraction (GR:366022/131041)

Paul Rawson Hadspen Estate Manager and Pat Benjamin, the architect, gave a short presentation to the meeting outlining the plans for the walled garden and development of the estate buildings and parkland as a visitor attraction. It was explained that Mr. Bekker, the owner, is keen to re-open the gardens to the public and this is the core of the application, surrounded by the other aspects to make it a viable business proposition. In view of the major impact this will have on the local area Hadspen Estate feel it is important for local people to have the opportunity to discuss the plans. Plans and drawings were presented and showed the whole proposed scheme in some detail.

They then answered questions from members and from the floor. Overall people seemed positive about the replanting of the gardens and the proposed building developments. Issues raised by parishioners at the meeting included:

Expected visitor numbers (c. 100,000 per year)

The nature of the 'visitor experience'

Traffic volumes and management – potential for increased traffic through village, on Cattle Lane, on Cary Edge Lane

Improvements to A371, A359 and access to Hadspen Estate

Staff access to Estate

Disabled access/provision

Suitability of roads

Signage

Car parking areas, volumes and management

Noise

Opening times

Restaurant opening times

Possible evening events

Shop

Potential light pollution

Local employment

Cider making and orchard planting.

Newts and bats

Permissive paths

Development phases

Likely opening date (aiming for Summer 2017)

Concerns expressed centred around traffic volumes and management, particularly the potential for visitors to follow their SatNavs and access or leave the Estate other than from the A359 as planned.

(With regard to the potential re-routing of the A371 around the area between the Grove Cross junction and the junction with Shatwell Lane, Paul explained that discussions were at a very preliminary stage with Highways to perhaps re-configure the curves of the road to reduce accidents and noise (via a change in road surface). Hadspen is also keen to support local parishes in getting the Grove Cross junction improved however both of these issues are outside the scope of this planning application.)

It had been arranged that the Village Hall would be open the following morning to allow anyone interested to inspect the plans and drawings which would remain on display. Paul kindly offered to attend this event as well, to explain the development and answer any further questions. It was decided to record any comments or concerns raised regarding the application so that the Parish Council could be sure to represent the views of residents who were not able to be at the meeting.

Following both the meeting and the Village Hall opening, the following observations were agreed should be returned to Planning:

The Parish Council is strongly supportive of this enterprise with its significant employment potential and the renovation of these neglected gardens to their former glory for public enjoyment.

Our concern is mainly about traffic with the potential for SatNavs to guide visitors via Cattle Hill, through the village or along Cary Edge Lane (very narrow and highly unsuitable) and the well-known inherent dangers at the Grove Cross junction..

Clear signage is imperative and a 'tourist' sign on the A371 at the Cattle Hill junction keeping visitors on the main road should help.

We are aware that the Grove Cross issue is being addressed by Highways with minor modifications but the general consensus is that a roundabout is required.

6. Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit request - deferred

7. Correspondence: None

8. a.o.b. None

9. Open discussion: It had been reported that a 'Low bridge' sign on the road from the Chequers corner towards the church was obscured by hedge. **Action:** Clerk to report.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.37pm.