

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL, SHEPTON MONTAGUE ON THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.30pm**

*(Draft minutes for approval at the next meeting.)*

**Present:** Paul Williams (acting chair), Richard Reed, Andrew Wiley, Janet Robinson, Margaret Hill (Clerk).

1. **Apologies for absence:** were received from Richard Ellis (currently abroad), and Anna Groskop, County Councillor.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** None

3. **Minutes of last meeting:** were signed as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising:**

- **Traffic through village:** the clerk had not yet followed this up with Colin Fletcher's successor. **Action:** Clerk to follow up.
- **Proposed change of access at Hadspen Estate.** The letter of support was sent to Planning on 26.7.17. Notification has since been received that a Planning Application no: 17/04130/S73 has been submitted and Parish Council comments invited. **Action:** Clerk will check that the proposal is the same as outlined at the last meeting and, if so, will respond to the Planning Dept. referring them to our letter of 26.7.17 in support of this proposal.

5. **Planning application no. 17/04044/FUL Construction of elevated pedestrian walkway within existing woodland at Hadspen House.** Council considered the plans and drawings submitted and concluded that there were no objections to the proposal. **Action:** Clerk to return this comment to Planning Dept.

6. **Grove Cross junction:** Paul Williams and Janet Robinson had attended a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October organised by Pitcombe Parish Council to discuss the urgent need for improvements at the intersection of the A371 and A359. The meeting had been called to establish if there was consensus among attendees for taking action to improve the safety of the junction. Representatives from local Parish, Town, District and County Councils were in attendance as well as from Haynes Motor Museum, Emily Estates, Avon and Somerset Police and County Highways.

Paul Williams explained that the meeting had concluded that, after considering various options and associated costs, the best way forward for improving the junction was to stagger it. Anna Groskop (County Councillor) requested that all attendees wrote a letter stating their support of improvements to Grove Cross with details of any financial contribution they were prepared to make towards the costs. Letters to be sent to Pitcombe Parish Clerk with copies to David Warburton MP, Nick Weeks, Chair of Area East Committee and County Highways. *(More detailed notes from the meeting are in the appendix to these minutes.)*

Members agreed to send a letter of support and to pledge £100, subject to receiving details of the use of the funds, to demonstrate the commitment of the

Parish Council. In addition, residents should be asked, via the village website, to ensure that all accidents and near-misses at Grove Cross are reported to the police in order to ensure that all accident data accurately reflects the situation on the ground. **Action:** Clerk to send letter to Pitcombe Parish Clerk, and also place request on village website.

7. **Community transport:** A letter had been received from SSDC regarding the future of the South Somerset Community Accessible Transport Scheme (SSCAT) and asking for help in funding it, through the precept. Members felt that this service was little used in Shepton Montague and we are too small a Parish to bear such additional cost on the rates.
8. **Somerset Fingerpost Restoration Project:** The clerk had already circulated information about this project, the aim of which is for local authorities to work with the community to restore these landmarks and return them to their former glory. Somerset County Council and the Southwest Heritage Trust have produced a handbook to provide all the information required to enable Parishes and community groups to decide if they would like to take part in the project. (Full details can be viewed at: [www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/somersetfingerpost-restoration-project/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/schemes-and-initiatives/somersetfingerpost-restoration-project/) )

Members agreed to take the first step in the project, which is to survey all the fingerposts in the parish and to enter the required information into the Survey App. **Action:** Andrew Wiley volunteered to download the App and report back.

Somerset County Council will be offering all volunteers 'Highway Safety Awareness Training' in the form of a half day local workshop. Only volunteers who have successfully completed this workshop will be allowed to carry out cleaning and painting work on fingerposts. The clerk had already expressed the interest of the Parish Council and requested dates and details of this training, when they are available.

Should members of the parish wish to become involved with this project then please email: [fingerposts@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:fingerposts@somerset.gov.uk) and let the Parish Clerk know as well ([hill.bowden@btinternet.com](mailto:hill.bowden@btinternet.com)).

It was noted that there is no funding available for this restoration work.

9. **FINANCE: Budget for 2018-19 and setting of Precept:** Members considered the accounts for 2017-18 (see below). Total expenditure for the financial year ending March 2018 is expected to be approximately £2,100 and there will be just under £3,000 carried forward to 2018/19. The budget for 2018/19 is very similar, totalling just under £2,000. Members therefore decided to maintain the precept at the existing level of £1,935.

A cheque was signed to Mr. Hibberd in settlement of his invoice for £750 for churchyard maintenance for the year. It was agreed that the work had been done well and his services should be engaged again for 2018/19.

**Action:** Clerk to send off cheque and letter thanking Mr Hibberd.

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>2017/18</b>		
Bal B/F	£3,155.19		
Precept	£ 1,935.00		
Govt grant	£ 10.00		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£5,100.19</b>		
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2017/18</b>		
	Budget		
SALC	£ 55.00	£ 55.00	o/s
Village Hall	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	o/s
CAB	£ 20.00	£ 20.00	o/s
Clerk	£ 495.00	£ 495.00	o/s
Insurance	£ 275.00	£ 257.60	
Audit			
Churchyard maintenance/mowing	£ 750.00	£ 750.00	
Slabs for grit bin		£ 10.74	
Adoption of BT phone box		£ 1.00	
Donation to Village Hall (acoustic improvements)		£ 200.00	
Purchase of salt/grit bin	£ 300.00	£ 225.80	
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£1,995.00</b>	<b>£2,115.14</b>	
<b>Income minus expenditure</b>	<b>£3,105.19</b>	<b>£2,985.05</b>	

#### 10. Correspondence:

- **Salt/grit for parish bins:** District Council will replenish the salt/grit bins as required. The 4 older bins need checking to see if the salt/grit within them is still useable. The fifth bin is new so will need filling. **Action:** Paul Williams agreed to check the 4 bins and let the clerk know so she can advise District. Paul will also collect the offered sacks from the depot on 25<sup>th</sup> November.
- **Christmas tree re-cycling:** It was felt that a re-cycling compound was unnecessary.

**11.a.o.b:** Richard Reed reported that several of the drains are blocked on the main road through the village, right from the Montague Inn to the junction with the A371. **Action:** Clerk to request drain clearance.

#### 12. Open discussion

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.31pm.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Improving the Grove Cross Junction

Meeting notes 19/10/2017

**Present:** John Knight – Chair (Pitcombe Parish Council), Mark Blissett (Somerset County Council Highways), Les Cheesman (North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council), Lucy Comer (Pitcombe Parish Council), Caroline Donald (Pitcombe Parish Council), Anna Groskop (County Councillor), Chris Haynes (Haynes Motor Museum), James Hood (Bruton Town Council), Ewan Jones (Bruton Town Council), Kerry Jones (Somerset County Council Highways), Sara Lackford (Haynes Motor Museum), Mike Lewis (County Councillor), Barry Moorhouse (Castle Cary Town Council), Pek Peppin (Castle Cary Town Council), Janet Robinson (Shepton Montague Parish Council), Paul Rawson (Emily Estates), Sue Seager (Emily Estates), PC Sara Stephenson (Avon and Somerset Police), Alan Wells (Pitcombe Parish Council), Paul Williams (Shepton Montague Parish Council).

**Clerk:** Zöe Godden

**The meeting began at 13:00.**

\* **Note:** The order of business varied slightly from the published agenda. These notes are presented in the order in which matters were addressed but please note that all the aspects of the agenda were covered.

- **Introductions** – John Knight welcomed everyone to the meeting and all attendees introduced themselves.
- **Aim of Meeting - Consensus and Ownership of the proposed project** – John Knight explained that the reason for the meeting was to establish if there was consensus among attendees for taking action to improve the dangerous junction at Grove Cross. John said that Pitcombe Parish Council was happy to drive an improvement project as the junction was located in the Parish of Pitcombe but that, as a very small Parish, Pitcombe needed other stakeholders to get behind any improvement project. John asked attendees to indicate whether they agreed that action was needed at Grove Cross and if they supported the idea of driving improvements.

**Paul Williams (Shepton Montague Parish Council)** – Agreed that the junction was dangerous and supported any improvements.

**Les Cheesman (North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council)** – Agreed that there were many accidents and near misses at the junction and added that North Cadbury and Yarlington was also seeking a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph on the A359 towards Haynes Motor Museum.

**Mike Lewis (County Councillor)** – Said that a Small Improvement Scheme application may be submitted for the A371.

**James Hood (Bruton Town Council)** - Said that Bruton wanted more information before giving support to any project. Bruton would not want to see the A359 becoming a more major road or to see more traffic directed through Bruton town.

**Alan Wells (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Said that the biggest problem at the junction occurred when traffic travelling on the A371 from Wincanton turns right onto the A359 and noted that this turn is extremely difficult for large vehicles.

**Caroline Donald (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Said that drivers do not see the junction and can travel straight across it without stopping. Caroline suggested that rumble strips may help.

**Barry Moorhouse (Castle Cary Town Council)** – Agreed that action was needed to improve the junction and suggested a roundabout or traffic island may help. Barry said that he would not favour the installation of traffic lights.

- John Knight asked if attendees would be prepared to offer a financial contribution, however small, to demonstrate commitment to decision makers that there was support for an improvement project.

**Paul Williams (Shepton Montague Parish Council)** – Said that a contribution of about £100 might be possible.

**Les Cheesman (North Cadbury and Yarlinton Parish Council)** – Said that a small contribution might be possible.

**Barry Moorhouse (Castle Cary Town Council)** – Said that a small contribution might be possible.

**James Hood (Bruton Town Council)** – Said that Bruton would be interested in making a financial contribution to any project preventing HGVs from accessing Bruton town on the A359 and added that a 7.5 tonne weight restriction was in place in Bruton, with only three firms having exemptions.

- John Knight asked PC Sara Stephenson for accident statistics and her thoughts on possible improvements to the junction.

**PC Sara Stephenson (Avon and Somerset Police)** – Informed attendees that, in the past 36 months, two serious accidents had been recorded by Police. There had been a fatal accident involving a motorcyclist several years ago. PC Stephenson noted that there were likely more additional accidents that had not been reported to the Police. In terms of possible solutions, PC Stephenson said that a roundabout would be the preferred option, but if this was not possible, the junction should be adjusted to increase its staggered layout and that illumination should be added to highlight the presence of the junction, especially from the Galhampton side.

**James Hood (Bruton Town Council)** – Reported that there had been seven accidents between 2002 and 2009 and a further three in recent years.

**Lucy Comer (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Said that she lived within earshot of the junction and regularly heard accidents and near misses taking place. Lucy added that problems occur because drivers do not know how to use the junction.

**Pek Peppin (Castle Cary Town Council)** – Noted that the enormous expansion in the number of homes in Castle Cary and the increased visitors to Hadspen House would increase traffic using Grove Cross and that this should be taken into account.

- John Knight asked for the views of representatives of Emily Estates and Haynes Motor Museum.

**Paul Rawson (Emily Estates)** – Agreed that there are highway safety issues at the junction but said that these were longstanding. Paul said that the geometry of the junction is substandard in comparison with a newly built junction and that he vehemently supported improvements, although he felt that a roundabout was not the right option as it would increase road clutter and would represent suburbanisation of the rural environment.

**Chris Haynes (Haynes Motor Museum)** – Said that the museum had 100,000 visitors per year and a 12,000 sq ft extension to exhibition space would increase this number. A car park extension was also planned. Chris agreed that the junction needed improvement and said he could see the pros and cons of a roundabout. Chris said that he would be happy to support the recommended improvements, whatever they might be but added that he felt a joined-up approach was needed to ensure that issues relating to the A303 were addressed in conjunction with any improvements to Grove Cross.

- John Knight informed attendees that three different landowners were in possession of the land surrounding the junction, namely Emily Estates, Somerset County Council and a local farmer. John went on to ask for possible options for improvements.

**Mark Blissett (Somerset County Council Highways)** – Reported that there are other junctions like Grove Cross across the County. An assessment of the relevant information would have to be made before a solution could be devised but Mark said that it might be possible to increase the stagger. However, a roundabout was not thought to be possible due to the cost and uneven ground levels on surrounding land. Mark also said that there was scope for layout changes, including a possible slip road.

**Paul Rawson (Emily Estates)** – Informed attendees that his own highways consultants and devised two improvement options. The first was a staggered priority junction that could be accommodated on land already owned by Emily Estates and Somerset County Council and which would cost in the region of

£650,000 – £700,000. The second was a roundabout which would cost in the region of £950,000 to £1million. Paul shared plans for both of the schemes mentioned.

Paul asked what plans the County Council had for the junction when it purchased additional land adjacent to the road several years ago. **Mark Blissett** said that no real plans were ever made.

**Paul Williams (Shepton Montague Parish Council)** – Agreed that a staggered junction was the best solution.

**Les Cheesman (North Cadbury and Yarlinton Parish Council)** – Asked if Emily Estates could have the surrounding land levelled. **Paul Rawson** said that Emily Estates would help in any way they could, including offering additional pockets of Emily Estates land if they were needed. Paul added that his objective was to avoid the installation of a roundabout.

**Lucy Comer (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Said that Hadspen Quarry could provide excess stone if it was needed to help level the land.

**Pek Peppin (Castle Cary Town Council)** – Noted that a gibbet used to stand on the junction. **Mark Blissett** confirmed that County Highways would be responsible for any archaeological issues.

**Anna Groskop (County Councillor)** – Said she regarded the need for a change to the junction to be urgent and supported action for improvements. Increases to traffic at the junction were substantial and the additional increases from Haynes Motor Museum and Emily Estates should be taken into account. Anna informed attendees that she was able to submit two Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) projects each year and that local funding contributions would bring schemes forward more quickly. Plans for improvements to Grove Cross would not be ready to submit as an SIS for approximately six months and the approximate cost of a staggered junction would be in the region of £250,000. Anna said that she had already submitted two SIS projects for the November 2017 deadline.

**Anna requested that all attendees wrote a letter of support for improvements to Grove Cross with details of any financial contributions that might be forthcoming from each stakeholder. The Clerk was instructed to draft a standard letter that could be shared with all attendees and to supply the contact details of the required recipient(s).**

**(Action Parish Clerk)**

Anna went on to say that it would take approximately five years to see the projects conclusion but that local support and funding would speed up the process.

**PC Sara Stephenson (Avon and Somerset Police)** – Said that the Police would support a new staggered junction and that she like the idea of left and right filter lanes.

**Kerry Jones (Somerset County Council Highways)** – Informed attendees that each SIS was limited to approximately £100,000 so financial support from the community would be required.

**Anna Groskop (County Councillor)** – Said that funding might be available from the Local Improvement Programme.

**Caroline Donald (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Asked if developers could make a financial contribution. **Anna Groskop (County Councillor) and Mike Lewis (County Councillor)** said this would not be possible.

**Ewan Jones (Bruton Town Council)** – Asked if there was a cheaper alternative for improvements to the junction, in case the required funding of £250,000 could not be raised. **Chris Haynes (Haynes Motor Museum)** suggested measures to slow traffic approaching the junction, such as additional white lines. **Mike Lewis (County Councillor)** said that there was a possibility that resources could be shared when improvement works were made to the A303.

**Pek Peppin (Castle Cary Town Council)** – Confirmed that Castle Cary would submit a letter of support.

**Kerry Jones (Somerset County Council Highways)** – Said that if more accident statistics were available, more funding from County might be made available.

**John Knight (Pitcombe Parish Council)** – Suggested that residents need to report all accidents and near-misses at the junction to ensure that accident statistics are accurate.

**Anna Groskop (County Councillor)** – Asked for a follow-up meeting to be organised for the end of November 2017.  
**(Action Parish Clerk)**

**Kerry Jones (Somerset County Council Highways)** – Informed attendees that the next SIS deadline would be October 2018. **Anna Groskop (County Councillor)** added that she did not have any new SIS plans for 2018.

**Sara Lackford (Haynes Motor Museum)** – Suggested the formation of a community group to raise funds.

**Paul Rawson (Emily Estates)** – Asked if the SIS was the only avenue for achieving improvements at Grove Cross and suggested that another option would be for the improvements to be community/private led and could be realised by the submission of a planning application by a landowner. Paul noted that this approach would be more expedient.

John Knight thanked everyone for attending the meeting and confirmed that a draft letter of support would be produced and forwarded to all attendees, along with details of required recipients.

**The meeting ended at 14:00.**