

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, SHEPTON MONTAGUE ON WEDNESDAY 7TH MAY 2014 AT 7.30PM (*Draft minutes subject to approval*)

Present: Richard Ellis (Chairman), Peter Costen, Paul Williams, Richard Reed, Janet Robinson,

M Hill (Clerk), Mike Beech (District Councillor) and four members of the Parish.

1. **Apologies for absence:** None
2. **Minutes of last meeting:** These were approved as a correct record.
3. **Matters arising:** None.
4. **Parish Council Chairman's report 2013-14**

Planning: This has been a relatively quiet year in the Parish and the council has received only 6 applications for planning since last April; these were largely for minor improvements and alterations. However; two are in the centre of the village and predictably raised more local interest: the extension to South Cottage, which was subsequently withdrawn and the second, at Kingslea, a variation to the original consent in response to observations made to SSDC.

There remain 2 issues regarding Southdown Farm; the permission for a Pond which Mike Beech has asked to be revoked and the renovation of a barn which is still currently the subject of a stop order.

Finance: the parish precept was reviewed at the beginning of the year in order to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of changed churchyard maintenance costs; SALC affiliation fees and increased insurance premiums. The precept remains lower than most local parishes.

Highways: the culvert at Welham Farm was finally cleared thanks to the intervention of Anna Groskop, and despite the very heavy rains this winter there were no reported incidents of flooding. Likewise the ditch cleared at Southdown seems to have minimised the flooding of Watery lane, so too the repairs to the drain in East Street have meant that there was less damage to the newly patched road this winter and that excess water seemed to escape more successfully.

Increased traffic, especially of HGVs through the village was a real problem whilst the bridge in Castle Cary was being repaired. Much of this traffic now seems to have disappeared however residents in the main part of the village

still note that there is an increase in HGVs which should not be there at all. PSCO Tim Russell has been most helpful in discouraging repeat offenders.

The latest figures back from SID results make interesting reading. During the period of 1st to 14th. March this year, 'normal weeks', 3486 vehicles went through the village, 94% of which were travelling less than 40 mph however only 39% were actually within the speed limit.

A recent meeting with Colin Fletcher the Area Traffic Engineer has lead to his agreeing to implement the following:

1. Extend the 30 mph speed limit at the northern end of the village to a point beyond Towns End so that the cross roads is included within the restriction.
2. Improve the speed limit signing to include place name sign and replace existing weight limit signs which are in poor condition. Refurbish all road markings.
3. At the southern end of the village extend the speed limit up to the junction leading to East Street. Renew signing as at northern end.
4. Refurbish edge lines and extend westwards to the post box.
5. Provide 30 mph roundels on road surface as discussed on site.

The road to Stoney Stoke remains an issue and for a period in January the road was all but closed. This is an issue we will continue to address with SSDC but given current budgets, the difficulties with Gillian McCarthy's situation and the heavy use of milk tankers no significant change is likely.

Once again this year there have been a number of accidents on the A3081 in Stoney Stoke , this too has been brought to the attention of Colin Fletcher who has agreed to improve signage.

Bags of salt were once again collected and distributed around the village to those willing to help should the snow and ice have caused a problem. We now have a few spare for the next harsh winter.

Chair: It was a real pleasure to be joined on the Council by Richard Reed, a farmer and lifelong member of the village. Particular thanks need to be given to Margaret Bowden for her meticulous and thorough work as Parish Clerk without whose efforts our work would be so much harder. I would personally like to thank all the members of the Parish Council for their help and wisdom throughout the past months.

Richard Ellis

Chair.

5. Presentation of the Parish Council accounts (unaudited). The clerk distributed copies of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014. Expenditure overall was less than that budgeted due to there being no audit fee (saving £60), the cost of maintaining the churchyard being £90 lower than budgeted and £350 budgeted for speed limiting measures in the village not having been spent. The balance in the account at 31st March 2014 carried forward to 2014-15 was therefore £1,904.08.

6. Open discussion. A member of the parish (Anne Collyer) asked whether the Council proposed to reduce the precept as the balance in the account was so high and the Parish Council was not a money-making organization. The Chair replied that this was something that would certainly be considered when the precept was next set.

Traffic through the village was discussed. It was asked whether this had reduced in volume and it was thought that this was the case since the Cary bridge had re-opened. There was discussion about what was being and could be done to prevent speeding. The Chair reiterated the measures that the Area Traffic Engineer had agreed to implement as mentioned in his Chairman's report. It was suggested that the presence of a police van may have some effect as this had proved to be the case in Bruton.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7.50pm.