

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF SHEPTON MONTAGUE PARISH COUNCIL HELD on MONDAY 9TH MAY 2022 AT 6.45pm

Present: Paul Williams (PW), Julia Hunter (JH), Ali Willasey-Wilsey (AWW), John Sykes (JS), Margaret Bowden (Clerk) and 3 members of the Parish.

Paul Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting and to the new Council following the election, some members on their re-election and Richard Ellis and Ali Willasey-Wilsey on being newly elected.

PW thanked Oliver Dowding for his commitment and input as Councillor over the last year, and his particular efforts with regards to the footpaths project.

1. **Apologies for absence:** were received from Richard Ellis.
2. **Election of Chair:** JH proposed Paul Williams. This was seconded by JS and carried unanimously. The new Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office and other councillors signed their acceptance of office as Council members.
3. **Approve the minutes of the last meeting:** The minutes of the last Parish Council annual meeting held on 4.5.21 were approved as a correct record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Bench in bus shelter: PW thanked JS for carrying out the necessary repairs.
 - Main noticeboard: PW thanked John Hill for refurbishing this.
 - Chicken waste left by the dog waste bin: is still there and PW will deal with it when passing with his van.
 - SSDC blue bags scheme that JH and PW trialed has now been rolled out and appears to be working well.
 - Fingerpost restoration: Virtually complete with just a couple of parts still to finish off.
 - Footpaths project: This is ongoing. PW expressed hope on behalf of the Council and village that Oliver Dowding (OD) will still participate even though no longer on the Council. OD has said he wishes to start with footpaths that cross his land. A few volunteers have already come forward to help with this. Richard Ellis (RE) was nominated as Footpaths Officer.
5. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021-22 – Exemption**

The Certificate of Exemption was duly completed and signed by the Chair.
6. **Risk Assessment and approval of Annual Governance Statement**
 - 6.1 **Internal Audit:** Council considered the report of the Internal Audit which had been carried out on 20th April.
 - 6.2 **Annual Governance Statement:** Council completed the Annual Governance Statement for 2021-2022 and this was signed and dated by the Chair. Re item 5 of the Statement: It was noted that an updated Risk Assessment was in progress and the clerk circulated the Finance section of this for consideration by members.

7 Finance:

7.1. Approval of Accounting Statement: Members approved the accounting statement for 2021-22 and this was duly signed by the Chair.

7.2. Cheque for Village hall: A cheque for £2,500 made payable to the Village Hall was signed by PW for the grant received from the Opening Up Safely and Re-connecting Communities fund. This grant is for reviving the Village Hall garden, some of which will be spent on a Platinum Jubilee bench. It was noted that the bank signatories will have to be changed again as OD is no longer on the Council and more than 2 signatories would be prudent.

Action: Clerk to sort out.

7.3. Payroll outsourcing: The clerk advised that she had received quotes from two firms of accountants as recommended and used by other Parish Councils to deal with their payroll. Goodings Accountants had been engaged at an annual cost of £30 + VAT. Payroll for 2021-22 had been dealt with and the tax paid to HMRC.

7.4. Insurance renewal: Policy renewal is due on 1st June. Present Insurer Zurich had offered a new (cheaper) policy aimed specifically at smaller councils that met certain criteria. Members agreed that the Parish Council could meet these and resolved to renew with Zurich and take advantage of this new policy. A cheque for the premium of £196 was signed by PW. This, and the cheque for the village hall will be passed to OD for signature.

8 Correspondence: None.

9 A.o.b.

- JS reported that the end ridge tile of the bus shelter is missing. JS will find the tile and get it fixed back on.
- Community Speed Watch: JS is gathering volunteers and will be arranging their training.
- Developments at The Newt: Sarah Maude (SM) said that with so much activity at The Newt/Emily Estates and planning applications that covered several parishes, it was difficult to keep abreast of developments. SM proposed that Council liaise with other local parishes more formally to share information so that we are all better informed and able to respond appropriately. This proposal was welcomed and JH offered to be the contact person for Shepton Montague and will approach other local parishes. Clerk will ensure that Paul Rawson is invited to future Council meetings.
- SM enquired if the entrance to the new restaurant at the Seart's Farm development would be directly onto the main road (Cattle Hill). It was assumed that this was so as it is the only entrance but Council had been informed that the restaurant was for the occupants of the holiday accommodation only and not for the general public.

10 Open discussion

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Chairman _____ Date _____