



Email: [clerk@sheptonmontagueparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@sheptonmontagueparish.gov.uk)

## **Minutes of the meeting of Shepton Montague Parish Council held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024 at 7:00pm in the village hall.**

### **Present:**

Cllrs John Sykes (Chair - JBS), Paul Williams (PW), Julia Hunter (JH),  
Ali Willasey-Wilsey (AW-W)  
Sam Mainstone (Parish Clerk – PC)

### **Members of Public:**

8 including Paul Rawson - representative from The Newt.

### **Somerset Councillors present: Cllr Trimnell**

#### **Open discussion started at 7pm.**

#### **1) Open discussion; Opportunity for parish members to comment on agenda items.**

The recent planning approval at Lily Farm was discussed, it is felt that this should have gone to the full Planning Committee for consultation in view of the issues raised in the community. The planning team seem to focus on the evidence of positive impacts for projects rather than questioning whether or not there are any negative impacts.

A resident pointed out that the Lily Farm application could potentially increase the local population by 10%, and with that sort of impact on top of the Lily Farm development, it would seem unfair to have not resulted in a proper consultation and is very disappointing that the community have not been heard or considered.

Cllr Trimnell reported that each planning application is viewed as a singular application and previous applications are not part of that consideration. In the absence of receiving parish objections, planning will not go to full committee and this has always been the process. Objection by the Parish Council forces the application to be reviewed by the Chair of the Planning Committee, which is what happened in this case.

It is evident that the current planning process is not working and Cllr Trimnell highlighted that there is opportunity to attend the public meeting to raise these issues and would recommend that route.

The chair suggested writing to the decision makers to inform them of the effect it has had. Lucy suggests the public meeting is attended by a councillor, as this would be the most productive. It is unfortunate that Cllrs have not received the official approval, however, this would need investigating as this may be due to the problems with the clerk at that time.



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It was queried how big would a development be before it goes to committee for approval? Cllr Trimnell could not answer this; this has been another incremental increase, rather than one single large application for the Newt development.

Somerset Plans and Local Plans were discussed. Shepton Montague parish is a settlement and there is no appropriate plan for a village of this size. The local plan (dated up to 2028) is currently under consultation. Councillors have access to view this now, and it is expected to be shared following this consultation.

## **Meeting began at 7:45pm**

### **2) Apologies**

All Cllrs were present.

### **3) Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4) Minutes of last meeting**

**It was RESOLVED (4-0-0) to accept and approve the minutes of the last meeting dated 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as a true and accurate record of that meeting.**

Cllr Sykes signed the minutes.

### **5) Report from Cllr Trimnell**

The Somerset Councillors report was circulated prior to the meeting and can be found on the website.

Cllr Trimnell attended the Somerset Prepared conference a few weeks ago. There were various organisations there with lots of useful guides and information on preparing for floods. The current Shepton Montague flood plan for monitoring looks good and it should be noted that there will be grants available (commencing December this year) from the Somerset Rivers Authority to help with flood prevention which may be of interest.

On the subject of Somerset's devolution of services and the Enhanced Highways Maintenance Scheme (EHMS), smaller parishes do not have to sign up to the scheme, and there is freedom to either buddy up with other local parishes to collect hours of work together and share the cost, or, to seek own provision of service with other contractors/volunteers. There is also opportunity to discuss costs with the devolution team and how the service might work in this parish.

### **6) Co-option to review 2 applications and vote accordingly.**

The Paper ballot was circulated for councillors to vote for one of 2 candidates.

Votes were counted and the majority decision was for Mervyn Watch (known as Fyn). The Chair welcomed Fyn who then joined the meeting as a councillor.



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## **7) Clerk's report**

The report was circulated prior to the meeting and is available on the website.

PC summarised report and there were no questions: the Chair thanked the clerk for a comprehensive report, which is available on the website.

## **8) A consultation on division of boundaries for Somerset Council – invitation for response**

The link provided for Cllrs to “have their say” was unhelpful in that it did not reveal the planned boundaries in order for an informed contribution. Cllr Trimnell says this information is awaited and is expected next week, and will ask if she can share this.

Although it remains undecided on how parishes will be allocated, it would seem to be going from 55 to 96 boundaries with only one Cllr responsible per boundary. A working group is being set up to look at this and it is planned to be completed by May 2027.

## **9) Section 19 Investigation for the May 2023 flood event – Final draft.**

- a) A copy of the draft (which was received in October) has been circulated amongst Flood Wardens and councillor for review as advised. Cllr Sykes confirmed that a detailed response was drafted and returned on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

- b) To review progress of Emergency flood plan

This has not been progressed since the last meeting. Action Chair to chase

The first local rainfall gauge was installed in January: it reported 20mm of rainfall in one hour during May. Two further gauges are now operating (Stoney Stoke and Hadspen). It is hoped that this will provide the community with advance warning of flash flooding: the information is currently posted to the village WhatsApp group and it was suggested to make it accessible via the website.

**Action: PC + JBS**

- c) To discuss blocked/broken drains at Lower Farm, Welham & Stoney Stoke and decide next actions.

Chair has written to John Nicholson to request an onsite meeting.

- d) Zoe Young from the Newt to present plans for flood mitigation.

As Zoe Young was unavailable, the presentation was given by Paul Rawson from The Newt.

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Yeovil Rivers Community Trust have both drafted several recommendations for The Newt for the land surrounding the estate, including the Shepton Montague catchment area (around Cattle Hill) as well as Yarlinton. Natural flood mitigation works have been started, and Paul is working through to implement the five projects witing our parish (shown on the attached map). There will be further water retention implemented as a result of the proposed development at Lily Farm.



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**10) Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day – To receive feedback.**

Cllr Trimnell attended this and gave feedback in her summary report.

There were lots of useful resources and it is a useful networking exercise with the opportunity to talk to the various agencies.

**11) To receive feedback from the Somerset Parishes Conference 2024 attended by Parish Clerk on 13<sup>th</sup> November (detailed in Clerk's report).**

The summary of feedback can be seen in the Clerk's report which was circulated prior to the meeting and is available on the website.

**12) LCN Meeting feedback – Helpful links from the LCN meeting were circulated by Cllr Willasey-Willsey on 25<sup>th</sup> October.**

Cllrs Willasey-Wilsey and Hunter were unable to attend the last meeting, but did receive the minutes which were circulated and included some useful links which may be appropriate to upload to the website.

Cllr Trimnell asked for feedback on the meetings as a whole. Cllrs report that where they are interesting, although there is much of no relevance to a small parish such as ours.

**Action AW-W/JH/PC**

**13) Planning items**

- a) Lilycombe Stoke Hill, Stoney Stoke has been approved – removal of agricultural tie on house in Stoney Stoke – noted.

**14) Agenda items to be included in next meeting:**

The following requests were made:

- Discuss re-design of the website with a view to encourage access, and to add a social media link.

**Action PC**

- A review of the parish population, with a view to add any newcomers to distribution lists as it is felt some may now be missed. Cllr Sykes suggested that a letter drop/questionnaire for feedback could be designed for this purpose.

**Action JS/PC**

- Paul Rawson updated Cllrs that there they have a new village steward called Saul Giddins, who may be able to support with village projects, including footpaths. Suggested to contact via Zoe. The Newt also offer a community newsletter which may be of interest and Cllrs are welcome to contact Zoe to be added to their distribution list.
- Remote meetings – to explore options with a view to increase accessibility.



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**15) To review and approve meeting schedule for 2025.**

The parish clerk has not yet had opportunity to prepare a schedule.

The Next Meeting was agreed to be held on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February** and a 3 monthly schedule will be available before that meeting.

**The meeting was closed at 9pm.**