

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD AT HIGH HAM VILLAGE HALL
TUESDAY 14th MAY 2019 AT 7.30pm

Present: David Vigar (Chairman), approx. 20 Parishioners,

Apologies: John Vigar, Gerard Tucker, Clare Paul

1. **2018 Minutes** Had been displayed on the noticeboards no action outstanding and were signed as a true record.
2. **Chairman's Report** Having welcomed everyone to the meeting the chairman thanked all the councillors and volunteers for parish groups. Report was as follows.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019

Yet another year has passed by since my last report. The weather today reminded me of the sunshine of last summer.

I believe that High Ham Parish is continuing to be a friendly and welcoming community.

The school is flourishing, evident by the twice daily in term time disruption of traffic close to the school. Most of the local village schools have similar problems, however I know that the school is an asset to High Ham Parish and the community would be poor without the school.

The monthly Parish Lunch continues to allow people to meet in good surroundings and from experience serve excellent food. Next lunch tomorrow. Thank you for the organisers and helpers.

The Lunch Club is just one thing that is available for the community to participate in. Others include the Monday club at the Kings Head, Parish Council meetings, 2 book clubs (High Ham and Low Ham), 2 groups for Pilates, Yoga, Knitting Group, Bell Ringers, Parish Footpath walks and others I have not mentioned.

I can recommend a visit to the History Hut at Low Ham, the Millennium Wood at Henley.

Low Ham Church has benefitted from an extensive re-fit and High Ham Church is raising funds for maintenance work.

A small group of volunteers have refurbished some of the historic finger signposts in the parish, work which is still ongoing. This shows a pride to make our community better.

The Village Hall is a meeting place for various activities; recently film nights, New Years Eve celebrations and with the church

remembered the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War including tributes made by the school children remembering those that did not return and great, great, grandparents that did. Various planning applications, some still ongoing, occurred during the past year.

I am proud to say that the High Ham Community Trust to provide affordable rented home for the next 125 years has come into existence. On 12 June the members, still time to join, will elect the first board of directors.

Following this meeting the newly elected Parish Council will take place. I would like to thank the retiring councillors and welcome the new councillors. Also, many thanks to our Parish Clerk, Vicky Young, for being a most efficient and helpful clerk keeping us on the straight and narrow mostly.

Thank you to all the people, many unseen, who contribute to keeping this parish and community the way it is.

Although I have lived in this parish practically all of my life I have recently discovered parts of the parish through the walks that I was not aware of.

Finally, within the High Ham Parish boundaries you can make Sam Cross, go around Piggy Corner, have a Beer or Stout, travel to Paradise and end up at Heavens Gate.

High Ham Parish Council - 14 May 2019

School Liaison Report

Good evening to you all.

I am pleased to provide the following report as the Parish Council's liaison representative with High Ham Primary School. My personal association with our school goes well beyond this liaison role as I have been involved with the school for the last 10 years as a school governor, the last 9-years as Chair of Governors.

The school remains a vibrant, happy and safe place for our children and continues to provide a stimulating environment for our children to learn, develop and thrive. We have 167 children on role at this time, being 13 short of our maximum allowed number. However, numbers are always fluctuating up or down and can change rapidly at any given time. Only 50% of our children live in the High Ham community and it is a measure of our popularity that parents travel from at least 10 other parishes to school their children in High Ham.

Numbers are as anticipated at the moment and we could see a significant increase once the major developments in Somerton are complete as the forecast is that there could, potentially, be more children in Somerton than can be accommodated by the new school proposed. This will, hopefully, be good for our school as many children travel from the Somerton area at the moment so the future looks good in terms of number projections.

We received a 'good' determination at our last full 'Ofsted' Inspection in 2017 and received an 'outstanding' determination by the Schools Inspectorate of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in the same year. The frameworks for each inspection regime are changing constantly which makes it increasingly frustrating for school leaders as they get used to expectations for a particular approach then the goal posts are moved yet again and its back to square one! The Ofsted framework changes again in September. However, we have an experienced 'External Partner' who is employed by SCC to look at our status each term and we remain in a very strong position in line with expectations in terms of the children's progress and attainment being made.

The school budget is a constant challenge with every penny being carefully spent in support of the children. The PTA provide an amazing level of support in terms of fundraising making it possible for the provision of many things that could not be supported by the school budget alone. The PTA members are truly remarkable people and I cannot thank them enough for their endeavours in support of the school.

As I feel sure you will be aware, there is more and more provision in mainstream schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Whilst we would always want to do our best for all our children, it is becoming increasingly frustrating that additional funding to provide the requisite level of support is simply not provided. This means that we are continually juggling available resources to meet day to day needs. As a consequence of this position, I have just written to SCC requesting additional financial support in order to be able to appoint the additional human resources we need to support these children in the best possible way. I am still awaiting the outcome of this.

Great emphasis has been placed on the health and wellbeing of our children over the last year and the provision of a permanent track around the school grounds has been a great

success in getting children undertaking a 'daily mile' routine. We have also benefitted from the provision of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) last year that provides a safe environment to undertake games of all kinds. Both these valuable additions were made possible via grants received.

Likewise, I feel sure you will have noticed that new fencing has been provided around the school fairly recently to ensure our children remain in a safe environment. Best practice guidance means we must carefully consider all aspects of safeguarding needs for our children and this means that we have to have arrangements and procedures in place to plan for a range of potential events including such things as 'Lock Down' procedures. I suppose this is a measure of the times we live in and the inherent risks we have to prepare for but far better to have these things in place rather than react to serious events on an ad hoc basis.

My fellow governors continue to provide professional support to the school undertaking their challenging roles with commitment and enthusiasm. Towards the end of last year we undertook a reconstitution process which means we reduced our governor numbers from 13 to 10. This is the second time this has happened over the last 4-years and I was happy to support this as we now have fewer governors working more effectively and collaboratively. I would take this opportunity to thank them all for the excellent job they do.

Of course, we are fortunate to have a really focussed group of professional teaching staff and a very experienced and passionate headteacher in Mrs Rosser. We have a good mix of experience across the teaching staff with some very experienced professionals along with teachers relatively new to the profession. There is a lot of support for each other amongst the staff and it is prudent to mention all the other people in school who undertake their roles without fuss week in and week out. It is a good team and we are well placed to ensure our children have the very best life chances ahead of them!

At this time of year, in fact this week, our Y6 children are sitting their Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). I called into school this morning and was very pleased to see all our children looking very upbeat - however, it is true to say that this was before they went into the hall! I feel sure they will all do their best and I wish them well.

Finally, I would just say that we are fortunate to have such a successful and popular school. If anyone wants to get involved with the school, please let me know. I very often go into school and do some reading with children of all ages and it is a very rewarding thing to do. There is a lovely, welcoming atmosphere in school and I always feel uplifted when I'm there so please continue to support the school as best you can.

Thank you.

b. **Village Hall Report.** – Presented by Amanda Chuter

2019 Parish AGM

High Ham Village Memorial Hall Report

Our Village Memorial Hall continues its function as a major village facility. The hall management committee remains unchanged with our chairman, Gwen Chubb, steadfast at the helm.

This Hall is in constant use and thus needs constant maintenance to keep it in a good standard of repair.

A new venture for the Hall has been Film Night on the first Friday of the month, the next one being on Friday 7th June, at 7.30, before a summer break.

The next fund-raiser is Saturday 18th May when an Auction of Promises, a joint venture with St Andrew's Church, will hopefully raise funds to replace the side door of the Hall and decoration of the toilets.

The hall committee is looking into the possibility of installing a broadband connection, which in turn will help the Parish Council, Community Land Trust, and other community organisations who may wish to use this facility.

John Vigar

c. **High Ham Community Project**

FROM THE HIGH HAM PARISH COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT

We displayed local farming and transport photographs from our archive at the Low Ham Steam Rally last year. This went into the Church until December, when we changed them for old photographs of local celebrations. There will be another display at the Low Ham Steam Rally this year, this time photographs from the Second World War. In February, to link with High Ham School's local study project, Kate took pupils on tours of the village, showing old photos and telling stories we have collected. She did the tours dressed up as the ghost of Mrs Carne-Hill, a fascinating woman, who had Ham Court built in the Arts and Crafts style in 1906 and lived there until she died in 1943. On the way, at her house on the green, Viv told the children how the blacksmith who lived there pulled out people's teeth! The children seemed very interested in the old stories, especially the practical jokes children played on the local policeman! We have provided the school with many historical local photographs (printed and digital) for their topic work.

Amanda and Viv have been researching local recipes, with a book in production!

There are still copies of our books available: A Somerset Parish; the 2012 Scrapbook; and the reprinted 1965 High Ham Women's Institute Scrapbook.

If anyone has any interesting local photographs please get in touch, we would love to scan them and add them to the archive, which is held here and also available at the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton (by appointment www.somerset.gov.uk/archives).

The High Ham Community Project Team are Amanda Chuter, Caroline Dickens, Sara Ellis, Viv Hall, Kate Lynch, Patricia Richards. For more information contact us at www.communityhistory.btck.co.uk

d. **Sir Edward Hext Almshouses** - report not available at the time of meeting. When one becomes available it will be published.

e. **Footpath Liaison Report** There was no update from the footpath users group. Tony Whitford had over the year led several walks as well as undertaken strimming on the footpaths.

f. **Tree Officers Report** . Paul Brunson –

TREE WARDENS REPORT AGM 2019

The highlight of the year was the community planting of a replacement tree on the village green. A diseased Horse chestnut tree was removed, and a Wild service tree was planted in its place. Thank you to all those who turned out to help and especially Mr Webb who made light work of the removal old stump with his trusty excavator. Now in leaf this tree is in full flush and vigour.

A tree issue was reported on the Union drove by Hamdown Court. An Ash tree was believed to be in falling distance of a property there and the landowner was contacted and made aware of his responsibility. In law the landowner is expected to take due care and exercise prudence in respect of the management and monitoring overhanging tree limbs. To date no action has been taken and the situation will continue to be monitored.

Several trees were donated to the Parish and were planted in suitable locations on the playing field. Some early plantings were maintained and old plastic spiral guards removed.

The millennium wood continues to develop and is a great Public open space asset to the Parish. Anybody who has not been is advised to visit for a spring walk in this marvellous place. Congratulations to everyone who has worked hard to make this what it is today.

g. **Planning Liaison Officers Report**

High Ham Parish Council - 14 May 2019

Planning Officer's Report

Good evening to you all. I am pleased to present the following report to you this evening having been appointed to take the lead on planning matters, on behalf of the Parish Council, for the last 12 years.

I should point out that the views that follow are those I, personally, feel will be helpful in providing a more informed understanding of some of the challenges we face at this time. I would not be doing this role justice if I were not able to share some of the concerns I have about the future of our community in terms of the way the planning process is changing and the potential impacts that could result.

Planning in communities like ours will always be emotive and generate all kinds of responses to proposals that come before us. Whatever each of us may determine in terms of support for a proposal, or otherwise, I believe that it is incumbent on the Parish Council to consider the merits of each application with an informed, fair and measured approach and, at times, know when to see beyond the application at first reading and to also exercise caution when reaching a decision.

I highlight this aspect because in the last 12 years I have been minded on many occasions to look beyond the application before me and to consider what might come next if an application receives the Parish Council's blessing and ultimate approval by the Planning Authority! If we do not consider the potential long-term impacts to our community we will have ignored any number of damaging precedents that will undoubtedly be set and make it very difficult to reverse unwanted development in this amazing South Somerset parish we are all fortunate to call home.

There are two specific areas I believe that could change the local landscape if we do not offer a strong challenge now.

Firstly, I would mention the 'Cluster Argument' that supports a notion that positions small hamlets that are, supposedly, close enough to each other to warrant them being seen as a collective allowing limited services and facilities available in each to be pooled together and shared, so the story goes, and transforms them from unsustainable to sustainable rural settlements in terms of development categorisation. Not only do I think this approach is stretching the boundaries, it does, of course, encourage the potential for new build in areas that would otherwise have not been seen as suitable in the past. We must, therefore, be wise to this folly and do all in our power to exercise as much control as we can in terms of what this PC and this community believe it needs if we are to safeguard our community in the future from unwanted/inappropriate development!

I would not want this view to be seen that I am totally against all development as this is not the case. New development in all communities is healthy and inevitable, however, I feel passionate about new development meeting existing needs and being in the right place.

Secondly, and in many ways this mirrors some aspects of the cluster argument, I am increasingly concerned about the potential for land being used for agricultural purposes being exposed to the potential for housing development. However, there is one thing I should make clear. The recently formed CLT, which I believe is a welcomed initiative that will deliver many benefits in the future, will be exploring options for affordable housing

based on the identified need. The delivery of the identified need will be adding great value to our community as a whole in the provision of the kind of housing we know is in short supply and will enable people to live in our community that might otherwise not be able to. The fact is, we have an abundance of large detached houses in our parish and, again, I believe it is incumbent on the Parish Council to fully consider the impact more executive detached houses will have on our community in the future. I strongly believe that we must not be afraid to exercise the influence we have, no matter how small this might be in reality, to challenge what we, as Parish Councillors, along with our parishioners, believe is not a good fit for us! Future development must be seen to be adding value to our community!

Another area that has caused me great frustration over the last few years is the constant reference in Planning Statements to the District Council being unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Nearly every planning application received refers to this and I am tired of it. Whilst this may be the case, I don't think the Planning Authority should be weak enough to rubber stamp proposals before it on this basis. As a Parish Council, we have not been afraid to make our views known and to take the opportunity to make representation at the District Council's Area North Committee when challenge is warranted. In fact, we have enjoyed some measure of success when planning case officer's have been minded to recommend approval and we have been successful in reversing the outcome through this committee via our representation efforts.

On that note, I would take this opportunity to formally thank our Ward Member for his support when challenge has been the chosen route. Without the close working relationship and understanding we enjoy with our Ward Member we could not hope to have any chance of succeeding in our endeavours. So, many thanks to you Gerard for your support in the past and also for your continued support, I feel sure we will receive, in the future.

Staying with the District Council for a moment, I can honestly say that I have never known the Planning Authority to be in such a state of disarray with it being very difficult to discuss proposals with case officers and subsequent determination timescales are, literally, off the scale at this time. I appreciate there is a heavy workload and agency staff being engaged to undertake the role, however, this mess needs to be sorted quickly if the level of confidence enjoyed in the past is to return. This situation is most certainly not helping Town and Parish Councils to undertake their significant planning responsibilities.

Finally, I would just like to return to the emotive aspect of planning which can be a very positive enabler. Sometimes, very hard decisions have to be made if the PC is to truly fulfil its role during the planning consultation process. Additionally, whilst the PC is here to represent this parish, we cannot cater for every eventuality on our own. If everyone engages in the planning process we will be a much stronger community collectively. There has been some very excellent engagement over recent months from certain sections of our community. However, we need people to mobilise a response across the board, not just when proposals may impinge on their own backyard. The more active we are the more opportunity we have to secure the right decisions!

I have never been afraid to make, or recommend, these hard decisions to my PC colleagues. My approach to planning in the past will continue in the future and is based on what I believe is best for our community. I appreciate that we cannot keep everyone happy all of the time, however, I promise you that I will continue to undertake my role with a clear understanding of how I believe I can add, deliver, and influence, the most benefit to our community for all when planning applications arrive through my door! Thank you.

h. **Twinning Report High Ham Twinning** -
Twinning Association Report for Parish Council Meeting – 14 May 2019

The Twinning Association has had a dormant year. Is there any interest in the village at this time in renewing contact with our partner village, Gometz-la-Ville. near Paris?

The Twinning Association AGM is to be held next Tuesday, 21st May, 7.30 p.m. in the school community room where comments can be made.

Mary Madgwick
12 May 2019

i. **Speed Watch Report** - Presented by Peter Dent

This is the 2018/19 and final annual report of the High Ham Community Speedwatch Team.

Speedwatch in High Ham has been operating now since 2012. We operated at three locations in the village, one on the northern approach on Ham Hill and two on the southern approach in Field Road.

With the safety of local children in mind, we concentrated our operations to coincide with the times when they were travelling to and from school.

During the last 12 months we increased the number of sessions on the previous year by 11 to 43 one hour sessions and monitored the speed of 5,566 vehicles, an increase of just under 1500 on 2017/18.

Of these, the number of motorists reported for exceeding 35mph was 110 motorists, down by 32 on the previous year.

The highest speed recorded was 50mph

During our sessions just under 2% of all vehicles passing through the village were exceeding the speed limit, this is the lowest percentage yet, the previous year it was 3.5% and we thought that was low. The target set by police is 10%, so we were well within this figure and shows that Speedwatch works here in High Ham.

Offending motorists reported are not prosecuted but receive warning letters from the police, pointing out the dangers of speeding and advising them of the consequences for failing to adhere to the speed limits

Last summer, with funding from the Parish Council, we were able to erect two new Speedwatch signs in conspicuous positions at each end of the village. It appears that along with the team's efforts, these signs may have helped reduce the speed of vehicles entering the village.

Speedwatch in South Somerset has always been administered by a Steering Committee made up of volunteers from teams throughout the region. This had worked successfully for many years. Last year the administration was taken over by the Avon & Somerset police. Although we've been operating here for the last seven years without any problems, a few weeks ago we were instructed to immediately cease operating until we had individually completed an application form to join Speedwatch and answer a questionnaire about our knowledge of Speedwatch. These forms had to be submitted and approved

and approved/

by police before we could continue operating again. The questions were personal and some we felt inappropriate. Such as:- what was the applicant's place of birth, possibly ok, but why? But we were also asked what our sexual orientation is and whether or not the applicant identifies him or herself as Transgender. What has this got to do with Speedwatch? Such was the feeling amongst us, two members immediately resigned leaving just the four of us, subject of course to police approval.

I e-mailed our Steering Committee complaining about this requirement being forced upon us and about the nature of some of the questions. I was informed that their hands are tied by the demands of Avon and Somerset Police and that they had been told that the information was required for police insurance purposes. My colleagues and I find this extremely hard to believe.

One of our members sent a letter of complaint regarding this to Police HQ, and I also sent them a copy of the email I had sent to our Steering Committee. Over a month has now passed and as expected, we've heard nothing from the police, not even an acknowledgement. This hasn't gone down very well, particularly when police tell us that they rely on public assistance and support.

I'd like to point out that I'm aiming our criticism at the recipients of our complaints at Police HQ, not at our local beat officers who are doing a splendid job, who more than ever need, deserve and should get our support.

For many years when I've delivered our annual report I've asked for volunteers, I've also appealed in Roundabout magazine. No-one has ever come forward. As we cannot regularly operate a scheme efficiently or effectively with just four volunteers, we decided to cease operating in the village at the end of March.

We wish to thank the Parish Council for their continued support over the last seven years. Also to thank the Police Community Support Officers for their roadside assistance during this time.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers, past and present, who carried out their task diligently and with the sole purpose of improving road safety in the village. I think their goal has been achieved.

That concludes our report.

j. Lengthsman Report - Presented by Amanda Chuter

Parish AGM Lengthsman Report of 2019 Activity

Routine work:

Grass cutting the rides and glades in Millennium Wooda, the Cemetery (with much appreciated help from Tony Whitford), priority verges and visibility splays.

Litter picking at the play area, and throughout the village (thankfully not a massive problem)

Weed killing along kerbs and pavement edges, control of invasive and noxious weeds in Millennium Wood, weeds in the Cemetery and Play Area

Drainage, opening blocked grips and grids, roding blocked pipes.

Hedge trimming, clearing road signs where vegetation has encroached.

Play area:

Repair work to the fence in the car park

Repair work to the filed gate post

Cemetery:

Crown lifting of trees on Eastern boundary and trimming of encroaching vegetation.

Village centre:

Crown lifting trees which impair visibility on road junctions.

Dismantling decayed chestnut tree and grinding the root and Involvement with volunteers to replant.

Installation of new bollards on green.

Alerting HiLine to branches near cables on the pollards on The Green instigating the network in the area being cleared! They haven't carried out the work on the village green just yet because they are hopefully applying for traffic management and network shut down.

Millennium Wood:

Some work carried out with help from Roger Hall, Amy Jenkins, Amanda Chuter, Roger Powell and Dave Vigar, and various other volunteers throughout the year.

Management of vegetation:

Control of noxious and invasive plants

Ragwort

Hemlock water dropwort

Bramble

Nettle

Clematis

Mowing and strimming

Woodland management:

Hedge trimming, clearance of encroaching vegetation around gates

Deadwooding

Extensive thinning over the winter, mainly targeted diseased trees.

Supplying the den building area with brash

Pond:

Pond clearance

Control of invasive plants

k. **Playing Field Report** - Paul Brunsdon
Chair AGM Report 2019 Playing Field MC

- I am pleased to report plenty of use from the public. Both play installations, football pitch and also the picnic facilities. Regular football practice was conspicuous during and on the run up to the world cup
 - The large and climbing frame was repaired and repainted with fine results and we are grateful the good work done here. A second session was required to repair the rusty pod and then to repaint it. The swings also had a new coat of paint and look good.
 - The annual post-Christmas match raised £275 for Clic Sargent and was enjoyed by all who turned out to play or support. High Ham beat Pitney 10 – 5 Pitney scoring most of the goals in the second half. This institution is open to all and any player that turns up will get a game.
 - The Valentines quiz was a success at the King’s Head. It enjoyed a good turn out with some generous raffle prizes. Thank you to all who joined in and the committee members who helped set up the evening. A total of £250 was raised for PF funds.
 - The wood mulch pile was a good money spinner this year and we have banked £50.00 from this.
 - A new gate hang post was fitted and the fence by the car park repaired and we are grateful to Amanda, Dave, Craig and Jeff Webb for their help here, there is ongoing work required on the aging posts that rot out at regular intervals
 - The Pavilion project is at last moving ahead as we now have two favoured contractors and an idea of how much we will need to realise the project. We are now able to start applying for grant aid so that we can get start on site before too long now.
 - Planting and conservation work continued maintaining existing plantings and planting new spring flowering bulbs kindly donated to the PF.
- It is especially heartening to see primroses and cowslips naturalising around the BMX track

l. **Millenium Wood** – Report presented by Amanda Chuter
May 14th 2019 PC AGM
Millennium Wood Report
Owned and managed by High Ham Parish Council

In the last year, the woodland has been cared for by Craig Howe, Parish Lengthsman, and a team of volunteers: Dave Vigar, Roger Hall, Roger Powell, Amanda Chuter and Amy Jenkins.

For the last 12 months, the programme of maintenance work has included: mowing of rides; clearing bramble; coppicing; thinning out of selected trees; crown lifting; clearing pond of invasive weed and algae; and the cutting of the boundary hedge by Olly Howley.

August 2018, wooden plaques displaying nature-related words made by Rachael Howe, were installed. Rachael also created 6 Family Activities sheets, laminated sets are available in the pond-side shelter.

September 2018, 33 nets of seasoned logs resulting from tree thinning, were sold. The £195 raised will be used to fund future MW projects.

March 2019, Wild Garlic bulbs were planted.

April 2019, stinking iris donated by Roger and Viv Hall were planted.

Future work in the wood will include giving the pond-side shelter floor an anti-slip surface.

Visit the parish website, and follow High Ham Millennium Wood on Instagram to follow what happens in the wood from month to month.

m. High Ham CLT

WHAT IS A CLT?

- A Community Land Trust (CLT) is for the sole benefit of the community.
 - It is an organisation in its own right and **NOT** part of the Parish Council.
 - Owned by the COMMUNITY
 - Run by the COMMUNITY
 - For the benefit of the Parish (excluding Culver Hill)
 - Not for personal profit
-

n. Strimmer Project – Tony Whitford’s report was presented by Amanda Chuter.

Somerset Strimmer Project – High Ham Parish 1/4/2018 -1/4/2019

1. The Somerset Strimmer Project

2. The Somerset Strimmer Project is run by Somerset County Council (SCC). It uses Parish Councils and volunteers to help the SCC Rights of Way Service maintain its duty for keeping public footpaths, bridleways, and restricted byways clear of vegetation. The use of volunteers is fully funded directly by the SCC.

3. High Ham Parish Volunteer

3.1. The High Ham Parish volunteer is Mr A Whitford.

3.2. Mr Whitford has received appropriate training and equipment to do the job.

4. Strimming Operations

4.1. Strimming operations involve checking sites for any H&S issues, access, scope of work to be done and the actual strimming

4.2. High Ham Parish has over 20 public footpaths. Over the period 1/4/2018 – 1/4/2019 most of the footpaths received strimming operations on one or more occasions. **A total of 23 hrs of volunteer time was used.** The hot and dry weather experienced during 2018 led to reduced vegetation growth over most footpaths.

4.3. The priority for strimming has been gates/stiles and the immediate surrounds.

5. Organised Walks

5.1. Mr Whitford organised two walks in and around in and around High Ham.

6. Main Issues

6.1. The main issues affecting High Ham Parish footpaths continue to be the following:

- **Lack of use** – Apart from the central footpaths in High Ham and Low Ham most footpaths are barely used.
- **Stiles, Gates and Signage** – Many stiles, gates and signs are in a state of poor repair or missing altogether.
- **Obstructions** – Crops are grown over some footpaths, unclimbable temporary structures are placed across footpaths to contain cattle, cattle troughs are placed alongside stiles gates causing unpassable mud pool. A section of footpath (L12/24) is obstructed and blocked off at Netherham Farm.

6.2. Somerset County Council Rights of Way Section has an interactive map of all footpaths in the county. The map, as well as providing information on footpath routes etc, allows members of the public to post any problems such as broken stiles, obstructions etc. The Rights of Way Section pick up on these and post any remedial action. There are numerous postings affecting High Ham Footpaths.

6.3. The map can be accessed via the council website www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway. The Parish Council and parishioners are encouraged to do so.

6.4. Mr Whitford has said that this current year is to be his last as the volunteer strimmer for the parish. The Parish council is currently advertising for a replacement.

A J Whitford (Volunteer)14/4/2019

Finger post restoration report – presented by Roger Powell

High Ham Finger Post report

2018

The Team:

Amanda Chuter, Phil Cale, Dave Vigar, Roger Powell.

The Report:

The project originally proposed at a parish council meeting started with a morning in March at Somerton Council office where the team received a safety briefing, followed by a test after which we were presented with certificates to prove we were safe to work on the public highways.

Post One:

The first post chosen for restoration was on the junction of New Way and Culver Hill locally known as One Elm. This was a relatively easy job as the post had in recent years been replaced, so a simple wash, wire brush and re-paint was all that was required.

Post Two:

On the Junction of Field Road & New Way at Cooks Hill. This post had a missing finger pointing towards High Ham. The first task was to gain access by removal of part of the overgrown hedge. The post was wire brushed and painted. The broken finger was located being in the safe keeping of Pete Brown behind the Kings Head. In my workshop the broken parts were welded back together and re-painted and the finger reinstated later in the year.

Post Three:

On the junction of Ham Hill, Nythe Road and Henley Road. Again this had to be recovered from the hedge our thanks to Jane who owns the cottage behind the sign, who on returning home to find the hedge gone was a little concerned but once recovered from the shock, supplied the team with tea most welcome. This post had to be straightened before brushing down and re-painting.

Post Four:

Top of Ham Hill in front of the Kings Head. This was a relatively simple job albeit on a steep bank to the road but again a good brush down and re-paint was all that was required, combined with a bit of sheep herding but that's another story.

Preparation for the 2019 season:

As you will be aware the finger post on the Green in High Ham suffered a road traffic accident some years ago and was smashed with only one finger surviving to our knowledge. The plan is to replace this post in 2019, in preparation of this the team has recovered an unused post which is currently in safe keeping awaiting a coat of paint.

The job is complicated as we need to replace the missing fingers and also plan to add further ones directing towards the school, Church and Millennium Hall.

In conclusion:

The team enjoyed a good first year and there are plans to start the 2019 campaign shortly with Picts Hill high on the list to be smartened up.

Many thanks to all the team and the many toots, waves from passing villagers and post on face book very encouraging.

4. **To receive the annual account of any Village Charity.** There were none.
5. **To Consider any Matter or Motion.** There were none.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm

D Vigar

Chairman High Ham Parish Council