



West Meon Parish Council

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MINUTES OF WEST MEON ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st APRIL 2015 AT 7.30PM AT WEST MEON SPORTS PAVILION

THOSE PRESENT: Residents including Cllr C Waller, Cllr U Casebourne, Cllr C Johnson, Cllr R Morrish, A Bassil, C Adams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs D Heppell (Minutes)

BY INVITATION: County Councillor R Huxstep, Councillor N Bodtger, Sergeant S Gilmore (Hampshire Police), Dan Oakley, South Downs National Park (SDNP), Martin Cowell (Volunteer Warden HCC),

APOLOGIES: Cllr T Over.

1. Welcome from Chairman

Cllr Waller (Chairman of the Parish Council) welcomed residents and guests to the Annual Parish Meeting. Apologies have been received from Buffy Morris and Hugh Morris.

2. Village Hall AGM

Chris Town (Chairman) reported that the hall was being well used and that the finances were in a healthy position and copies of finances were available. A National Lottery Grant had been received and a grant of £500 from the Parish Council towards refurbishing the ladies toilets.

Hall usage was high with a new table tennis club being run from the hall. The Little School hire terms have been extended to enable them to plan ahead. A new hire agreement is being brought into use

There have been no reports of structural problems in the building and some replacement kitchen items have been provided. Overall Claire Fullock has maintained high standards of cleanliness. Necessary Fire, Health and safety and electrical testing checks have been completed during the year. A replacement electric piano and cushions have been purchased. Thanks are given to Hazel Town and Mary Dawson for leading the project on refurbishing the ladies toilets. The hall insurance has been renewed as was the Performing Rights Licence. The Premises Licence is being changed to the name of the Management Committee. It is planned to introduce a Management Health Check by ACRE. It is being proposed to change the Trust Deed and the committee is working to amend the constitution. Professional advice is being sought.

The Chairman thanked Mike Davies the ex-chair for his contribution for the last 17 years to the Village Hall Committee.

Co-opted Members of the present Village Hall Management Committee stood down and with no other volunteers they were re-elected for the coming year. The newly elected members took the

roles of: Chris Town Chair, Mary Dawson Vice Chair, Vanessa Wills Treasurer, Sally Williams Secretary and Hazel Town Booking Secretary.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd April 2014

Cllr Waller circulated 23rd April 2014 minutes and these minutes were accepted and approved.

4. Report from Cllr Waller, Chairman West Meon Parish Council

The Chairman advised that the last twelve months have been a most productive time for the WMPC. He thanked his fellow Councillors and Clerk for their commitment and hard work, also the maintenance team of Mac Edwards and Dayle Westwood and footpath officer Martin Cowell. He thanked parishioners who volunteer in West Meon community in so many different ways and the City and County Councillors and the Lengthsman scheme. A reasonable and responsible precept was set again this year. The Parish Council are continuing to try and improve communications through the website, the Parish News, the Council meetings and the Listening Post held in the West Meon café. The new noticeboard has space for WMPC and village enterprise notices.

In the last twelve months the Parish Council have:

- Refurbished two bus shelters
- Installed new play equipment at Meonwara
- Made grants to and supported a whole range of village institutions and enterprises
- Promoted the redevelopment of the MVT
- Published a new WM walks booklet
- Remembered and commemorated our war dead from the Great War

Many more mundane and everyday issues and matters have also occupied the Council over the past five years. West Meon struggles with car parking and motorbikes and worry about the sustainability of the village shops and clubs and how to recruit younger parishioners into parish institutions going forward.

There are two vacancies the Parish Council would like to encourage any parishioner to consider co-option by contacting the Clerk. This Parish Council will last until 18th May 2015 when there will be new elections. At that time the Parish Council would hope to have full membership. There are many concerns ahead, especially now we are in the SDNP-a gateway community in so many respects. Councillors believe that having a strong Parish Council is a sign of a strong and successful community. Our ambition is to ensure that we continue to have both.

The Chair advised the County Councillors and City Councillors reports would be available on the WMPC website.

5. Dan Oakley - SDNP

Dan Oakley gave a talk on the International Dark Skies Reserve Framework Designation and advised how people in the SDNP can help reduce light pollution in their area. SDNP are carrying out sky quality measurements and light surveys. The main forms of light pollution are streetlights and high powered bulbs.

He advised that measures are being incorporated into planning applications to reduce light pollution. A powerpoint presentation was given showing images of the night skies in the SDNP and how light pollution affects the night skies. He also advised that individuals can help by ensuring their security lights are pointed downwards rather than at the sky and reducing the

wattage on lighting. SDNP have an online letter of support for which he is requesting villagers pledge their support and a letter will be sent to the Parish Council asking for their support.

6. Report from Cllr Mrs N. Boddger Winchester City Council (WCC)

Cllr Boddger advised that Council tax rates are frozen again despite reductions from central government. WCC priority is to provide affordable homes and working towards a right to buy scheme and providing more Council owned homes. Extra housing is required for the ageing population and extra care for the ageing population.

Through the supporting families Programme WCC are committed to reducing the number of adults claiming out of work benefit and making work pay.

WCC is promoting economic prosperity and supporting local businesses. There is no rise in car parking charges for the third year running. Winchester District is being promoted as a Tourist District and the Council is delivering their commitment to carbon reduction.

Cllr Boddger answered questions from the public on litter which raised concerns on safety of volunteers and right to buy schemes.

7. Report from Sergeant S Gilmore

Sergeant Gilmore advised there had been significant budget cuts and over 700 staff had been lost, but neighbourhood policing had been retained. The police are becoming more pro-active and problem solving and have been involved in local PACT meetings with the Parish Council. West Meon is a low crime area with only 160 occurrences, 40% are road related and four burglaries. The police have been taking the motorbike speeding seriously on the A32 and are committed to the problem. There have been 19 speeders stopped, 1 reckless driver and 5 cautions, 2 infringed exhaust regulations and 3 bikes seized. A new ring of steel approach is being implemented with checkpoints on the A32 and A272 between Wickham, Petersfield and Alton.

Questions were asked from the public on hours of checking and anti-social behaviour, including speeding cyclists.

8. Public session

Mr Small asked questions on the Low Cost affordable housing in the village and what was planned. Cllr Waller advised that consultations from SDNP advised that West Meon has 15 houses proposed during the plan period 2015 to 2030, of which 40% would be low cost housing.

Mr Jenkins asked if the Police and Crime Commissioner was good value for money. Cllr Huxstep advised he had meetings with him and he has come to understand the specific problems in Meon Valley and could view the Police and Crime Commissioner website.

Cllr Huxstep answered questions on the Broadband and advised that there is a political will to progress this right across the country.

Mike Davies raised the issues of flooding and that there were specific problems on Lynch Lane. Cllr Huxstep advised that only 30 schemes had attracted funding last year and that a flood action group should be set up in West Meon.

Cllr Waller thanked Cllr Huxstep and Boddger for their reports and for attending.

9. County Councillor R Huxstep

Cllr Huxstep advised that Cllr Roy Perry, Leader of HCC has written to Hampshire’s MPs, encouraging their support in the strong case for greater devolved powers to Hampshire. This view was echoed across the County Council with the full backing of a Notice of Motion calling for a transfer of powers on matters such as transport infrastructure and college funding.

Cllr Huxstep commented that the Prime Minister has spoken of the ‘core cities’ but why not the ‘great shires’, of which Hampshire is one of the greatest. For example its economy is greater than Northern Ireland. In education Hampshire students had reason to celebrate this summer with strong performances in SATs, GCSEs and ‘A’ Levels. Services for Vulnerable Children delivered by Hampshire County Council are good’ overall and, in some aspects ‘outstanding’, according to Ofsted. The Council was one of the first authorities to face a new, tougher framework that places greater emphasis on positive outcomes for children and young people – focusing heavily on child protection and children in care.

Although West Meon had not been affected by flooding this year, the Government has put into place measures to address flooding across the whole Country. In Hampshire limited number of projects are being supported. HCC continue to press for earlier funding and will seek to use HCC’s own resources to accelerate the delivery of these important improvements on the ground. Hampshire is amongst the second wave of early starters for the widened Troubled Families programme, with Phase 2 beginning now. This will mean working with a minimum of 1,112 families in the first year.

With regard to Council proceedings, there was cross-party agreement to stay at 78 councillors to make up the County Council, even though Hampshire’s electorate is set to rise by of the order of 5%. The Meon Valley may well be the subject of an enlarged area to bring in a greatly enlarged electorate

Care at Home will be the new service for providing care and support in people’s own homes to older people and physically disabled service users.

Changes have been made to waste recycling centres’ opening hours. Opening hours at Hampshire’s 24 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) will be changing from 1st April 2015. The revenue budget that covers the cost of providing services including wages, goods and materials must be reduced by 12% in 2015/16 to meet cuts in Government grant and to balance demand pressures linked to an ageing population and children in care. For the sixth year in succession HCC is planning no change in Council Tax.

HCC is supporting the programme for improving broadband and for the latest news see www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com.

There being no further matters for discussion, Cllr Waller thanked everyone and the meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

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Chairman