



# West Meon Parish Council

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## **MINUTES OF WEST MEON ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2017 AT 7.30PM AT WEST MEON SPORTS PAVILION**

**THOSE PRESENT:** Residents including Cllrs C Waller, C Adams, P Brannon, A Trenchard, C Johnson and J Nicholson.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs D Heppell (Minutes)

**BY INVITATION:** County Councillor R Huxstep, SDNP Chris Patterson and Sgt Gilmore.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs T Prowse, G Silk and T Over. Mr C Town and WCC Councillor L Ruffell.

### **1. Welcome from Chairman**

Cllr Waller (Chairman of the Parish Council) welcomed residents and guests to the Annual Parish Meeting.

### **2. Village Hall AGM**

Sally Williams (Secretary) welcomed Members, and introduced the Village Hall Management Committee and circulated the AGM minutes, annual reports and accounts. The present Village Hall Management Committee comprising 5 elected and 5 co-opted member were all trustees. The Secretary advised that Ingrid Sparshott had stood down and Rosemary Morrish was welcomed as a Trustee. The remaining Members 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, Philip Brannon and Gemma O'Reilly.

Sally Williams circulated financial accounts advising that total income was £15,985 and total expenditure this year was £13,236 less a credit for electricity which gave a net surplus of £3,124 for the year. The accounts were independently checked by John Claisse. The accounts were duly approved. The charity has agreed to keep a minimum reserve of £15,000 to enable repairs and maintenance to be carried out. Recommendations have been made to strengthen the ridge beam of the roof and this will be undertaken in the coming months.

Hall fees were not increased again in January this year. Hall usage was good with regular users during school term times, one off events and parties, school, beavers, cubs, scouts, ballet, tap, keep fit, choir and musical theatre group, table tennis, WI and Garden Club. The Committee welcomes feedback on any matters including usage and potential usage and improvement.

### **3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Cllr Waller circulated the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016 minutes and these minutes were accepted and approved.

### **4. Report from Cllr Waller, Chairman of West Meon Parish Council (WMPC)**

The Chairman advised that the last twelve months have been a most productive time for 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 Martin Cowell for footpaths. He thanked parishioners who volunteer in the West Meon community and the support from 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 revisions to the website, details of reports in the Parish News, Council meetings and the Listening Post held in the West Meon café. WMPC also post regularly and thoughtfully on the 'We are West Meon Facebook' site and have had greater public attendance at Parish meetings. The new noticeboard has space for WMPC and village enterprise notices.

In the last twelve months the Parish Council have:

- Had a full Parish Council of nine members
- Continued to liaise with the Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), MP and Meon Valley parish councils over motor biking and the A32/A272 despite the setbacks over the installation of average speed cameras with the appointment of the new PCC.
- Strongly supported the community shop and its management committee
- Made grants to and supported a whole range of village institutions and enterprises
- Continued to promote the re-development of West Meon station at the head of the Meon Valley Trail
- Created a working group to co-ordinate the re-drafting of the Village Design Statement and Environmental Statement.
- Responded to SDNP Future Planning Framework and Conservation Area Consultation in West Meon
- Marked advisory disabled parking bay in the High Street
- Continued to improve facilities at the Recreation Ground

The Chairman advised that more mundane and everyday issues and matters have also occupied the Council over the past year. The struggles with car parking in the High Street and worries about the sustainability of the village shops and clubs and how to recruit younger parishioners into parish institutions. At present two major concerns are the drafting of the Village Design Statement and EAS and responding to planning applications in the village. The recent consultation on the Conservation Area highlights the diversity of buildings and open spaces in the West Meon and the need to protect and conserve the value of this ancient village. The whole community must be involved in forthcoming discussions about how the village evolves.

The Chairman advised that the on-going financial situation nationally, plays out locally with reduced policing, withdrawal of community services at City and Council levels or reduced funding, meaning future budgets will be tighter. WMPC will continue to work as a team. The Chairman advised there are many concerns ahead, especially now that the village is in the SDNP- a gateway community. Councillors believe that having a strong Parish Council is a sign of a strong and successful community and the Parish Council want to ensure that they continue to have both.

## **5. County Councillor R Huxstep (Hampshire County Council)**

Cllr Huxstep advised that Keith Chapman and Graham Burgess have been re-elected. George Holingbery is private secretary to the Prime Minister.

HCC has made investments on the Farnborough Air Show with Rushmore. He also advised that HCC parks are doing well, and HCC won a gold award for armed forces. GCSE results are up on average and 'A' level results are even better.

HCC are proposing a 3% increase in Council tax. Household recycling centres hours were revised in October 2016.

The Secretary of State is minded not to change the boundary for Droxford which is staying in the Meon Valley. Following Brexit, the Local Government Devolution has come to a halt.

Cllr Huxstep advised that Sgt S Gilmore had been awarded a long service award for Hampshire.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Huxstep for his report and assistance.

## **6. Police Report**

Sergeant Gilmore thanked Cllr Huxstep and Cllr Waller for their congratulations on his long service award. He advised that concerning the recent theft of motor vehicles in WM the suspects are in court. Neighbourhood policing is increasing to manage vulnerability, domestic violence, safeguarding, cyber-crime and older victims of crime. Prevention of crime is important. Recent crime reports show that at Old Station Road, 5 vehicles have been broken into. Preventative measures regarding motorcycles and their average speed are being discussed with the new PCC and MP George Holingbery.

## **7. Chris Patterson of South Downs National Park (SDNP)**

Chris Patterson introduced his presentation on Sustainable Tourism in the SDNP, advising there are over 46 million visitors to the area each year. The area has a high residential population, with 12,000 jobs related to tourism, and is accessible to 10 million people.

The SDNP it has a large number of holiday homes and a high number of planning applications. Sustainable tourism aims to protect SDNP, and the key aspects are:

- Geographical aspects identifying the hot spots of pressure in the park, such as the South Downs Way
- Policies that protect the environment, social and economic interests
- Education on how to manage and not damage the environment. The Sustainable Strategy is a partnership management plan, was approved in 2016 with the aim of improving the visitor experience

The plan also looks at sustainable transport in SDNP identifying programmes and projects, footpaths, business development and access grants. 'Knowledge and custodianship' are key issues where visitors leave no trace that they have been to the park i.e. litter. Others key policies include 'Take the lead' aimed at dog walkers and at The 'Dark Night Skies' which looks at stargazing and reducing light pollution in the SDNP. The 'Go South Downs' project are aimed at cyclists and walkers.

Locally, it is proposed to extend the Meon Valley Trail to Alton providing a safeguarded route to Alton via the South Downs Way.

## **8. Martin Cowell - Footpath Volunteer Ranger HCC**

Mr Cowell advised of HCC's latest proposals for Station Yard as a nature area and a sustainable area for use for schools as an outdoor education area, and use by the community. It is proposed to clear the site that was used for tipping, and fence it to keep dogs out. The public would be able to access land but it wouldn't be a picnic area.

**9. Public session**

A resident raised concerns on increased motorbike noise in West Meon. Cllr Waller gave an update on meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner and speedwatch initiatives.

Cllr Huxstep added that average speed cameras were useful and due to PCC resources maybe a portable system could be considered. Cllr Waller also advised that fixed speed areas of 30mph were discussed from Warnford to West Meon.

Mrs P Collins thanked the Parish Council for their grants this year for the Community Village Shop.

The Chairman reminded residents that the Parish Council had circulated information on the Village Design Statement and was seeking volunteers to help with the improvement of it.

Cllr Waller thanked Cllr Huxstep, Sgt Gilmore, Mr Patterson, and Mr Cowell and for their reports and parishioners for attending.

There being no further matters for discussion, Cllr Waller thanked everyone and the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

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Chairman