

# Medstead Parish Council

**Minutes** of the meeting of Council meeting held in the Village Hall on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015** at 7.30pm.

## **Present:**

Councillors Deborah Jackson, Ken Kercher, Peter Buckland, Peter Fenwick, Stan Whitcher, Hans Taylor, Mike Smith, and Jean Penny and one member of the public.

**Also in attendance:** Miss Katie Knowles, Clerk.

## **15.46 OPEN SESSION**

- Mr Coles thanked the Parish Council for its efforts with reporting the road sign on Wield Road, which has now been repaired.
- Mr Coles highlighted concern about the rate of growth of self-seeded saplings between the pavement and the school fence. As they are on a footway it was agreed it should be reported to Hampshire County Council.
- Councillor Penny said that a resident has some Spanish blue bulbs which he had offered to the Parish Council for the green area around the bus stop. Cllrs thanked the resident through Cllr Penny for their kind offer, but declined, as the Spanish Bluebell variety is known to be invasive.

At the conclusion of the Open Session, Standing Orders were applied.

## **15.47 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Roy Pullen, District Cllr Ingrid Thomas and Mr Andrew Hill.

## **15.48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **15.49 COUNCIL MINUTES**

- a. The minutes of the Council meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 having been previously circulated, were proposed as a **true record** by Councillor Kercher, seconded by Councillor Fenwick, **and signed by the Chairman**.
- b. Minute reference 15.31 – Cllr Taylor reported he had looked at the tree by the pond and considered that the lower branches needed to be removed in order to improve visibility and to assist the maintenance contractor. The Clerk reported that the tree could be included in the specification for the tree works in the Cemetery and Village Green.

## **15.50 COMMITTEE MINUTES AND REPORTS**

- a) The minutes of the Maintenance Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015 having been previously circulated, **were ratified**. Councillor Kercher reported that the Committee had considered the relocation of the picnic bench inside the new play area and a location identified. The Chairman asked the Clerk to report on the latest offer from Playdale Playgrounds of compensation for the delays with the installation, which had not been supported by the Committee. The negotiations are ongoing. Works have been agreed by the Committee to resurface the remainder of FP16. The Clerk was liaising with Bentworth Parish Council and the Alton Ramblers, who had offered a kissing gate to local Parishes, for FP28.

Councillor Taylor who had not been at the meeting, enquired about the request for a kissing gate on FP26 to replace an old gate in the Convent. Councillor Kercher reported that the Committee initially agreed to allocate funds for a new gate in next year's budget. It was highlighted that if the Parish is able to utilise the gate on offer from Alton Ramblers, then funds in the current year's budget could be used for FP26.

Councillor Buckland commented that some of the dragon's teeth on the Village Green needed replacing and reported on the cost of two new flower tubs by the bus stop. These matters are being progressed through the Maintenance Committee.

- b) The minutes of the Planning Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> September having been previously circulated, **were ratified**. The Chairman's report was circulated prior to the meeting and **noted**.
- c) The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> August were not available to circulate prior to the meeting. The Chairman reported that the Committee had focused on the recruitment

of a replacement Clerk and agreed a job advert, description and specification. It was hoped that someone would be in post by mid-November providing time for a handover. Councillor Kercher **proposed** that Council should agree at this stage to fund two posts during the handover period. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Fenwick and **agreed** by all Councillors. The Chairman also reported that the Committee reviewed the costs of maintaining the defibrillator and agreed to allocate £100 in next year's Council budget.

#### **15.51 CHAIRMANS REPORT**

The Chairman commented that the main items in her report were covered on the agenda. She reminded Cllrs that the Remembrance Service will take place on 8<sup>th</sup> November. The Chairman also raised the need for monthly Parish Council meetings to improve the decision making process and reduce the length of agenda's. This will be an item for discussion at the November Council meeting.

#### **15.52 FIVE ASH POND**

- a) The Chairman introduced the item and presented a detailed overview of the weather event at the end of August, where a significant amount of rain fell in a few hours. A resident of Lymington Bottom Road, whose property had flooded as a result of water run-off from the Highway through the front of the house, had made contact with the Parish Council and in person after the end of the August Maintenance Committee meeting, where he spoke to Councillors about his experience. Councillor Kercher confirmed that he informed the resident that he could attend the September Council meeting and speak during the open session and that as the Committee Chairman he would request an agenda item to enable Councillors to discuss the issues he had highlighted.

Without consultation with the Council the resident then attempted to organise a separate meeting with representatives of East Hants District Council (EHDC), Hampshire County Council (HCC) and the Parish Council at the same time as the Council meeting. Despite a suggestion that the meeting should be re-scheduled to enable a Parish representative to attend, it had not come to fruition and the Clerk confirmed that the resident would now not be attending the meeting this evening, as he needed to make further enquiries about the responsibilities of Departments within Hampshire County Council. The Chairman reported that a considerable amount of email correspondence has been generated by the resident who had apportioned responsibility to various departments within HCC, EHDC and the Parish Council.

Councillors then went on to consider the effectiveness of the extensive works carried out at the pond in May and in particular during the weather event in August, where it was estimated that approximately 80% of the normal rainfall for August fell in the space of a few hours. Footage provided by the resident of Lymington Bottom Road that was shown to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, had provided evidence that the pond had coped well with the levels of rainfall. After a long discussion it was concluded that the works at the pond had been effective to date, the surface water across the Highway on 26<sup>th</sup> August had been delayed (i.e. the Highway was clear at midday) and that when the water did flow back out of the pond across the Highway, it had dissipated quickly.

- b) Councillors considered a report prepared by Councillor Pullen and circulated to Councillors on a bore hole which the Council had committed to investigate in January. Councillor Pullen was expecting further technical information. Councillors considered that it was premature to progress a bore hole at this stage. It was **RESOLVED** to identify a reserve budget commencing 16/17 for the cost of the works in recognition that it may be required in the future.

#### **15.53 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT**

The monthly update report from Councillors Jackson and Thomas was circulated to Members prior to the meeting. The Chairman reminded Councillors that there are grants available from both District Councillors.

#### **15.54 MILLER HOMES**

The Clerk reported that a representative of Tank PR had contacted her on behalf of their client Miller Homes, to ask if there were any community events or projects that they could sponsor. There was a short discussion about suitable

events and projects, but it was agreed that there was insufficient information about how much they were willing to offer and what they would want in return. The Clerk was asked to obtain further information and report back.

#### 15.55 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the income and expenditure reports for July and August 2015.
- b. Members received the expenditure against budget report to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.
- c. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Bank Reconciliation as a 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015.
- d. It was **RESOLVED** to note the return of Section 3 of the Council's Annual Return, approved and signed by the External Auditor, BDO LLP.

#### 15.55 INTERNAL COUNCIL MATTERS

- a. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Kercher would attend the HALC AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2015 from 8.45am – 1.00pm at Sparsholt College. There were no resolutions to consider at this stage and Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor Kercher vote on behalf of the Parish Council at the meeting.
- b. Councillors are expected to attend Code of Conduct training offered by EHDC. The Clerk was liaising with Four Marks Parish Council to arrange a date that she will circulate to Cllrs when confirmed.

#### 15.45 COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

- a. **Village Hall** – Councillor Buckland reported that there had been one meeting of the management committee on 28<sup>th</sup> July. There was no meeting in August. Generally the hall is quieter during the summer period. The new chairs are now here and the defibrillator is up and working. The AGM meeting is on 29<sup>th</sup> September at 8pm. At the last meeting of the Parish Council Cllr Buckland raised the possibility of the area alongside the hall for additional hardstanding / car parking as this was being looked into before the fire. The Trustees consider that their car park is generally adequate for hirers' use and does not need extension, but understood that it had been previously raised to help people not using the hall e.g. dog walkers or the school. It was agreed that this issue would be discussed at the November Council meeting.
- b. **Sports Club** – Councillor Kercher reported that it was the last cricket match of the season at the weekend. Extensive works will then commence on the cricket square. Medstead Cricket Club have been promoted to the Hampshire County Division 4, their highest level. Further the Table Tennis club had entered two teams to the Winchester & District Table Tennis League.
- c. **Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group** - Councillor Kercher reported that the Neighbourhood Plan was formally accepted as submitted on the 28th August, with the statutory consultation period ending on the 9th October. The Steering Group had a meeting last week with Officers at East Hants District Council (EHDC) and it seems that they are getting things moving. The Steering Group are able to select the examiner and have three names to choose from, or they can request one of their own. The examiner will be officially 'appointed' before the 9th October. Within a week of the closing date EHDC will have sent everything needed to the chosen examiner and the Steering Group should hear within a week, although some have taken 3/4 weeks - for the larger areas, whether the Plan will go through a hearing or written submission type examination. From past experience EHDC feel that we could have the final decision by early December. EHDC are already talking to Democratic Services regarding the Referendum which now looks likely to be early 2016.
- d. **Parish Plan Committee** – Councillor Jackson reported that there has not been a meeting of the Committee. The Committee had contributed £2,000 towards the new toddler play area.

At the conclusion of the discussions the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Chairman .....Date.....