

**Parish Council Meeting
Held at East Meon Village Hall on
Monday 18 March 2024**

Present: Councillors Susan Davenport (Chair), Charles Ritchie (Vice Chair), Steven Ridgeon, Matt Atkinson, Andrew Hales, Sarah Round, Tom Tyrwhitt-Drake, Trudie Lang, Cllr Rob Mocatta, Sam Marchant (PC), and 4 members of the public attended.

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest

No declarations were made.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Chair asked the Councillors to consider whether they felt the Minutes were a true record of the meeting held on 22 January 2024. Councillors who had attended the meeting confirmed that they were, and they were approved as read.

Proposed by Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake and seconded by Cllr Ridgeon and duly signed as a true and correct record.

4. To Co-opt a Councillor following Cllr Sillence's resignation

The Chair expressed the view of the whole Council in saying that Sharon Sillence had made a valuable contribution to the work of the Parish Council and would be much missed. She went on to outline the procedure which had been correctly followed in advertising the vacant Councillor position. She then referred to the application letter received from Jeremy Sillence who had expressed his interest in joining the Parish Council. A vote was taken by show of hands with all Councillors unanimously resolving to co-opt him.

5. Councillor Responsibilities

It was resolved that Cllr Sillence's responsibilities would, for now, be the maintenance of the Workhouse Lane and Frogmore Carparks, litter bins, recycling, lighting and signage.

6. Open Forum

No questions were raised.

(8b). Beavers project

The Chair invited Will Atkinson to summarise his proposed project.

Following his presentation Mr Atkinson answered questions from Councillors as follows;-

How many beavers would be introduced and how would numbers be kept under control? The license required for the project states that a pair of beavers, which might have cubs at the time, would be introduced to start with. The site would be secured by fencing dug deep into the ground around the 7-acre plot, if the

number of beavers was to become excessive, then some would be moved onto another site or culled.

What would be the ecological effects? The beavers would create their own dam system which would then make the stream deeper, slow the water in flooding weather conditions and provide a steady stream when drier weather occurred.

The site would also provide a habitat for amphibians, reptiles, and birds.

What is the long-term plan for management? The License is held for a duration of 5 years and the beavers would manage the site themselves.

Is there insurance cover? The farm's public liability insurance would cover any beavers escaping or consequential damage. The beavers are protected however there is also a clause stating culling is acceptable in cases such as damage to property off site or excessive numbers.

What are the future plans for the project in terms of publicity and visitors?

There are plans to host small school trips and possible guided walks however these would be limited. The Parish Council was assured that this venture would not become a tourist attraction.

Councillors unanimously agreed to express their support of Mr Atkinsons project and would put this in writing to support his grant application to SDNPA.

7. Reports and Updates

a) Sewage and excess water in Workhouse Lane (SD)

The Chair informed Councillors that she had continued to liaise with Southern Water and that she hoped to attend the Southern Water drop-in day on 21 March if there was going to be any officer there who could deal with her questions regarding the issues in the village.

In any event, an engineer and two representatives from Southern Water were coming to meet with her and Mike Critchley on 27 March on site. Since the last Parish Council meeting Cllr Mocatta had sourced maps of the sewer pipe network but these did not look to be complete. It was resolved that Cllr Mocatta would look into an independent engineer to carry out a survey on the drainage system and that the Chair would continue to attend meetings with Southern Water.

(SD/RM)

b) BOATs (SD)

The Chair reported on the meeting of East Hampshire parishes that took place in East Meon in February. She felt it had been useful for the councillors and representatives from 12 parishes to come together to discuss their collective issues with damage to BOATs with Jonathan Woods and Andy Aitken from HCC. There were plans to meet again in April once the Hampshire County Council Byways Operational Procedure had been drafted.

(SD)

c) Lengthsman (TL)

Cllr Lang reported that she had been in contact with the Lengthsman, he had been waiting for drier weather before starting works on the ditches. Jobs added to the list were to repaint the white bench on the cricket pitch and replace missing rails from the fence surrounding the football pitch. She also said that she had spoken with David Cooke regarding allotments and that she had visited the war memorial to see what could be done to tidy it up, cutting the shrubs back and giving the statue a clean was discussed.

(TL)

d) Footpaths and Highways (MA)

Cllr Atkinson reported that the potholes along the Clanfield road had been filled. With regards to the speed monitor sign, he had been able to download data. It was agreed to investigate whether East Meon could be eligible for the "20 is plenty" initiatives being proposed by HCC.

(MA)

e) The Green/Parish grass cutting for 2024/25 (TTD)

Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake informed Councillors that Petersfield Town Council had recently increased their prices, it was agreed that Simon Marden's quotation for the contract would be accepted.

(TTD)

f) EMNG/Environmental (SR)

Cllr Ridgeon reported that he, and 3 other SDNPA Members from Hampshire, met with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to try to raise awareness of the need to provide more protection to the River Meon (in line with that afforded to the Test and the Itchen). This was one of the main issues raised by residents in our recent consultations for the Parish Priorities Statement. Actions were agreed, including potentially more surveys to understand the river's health; it may be that a request for financial help from the Parish Council may be made in the future.

(SR)

g) CIL Money Projects (AH)

Cllr Hales looked to present his report in the May Parish Council meeting.

(AH)

h) Grants - to include report from 'Meet the Funders' workshop (SRound/AH)
Cllr Hales reported that he had met with various funding groups in the area at the all-day workshop which he had attended along with David Pepper (Village Hall) and Suart Martin (EMPCC).
Cllr Round reported that she had completed the SDNPA form with regards to the CIL funding for 50% of the All-Sports Court resurfacing.

(SRound)

i) EHAPTC (TTD)

Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake informed Councillors that he had attended the first zoom meeting for the regrouped EHAPTC.

(TTD)

j) APA (SD)

It was agreed that Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake would take care of the refreshments for the APA and Councillors would set out the chairs in good time.

(TTD)

k) D-Day 80 Commemorations (SD)

Cllr Hales agreed to help with plans on behalf of the Parish Council and would liaise with David Pepper.

The event was set to take place on Thursday 6 June with Mike Critchley to give a talk in the Village Hall on the D Day Landings, the Church bells to be rung and the beacon on Park Hill to be lit.

Refreshments and music were yet to be confirmed.

(AH)

8. Matters arising from the Parish Council meeting on 22 January 2024

a) May Fair (SD)

The Chair informed Councillors that the May Fair would be taking place on Saturday 18 May on The Green and that volunteers were needed. Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake undertook to ensure that the new path works would not clash with the event and that the grass would be cut prior to the Fair.

(TTD)

b) Meonside Beaver project (SR)

This had been discussed and resolved at the beginning of the meeting.

c) Removal of Bus Stop (SD)

The Chair explained that following the decision taken in the January Parish Council meeting, a plaque had been discovered on the Bus Stop shelter. It was resolved still to take the Bus Stop shelter down but now to replace it with a bench for the plaque or a new plaque to be displayed.

(TTD)

d) Citizens Advice Bureau donation application (SD)
The Chair informed Councillors that the CAB had approached the Parish Council for a donation, the last donation to them had been given in 2020. It was agreed to give £400 to the CAB in recognition of the large number of East Meon residents using the service.

(PC)

e) Parish Award (SD)
This item was deferred to the end of the meeting.
The recipient was agreed with the Chair to action.

(SD)

f) Yew Tree plaque (SD/SR)
The Chair explained that the Yew tree in Frogmore had been awarded the status of a 'notable tree' by the Woodland trust.
She along with Cllr Ridgeon proposed that a plaque should be purchased in memory of John MacKinlay as he had drawn attention to the tree.
Councillors agreed for Cllr Ridgeon and the Chair to source quotations.

(SD/SR)

g) EMCC cricket nets & payments (AH)
Cllr Hales informed Councillors that the invoice for the East Meon Cricket Club had been raised, this included the annual usage charges for electricity, water and rates.
He also asked Councillors to consider giving a grant to go towards new cricket nets. It was agreed that the Club should first explore outside grants such as SDNPA CIL monies or EHDC Cllr grants.

(AH)

h) Recycling scheme (JS)
The Chair said she would speak with Cllr Sillence about this in more detail and revisit at the next meeting.

i) Litter pick (JS)
Cllr Sillence agreed to plan a village litter pick for December/January time.

(JS)

9. County/District Councillor report

Cllr Mocatta's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found on the Parish Council website.

He highlighted that the response to the HCC consultation had been the largest response in the area. He encouraged everyone to send in their submissions before the closing date of 31/03/2024.

10. Planning - Report by Chairman of the Planning Committee to include the Penny Mile development.

Cllr Ridgeon reported that three applications had been received, two for dwellings and one for equestrian use, the planning committee had submitted no objection comments to all.

Although the Penny Mile development was not yet complete residents had begun moving in. Once the works were finished, Cllr Ridgeon said he would be contacting SDNPA for a revisit.

(SR)

11. Finance

a) Presentation of actual v budget for the current year

The RFO presented her report of actual cost against the budget for the current year, this was approved by Councillors.

b) Approval of payments of invoices (16 January 2024 – 11 March 2024)

The RFO reported on all payments between the dates of 16 January 2024 to the 11 March 2024. Councillors unanimously approved all payments.

c) Internal Audit

The RFO informed Councillors that the internal audit would be taking place on Friday 26 April with Tim Light, Lightatouch.

12. Any other business including correspondence of note.

Cllr Ritchie reported that the East Meon signpost on the Clanfield road had been removed. He along with Cllr Atkinson would investigate a replacement.

Cllr Ritchie also reported that Aspire Football Club had approached the Parish Council in the last week, they would like to hire the Football pitch and Pavilion for a girls tournament on 23 May.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8:30pm.

Signed:

Date: