

West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 12 May 2014 in Itchenor Memorial Hall.

Present: Mrs J Boadle, Mr M Chater OBE (Chairman), Mr G Colbourne, Mr J Hartley, Mr A Spencer, Mrs S Taylor, Mr C Watson

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), 12 members of the public

41/14C Election of a Chairman.

Cllr Spencer was proposed and seconded for the office of Chairman of the Council. **RESOLVED** that Cllr be elected as Chairman of West Itchenor Parish Council. Cllr Spencer's Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman of West Itchenor Parish Council was duly received.

42/14C Chairman's welcome.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Chater for his work as Councillor and Chairman of the Parish Council. He highlighted Cllr Chater's role within the National Association of Local Councils and the importance of his Local Government work.

43/14C Questions/comments from members of the public.

A resident thanked the Parish Council for their work in supporting better broadband for the village as well as work on the village pond.

Mr Holmes commented that he understood that when the Common was purchased from the Goodwood Estate it included the pond by Shipton Mead and he thought that the Parish Council held this view until the meeting in September 2008. He hoped that the Parish Council would lodge an objection to the Possessory Title currently in place and suggested that it was important that residents did not annex areas of the Common for their own use.

Mr Moate suggested that the pond was part of village heritage and suspected there were no known owners. In the early days there was a working party which cleared trees and put in a lot of work in order to preserve the pond. He suggested that the owners of Shipton Mead did not have title or right to the pond. He added that the Parish Council should clear in front of the pond to provide a view to people passing by.

Mr Mead-Briggs made comments on the Neighbourhood Plan. He referred to communications sent to him on the 3 May raising serious concerns on the Council's interpretation of the correspondence. He was concerned that comments he made on 8 May had not yet been acknowledged and requested that this be placed on the next Steering Group agenda so that other members would be aware of his concerns.

Cllr Taylor acknowledged the email and agreed that this would be placed on the agenda of the next Steering Group meeting.

Mr Mead-Briggs also commented that he felt the matter of a Village Shop should also be considered by the Steering Group.

Mr Green added that he had read Mr Mead-Briggs' comments and agreed with the sentiment. He suggested that there were lots of other villages with shops that are unsustainable and questioned whether this had been looked into.

Mr Green also raised concern about Travis Perkins delivery vehicles parking on the blind bend and asked whether the Parish Council was looking into this.

The Chairman responded that the Parish Council was indeed looking at this issue and awaiting a meeting with Travis Perkins.

- 44/14C Apologies for absence.**
There were no apologies for absence.
- 45/14C Councillors Register of Members Interests.**
The Clerk reminded Councillors of the need to confirm any changes to their Register of Members Interests.
- 46/14C Declarations of Interest by Members.**
Cllr Chater declared an interest in Agenda Item 19 as a resident on the Common.
- 47/14C Election of a Vice Chairman.**
Cllr Colbourne was proposed and seconded for the office of Vice Chairman of the Council. **RESOLVED** that Cllr Colbourne be elected as Vice Chairman of West Itchenor Parish Council.
- 48/14C Appointment of the Responsible Financial Officer.**
RESOLVED that the Clerk continue as the Responsible Financial Officer for the Parish Council.
- 49/14C Standing and Statutory Committees.**
RESOLVED that there should be one Standing Committee and that its membership should be as follows:
Planning Committee
Cllr Colbourne, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Hartley and Cllr Spencer.
RESOLVED that the Cllr Chater, Cllr Boadle and Cllr Watson be nominated as substitute members who could stand in should any member of the Planning Committee be unable to attend a meeting.
It was **NOTED** that planning meetings would continue to take place fortnightly at 10am on a Monday morning provided there were applications to consider.
- 50/14C Parish Council representatives to various outside organisations**
RESOLVED that Cllr Colbourne and Cllr Spencer should be invited to act as the Council's representatives to the Chichester District Association of Local Councils.
RESOLVED that Cllr Chater should continue as the Council's representative to the Sussex Association of Local Councils.
RESOLVED that Cllr Hartley and Cllr Taylor should act as the Council's representatives to the Manhood Peninsula Forum.
RESOLVED that Cllr Taylor and Cllr Watson should act as the Council's liaison with the local Police.
RESOLVED that Cllr Spencer should act as the Council's liaison with the Itchenor Society.
- 51/14C Representative to oversee the Parish Council Accounts.**
RESOLVED that Cllr Colbourne continues as the Council's representative overseeing the accounts.
- 52/14C Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other adopted Policies**
The Clerk explained that it was necessary for the Parish Council to regularly review the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other adopted policies. It was noted that the latest Standing Orders were adopted in March 2011 but that other policies had not been reviewed for a number of years.
RESOLVED that the Financial Regulations and Complaints Policy be reviewed at the July meeting.

RESOLVED that the Standing Order, Community Engagement Strategy, Grants Policy and Common Management Policy be reviewed at the September meeting.

53/14C Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 March 2014

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 10 March 2014. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

54/14C Matters Arising from the minutes of 10 March 2014

The Clerk confirmed that the family requesting the installation of a Memorial Seat by the pond had acknowledged the letter from the Parish Council and would come back with firm proposals in due course.

55/14C Minutes of the extra Council meeting held on 24 March 2014.

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the extra Parish Council meeting on 24 March 2014. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

56/14C Members Reports.

56.1 Meetings of Local Government Associations, AiRS/SALC, National/sub regional developments, SERCAF, Manhood issues and Birdham School – Cllr Chater

Cllr Chater's written report previously circulated to members is appended to these minutes. Cllr Chater highlighted a number of areas in the report.

56.2 Planning – Cllr Taylor

Cllr Taylor reported that there had been three meetings since the last Parish Council meeting and updated the Council on the plans discussed.

The District Council decisions included two permits and one refusal.

The Planning Inspector has allowed the appeal on the Boat store at Chandlers Reach. The Parish Council has been notified that an appeal has been lodged by the owners the land next to The Oast against the refusal by the District Council of their most recent planning application. The District Council's response is on their website.

A matter of concern for some considerable time has been the ditch in front of the land in question and which has been partially filled in by the owners. There is correspondence going back for over a year whereby the Parish Council was given the impression that a ditch survey was being carried out as a prelude to possible action being taken by the County Council. After considerable delays the County Council's solicitor has now disclosed that no such survey has been carried out and no indication if and when one is to be carried out.

The Parish Council is concerned that a matter which is of concern to a village which is prone to surface water flooding, especially in the area around The Oast, has been put on a back burner despite requests asking for updates. Cllr Taylor suggested that the matter should be pursued vigorously by the Parish Council with the support of the local Councillors.

Ditch belongs to WSCC and it is their responsibility to look at this. Make points to WSCC. Copy PM as well.

56.3 Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Taylor

Cllr Taylor provided a report on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan which is appendix to the minutes.

56.4 Speed Limits – Cllr Spencer

The Chairman commented that 20mph speed limit signs had been put up but this was due to scheduled road resurfacing. This has been delayed until the issues of the flooding near the pond have been resolved.

The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk were due to meet with Greg Ockwell (WSCC) in early June to discuss issues relating to the proposed speed limit changes.

It was noted that the recent 20mph zones for Chichester had not seemed to face the same hurdles as those that were being faced by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council was also talking to Chichester City Council about their involvement in the city wide 20mph speed limit.

56.5 Operation Watershed – Cllr Spencer

The Chairman explained the purpose of Operation Watershed funding. The Parish Council has received a grant to do a full survey of drainage in the village. Work is now underway and a report due early in the autumn. This substantial piece of work will hopefully highlight where the problem areas exist. The next phase will involve detailing the problems and phase three the implementation of remedial action.

56.6 Annual Parishes Meeting – Cllr Spencer/Cllr Boadle

The Chairman highlighted some information from the All Parishes Meeting.

The new homes bonus applies only to additional homes not replacement homes and the forms for applying for the new homes bonus should be available in July.

The Local Plan has now been formally submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. Plans to switch to electronic consultations for planning applications have been delayed to the autumn. The plan is for parishes to view applications online or download them. Many villages like Itchenor have problems in that there is no internet access at the village halls. Training is due to start in September.

An update on the gypsy and traveller site had been given. 9 pitches would be available on the Westhampnet site but it was reported that a further 51 pitches were required. People in Westhampnet were very upset and the District Council had acknowledged that it had been a very difficult decision to make. The Chairman highlighted ability of the Police to move on travellers under legislation.

57/14C Proposal from residents about establishing a village shop.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow a group of residents to put forward their proposals.

Mrs Green highlighted the fact that a number of residents had responded to last year's questionnaire showing support for a village shop. Most of these residents were full time residents in the village. The group understood there could be complications. However, they were asking the Parish Council if they would add support to the project. It was proposed to start with a questionnaire and if there was sufficient interest then to form a Steering Group to look into the idea in greater detail. The Residents were keen to have a hub central to village and keen to promote the availability of somewhere to gather that provided a service to community.

The group had already done quite a bit of research and produced a questionnaire. The proposed shop would be run by volunteers as not for profit shop. It would sell local produce and other basic products. It was also mentioned that the village needed a playground which could be added to the hub. Mrs Fawcett gave some further information on the proposal for a playground.

Councillors were generally supportive of the concepts. It was suggested that the Parish Council could refer this to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group or it could nominate a couple of Councillors to work with the residents to bring a formal proposal to the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that Cllr Boadle and Cllr Taylor work with the residents on the proposal and bring forward a formal proposal to the Parish Council in due course.

58/14C Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2014, completion of the Annual Return.

The Clerk had previously circulated copies of the accounts to Councillors for comment. Copies of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 2 of the Annual return) had also been circulated. The Clerk commented on the level of reserves and the need to keep them at a maintainable level.

RESOLVED that the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014 be approved.

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement be completed and that the Chairman and the Clerk be authorised to sign the appropriate sections of the Annual Return.

The Clerk had also circulated a copy of the Internal Auditors report. It was noted that there were no matters brought to the attention of the Council by the Internal Auditor.

RESOLVED that the Internal Auditors report be accepted.

59/14C The Common

59.1 Maintenance issues

Several Councillors had previously walked round the Common to review what work may be required. The idea was in the longer term to make it a better amenity. The Parish Council had already started to communicate with residents about issues. The Parish Council had written to the owners of Oakside highlighting the fact that a number of residents regularly mowed the Common in front of their properties. As a result the area outside Oakside had been strimmed. It was agreed that the grass cutting contractors may be asked to include this area in their regular schedule of mowing.

The Parish Council had also written to the owners of Mulberry Cottage and Travis Perkins about encroachment onto the Common. It was hoped that meetings would take place shortly to discuss the issues. The Parish Council was also in communication with Travis Perkins regarding parking of delivery vehicles and damage to the Common by vehicles turning into the yard.

There were further issues to be resolved by they were minor by comparison and it was noted that the Parish Council would see the current concerns to a conclusion before tackling any further issues.

It was noted that there had previously been good communications with Travis Perkins over issues. However it seemed that the problems previously identified did resurface from time to time.

It was noted that the Clerk and Cllr Colbourne would pursue the requested meetings with Travis Perkins and the owners of Mulberry Cottage.

59.2 Correspondence relating to the Pond outside Shipton Mead.

Two residents had written to the Clerk regarding the Pond outside Shipton Mead expressing concern that a duck house had been put on the pond and also that the Land Registry had granted a temporary Possessory Title to the owners.

Copies of the map of the Common were made available to Councillors and members of the public. The Chairman highlighted the curtilage of the Common identified from the Commons Act 1965. The map indicates that the pond is not part of the Common. It was further identified that there was a Statutory Declaration on record from the Duke of Richmond stating that he was the legal owner of the Common.

The Chairman had spoken to Ric Dukoff-Gordon who had commented that the Parish Council at the time had done little or no maintenance of the pond and did not want to take on responsibility for it. Some planting by the previous owner had been removed by them. It was noted that the existing planting does provide some effective screening of Travis Perkins.

The Chairman commented that whilst it was permissible to raise an objection to the Possessory Title it did not give the Parish Council enforcement rights of what happens on the pond.

There was some concern raised previously at the prospect of any owner trying to fill in the Pond. Cllr Watson confirmed that the Environment Agency was highly unlikely to give permission for this to happen. There was some uncertainty over where the water from the pond went to but it was felt that it was generally looked after well and kept clean and tidy by the current owners of Shipton Mead.

The Parish Council has a formal risk assessment of the pond done periodically as it borders the Common. It was felt there was no disadvantage to registering a formal objection although it was recognised that the Parish Council had no grounds itself for claiming ownership.

A recommendation was made to seek advice from a Solicitor to ascertain if there would be a downside to registering an objection to the Possessory Title.

RESOLVED that the parish Council lodges an objection to the Possessory Title subject to confirmation from the Solicitor that there would not be a problem with this.

60/14C Clerks Report.

The popular Operation Watershed 'Active Communities Fund' – set up in 2013 by the County Council to help communities tackle flooding issues - has been extended for a further year.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be requested to put in expression of interest for a grant for dredging the pond.

61/14C Adoption of policies

61.1 Internet Banking Policy

The Clerk reported that the new accounts with Barclays had been set up and that the Council now had the facility to use internet banking which would be particularly helpful when invoices required settling between Parish Council meetings.

A draft Policy for Internet Banking had been circulated to Councillors for approval.

It was agreed that that additional wording be inserted that made it clear that Cllr Colbourne was not authorised to confirm transactions for the Parish Council as his access was simply to enable him to monitor the accounts.

61.2 System of Internal Control

As part of the requirement to have a sound system of internal control draft guidelines had been drawn up and circulated to Councillors for approval.

RESOLVED that the System of Internal Control document be adopted with immediate effect.

62/14C Finance.

62.1 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £2471.14 be made. See appendix 1 (May 2014)

62.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts up to 30 April 2014 was **APPROVED**.
See appendix 2 (May 2014).

63/14C Items for referral to the next Council Meeting.

Internet banking, complaint about aircraft noise, village shop, playground.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.32pm

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairman