

Minstead Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly

Wednesday 18 March 2015 at 19.30

Minstead Village Hall

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

Present: Cllrs W Andrews (Chair), H Bennett, A Ferguson, P Glover, R Taylor, HCC Cllr K Mans, NFDC Cllr Mrs D Andrews, Mrs P Osborne (Clerk).

Invited speakers: PC R Morant (Hants Constabulary), PC A White (Hants Constabulary)

Public: There were 19 members of the public present.

Apologies: Cllr S Cattell, Mrs M Young, Mr D Young.

2. Minutes of the last Parish Assembly (19 March 2014)

These had been circulated and were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Chairman's Report

Cllr Andrews reported the following activities over the last year:

Fabric

- Resurfacing of Church Footpath completed.
- Bridleway 10 has now deteriorated following excellent preparation by the PC contractor because HCC have been unable to fund their promised re-surfacing.
- Bridleway 15 is programmed (by HCC) for clearance and drainage to assist drying, but is not considered to need re-surfacing.
- Dragons teeth replaced as necessary.
- Bus shelter at Village Hall repaired again and will be re-furbished this summer.
- Housing for village clock still to be replaced.
- Regular maintenance checks of bus shelters, seats, war memorial area, flag pole, footpath signs, PC-owned trees etc. with repairs and maintenance as required.
- War memorial has been properly cleaned.

Roadways, Hedges & Ditches

- Continued support from Hampshire Highways (Rob Millar, Richard Bastow, Tim Lawton) re pothole and edge repairs, road markings and drainage. Several potholes have been repaired throughout the year.
- *Please remember that householders are responsible for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties.*
- Drainage mapping is ongoing, hope to complete this year.
- Regular work by our Parish Lengthsman, Stephen Short, on footpaths and drainage.
- Church Close hedge is re-growing behind the protective fence.
- Liaison with Forestry Commission regarding restoration of the greens - Top Green, Shave Green and Lyndhurst Road Green have been cleared of brambles and self-seeded small trees.
- Ragwort Clearance in July is helping to keep this noxious weed in check.

Planning

- Support for community on many diverse planning matters.

Community

- Continuing to develop the much acclaimed Minstead Village Community website.
- Continued efforts to bring SuperFast Broadband to the Parish; Vodafone 4G found to be most effective.
- Councillor surgeries held two or three times each week - at Village Shop and at Trusty Servant.
- Weekly eNewsletter produced and distributed to 264 addresses (plus hard copies printed and delivered to neighbours).
- Minstead Mail, three issues last year, distributed (hard copy) to ALL households.
- Donations made to *NF Citizens Advice Bureau*, and to All Saints PCC for churchyard maintenance.

- Cllr Taylor's *Proposal for Strategic Cycle Network* gained universal support and is now included in the NFPA Management Plan.
- Support of Village Fete, Carols by the Green with Father Christmas, tree lights.
- Consideration being given to siting a defibrillator in the village.
- Litter picking in/around village and car parks.
- Liaison with police and police community support officers.
- Representation of interests of Minstead parishioners at various meetings.

Traffic

- Liaison with police and NFDC regarding the number and speed of vehicles through Minstead.
- Liaison with police re parking around the village centre when vehicles obstruct the highway. This is an ongoing concern.

5. Financial Statement

The Clerk reported on Parish Council finance:

- Successful audits – both the Internal and External Auditors were satisfied with the Minstead Parish Council accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2014.
- There has been no increase in Precept.
- Council continues to run a tight budget and keep its costs to a minimum, so has managed to maintain a good reserve for contingencies.
- Council contributed £739 (25% of total cost) this year towards cost of drainage and restoration of Church Footpath. (75% of cost was met by grants received last year from HCC and NFNPA.)
- Grants were received this year from HCC and NFDC for projects within the parish:
 - HCC Lengthsman Scheme - £1,000 towards Lengthsman salary;
 - NFDC Councillor's Community Grant - £135 towards a dedicated disabled parking space outside church.
- Council has made two donations this year to:
 - All Saints PCC towards maintenance of churchyard - £300;
 - New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau - £50.

6. Report by Hampshire County Councillor K Mans

Cllr Mans reported that HCC:

- has again not increased its proportion of the council tax.
- has tried to restrict reductions in frontline services by continuing to look at more efficient ways of carrying out activities; wants to maintain level of quality - recent OFSTED report on Children's Services was Outstanding/Good.
- now shares many back-room operations with police and fire service.
- has large capital programme for building.
- is increasing the selling of skills to public sector organisations outside Hampshire in order to provide services more cheaply for Hampshire people.
- Hampshire Lengthsman Scheme is working well in many parishes. In addition, individuals are helping keep costs down by clearing ditches and carrying out work that is reducing risk of future flooding.
- High speed broadband continues to be rolled out across Hampshire. However the service being received from BT is far from perfect and HCC is trying hard to ensure BT carries out work properly and on time.
- Boundary Commission is looking at boundaries and possible adjustments.
- Councillor Devolved budgets (for local community activities) start again in May. Cllr Mans tries to spread his budget across his seven parishes.

7. Report by New Forest District Councillor Mrs D Andrews

Cllr Mrs Andrews reported on her NFDC Council activities. She:

- has attended as many Parish meetings as possible.
- has continued as Vice Chair Environment, Vice Chair Audit, member of Planning Appeals Committee.
- is the District Council's Representative on *Community First New Forest*, the charity which runs *Night Stop*, *Wheels to Work*, *Young Carers Group*, and more.

- has been on 'Task and Finish' Groups – where a work party carries out a piece of work and reports back to Council within a given timescale. Topics have included: Child Poverty within the New Forest District; Funding for flood and coastal erosion risk management; Night Shelter for homeless men; Search for new cemeteries and burial space; Planning Pre-Application Preview; the allocation of Community Grants.
- has reported back to this Parish on the outcome of these groups and kept them up to date.
- has assisted individuals within her Ward with varied problems from flooding to neighbour disputes and help with planning applications.
- worked closely with the Environment Officer to reduce the impact of the large salt dome at M27 junction 2.
- has shared her Councillor Community Grant between her three parishes, Copythorne (donations to Copythorne Infant School, Copythorne Amateur Theatrical Society, and towards a telemetry device for flood warnings), Bramshaw (towards the restoration of the church bell at St. Peter's, one of the oldest striking bells in the UK) and Minstead. Minstead's share has paid for six months hire of the Surgery for Community Policing Beat Surgery (as a trial) plus a donation towards a disabled parking bay at the church that has been agreed by HCC.

There had been many complaints recently about the noise from the M27. However, noise-deadening resurfacing will take place during 2015/16 between Junction 1 and the bridge over Newbridge Road. Having now served four years as District Councillor for this Ward, Cllr Mrs Andrews spoke enthusiastically of the prospect of continuing in the future term.

8. Report by Beat Police Officer

PC Morant introduced PC White who would be taking over as Beat Officer for Minstead from 1 April. PC Morant reported:

- Efficiency savings being made within police service:
 - Police patrol teams now based back in Lyndhurst;
 - Beat surgeries being changed from 1 April due to changes in shift patterns - one daytime surgery at Lyndhurst Library plus one evening at Minstead Village Hall (6-7pm in the Surgery); PCSO Quinn will also do some daytime surgeries in Minstead Village Shop.
- Crime – local break-ins have been theft of machinery.
- Beat reports giving information retrospectively for whole month have now stopped and are replaced by *Hampshire Alert* messaging. [See Item 10 below.]

9. Report of Speedwatch Activities by Chairman

Minstead has lost one local co-ordinator. During the winter there have been very few operations. Operations are expected to pick up again soon under the leadership of ex-PC Dee Faulkner-White but more volunteers are needed. Lyndhurst and Copythorne are doing quite well.

10. Hampshire Alert: Introduction by PC Rob Morant and PC Andy White

Hampshire Alert is an online messaging system that is secure, free and user-friendly. Information is sent out immediately and recipients can reply (in confidence) to messages. Each subscriber can select topics of interest, thereby tailoring the messages that will be received. Those who do not use email can sign up to receive emergency information by telephone.

11. Items requested by the Public

- Query about red marks that have appeared recently on dragons teeth - Chairman said he would investigate.
- Suggestion that the vegetation that has grown up by Lyndhurst Road between Football Green and Park Gate Cottage (Minstead Manor land) should be cleared - Chairman to look into it.
- Complaint that the new street light on Village Green, intended to save electricity, has been on continuously, night and day, since installation in November. Cllr Mans to follow this up.

The Chairman thanked those present for coming.

Cllr Ferguson, on behalf of all, thanked the Chairman for all the work he does for the parishioners.

The meeting closed at 20.30

The next Annual Parish Assembly will be on 16 March 2016