

Minstead Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly
Wednesday 15 March 2017 at 19.30
Green Room, Minstead Village Hall

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

Present: Cllrs W Andrews (Chair), H Bennett, S Cattell, A Ferguson, G Hough, R Taylor, D Wakelin, NFDC Cllr Mrs D Andrews, Mrs P Osborne (Clerk), PCSO Richard Williams (Hants Constabulary).

Invited speaker: Cllr E Heron (HCC)

Public: There were 21 members of the public present.

Apologies: HCC Cllr K Mans, Mrs M Young.

2. Minutes of the last Parish Assembly (16 March 2016)

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

- Most Footpaths remain in acceptable condition despite the rather wet winter, and the roads have relatively recently been swept.
- Footpath 9 between Oakleaf & Red House is finally to be resurfaced tomorrow.
- Housing for village clock on the Shop is still to be replaced, and I think the clock may need a new battery.
- Many thanks to our Parish Lengthsman, Stephen Short, who carries out regular maintenance checks of bus shelters, seats, war memorial area, flagpole, footpath signs, PC-owned trees etc. with repairs and maintenance as required. He cleans our road signs, drains and gullies, monitors the condition of our Roadways, Hedges and Ditches and works on our footpaths and their drainage.
- We continue to receive support from Hampshire Highways (Bob Brown, Richard Bastow, Tim Lawton) both directly and through the good offices of Cllr Mans. Several potholes have been repaired throughout the year. Please use the HCC website or NFDC App to report directly.
- Eroded edges are still exercising Highways, Cllrs and residents, after more than 5 years involvement. We shall keep trying.
- Please remember that householders are responsible for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties, even if outside their hedge or fence.
- Drainage mapping is still on-going; all contributions of knowledge gratefully received.
- Ragwort Clearance in July is helping to keep this noxious weed in check.
- The great overgrowth from hedges along Blackwater Road has been cut back (by HCC) and it is now our responsibility to keep it in check. A Working Group, with Lyndhurst PC, is monitoring traffic conditions there, and trying to find an acceptable solution.

Community

- We remain pleased with the well visited, Minstead Village Community website.
- Continued efforts to bring SuperFast Broadband to the whole Parish; various 4G providers are found to be effective in "not-spots". Further developments again expected this year.
- Informal Councillor surgeries continue to be held two or three times each week - at Village Shop (some weekend mornings) and at Trusty Servant (Friday evenings).
- Weekly eNewsletter produced and distributed to 320 addresses (plus hard copies kindly printed and delivered to neighbours who are not connected to email).
- Minstead Mail, three issues last year, hard copy distributed to ALL households; first for this year coming quite soon.
- Donations made to NF Citizens Advice Bureau, and to All Saints PCC for churchyard maintenance.
- Support of Village Fete, Carols by the Green with Father Christmas, and Christmas tree lights courtesy of NFDC Cllr Diane Andrews.

- Regular Litter picking in/around village and car parks.
- Continued liaison with local police and police community support officer.
- Representation of interests of Minstead parishioners at various meetings, and support and advice in planning matters.
- We are pleased that the Minstead Community Speedwatch has been resurrected and could be monitoring a road near you at any time.

Council

- Our Precept was increased this year for the first time since 2011, largely occasioned by the reduction in supporting grants from Central Government via NFDC and devolvement of some functions from HCC and NFDC to us, such as the maintenance of Blackwater Road hedge.

My thanks to all Cllrs and our Learned Clerk for support, industry and effectivity, AND to both County and District Cllrs for continued support.

After the division boundaries changes we bid farewell to Cllr Mans following the County Council election in May. How shall we manage without you?

5. Financial Statement

The Clerk reported on Parish Council finance:

- Successful Internal and External Audits of the governance and the accounts of Minstead Parish Council for financial year ending 31 March 2016.
- Council continues to run a tight budget, so has managed to maintain a good reserve for contingencies. One such unplanned expenditure last year was tree work to the liquidambar on the Top Green that was required after a section of the tree was ripped off in a storm.
- The increase in the precept for the coming year is the first increase in precept since 2011, six years ago.
- Grants were received this year from HCC for projects within the parish:
 - Funding under Parish Lengthsman Scheme;
 - From Cllr Keith Mans for (a) replacement case for the village clock (b) footpath surface repair.
- Purchase and installation costs for the defibrillator have now been met. There were two fund-raising events last year: Village Fete (half proceeds) and EU Debate. The Defibrillator Fund currently has a balance of **£160.68** which will be used for maintenance and further training.
- Council has made two donations this year to:
 - All Saints PCC towards maintenance of churchyard;
 - New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau.

6. Report by Hampshire County Councillor K Mans

Cllr Mans was not present.

7. Report by New Forest District Councillor Mrs D Andrews

Cllr Mrs Andrews is District Councillor for area covering Fritham, Bramshaw, Ower, Wellow, , Minstead, part of Copythorne and part of Emery Down. She is chair of Planning Development & Control Committee that meets monthly to consider cases where the parish and planning department disagree, or high profile cases where a large number of houses are proposed – e.g. in Ringwood. She represents NFDC on board of Citizens Advice Bureau and Community First New Forest which is responsible for running *Wheels to Work* and *Nightstop* amongst other good works.

She listed some of the items she brought to the Parish Council over the last year:

- *Clean for the Queen*
- New Road sign for Congleton Close
- Police Crime Commissioner election
- Change of use of Fawley Power Station to housing
- HCC cut 40% of NFDC traffic management budget; proposal to raise funds by charging utilities to close roads.
- Devolution

- Speed Indication Display (SID) device organised on the C17; there had not been a SID in position there since 2013 and in future there will be a cost to the parish for use of these machines.
- Car parking charges frozen for 2017
- The land at RAF Calshot given permission to open a new cemetery with space for 2,000 graves; the graveyard is much needed as graveyards are nearing their capacity.
- Universal credit to roll out in this area changing the way benefits are paid
- In the Budget £5.00 increase on properties in Band D
- The new local plan for building possibly up to 10,000 homes in the NFDC area will be introduced to Cllrs at the end of March. The NPA hopes to introduce their local plan in October of this year which will have more relevance to Minstead.

She was asked to explain the different roles of NFDC/NPA in planning matters.

A: Building control is under NFDC but both bodies have a committee for planning control.

8. **Report on Neighbourhood Policing by PCSO Richard Williams**

PCSO Richard Williams was transferred to this area in May 2016. He reported:

- Theft – there have been some shed burglaries, but in general it has been a good year for Minstead. Officers regularly do patrols around the village. He encouraged everyone to ensure sheds are secure and to report any unusual activities.
- Measures have been taken to deter anti-social activities in car parks: vegetation has been cleared and a strategy is in place.
- Community Speed Watch is operating in Minstead. Volunteers are always needed.
- Beat Surgery takes place monthly at Minstead Village Shop.

9. **Guest Speaker – Cllr Edward Heron.**

Cllr Heron is currently HCC Cllr for Fordingbridge area, a large area of 70 sq miles. With boundary changes, the new division will include many small communities. He performs various roles within HCC and NFDC: Deputy Leader of NFDC and is a representative at National Park Authority and Verderers Court.

He outlined some issues of concern to all:

Animal casualties – caused by lack of understanding/awareness and feeding of animals. Overall rate of casualties has reduced since 1962 when major roads were fenced and 40mph speed limit imposed. But on three roads casualty rate is unchanged: B3078 Cadnam to Godshill (Roger Penny Way), B3054 Hatchet Pond to Portmore and B3056 Beaulieu to Lyndhurst. It is suggested that average speed cameras might help.

Eroded edges - an old problem, still no solutions. Cannot use alkaline material in Forest and hoggins gets washed out. However, following research with Southampton University for an acceptable but effective filler, a new material is currently being trialled.

Broadband: Verderers have agreed to new cabinets on New Forest.

The following questions were put to Cllr Heron:

Qu -How does joint scheme Verderers/HCC for road edges apply to Manorial Waste?

A - HCC would have to do it.

Qu – In recent notification of Council Tax why is the HCC element shown as a 2% increase and a 3% increase rather than a 5% increase?

A - Councils are mandated by government to show it that way; the 3% is a special arrangement promoted by central government towards payment for local Adult Social Care.

Qu – who will pay for speed cameras on forest roads?

A – Purchase and installation costs would be met by HCC Highways. Money from fines can be used only for running costs, with surplus going to central government.

Qu - Road erosions: concrete blocks have proved successful on Roger Penny Way; could they be used on a wider scale?

A – They can be used on wider roads like Roger Penny Way; they have been tried elsewhere but over-running on narrow roads causes erosion of the gravel edges. (On Crown Lands HCC is not responsible for 1m either side of highway.).

Qu – Will imposition of charges and reduction in opening times at Household Waste Recycling Centres result in an increase in fly tipping?

A – No, because those who engage in fly tipping have no intention of using the Recycling Centres.

10. Items requested by the Public

- Commemoration plaque missing under Liquidambar tree. ***[Subsequently found to be still in place.]***
- Problems with sheet ice on Newtown road by Study Centre in freezing conditions: This results from water that runs down side of road from Home Farm. There is no space for a ditch. In other situations digging out ditches helps; but the increased numbers of commoners' animals are causing more damage.
- Water at London Minstead flows out of storm drain, runs down left side of road and across road by Perry's Farm: There have been many attempts made to deal with this; it has been reported to HCC; parish council will continue to work on it.
- Broadband: Have we had response about 2nd cabinet in Centre of village? No, but there has been recent Openreach activity.
Cllr Heron said that Openreach will not re-route existing copper to a nearer cabinet. Also that a nearby parish is about to get universal Superfast Broadband,
- Thanks expressed to Chairman, Clerk and Councillors for their hard work on behalf of the community.

The meeting closed at 20.34

The next Annual Parish Assembly will be on **21 March 2018** *[NOT 14 March as previously announced]*