

Minstead Parish Council
Annual Parish Assembly
19 March 2014 at 20.00
The Green Room, Minstead Village Hall

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

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

Invited speakers: Mark Holroyd (NFNPA), Richard Burke (FC), Mrs Dee Faulkner-White (Speedwatch).

Apologies: Cllr M Bridle, PC R Morant, PCSO L Quinn, Mr S Gibbons, Mrs G Gibbons.

Public: There were 31 members of public present.

2. Minutes of the last Parish Assembly (20 March 2013)

These had been circulated and were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Report by Chairman

Cllr Andrews reported the following activities of the Parish Council over the last year:

Fabric

- Major drainage work in progress on Church Footpath. New gravel will be laid on completion.
- Bridleway 10 (Brook to Canterton Green) – initial work (vegetation clearance, drainage) completed a year ago. Ongoing liaison with HCC who have undertaken to resurface the track.
- Cycle racks installed by Village Green.
- Dragons teeth replaced as necessary (when broken) outside Compton Cottages and Village Green.
- Bus shelter at Village Hall repaired.
- Housing for village clock shortly to be replaced.
- Regular maintenance checks on bus shelters, seats, war memorial area, flag pole, footpath signs etc. with repairs as required.
- Looked into possibility of Listed Building status for Malwood Cricket Pavilion – not eligible (because not much left of original building)

Roadways, Hedges & Ditches

- Continued support from Hampshire Highways (Rob Millar, Richard Bastow, Tim Lawton) re pothole and edge repairs, road markings and drainage. Potholes have been repaired throughout the year and road markings (white lines) have been recently renewed. Major work recently at several points on Lyndhurst Road where flooding occurred. ***But please remember that householders are responsible for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties.***
- Regular work by our Parish Lengthsman, Stephen Short, on footpaths and drainage etc.
- Church Close – temporary fencing erected in Church Lane to allow vegetation to re-grow.
- Ragwort – there being little ragwort this year, the usual organised ‘Ragwort Clearance’ did not take place. Instead, individuals were asked to collect and dispose of any ragwort they came across.

Planning

- Support for community on planning matters, please do come to us before submitting planning applications, we have considerable experience and knowledge that may be useful and helpful.

Community

- Set up Minstead Village website with the kind assistance of Shaun Barriball and Cllr Alan Ferguson.
- *No Cold Calling Zone* introduced at request of parishioners.
- Councillor surgeries held two or three times each week - at Village Shop and Trusty Servant.

- Weekly eNewsletter produced and distributed to 258 addresses (plus hard copies printed and delivered to neighbours).
- Minstead Mail, three issues last year, distributed (hard copy) to ALL households.
- Donations to *NF Citizens Advice* and to All Saints PCC for churchyard maintenance.
- Petition for safe local cycle routes.
- Support of Village Fete (17 August 2013), Carols by Green with Father Christmas, tree lights.
- Litter picking around car parks.
- Liaison with police and police community support officers. **Remember Beat Surgery at Village Shop on 1st Wednesday each month.**
- Representation of interests of Minstead parishioners at various meetings.

Traffic

- Liaison with police and NFDC regarding number and speed of vehicles through London Minstead, especially Bull Lane which is unsuitable for large vehicles. Police made request to some Satnav companies to remove Seamans Lane route from their maps.
- Liaison with police re parking around Trusty Servant and along road outside Village Hall (on Auction nights), if vehicles obstruct the highway. This is an ongoing concern. The Village Hall Committee is looking into possibility of creating additional parking spaces in the Hall car park.

5. Financial Statement

The Clerk reported:

- Successful audits – the Internal and External Auditors were satisfied with the accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2013.
- Parish Council runs a tight budget and keeps costs to minimum, which has enabled the reserve for contingencies to grow – one such will be the cost of Elections in 2015.
- Precept kept same this year at £9,500.
- Parish Council is very grateful for support from NFDC, HCC and NFNPA all of whom have given grants this year for projects within the parish:
 - Drainage work on Church footpath - HCC + NFNPA (Small Grants Scheme).
 - Towards cost of gravel for footpaths and area in front of Village Shop - NFDC Cllr Diane Andrews + HCC Cllr Mans.
 - Fencing in Church Lane - HCC Cllr Mans + New Forest Villages Housing Association.
 - Cycle racks opposite Village Green - NFNPA (Sustainable Transport Solutions Fund)
 - £1,000 towards Lengthsman salary - HCC (Lengthsman Scheme)
- Parish Council has made two donations this year:
 - All Saints church towards maintenance of churchyard.
 - New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau.

6. Report by Hampshire County Councillor K Mans

- This is 5th year that HCC council tax has not been increased and majority of frontline services have been maintained. HCC has capital programme of £750m of which £237m is being spent on the school estate. Despite increased demand for school places, 90% of pupils have been offered their 1st choice for September and 97% have been given one of their choices.
- Superfast broadband is being rolled out across Hampshire and HCC is contributing £9.2m extra to ensure as much of the rural areas of the County as is economically possible are covered by this project.
- High spend on road maintenance our roads, particularly as a result of the recent bad weather. Highways and Environment Dept both stretched in dealing with the floods – Hampshire had the second highest amount of rainfall since the beginning of the year of any county in the country. Estimated cost to the County £68m - so far £15m claimed back from government. A group has been set up to collect lessons learnt from the floods, especially how different agencies can work together more efficiently in the future. All Parish Councils are encouraged to send information to this Committee concerning the effect of the floods in their area.

- He spent his devolved budget of £8,000 right across the Division.

In response to questions, Cllr Mans said:

- Re lack of sound barriers on M27 – He will put pressure on Highways.
- Re future of Mobile Library - Use it. Service cuts are made according to usage.
- Re lack of high speed broadband – There is no redress if house prices are affected adversely; but extra money IS being put into rural broadband. HCC has a contract with BT but BT is a monopoly supplier and does not want to be transparent. Phase 2 should be better. He urged customers to complain.

Chairman announced at this point news received of cabinet to be installed by A31 at Malwood that should provide high speed broadband to those within 1.5km.

- Re possible closure of A31 U-turn at Rufus Stone - Cllr Mans will support Minstead in opposing this.

7. Report by New Forest District Councillor Mrs D Andrews

Cllr Mrs Andrews explained what she has been doing, whilst representing Minstead on the District Council.

- She is Vice Chairman on the Audit and Finance committee, Vice Chairman of the Environment committee and a member of the Planning Appeals committee.
- She is NFDC's representative on the board of Community First New Forest and New Forest East Conservative Association Executive committee.
- Throughout the year she has served on many Task and Finish groups:
 - Review of need for night shelter for young men.
 - Policy review of the supply of sandbags to the community.
 - Cemetery Review and possible buying of land for new cemeteries.
 - Funding for coastal erosion, particularly Hurst Spit.
 - Community Grants.
 - Citizen Advice Bureau grant application.
 - Review of the Pre application process for planning.
- Concerns within the three parishes in her ward:
 - In Copythorne North there has been major flooding and many ditches that have not been maintained are being reinstated.
 - In Bramshaw speeding through the village and environs causes numerous animal deaths. The Parish is looking into installing pinch points on the roads.
 - Minstead has also been reinstating ditches that have not been maintained and has also been upgrading bridleways and local paths.
- She has shared her Community grant this year between the three parishes. In Minstead it will go towards gravel to be used in front of the village shop, Footpath 5 and other footpaths.

Cllr Mrs Andrews urged parishioners to contact her if there is anything with which she could be of assistance.

She was asked when the new bottle boxes would be distributed to households; answer: by end of May.

8. Report by Beat Police Officer / PCSO

Neither Officer was able to attend. Chairman read crime figures for Minstead from recent Beat Report sent by PC Morant.

9. Report of Speedwatch Activities

Dee Faulkner-White (Co-ordinator of Speedwatch) reported that Speedwatch is now in its fourth year. The equipment is shared between three parishes (Minstead, Copythorne, Bramshaw) and is used for two weeks in turn by each parish. In 2013 volunteers in Minstead surveyed 17 times for a total of 21 hours. Minstead statistics for 2013:

- 1527 vehicles were surveyed on C17 and Lyndhurst Road.
- 664 (43.4%) of these were found to be above the speed limit if only by 1 mph. Of all the 1527 vehicles surveyed only one person offended 3 times.

- The highest speed recorded in a 40 mph zone was 63 mph.
- The highest speed recorded in a 30 mph zone was 42 mph.

10. Safe Cycling for Local People: speakers from NFNPA and FC

Cllr Taylor explained that a recent petition in Minstead requesting safe cycle routes had attracted 127 signatures and was sent to the various bodies. Cllr Taylor introduced invited speakers Mark Holroyd (Transport & Tourism Manager, NFNPA) and Richard Burke (Recreation & Public Affairs Manager, South England Forest District, Forestry Commission).

Mark Holroyd explained that he is concerned with sustainable transport. NFNPA has a limited role but tries to liaise with stakeholders. It feeds in ideas and supports projects. It works with HCC to support changing the way people travel, aiming to take traffic off roads, for instance by improving surfaces for cyclists and horse riders – on existing routes, not new ones.

Richard Burke's remit is within the Forest but limited in Minstead since much of the parish is Crown Lands and also designated as an SSSI. There is no provision for cycling in Crown Lands because under Law of Property Act 1925 cycles were considered to be vehicles. Problems arise continually over reconciling recreation with grazing interests - Verderers may be prepared to swap cycle routes (but not increase distance) in order to provide better links for locals.

The two speakers gave the following responses to points raised from the floor:

- Since the Forest is open access, there are no statutory footpaths marked on maps.
- New Forest Cycle Routes map is now free.
- Re signage to Minstead required on exit from Stoney Cross underpass – since this is Manor land, not FC, it was suggested that a sign might be mounted on barrier across track.
- Re possibility of cycle route adjacent to highway on A337 to Lyndhurst – would be difficult to implement since verges often SSSI land.
- Re development of Brockenhurst as cycling centre – NFNPA supports projects for businesses e.g. grants for developing cycle docking stations. HCC designs projects but there is long lead-in time. Cllr K Mans said NFNPA must push HCC.
- Re unannounced cyclists frightening horses - NFNPA is supplying bells to cycle hire businesses. Cyclists need to know how to pass horse riders safely – this is included in *Cycling Code of Conduct*.

[Discussion of traffic speed being a problem for cyclists and possibility of lower speed limit through village was held over to Item 11.]

11. Items requested by the Public

Any possibility of 20mph speed limit through the village? *[On a straw poll - show of hands - more than half those present would support this.]* Cllr Mans said that it was possible for a village to do this, but it might be difficult to enforce. Dee Faulkner-White (ex-Police) commented that if 30mph is not effective then a reduced speed limit would not be implemented. Mrs Sue Cole agreed to research support for 20mph limit.

Vice-Chairman Cllr Cattell expressed thanks to Chairman.

The meeting closed at 21.29

The next Annual Parish Assembly will be **18 March 2015**