

**Minstead Parish Council
Annual Parish Meeting
Minstead Village Hall
Wednesday 20 March 2019 at 19.30**

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

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

Public: 30 members of public.

Apologies: Cllr A Ferguson, Mr S Gibbons, Mrs G Gibbons.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting (21 March 2018)

These had been published and were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Report by Chairman

Fabric

- Housing for village clock on the Shop is still waiting to be replaced, and the clock is still stopped, last year's offer failed to materialise.
- 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 County Highways both directly and through the good offices of Cllr Heron. Several potholes have been repaired ^[L]_[SEP] throughout the year, please use the HCC website or NFDC App to report directly.
- Eroded road edges are still exercising Highways, Cllrs and residents, after more than 7 years involvement & despite promises of new material being trialled. We shall keep trying.
- Please remember that householders are responsible for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties, even if these are outside their hedge or fence.
- Blackwater Road, aka "Mill Lane" continues to be a through traffic problem despite more than 20 years of seeking resolutions. New Road signs and restrictions may help. The Working Group with members from Minstead & Lyndhurst PCs continue to co-ordinate efforts.

Community

- We remain well pleased with the much-visited Minstead Community website, and the response to our Facebook page.
- Continued efforts to bring Ultrafast Broadband to the whole Parish have finally borne fruit – stay for Agenda item.
- Efforts to form a Minstead Village Community Shop continue, stay for that Agenda item too.
- Informal Councillor surgeries continue to be held at the Trusty Servant on Friday evenings.
- Weekly eNewsletter produced and distributed to nearly 300 addresses (plus hard copies kindly printed and ^[L]_[SEP] delivered to neighbours who are not connected to email).
- Minstead Mail, two or three issues each year, hard copy distributed to ALL households, first for this year coming soon.
- Your PC grants support to NF Citizens Advice Bureau, and All Saints PCC for churchyard maintenance.
- We support the Village Fete, Carols by the Green with Father Christmas, and Christmas tree lights.
- Regular Litter picking in/around village and car parks, the next New Forest Spring Clean is Saturday 6th April from 1030 on the Green.

- Continued liaison with local police and police community support officer.
- Representation of interests of Minstead parishioners at various meetings, and we continue to offer support and advice in planning matters.
- We are pleased that the Minstead Community Speedwatch has again been active in encouraging us all to drive at safe speeds, and is once again allowed to survey 40mph roads such as the C17. Our thanks to Dave Donawa for coordinating this and to his team of volunteers.

Council

- Parish and District Elections scheduled for May 2nd. The polls will speak.

Finally My thanks to all Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their support, industry and effectivity, AND to both County and District Councillors for continued support, AND most importantly to you, our Parishioners, for giving us the opportunity to serve you.

5. Financial Statement

Polly Osborne, as Responsible Financial Officer, reported:

- Successful Audit of the governance of Minstead Parish Council and the accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2018.
- Council has increased the precept by £500 from £10,000 to £10,500 for the coming year because of a general rise in costs.
- Council is managing to maintain a good reserve for contingencies. Expenditure is often unpredictable, especially the amount. We are fortunate this winter that no snow ploughing has been needed. Other unpredictable expenditure this current year has been for footpath maintenance (including replacing 2 stiles), hedging and repair of the council's laptop.
- Grants were received this year from HCC and NFDC for projects within the parish:
 - HCC Parish Lengthsman Scheme - £1,100 towards Lengthsman salary;
 - HCC Councillor's Community Engagement Grant - £1,850 towards the proposed Community Shop.
 - NFDC Councillor's Community Grant - £150 towards the proposed Community Shop
- Council has made two donations this year to:
 - All Saints PCC towards maintenance of churchyard - £300;
 - New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau - £100.

Anyone can view the Parish Council's finances at any time on the Minstead website - details published monthly in the minutes of PC meetings.

6. Report by Hampshire County Councillor Edward Heron

- HCC is facing financial challenges, with cuts in government grants and a budget gap.
- Mill Lane/Blackwater Road: Signs now in place to deter vehicles from using this narrow road seem so far to have had little effect; it is hoped they will deter large vehicles (e.g. caravans) in the tourist season. A traffic survey has been carried out but results have yet to be analysed. Installation/replacement of dragons' teeth has been temporarily delayed due to Southern Gas works.

7. Report by New Forest District Councillor Mrs Diane Andrews

The purpose of my report is to give you information on the work of the council over the past year.

Late 2015 BOB JACKSON became CEO and after a year of settling started to PLAN changes in the council. Making it more streamlined and efficient. This year we begin to see the fruition of his plans.

When I was in Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee 8 YEARS AGO I was appalled to see the small interest THE COUNCIL received for the money held on deposit and I suggested that we should invest in property and use it for private rental to bring in better returns. I was told with no uncertainty that councils don't do that. Fast forward to 2018 and a portfolio for Local Economic Development, Property and Innovation was introduced. The council has been quietly investing in property and land.

This has been timely with the inception in April 2017 of the HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY. We are now BUILDING our own hostels on our own land to address the problem of street

sleepers and the homeless reducing the need for B&B which is expensive and not fit for purpose, especially for single mothers. These hostels are a real improvement. The Council is not just responding to the governments initiative it is taking it to a new level of responsibility.

Appletree Court is 100 years old this year and comes with the many problems associated with an old building. Whole floors have been redesigned with state of the art working spaces and break out areas. SMARTER WORKING was introduced and is bringing huge change with hot desking, Flexi working from home and the housing team now have laptops to input their work while on visits with no need to return to Appletree court. The 24 HR CCTV and the customers service centre have been relocated to a new control room which can be turned into a stand-alone emergency centre for council and police should it be needed.

Next year a new Website will change the way that you as residents can contact the council and you will have a 24/7 digital access to everything that you might need, putting YOU First. These are just a few of the physical changes, but behind this is an energy, a feeling of progress, which has reinvigorated the staff.

There is an election on 2nd May for Parish and district, at least we hope it is just Parish and district. With all that has been going on in Parliament I have the feeling that people are totally sick of politics and that there may be a low turn out or protest votes. I encourage you to vote so that you get the council that you want an continue this modernisation. It goes without saying that I would like to be part of that too.

8. Police report by PCSO Richard Williams

PCSO Williams gave a report for Minstead covering the last 12 months:

- Burglaries: two house burglaries (while owners out) but several outbuilding break-ins when mainly garden tools were taken. Police are varying their shifts to try to prevent outbuilding thefts. Also several vehicle break-ins and thefts (of tools, trailer, batteries) from outdoor sites.
- Action Fraud: no known victims this year; PCSO Williams intends to visit potential victims to offer advice.
- CCTV may show attempted break-ins as well as actual burglaries. Police would like to know where CCTV cameras are set up since it might be useful to view footage if there is an incident nearby – Please let him know if you have CCTV.
- No violent crime or criminal damage this year in Minstead.
- Speedwatch: can now survey 40mph roads – thanks to Mr Donawa’s persistence with pushing for this. Volunteers always needed.

Telephone numbers: He stressed that for emergencies, dial 999. Otherwise. use his mobile number and leave a message.

9. Update on proposals for a village shop

Tim Nicholson, Chair of Working Group, presented the proposals for a Community Shop to be located in a small area to the front of the Trusty Servant currently in use as a store room. The design (drawn up professionally at no charge) was displayed. The proposed shop would open 7 days a week, selling coffee/tea, cakes, a few basics, milk and maybe village produce. It would be a not-for profit enterprise, run by volunteers – at least thirty volunteers required.

He summarised the costs of setting up the business and presented a business plan for its operation.

The Working Group has plans for fundraising that include (in the short term) a Quiz Night in April then a Pop-up Coffee Shop on the Village Green at some weekends. They are exploring further possible grants and the will be issuing Shares in the enterprise.

In response to questions he explained that:

- It is NOT possible to use the previous shop premises; other locations had been considered and it was concluded that the Village Green was the best option.
- The landlords of the Trusty Servant have agreed that the Community Shop could sell coffee/tea and cakes.

10. Update on superfast broadband

Cllr Taylor outlined the current position in Minstead. There is an existing scheme *Hampshire Superfast Broadband Wave 2*, connecting fibre to the premises (FTTP), that should be operative by end of 2019. However, it covers only part of Minstead village, 100 properties.

A new community scheme could get FTTP to more properties (an additional 73) but this will need a contribution from the community. HCC will match-fund. Time is short because parties must sign the contract by end March and pay by end April – payment to a crowd funding scheme run by HCC. It would then take 12 months to implement. If the total fund is not raised, it will not proceed and all monies paid will be refunded.

Offers were made to help with the fundraising which the chairman agreed to take under consideration.

11. Items requested by the Public

There were none.

Meeting closed at 21.07