

**Minstead Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 19.30**

Meeting held in Main Room in Minstead Village Hall

Present: Cllrs B Andrews (Chair), H Bennett, M Causton, G Hough, J Smith, R Taylor, Cllr Mrs Andrews (NFDC), Cllr E Heron (HCC), PCSO Richard Williams (Hampshire Constabulary), B Mollett (Clerk) + 18 members of the public.

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

Apologies noted from 15 parishioners

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting, 16 March 2022

These had been published and were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Report by Chairman

Cllr Bill Andrews reported:

Thank you all for making time to attend this Annual Parish Meeting.

Fabric

- We are delighted that the Minstead Community Shop continues to be well patronised, many thanks to all the team involved in that.
- The housing for the village clock on the old shop building has still not been replaced, and the clock is still not running.
- Our Parish Lengthsman, Stephen Short, 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 and drains and gullies, monitors the condition of our Roadways, Hedges and Ditches and works on our footpaths and their drainage. Many thanks to Stephen, and to Cllrs and Clerk for keeping him informed of our needs.
- We have continued to receive support from Hampshire County Highways both directly and through the good offices of Cllr Heron. We wish him well in his new endeavours. Please use the HCC website to report road issues directly.
- We are also grateful to have received many years' support from Cllr Mrs Andrews who is now reluctantly leaving NFDC for pastures, or should I say oceans, new!
- Please remember that all property owners are responsible under **Riparian Ownership** rules for keeping their hedges cut back and ditches cleared alongside their properties, even if these are outside their garden boundary.

Community

- We are well pleased with the useful and much-visited Minstead Community website, and the ever-expanding reach of our Facebook page. Many thanks to Cllrs Georgie Hough and Jack Smith for keeping on top of those.
- Our monthly eNewsletter is distributed to nearly 300 addresses, please sign up if you don't yet receive it, copies are kindly printed and delivered to neighbours who are not connected to email. Our thanks to Cllr Miranda Causton for masterminding this.
- Continued efforts to bring Ultrafast Fibre Broadband to the whole Parish have borne some fruit, more is coming. Our thanks to Cllr Richard Taylor and Cllr Miranda Causton for all their efforts with Openreach.

6. Police report by PCSO Richard Williams

PCSO Richard Williams updated the meeting on current and planned police initiatives and responded to a number of questions from the floor.

7. Report by Hampshire County Councillor Edward Heron

Cllr Heron provided a verbal update and answered questions from the floor

8. Report by New Forest District Councillor Mrs Diane Andrews

Cllr Mrs Diane Andrews briefed the meeting with the following update:

The last year has been a very active one across the district.

The headlines have mostly been about the Waterside and the Freeport, which has been estimated to bring in 8,000 jobs. While this is good news, common sense asks where will these people come from and where will they live? Having said that, the timing of this will be well spread out from now until 2035.

The Fawley Waterside development on the Drummond Estate has not yet put in a planning application, so it is likely to be years until completion, but I am hopeful that it will be a jewel in the crown, being an exciting, innovative and exceptional development with water frontage and marine access.

Moving up the Waterside we have the huge Exxon Mobile site, covering 3,250 acres. It refines 270,000 barrels of oil every day a (fun fact, it also has the longest privately owned jetty in Europe at 1.5km long.) In the future they will need a further 400 technically trained employees. Exxon are already working with educators and will be at the forefront of decarbonisation technology and hydrogen capture.

Solent Gateway will be dealing with aggregates, Ports and logistics and Marchwood Port, is for the time being already storing containers. All of these projects, except Exxon depend on being able to get direct road access to Southampton this being severely impacted by the road along the waterside, the A326.

Recent discussions with the Waterside Steering group indicated that the main sites would be unable to do anything until they had upgraded the A326, Hampshire Highways confirmed that even if construction was agreed, which it has not, it would not be finished until the next decade, which calls into question, some of the estimated gains and employment numbers predicted for the district.

It has not been all about the Waterside, Fordingbridge has had some major developments agreed this year and the population will double over the next few years. Ringwood has enjoyed stable growth with new business investment being brought to the area. The new Platinum Jubilee Business Park owned by NFDC will be opening in late spring and is already over one third let.

To reduce the impact of these new residential developments and to support the Habitats and Species regulations a range of greening and social projects have been delivered this year funded from CIL, developer contributions.

1 in Hythe

4 Totton

4 in Lymington

2 New Milton

The total being spent on these 11 projects is £850,000 The projects range from new walking routes, new signage, and providing additional green space with access for all. These projects will be convenient, attractive and safe to use.

The New Forest is a vibrant and healthy place to live and the future is looking bright.

I cannot say the same for some villages in the National Park, we are stagnating, with no new or affordable homes we are not attracting younger families. There have been stalwarts who for many years filled the essential roles needed to keep our village vital and flourishing, but these parishioners have aged, they have done their bit, and so now we are struggling to find

new volunteers. Junior Minstead, the Pantomime, the flower show, the hall, the church all need supporters. I have no solution, but it is a conversation that we need to have.

This will be my last Annual Parish meeting, I will not be standing for re-election in May. It wasn't my choice, but that's politics for you! I have represented this ward of Bramshaw, Copythorne North and Minstead for 12 years and have been proud to do so.

My time in the New Forest District Council has been fulfilling and I have enjoyed my varied roles firstly as Chairman of the Planning Committee, then I held the Portfolio for community affairs, and more recently Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure. Throughout the years I have worked closely with this Parish Council and I know how motivated and committed they are. It can be a thankless job.

To me, the important thing about being a Councillor Parish or District is to have the people and the place at the heart of everything you do. To have a real interest and connection with those living in the community.

Bear this in mind when you elect your new District councillor in May. Now more than ever you want to know that your councillor will give a 100% commitment and be a person who understands the history of this place and what makes it special.

I will be leaving NFDC and my role as Deputy Leader on 4th May. Thank you all for your support over the years.

9. Update from Minstead Green Group

A presentation was given on the Minstead Green Group by Cllr Smith, who also answered questions and suggestions from the floor.

10. Update on Volunteers

Cllr Bennett briefed on the need for volunteers to both support community resilience plan and to support vulnerable parishioners. She requested that any volunteers contact the clerk for further information.

11. Items requested by the Public

- a) Fenwick Hospital: A parishioner encouraged all parishioners to become involved in supporting the campaign to save the historic Fenwick Hospital facility.
- b) Future Meeting Items: A Parishioner suggested that future items of interest for Annual Parish Meetings might include:
 - i. presentation from the Forestry England about local issues and initiatives and
 - ii. representatives from NHS to speak about local services

Action: Chairman committed to consider these items for future meetings
- c) Village Shop(Old): A parishioner raised a question about the parish council's role in lack of application for change of use for the "old" village shop. As this item had been raised and responded to at a number of previous forums and meetings, the chairman requested that any specific questions be put to the council in writing.

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 3 April 2023 at 19.30.

Meeting closed at 20:55