

Minstead Parish Council - Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 27 March 2024 at 19.30

Meeting held in Main Room in Minstead Village Hall

Present: Cllrs B Andrews (Chair), H Bennett, M Causton, G Hough, D Pascoe, J Smith, B Stratford, Cllr Hilary Brand (NFDC), Cllr E Heron (HCC), PCSO Richard Williams (Hampshire Constabulary), R Burke (Forestry England), D O’Grady (Clerk) + 20 members of the public.

1. Attendance Register and Apologies

Apologies noted from 4 parishioners

2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, 22 March 2023

These had been published and were agreed and signed.

3. Matters Arising from the previous minutes

None

4. To receive the Annual Report by Chairman

Cllr Bill Andrews reported:

- Thank you all for making time to attend this year’s Annual Parish Meeting which is a legal requirement and is for Parishioners’ benefit but is convened by the Parish Council for convenience. Whilst all parishioners are most welcome to attend, speak and ask questions only those registered as Local Government electors may vote if necessary on any business conducted.
- This year Parish Council has welcomed two new Clerk and RFOs, we hope that Diana will stay with us.
- Council also has two new Councillors - Brice Stratford and Dimity Pascoe. We are all volunteers you know, would anyone like to join us?
- As always, the Parish Lengsthman has done a huge amount of good work in all kinds of weather, Thank You Stephen.
- The Minstead Oil Buying Group continues to be a great service and we thank Mike Hutton for running this.
- There is also a FloGas buying group for LPG looked after by Dave Donawa
- Speedwatch is locally administered also by Dave Donawa, many thanks to him and his team of volunteers.
- Our local Postie not only delivers mail, but he also litter picks most weekends, passes on messages and probably has the best and most frequent overview of this Parish – Thank you Sean!
- We have had good success using the “Fix My Street” App to report road and verge problems, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and a host of other issues directly.
- 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. An explanatory notice is on the board by the post-box on the Village Green, and online.

- Don't forget the Village Website, eNewsletters, Facebook pages etc, sign up if you already haven't.
- Our continued efforts to bring Ultrafast Fibre Broadband (FTTP) to the whole Parish have borne more fruit, we are more than 50% covered now and more is coming (particularly when we can get the A31 westbound closed for a few days' trenching work)
- Once again, I hope you will join me in thanks to all Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their time, industry, and effectivity; to both County and District Councillors for their continued support, to our Policemen Richard and Mark, and to all of you who take things on in, around and for this Village.

5. To receive the Financial Statement by the Clerk and RFO

- Audit of the governance of Minstead Parish Council and the accounts for financial year ending 31 March 2023 will be carried out in April 2024.
- Council has increased the precept request to £14,400 for the coming year, 2024 - 2025. This was necessary to keep up with inflation over the last 2 x years and results in an increase in Council tax of £6.66pa on a Band D property.
- Council finances remain in a sound position with a current balance in excess of £13,000 (excluding reserves). There have been no unusual costs beyond those relating to council administration and normal maintenance within the parish.
- In addition to the general reserve maintained by the council (£6,000), the council has established specific reserves for potential upcoming investment which may be required:

Cricket Pavilion (Repairs or replacement)	£15,000
Audio Visual Equipment (Village Hall)	£5,000

Note: These are held as a reserve only and not committed for payment
- Grants were received this year from:
 - HCC to support HCC Parish Lengthsman Scheme: £1,100 towards Lengthsman salary; this will continue into 2024 – 2025.
- The Parish Council has made grants and donations so far this year to:
 - Minstead flower show and Royal British Legion

You can view the Parish Council finances yourself at any time on the Minstead website, with details published monthly in the minutes.

6. To receive the 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.

This time last year there were quite a few shed break-ins. Favour the idea of being on the Operations Sherlock WhatsApp Group. Covert police activity throughout the NF including Minstead. Hampshire Alert is an email system – you join, sign-up and have alerts from police and emergency services. It is scam free. Quarterly survey for the public signed-up. Speedwatch, Operation Mountie will be carried out on the C17 soon. Working harder on speeding and driving offences in general in the Forest.

7. To receive the Report by Hampshire County Councillor Edward Heron

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

Encouraged people to complete the HCC Futures consultation. All leisure centres must provide swimming for schools. Looking after 600m older vulnerable adults and 380m most vulnerable children. Leisure centres are not for profit organisations. Swimsafe was recommended from the floor for swimming lessons. Concerns voiced from the floor about litter close to the A31 / M27 junction, Cllr Heron agreed and HCC/NFDC have action in hand with National Highways. Cllr Heron emphasised the difficult decisions made by HCC on how money is spent.

8. To receive the Report by New Forest District Councillor Hilary Brand

- Road issues remain a concern for residents especially speed limits. I have attended meetings with resident regarding road issues and have pushed for a Road Forum to be set up with Lyndhurst Parish Council which is now in place with the first meeting held in January. I have received new information from Hampshire Highways regarding how to move to a 20mph zone which is being investigated. I have continued to raise to Hampshire all issues reported to me regarding road use, pavement access, drainage problems, potholes etc of which there are many.
- I continue to liaise with OpenReach regarding the continued roll out of Gigabit Broadband in Minstead. Unfortunately, there is a hold up for some residents due to the need to close the A31 to enable cabling to be installed. The time frame for this closure is yet to be determined.
- Issues of theft and burglaries were raised earlier in the year with much press attention. Information regarding what signage can be used to deter burglars was passed on to Minstead Parish Council and a CCTV roll out in Lyndhurst funded by NFDC is in progress.
- Many residents reported to me their concerns of the closure of long-standing swimming clubs at our public Leisure Centres. This decision was reversed by Freedom Leisure after many Councillors pushed for this to be reviewed.
- I have worked with residents on many issues from Homelessness, rat infestations, noise complaints, parking problems, broken gates, broken drains, rubbish collection, inappropriate fines/licenses, missing benches and many more and will continue to do my best to support residents when required.
- I have supported the Cadnam Cricket Club with their plans to set up a children's cricket club in Minstead with advice and a grant donation. I have helped Foxie's Futures obtain the status of Asset of Community Value for the Foxlease Estate to enable them time to fund raise and provided a donation. I have also provided a donation to Lyndhurst Preschool to enable it to continue to July 2024.
- I continue to run and support The Den (Youth Club based in Lyndhurst Community Centre) which has been running for nearly two years. This is managed by a group of volunteers with attendance of between 10 – 20 children approx. age of 11- 15 years.
- I continue to be the Treasurer of Friends of Lyndhurst Surgery and Lyndhurst Village Decorations Committee. I also became a licensed child chaperone to support the children's pantomime at The Vernon Theatre in January.
- I currently sit on the following Committees at NFDC:
Planning Committee, Housing and Communities panel, Parking Task and Finish Group.
- I will continue to support the residents and businesses of Lyndhurst and Minstead as best I can over the coming year.

9. Update on Cricket Pavilion by Cllrs Smith and Pascoe

A presentation was given on plans for the cricket pavilion by Cllr Smith, who also answered questions and took suggestions from the floor.

10. Richard Burke Forestry England on local matters of interest

How FE manage visitor behaviour through the New Forest Code. Working in partnership is increasing the reach of messages. Improve the quality of the mobile catering offer in the New Forest for example providing NF Marque ice creams instead of others brought in from elsewhere. Favouring vans powered by solar panels over diesel etc.. Maintenance of car parks is a challenge with the wet weather. Details on tree planting and a reminder about ground nesting bird protection. Discussion about deer management and drainage issues in Minstead.

Richard answered questions from the floor.

11. Items requested by the Public

Concerns about leisure facilities especially swimming pools being taken into private ownership and management and this impacting childrens' learning to swim. Cllr Brand will check the current situation and will reply.

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on Monday 8 April 2023 at 19.30.

Meeting closed at 21:20