West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 8 July 2013 in Itchenor Memorial Hall.

Present: Mrs J Boadle, Mr M Chater OBE (Chairman), Mr G Colbourne, Mr J Hartley, Mr A Spencer, Mrs S Taylor, Mr C Watson

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), Mr P Montyn
9 members of public,

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm

59/13C Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

60/13C Questions/comments from members of the public.

The Chairman explained the purpose of the public speaking session as clarification was sought on the discussion to take place.
Mr Mead-Briggs commented that he had sent Cllr Taylor an email questioning whether this was right time to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan. He thought it was premature as the village was within the Conservancy Area where policies in the draft Local Plan were deficient. This makes the Neighbourhood Plan questionable as it has to follow Local Plan. Once the Conservancy Area issues were resolved then it might be appropriate to proceed. Mr Mead-Briggs commented that the Neighbourhood Plan can only follow or increase the allocated housing numbers. The Itchenor Society has also just finished the updates to the VDS which carries some weight although not as strong as a Neighbourhood Plan. He finished by stating that he was not suggesting that the Parish Council did not produce a Neighbourhood Plan just that he thought to start the process now was too soon. This view was supported by the other members of the public present.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mead-Briggs for his comments adding that the sway of public opinion would determine the route the Parish Council takes. It is possible to have a plan for a community that does not necessarily have allocations of housing. The Parish Council would take account of all opinions in the community. The process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan was a long one and it was not just about housing, even in light of the formal statement provided. He was surprised at the conclusions drawn, as a Neighbourhood Plan can be good for the community for a range of reasons.

Mr Arnold commented that he had discussed the merits of a Neighbourhood Plan with a number of people and he was looking for positives for having a Neighbourhood Plan. Amanda Jobling had questioned what happens if the Harbour Office becomes redundant but he suggested that this was hypothetical and it was not possible for us to predict what will happen in future.

Mr Holmes asked whether the Parish Council had objected to the planning application in East Wittering relating to the move of The Co-op store. He explained why he felt this should be objected to and asked the Parish Council to consider responding.
Mr Moate supported his objections.

61/13C District and County Councillors reports.

Mr Montyn commented that grass cutting had been of concern to local parishes and he had forwarded the cutting schedule to the Clerk for interest. Urban areas were subject to 6/7 cuts but in rural areas this was only 2/3 cuts on the roadside verges. This is more than required under current regulations. Funding was in short supply but it may be possible for parishes to organise more frequent cuts with County Council help.

The Chairman highlighted the safety aspect of verge cutting adding it was helpful to know cutting schedules. Mr Montyn highlighted the safety measures taken in cutting along with the new WSCC Highways website.

The Chairman commented on the work of volunteers in cutting back vegetation and expressed the need for information from the County Council on safety measures.

Mr Montyn reported on the Conservancy concerns regarding the Local Plan. A number of working panels were set up to deal with comments received. The comments made by the Conservancy are now in the draft Local Plan included as separate stand alone policy in the revision.

Mr Montyn highlighted the need to ensure the Winter Management Plan was agreed with the County Council within the timescales set.

62/13C Apologies for absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

63/13C Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Taylor declared an interest in Agenda item 12.

64/13C Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 13 May 2013

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting on 13 May 2013. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

65/13C Matters arising from the minutes of 13 May 2013.

There were no matters arising.

66/13C Minutes of the extra Parish Council meeting on 21 May 2013

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the extra Parish Council meeting on 21 May 2013. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

67/13C Members Reports.

67.1 <u>Meetings of Local Government Associations, AiRS/SALC, SERCAF, National/sub regional developments, Manhood issues and Birdham School – Cllr Chater</u>

The Chairman reported that there had not been many formal meetings recently.

The Chairman, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Colbourne had attended the District Council meeting on 23 May 203 where parishes had expressed particular anxiety over travellers. Other events attended included on 6 June the NALC conference in Sheffield with Rory Stewart MP present. The Chairman had been unable to attend the Chairman's networking day on 12 June but Nick Boles MP had attended as guest speaker and he had been very forthcoming in his comments.

The Chairman met with the Chief Executive of NALC on 18 June.

Birdham School Governors meeting took place on 20 June. The Chairman briefly highlighted changes in the links between Local Authorities and schools, including the-pressure on providing Academy Schools for the future. Good schools and governors will thrive others may suffer. Birdham Primary school is a Church controlled school

but the Church will work more in partnership with the state in the future. Loss of Local Authority support is a sad change that has arisen due to economic circumstances.
NALC council met on 2 July and covered reports of meetings with DCLG Ministers, the programme to create new councils, 35% of the country is parished currently. The Chairman referred to the Sustainable Communities Act relating to the Council Tax support grant. Government has declared support for the programme to pursue localism. There is a need for funding at lower levels to make this work and this has been made clear to Ministers.
The Chairman commented that although some of this information may seem remote but this work percolates down to local communities. Tight fiscals controls remain a challenge to parishes.
The Chairman reported that sadly Pauline Mould had sadly passed away on 5 July; she had been a church warden for many years.

67.2 Planning – Cllr Taylor

Cllr Taylor reported that the Planning Committee had met twice and had recommended approval for the two applications. The District Council has permitted 2 applications.
An appeal has been lodged by Mr Antill regarding the boat store at Chandlers Reach. The Planning Committee did not feel it necessary to add further objections.
The footpath by the Land adjacent to The Oast has not been reinstated satisfactorily and Cllr Taylor was drafting a letter to WSCC asking them to take further action.
Cllr Taylor reported that nothing appeared to be happening at Old Haven and she was hoping to arrange a meeting with the owner in August.

Cllr Colbourne questioned whether the Parish Council should receive notification of all appeals. Two properties in the village had appealed against the District Council refusal to grant planning permission. He added that the appeal for Sea Urchin had been allowed by the Planning Inspector. It was agreed that the Clerk would check the process with the District Council.

Cllr Colbourne commented that he felt the reinstatement of the ditch at the front of the Land adjacent to The Oast was unsatisfactory. It was agreed to pursue this with the District Council.

The Chairman also highlighted the Peninsula Forum minutes and Medmerry updates.

67.3 Road issues – Cllr Spencer

Cllr Spencer reported that Highways had installed speed loops from 1 to 11 June 2013. He has spoken to Dan Sanders and Greg Ockwell who were analysing the information. This will be circulated and Cllr Spencer will follow up in due course.

68/13C District Council proposals regarding planning applications.

Despite a significant number of Parish Council's and the Conservancy writing to complain about the proposal to give delegated powers to Officers for /DOM applications the District Council has only deferred a decision to the July meeting (23 July). The District Council has sent out a copy of the report from the Task & Finish Group which gives some background into the reasons behind the proposal. Copies of the relevant pages of the report are enclosed. The CDALC group members also discussed this at the meeting on Monday 24th June and members (who were not District Councillors) remain resolute that this was not the way to proceed. Their recommendations included, better training for Parish Councils, easier access to Planning Officers, great involvement of District Councillors. There was real concern that this could seriously damage relations between the District Councils and Parish Councils. It was also noted that the number of /DOM applications is likely to reduce

anyway because of the relaxation in planning laws. A copy of the letter from CDALC to Heather Caird was circulated for information.

Cllr Colbourne suggested that the District Council has missed an opportunity and that planning fees could be increased to reflect the level of work involved.

Cllr Taylor agreed adding that the fees to comply with Building Regulations were far more realistic.

Cllr Hartley commented that the planning committee put in a lot of time reviewing applications and do so as volunteers. He thought the proposals were counterproductive.

The Chairman highlighted the effectiveness of the planning committee and suggested that the District Council needs the good will and understanding of parishes.

Cllr Spencer expressed concern that the District Council was not actually saving costs. If the staffing levels remain static the District Council is not saving any costs.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow Mr Montyn to comment.

Mr Montyn reiterated that the Parish Council would not lose the ability to object to applications. Parishes would be listened to and officer communication would be better. In addition there would still be the option for a District Councillor to red card an application. It would be incumbent on the case officer to meet with Parish Council representative to discuss an application. He stressed that this change was not just about costs but also efficiency savings.

Mr Montyn suggested that although planning application fees seem cheap but it should be available to anyone to afford. There was an increase in work for the planning officer to go to committee. He also highlighted problems where a Parish Council objects but doesn't go to the Planning Committee meeting to argue the case.

The Chairman suggested that where a Parish Council carries out site visits and puts forward reasoned arguments this proposal would make them feel alienated by the District Council. Dedicated councils are objecting to this process.

Cllr Taylor added that it seemed that more sensible parishes were being penalised for the less conscientious councils.

Mr Montyn argued that the Parish Council's concern was not mirrored across the district as only 15 out of 60 parishes had written to express their concerns.

The Chairman suggested that those parishes were looking for practical and efficient methods of retaining democratic process and he reiterated his concern about alienations with the District Council.

Mr Montyn insisted that there was no removal of the democratic ability to protest and that there would be the ability to speak to planning officers which was not there before. The planning function is being decreased in size and there is now only one Planning Committee. Everything is being streamlined and made more efficient. He highlighted that it was far more expensive to the District Council for applications to come to the Planning Committee.

The Chairman commented that everyone understands the need for review. However Parish Councillors live in their local communities and this understanding needs to be valued and utilised. Planning Officers don't necessarily live in the local community and understand the desire to maintain this area.

Cllr Colbourne suggested there was a need as well to have more involvement to support an application and asked if the Parish Council could talk to the Planning Officer about both scenarios.

The Chairman observed that currently if a Parish Council objects to an application if the Planning Officer is going to support the application then they have to put forward a strong case to get the Planning Committee to agree. In the proposed new environment the Planning Officer doesn't have to defend his decision against the full Planning Committee and this was a cause for concern.

69/13C District Council - Draft Housing Strategy.

Copies of the Draft Housing Strategy had previously been circulated to Councillors for consideration.

Cllr Colbourne commented that the document was very woolly, full of aspirations and platitudes but it had no substance. He suggested that it needed concrete suggestions on what the District Council was going to do.

Cllr Taylor commented that the aspirations were good but there was a need for diverse range of ages and social groups within a community. People need to have a clear idea on what is going to be proposed. She suggested that the timing of the consultation was not good as recent Government policies will make a difference to numbers of housing needed.

Cllr Spencer highlighted the figures for affordable housing in developments. He suggested the Planning and Housing departments at the District Council were out of sync and he highlighted a recent development where the numbers of affordable homes were reduced to appease the developers when it was affordable housing that was most needed.

70/13C Itchenor Society proposal to purchase land.

A copy of the letter from the Itchenor Society had previously been circulated to Councillors for information. The Clerk reminded Councillors that this was essentially a private matter between the Itchenor Society and a resident.

The Parish Council noted the correspondence and it was agreed that the Parish Council would write to the Itchenor Society to thank them for the information provided.

71/13C Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Taylor reminded Councillors that the Neighbourhood Plan had been discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting at which there was a strong indication that a Neighbourhood Plan should be developed. The forthcoming Newsletter sets out the details behind the Neighbourhood Plan. Most important for the Neighbourhood Plan is the consultation. A questionnaire has been drafted to go out with newsletter which is planned for delivery to coincide with Itchenor fortnight as many of the weekend residents will be here during that time. Questionnaires are to be returned by 31 August so that responses can be collated and reported on at Council meeting in September.

The Chairman sought to reassure everyone that the Parish Council would be looking at all aspects of the village in terms of the future and would ensure there was appropriate guidance and direction. The Neighbourhood Plan would be a community led plan that reflected the views and aspirations of the villagers.

He added that Neighbourhood Plans do not happen overnight and Slaugham village who were one of the earlier parishes to start the process still has not yet adopted their plan.

Cllr Taylor reminded everyone of the stages that had to be completed before the plan could be adopted. The proposed questionnaire will provide the community views and does not bind the Parish Council to continuing with the process.

The Chairman explained that the Council was looking at community ownership and direction for the plan. Cllr Taylor concurred that community involvement in the plan was essential.

The Chairman commented that the village has wonderful attributes and distinctive features. There are lots of second homes and recreation facilities. The question was, is this a living community are there things that have been missed out. This may mean looking at the wider issues.

Cllr Taylor commented that although Itchenor had no housing allocation the Neighbourhood Plan was not just about housing but also to other assets valued in the village and additionally assets that can aspire to.
Cllr Hartley commented that the Parish Council was just laying the groundwork in the event that the Community supports a Neighbourhood Plan.
Cllr Colbourne suggested that starting the process did not mean that the village would necessarily end up with a Neighbourhood Plan. He had spoken to a number of people about the Neighbourhood Plan and all had advised the Parish Council should set the ball rolling.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should start the process towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow for additional comments from the public.

Mr Blevins commented that a major business had become insolvent earlier in the year and asked the Parish Council if discussions on the site and its potential use could be factored into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Holmes commented that the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be well thought through and works with the District Council's Local Plan. He added that there was a sound relationship between the Itchenor Society and the Parish Council and it was important to retain this and work closely together.
The Chairman responded that the relationship with the Itchenor Society was hugely important and the Parish Council would work to keep that going.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments and resumed the meeting.

8.45pm 7 members of the public left the meeting.

72/13C Clerks Report.

CCTV Meeting

A date needs to be agreed for the final CCTV proposals to be communicated to residents to establish whether there is support for this to go ahead.
Cllr Spencer reported that the Home Office has released new guidance and subsequently the Information Commissioners Office was in throes of rewriting the guidance last issued in 1998. Expectation is that this would be published in the next couple of months. Cllr Spencer suggested that it would be difficult to agree how to proceed without knowing what the new rules would be and suggested that the Parish Council delays any further action until the new guidance had been published.
It was agreed to delay matters until the revised guidance had been published and a note would be put on the Parish Council website explaining the reasons for the delay.

The Chairman suspended the meeting.
Mr Arnold asked for accurate details on what is being proposed as the information provided to date had been mixed.
The Chairman explained that this information would be provided once the updated guidance had been issued and reassured Mr Arnold that the Parish Council would not proceed without residents knowing what was being installed.
The Chairman resumed the meeting.

Chichester District Council

Advance notice has been received that the next meeting between members of Chichester District Council and representatives of Parish Councils will be on Thursday 17 October 2013. Further details, including the topics to be will be notified in due course. However, Mrs Katy Bourne, the Sussex Police & Crime

Commissioner, has agreed to attend and speak. There will also be a presentation about the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was agreed that Cllr Spencer and Cllr Hartley would attend and the Chairman would be available if needed.

Website

The website has now been updated and it is hoped that it will continue to be a good source of information to residents. www.westitchenorparishcouncil.org.uk

Operation Magpie launched to tackle burglary in Sussex

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne has joined Sussex Police in launching Operation Magpie - an initiative formed to tackle burglary in the county. The first phase of Operation Magpie will begin by denying the use of the roads to burglars. Officers will carry out spot checks on vehicles in locations across Sussex to prevent burglary and detect crime where it has taken place.

They will be based at strategic points around the county in a robust and ongoing series of operations. Burglars will not know when or where the next spot check will appear. The teams will use technology and local intelligence reports to stop any vehicles that are highlighted as being driven illegally - such as those without MOT or insurance as well as those thought to be linked to burglary.

Spot checks will also be used to try to catch burglars using the roads. This is the first time this tactic has been used by Sussex Police specifically to target burglars.

The launch of the operation coincides with the start of the warmer months when there is a typically an increase in burglaries due to homes not being left secure.

New Homes Bonus

At the All Parishes Meeting hosted recently by Chichester District Council, Cllr Tony Dignum (Cabinet Member for Finance) announced plans to allocate £456,000 of New Homes Bonus to Parish, Town and City Councils. Applications are invited for consideration at a special meeting of the Grants and Concessions Panel in October 2013. A copy of the eligibility notes and details of the funding allocation were circulated to Councillors.

Save Our Village – East Wittering

An email has been received from a group of residents concerned about the Co-op proposals to take over the local pub in East Wittering.

Cllr Spencer asked what would happen to the existing store. This was unknown.

The Chairman expressed anxiety that ancient pub was being closed to provide a bigger shop. There was concern this may damage other local businesses. The Chairman also highlighted concern that the new chemist within the doctors surgery had resulted in a loss of business for another in the village.

Cllr Watson expressed concern about large delivery lorries having to go through the village to service the store.

Cllr Colbourne highlighted the advantages of having a bigger store adding it may reduce traffic going to Chichester.

It was agreed that this would be delegated to the Planning Committee to respond.

New Highways Services Website

The website address is www.westsussexhighways.org

The hope is that customers will "self-serve" by finding out information for themselves without having to contact the County Council by other means. This should be quicker and more convenient for customers, and cheaper for the County Council.

Unauthorised encampments

At the All Parishes meeting the District Council reported it would make some financial and practical assistance available to support Parishes in dealing with Unauthorised Encampments. A protocol and supporting documents which sets out that support and how it can be accessed have been made available to Parish Clerks.

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency is holding a community drop-in to explain more about the work we are doing, in partnership with the local authorities and the community, to help manage the risk of flooding on the Manhood Peninsula. West Sussex County Council will be available on the day to talk about the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which sets out how flood risk will be managed across the county, in partnership with other risk management authorities. There will be the opportunity to have your say on the strategy, to make sure it is supported locally, understandable, correct and appropriate. Drop-in anytime between 3pm and 8pm on 18 July 2013, at Bracklesham Barn, Beech Avenue, Bracklesham, PO20 8HU.

73/13C Finance.

73.1 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £2312.12 be made. See appendix 1 (July 2013)

73.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts up to 30 June 2013 was **APPROVED.**
See appendix 2 (July 2013).

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

1 member of the public left the meeting.

74/13C Parish Amenities.

Cllr Spencer outlined the extent of the Village Pond explaining which parts were owned by the Parish Council and the Woodger Trust. Discussion on the ownership and maintenance issues took place.

RESOLVED that Cllr Colbourne and Cllr Spencer would progress the points raised with input from Cllr Watson and Cllr Hartley where appropriate.

75/13C Items for referral to the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 9 September 2013.

No additional matters were raised.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.41pm

Signed_____ Date_____
Chairman