West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 9 September 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), 11 members of public

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm

76/13C Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman explained the purpose of the public session which allowed members of the public to put their views forward.

77/13C Questions/comments from members of the public.

Mr Edwards commented that he was looking to the Parish Council for assurance that it was working on behalf of the residents. He questioned why the Parish Council had appeared to move away from issues discussed in 2006. Previously the Parish Council had worked closely with the Itchenor Society, RoSPA and the Conservancy in maintaining a very rural pond. Recently there seemed to be no connection between Parish Council, the Conservancy and the Itchenor Society on maintenance of the pond. Mr Edwards sought reassurance that the Parish Council would stick with the policies agreed in 2006. He highlighted the considerable concern of residents when RoSPA had suggested fencing round the pond.

The Chairman commented that there were two parts to the work carried out. The Woodger Trust had undertaken to carry out some clearance of the ditch on the eastern side of the road. The Parish Council had undertaken work on the pond side of the road. Normally any work would have been done in conjunction with the Itchenor Society. However on this occasion because the parish Council was able to take up the services of the Woodger Trust contractor at a reduced rate the Parish Council had agreed the work.

Mr Mead-Briggs requested that the Itchenor Society be involved a little more in matters on the agenda. He suggested that if they had to make contributions only at the start of the meeting it would be difficult to have an active part in helping make some of the decisions.

The Chairman carefully explained the extra efforts that were made when Mr Mead-Briggs and Mr Arnold were able to be involved. He also explained the difficulties that the Parish Council faced by allowing members of the public to comment during meetings.

Mr Mead-Briggs explained that this would be his last attendance at a Parish Council meeting as he was stepping down as the Chairman of the Itchenor Society and others would then become involved.

Mr Arnold expressed concern that there would be no discussion on matters.

Cllr Colbourne explained that the Parish Council would debate and discuss the items on the agenda. He reiterated that there would continue to be discussion with the Itchenor Society on matters but this would not be within the Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Colbourne explained that for many other organisations it would be possible to have a working party that would look at the issues and come to a decision. The Parish Council however had to make all its decisions in at a formal Parish Council meeting.

The Chairman stressed that this did not preclude the views and initiatives of the Itchenor Society from being taken into account.

Mr Burnford queried why the Parish Council had come to a decision on the pond without it being raised at the last meeting. It was pointed out that the pond was discussed in a private session at the July meeting.

The Chairman suggested that if the Pond was a critical issue then it may be possible to bring it forward on the agenda.
The Parish Council agreed to change the order of items 8 and 9 on the agenda.

78/13C District and County Councillor Reports.
Mr Montyn had sent his apologies.

79/13C Apologies for absence.
There were no apologies for absence.

80/13C Declarations of Interest.
The Chairman declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 as a resident on the Common.

81/13C The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 July 2013
The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 8 July 2013. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

82/13C Matters arising from the minutes of 8 July 2013.
Min 67.2 – Cllr Colbourne asked if the Clerk had made progress on the appeals notification procedure. The Clerk responded that this was still outstanding.

83/13C Members Reports.

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

The Chairman made a very brief report and highlighted a number of matters.
The Chairman had attended the Birdham Primary School play which had been very well received by parents. A new Nursery has opened at the school with the support of the Woodger Trust. The Nursery will accommodate 30 children and he promoted the link between the Primary School and Nursery education.
The Chairman had attended a reunion at Chichester University and he added that it was now rated seventh in the country by students.
The Chairman highlighted the work of the Manhood Peninsula Partnership which had created a significant impact on the Manhood, protecting infrastructure, wildlife and environment. He also highlighted the Medmerry project reporting that the footpaths should be completed by November. There were around three hundred people who will be reassured that the danger of flooding in their homes had been significantly reduced.
The Chairman had attended the last Peninsula Forum meeting and had suggested that Councillors attend the next one which would feature neighbourhood planning.
It was noted that Cllr Watson would be attending the Community Resilience Forum on behalf of the Parish Council on the 19 September 2013.
Other forthcoming events highlighted included on 31 October a joint WSCC/WSALC conference at Boxgrove and the AiRS /SALC AGM on 7 November 2013.

83.2 Planning – Cllr Taylor

Cllr Taylor reported that only two Planning meetings had been held and the Planning Committee had made no objections to the applications. The District Council had approved tree works in the Conservation Area and permitted three applications.

Although not in the parish the Planning Committee had considered the Co-op application to build new premises on the site of the Royal Oak in East Wittering. A letter outlining the Planning Committee's objections to the proposals had been sent to the District Council. Cllr Taylor reported that the District Council had deferred

determination to November due to concerns about noise, information on the viability of the Pub, the retain impact on local shops and design issues. In addition, at the request of Save Our Village Assets, the District Council has now listed the Royal Oak Pub as a Community Asset and she explained what was involved.
Cllr Colbourne raised a question about who actually made the Pub the village asset.
Cllr Taylor responded that the District Council had done this in response to the request from the group.
Cllr Taylor reported that the District Council after a number of meetings and communications had agreed to include solar panels in the Article 4 Direction. The amendment has to be subject to a public consultation and this expires on 16 September. Providing there are no strong objections the amendment should be approved. This will mean that in future planning permission will be necessary for the installation of solar panels in the Conservation Area.
Cllr Taylor reported that she would like to thank the Itchenor Society and particularly Mr Mead-Briggs for the invaluable support in achieving this outcome.
Cllr Taylor reported that the letter to Ms Moutrey (WSCC) had eventually been responded to by a Ms Luff. This response advised that the ranger had been asked to organise the discussed works and that two weeks' notice of this work would be given to the land owner. Cllr Taylor expressed some frustration that she had been unable to elicit any further information on a likely start date from either Ms Moutrey or Ms Luff.
The Chairman expressed concern about the apparent lack of communication.

83.3 Road issues – Cllr Spencer

Cllr Spencer reported on the possible installation of a 20mph speed limit from the barns to the hard. Cllr Spencer and the Clerk had met earlier that day with Greg Ockwell (WSCC) and Mr Mead-Briggs and Mr Arnold. The next stage would be to create a map of where signs would be installed. After this the Parish Council would need to apply for a Traffic Regulation Order which he advised may be a lengthy and costly exercise but that the Parish Council was in negotiation with WSCC to keep costs down. As regard installation Cllr Spencer suggested that this could be carried out by suitably experienced people within the village.

84/13C The Pond.

Cllr Colbourne had circulated a report on the pond to everyone prior to the meeting. Councillors needed to look at the Risk Assessment, maintenance and future activities. RoPSA undertook an inspection in June and the subsequent report had identified certain issues. He suggested there should be a balance between maintaining the pond as a natural feature and protecting the pond as a village amenity. The Pond area itself is very large; however, the area the public uses is very small. He emphasised that it was important to ensure that nothing inhibits the flow of water through the pond.
Regular maintenance has been done by the Parish Council and the Itchenor Society with Mr Edwards mowing the grass area. Looking at the RoSPA report it is clear the Parish Council needs to do more maintenance. The Inspector was keen for the edges of the pond to be visible. One recommendation would be to undertake regular strimming and put round posts to mark the edges. There is an Issue as to whether further clearing may be desirable. Some clearance had been done on the north east side of the pond where vegetation had overgrown. On the road side of the pond there had also been an accumulation of vegetation. He appreciated that this had been done to provide a barrier but it had proved difficult to maintain.
Cllr Colbourne suggested that where this vegetation had been cleared the Parish Council could consider putting in a barrier; his preference would be for a natural hedge which would provide a more amenable outlook.
Cllr Colbourne explained that about half of the water area of the pond was owned by the Woodger Trust and leased to the Parish Council. The Parish Council has the

responsibility of maintaining this area. The Woodger Trust land extends across the footpath/road and includes the ditch on the other side. The Woodger Trust had engaged the services of a contractor to carry out some work on the ditch and the opportunity to use the contractor at a very reasonable rate was too good to pass up.
The other area that needed discussion was the Island in the middle. This has been cleared from time to time. Cllr Colbourne highlighted the need for care as he didn't feel that the Parish Council wanted to encourage people to cross onto the island.
In addition the Parish Council should consider whether to dredge areas of the pond.
The silt build up was significant. The Pond appeared to be about half a meter deep but with the silt might be much deeper. The silt may also be restricting flow of water through the pond and it was important that the pond worked as it was meant to.
Cllr Watson explained his background, his first degree being in fresh water ecology, he had also spent many years lecturing on fresh water quality management and it remained an ongoing interest.
Cllr Watson described the sediment as anaerobic, due to there being no substantial rooted vegetation. There were some water lilies which were visually nice but did not do anything for the water quality. The only way to oxygenate the pond was through turbulence such as rain water or with oxygenating plants and wildlife. Cllr Watson had undertaken PH testing of the water. This was found to be acceptable at 7.8, mildly alkaline for this area which was to be expected. However the PH of the sediment was 5.5, showing it to be significantly acidic. Water creatures normally found in such ponds are unable to survive in the acidic sediment. He had also measured at least a foot of sediment. If the pond is not managed well it will eventually end up as a marsh or bog. Cllr Watson suggested there were two approaches that could be taken either conservation or preservation.
Conservation allows for natural progression, preservation involves maintaining the pond as it is.
Cllr Spencer commented that he would like the pond to retain its look of naturalness but not to die in the process. He added there was not much wildlife in there at the moment.
Cllr Watson responded that there should be water voles nesting round the pond adding that the implementation of post and branches around the edges would inhibit their ability to nest. He added that the Woodland Trust were offering free trees and hedging and that he had put in a request for 30 mixed hedgeland species as the deadline for applications was closing. Should the Parish Council not wish to use these then the offer can be turned down later.
Cllr Colbourne highlighted the recommendations that had been made stressing the importance of not diminishing the Pond's function as a flood water catchment area. He commented that views amongst villagers were mixed and that it was really down to individual judgement.
There was some further discussion on the silt issues and how this could be used to infill certain low lying areas.
Cllr Spencer reported that he had spoken to Peter Mann (RoSPA Inspector) in depth earlier in the day. He reported that Mr Mann's preferred method of lining the roadway was to put in a natural low hedge rather than bundles of vegetation cuttings that were difficult to control and not environmentally friendly.
Cllr Colbourne explained that recommendations a, b and c were all about the removal of dumped vegetation and insertion of low hedge. He added that the Parish Council would consult with the Itchenor Society and Conservancy on the specifics.

The proposals put forward were:
a) that the grass areas are enlarged to the northeast of the pond?
b) that the grass areas are enlarged to the southeast of the pond?
c) that the (previous) high vegetation and waste piles between the pond and the footpath be managed to improve the sightlines and light to the pond?

d) that shrubs or a low natural hedge be planted and maintained between the southwest part of the pond and the footpath?

RESOLVED that the recommendations be accepted.

Cllr Colbourne raised the issue of what work should be done on the island.
Cllr Watson explained that if nothing was done vegetation and fallen trees may die back and fall into the water. This would ultimately increase the amount of sediment that would not break down.

RESOLVED that some clearance of the island should also be undertaken.

The Chairman allowed a note from Mr Mead-Briggs to be read out.
Mr Mead-Briggs had written "The Itchenor Society would like to be involved. Please can you put your plan for all the changes that the Council want to make to the village pond to the village before your council carry out any of it – perhaps in a newsletter or a public meeting".
Cllr Colbourne suggested that the issue had been given a lot of thought and that a good way forward had been agreed. He did not think a public meeting would be helpful although a report in the next newsletter would be useful. He suggested that the Parish Council was proposing that the Pond be maintained as it currently is and when the timing was right, putting in a low hedge to provide amenity value and satisfy the RoSPA requirements.
The Chairman commented that it was important keep the community involved and there should be a newsletter release as soon as possible. He expressed concern that the pond may die, Cllr Watson had given expert advice and the Parish Council was looking to maintain the pond in the best way possible. He suggested that the Parish Council would communicate via newsletter as soon as possible. He hoped the public were reassured to a point on the advice received. Other areas of concern will be picked up and considered as appropriate.
Cllr Hartley expressed concern that the hedge would grow and be an impenetrable barrier and it needs to be maintained.
Cllr Watson reassured him that hedging species involved will be manageable and would enhance the wildlife.

Cllr Spencer explained the reasons for the closed session at the July meeting.

85/13C Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the decision made at the July Parish Council Meeting, a Neighbourhood Questionnaire was submitted at the end of July to all households and businesses in the village. There were in excess of 80 responses (roughly 36%). Included in this figure are responses received by e-mail from respondents who did not wish to reply to the questionnaire. Responses were not only from the residents but also from the business and landowning communities and the Conservancy. Out of the responses received were ten that were against a Neighbourhood Plan.
It would appear from comments received that there was some misunderstanding as to the nature of the questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was consultation to ascertain the views and aspirations of the residents in West Itchenor as required under the Localism Act and which, the Parish Council deem to be desirable. It was not the setting out of Parish Council policy for example, that the Parish Council advocated further development as policy. It was a consultative document.
There will be a detailed analysis of the replies but already common themes are emerging from the responses. Residents are very aware of the unique character of the village and, although many are not completely adverse to future development, would want any such development carefully controlled. This applied to extensions as well as new build. People generally felt safe in their own homes but many would like

to see greater security in the village such as an increased police presence and CCTV strategically placed. There were some strong views on street lighting!
Many residents participated in the same organisations but views were expressed by some that it would be desirable to have more recreational availability, such as a community tennis court and play areas for younger children. The public footpaths were very popular and, based on the replies, well used. On "Green Issues" allotments and car sharing were very popular. Many residents expressed a desire for a village shop/café. On a more poignant note, one or two replies indicated that people with mobility issues felt isolated and that there was little communal support for them. Whilst the reality may not be the case, as it is a caring village, it is nevertheless a perception by the people involved and is a perception that should be addressed. It also shows the importance of the consultation process as it highlights such issues.
The Parish Council may now consider adopting the following proposals:-

- To submit a Neighbourhood Map to Chichester District Council. If such a Plan is accepted by the District Council it will be published on their web site for six weeks for consultation.
- To set up working parties to take the matter further. It is proposed that invitations be sent to the following organisations to send a representative to sit on these working parties to ensure that all aspects of the village are included:- The Itchenor Society, Itchenor Memorial Hall, The Church, The Conservancy, The Ship Inn, The Sailing Club, The Marine Businesses, Other businesses and Landowners.

It will not be necessary for all the representatives to attend every working party meeting as topics may be discussed that are not relevant to them but it is important that the availability is there for all voices to be heard .

The Chairman thanked Cllr Taylor for report which will be followed by a long process of analysis and testing out within the community. At all stages the community will be at the centre of the issue.
Cllr Colbourne commented that it was encouraging that the response rate was so high.
Cllr Hartley added that it was clearly worth the effort to get the questionnaire out to residents at the height of the holiday season.

RESOLVED that the recommendations be accepted.

86/13C The Common.

Cllr Colbourne reported that he, Cllr Spencer and Cllr Watson had undertaken a walk of the Common and a brief report had been circulated to Councillors.
He highlighted the variations in the name that the Common was known by - Itchenor common / Shipton common. He commented that the Common was bigger than he first thought as many areas were covered in trees and brush.
The Councillors had looked at infringements, areas where the Common was not accessible or as it should be. One or two areas appeared to have been annexed as part of a garden. Other infringements had included the parking of cars and although some progress had be made with two houses, it was still an issue elsewhere, as detailed in the report.
Cllr Colbourne commented that there were some lovely tress on the Common and some that were not so desirable.

He highlighted the Parish Council's Common Management Policy and explained the need to add a statement about bins, outlining the reasons.
Cllr Colbourne suggested that the Parish Council wrote to all residents on the Common enclosing a copy of the Common Management Policy and waited to see if this brought forward any comments. After a period of time then the Parish Council

should then write to specific residents where infringements had occurred to try and get a resolution to the infringements.
Cllr Colbourne also reported that most residents also looked after the Common in front of their own properties. Wicks Farm looks after the rest. A few residents do not look after the area in front of their property and Cllr Colbourne questioned whether the Wicks Farm contract should be extended to cover these areas.
The Chairman suggested it might be advisable to approach those residents again. Those who do take care of the Common in front of their property might be aggrieved that others did not have to take care of the Common in front of them.

Cllr Colbourne also suggested that the Parish Council might consider enhancing the Common. Many areas were now woodland which had become overgrown with vegetation.
The Chairman highlighted work of the Itchenor Society in planting of the trees for wildlife and as a protection against travellers.
Cllr Colbourne suggested that the entrance to the village by the Caravan Park was very attractive but the opposite side had become very overgrown. He suggested that consideration be given to cutting out some brush to access the woodland from this point down to the parish notice board and back up the Itchenor Road.
Cllr Colbourne suggested that Councillors take some time over the next month or so to walk the Common with a copy of the map so that some discussion could take place in November.
Cllr Watson suggested that any proposed work would focus on increasing accessibility, not necessarily to create large open areas but perhaps put in footpaths to allow people to walk through the woodland areas.

The Chairman took a note from Mr Mead-Briggs which read “Can any opening up of the tree’d area of Shipton Green please be put to the whole village before any action is taken”.
The Chairman reminded everyone that the public could make comments about the proposals in the public session and that further submissions could be made as matters were subsequently explored.

87/13C District Council Draft Local Plan – Key Policies.

Details of the latest consultation had previously been circulated to Councillors for review.
Cllr Spencer highlighted pages 37 to 44 of the document and suggested that the District Council had made some effort to protect the AONB and brought back some policies for that area. He highlighted the protection offered by the Ramsar area adding that the District Council admits that it may be impossible to accept applications that might fall foul of the Ramsar requirements.
He also drew attention to the Shopwyke development which had no shops, no schools and limited access to and from the site.
The Chairman reported that the Manhood Peninsula Partnership had welcomed the changes and revisions. A good deal of pressure had been put by Parish Councils to get account of the AONB arguing that the impact of preserving interests of the harbours against too much development was important to minimise pollution so as not to unduly affect the AONB.

88/13C Clerks Report.

88.1 <u>Councillors Training</u>

The Clerk highlighted the next Councillors Training which would be held on Saturday 23 November at the Chichester Hotel. It was agreed that Cllr Boadle and Cllr Watson would attend.

88.2 Clerks Training

The Clerk sought permission to attend the next Clerks Networking Day on 8 November at Crowborough. **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be allowed to attend.

88.3 CDC on street parking enforcement survey

The Clerk highlighted the current survey designed to highlight issues relating to on street parking enforcement within the district. It was noted that responses were invited from individuals as well as the Parish Council. It was agreed that Cllr Colbourne would complete this on behalf of the Parish Council.

88.4 Medmerry Time Lapse Cameras

Details of the link to the Medmerry Time Lapse cameras were given to Councillors.

88.5 Planning matters

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the District Council had at a meeting on 24 July approved the use of delegated authority for /DOM applications. In addition the District Council had approved a decision to introduce electronic consultation on planning applications. Consultation with parishes in this way will start from 1 April 2014. The exception to this is for major applications, where Planning Officers will continue to send parishes a hard copy of the submitted plans. It is proposed that the electronic consultation will be via a new 'consultee access' module to the current Public Access. This will enable parishes to be set up as 'consultees' which will mean that automatic links to new applications in the parish will be sent, which can be downloaded negating the need to search for them. This will give parishes a standardised response process, an automated acknowledgment and a record of their comments. An upgrade of the Council's Public Access system that is shortly to be introduced will include an embedded measuring tool for measuring plans. The District Council also plans to hold a training session on planning matters, key procedures and the red card system on 1 November 2013 (2 – 5pm). Two councillors are invited to attend. It was agreed that Cllr Taylor and Cllr Spencer would attend.

88.6 Southerly Yachts

The Clerk reminded Councillors that Management at Southerly Yachts had been in touch regarding concerns over the public ambling through the yard thinking it was the public footpath. A number of suggestions regarding a resolution to the problem had been circulated. It was recommended that Southerly Yachts be invited to implement their suggestion of putting a gate at the entrance to the yard. In addition to request that the Conservancy put up signs directing the public to the correct footpath and also highlighting the disabled parking spaces in the car park. This proposal was agreed.

89/13C Finance.

89.1 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £2,176.39 be made. See appendix 1 (September 2013)

89.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts up to 31 August 2013 was **APPROVED.**
See appendix 2 (July 2013).

90/13C Items for referral to the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 11 November 2013.

Clerk' Annual review
Unnamed roads in the village

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9pm. He thanked Councillors for their work and the public who had remained throughout the meeting.

Signed_____ Date_____
Chairman