West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 10 November 2014 in Itchenor Memorial Hall.

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

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), 11 members of the public

The meeting commenced at 7pm

99/14C Chairman's Welcome
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

100/14C Questions/comments from members of the public.
Mr Mead-Briggs reported on the Planning enquiry into the 160 houses at Bracklesham. The Western Manhood Consortium is now looking at appearing at the Planning Enquiry when housing numbers are looked at. A decision on the Planning enquiry at Bracklesham is due January 2015. Mr Mead-Briggs suggested residents should support the Examination in Public hearing on 2 December 2014 when the Inspector will be revisiting the issue of housing numbers.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mead-Briggs for his reports from the enquiries.

101/14C District and County Councillor Reports.
None

102/14C Apologies for absence.
Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Boadle and Cllr Taylor.

103/14C Declarations of Interest by Members.
Cllr Chater declared an interest in Agenda Items 12 and 15 (The Common) as a resident on the Common.

104/14C Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 September 2014
The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 8 September 2014. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

105/14C Matters arising from the minutes of 8 September 2014.
None

106/14C Members Reports.

106.1 Meetings of Local Government Associations, AiRS/SALC, SERCAF, National/sub regional developments, Manhood issues and Birdham School – Cllr Chater
Cllr Chater's report is attached as an addendum at the end of the Minutes.

The Chairman commented briefly on the Chairman's networking event highlighting information on Pensions, fracking and housing.

106.2 Planning – Cllr Taylor
Cllr Taylor's report is attached as an addendum to these minutes.
It was noted that at the Local Plan enquiry after representation from the Conservancy supported by the Parish Council the District Council had agreed that the wording in Policy 43 bullet point 5 will be changed from 'considered' to 'meet'.

It was also noted that in relation to comments regarding primary school capacity, there were no spaces in any of the primary schools on the Manhood.

106.3 Neighbourhood Plan update – Cllr Taylor

Working Parties are currently working on drafting policies and the next full meeting of the Steering Group is scheduled for 28 November 2014. The Chairman reported that the District Council officers had suggested to all Parish Councils that in light of the progress on the Local Plan enquiry Neighbourhood Plans should be put on hold until the outcome of the audit on housing numbers was known.

106.4 Broadband – Cllr Spencer

High speed broadband is now available to residents in Itchenor. BT had advised some residents that they would have access to speeds of 40mb in practice this was nearer 20Mb. It was also noted that there had been some teething problems for BT customers but this was only expected to be short term.

It was proposed that the Parish Council writes a letter of thanks to Louise Goldsmith (Leader, West Sussex County Council) to thank her and the team for working hard on the issue of securing high speed broadband for rural communities. Many County Councils were not doing such a great job on this issue.

It was also noted that the Parish Council would next be tackling the issue of mobile telephone services.

106.5 Ditches/Flooding issues – Cllr Spencer/Cllr Watson

Mr Tyler has carried out a desktop survey and now has plans to walk the village to review the situation. It was reported that responsibility for the clearance of ditches would be the responsibility of Riparian land owners in the New Year. There were ditches identified as not draining as well as they might. Some of these needed remedial work and Land owners should be aware of their responsibilities.

There was a need to have a review of the Pond as it needed work. There was concern that without work the Pond could turn into a marsh. The Trees at the back of the pond are not helping with the drainage, the dead ones need taking out, others need thinning out. This work needs some management to ensure it is done sympathetically, work carried out needs to be functional as well as acceptable to residents. Cllr Watson also highlighted the need to remove much of the silt and dead trees although the cost of this could be in the region of £20/£30,000.

It was reported that the Manhood Wildlife Group were carrying out an inspection of ditches across the Manhood looking at wildlife and pinch points in water flow.

The Chairman suspended the meeting.

Mr Dunn expressed concern that he had met with Cllr Watson and representatives from Highways in May and had sent a report on the situation and was still waiting for the Parish Council to take action on this.

The Chairman responded that the Parish Council now had maps of the drains through the village as well as contour maps. The Parish Council has been pressing for Highways to clear the ditch along the front of The Oast and the land adjacent to it. An application has been made to the County Council Quick Fix Fund to address this issue.

The Chairman resumed the meeting.

The Parish Council was also intending on applying for funding for de-silting the Pond from the Operation watershed funds.

It was reported that the Rife that drains from the Pond into the Harbour had become overgrown. The Environment Agency usually undertakes clearance work every two years. There was some uncertainty as to whether this would continue although the Chairman reported that the Environment Agency had said this work would be undertaken around January/February 2015.

The Chairman closed the meeting.
Mr Arnold suggested that in the past there had been working parties which had raked out weeds in the Pond. He also suggested it would be cheaper to hire a small digger which could pull out much of the silt and this could be put at the far end of the land by the pond to build this up. He urged the Council to consider this as an alternative.
Mr Payne also highlighted similar work done previously on the pond. Although it was noted that last winter most of the stuff pulled out had washed back into the pond.
The Chairman resumed the meeting.

After some discussion on the pros and cons of digging out the pond and transferring this to other areas the Parish Council agreed to take some advice on the matter.
It was agreed that Cllr Watson would make the appropriate enquiries.

107/14C Proposed village shop.

A report from the Village Shop Steering Group was read out a copy of which is appended to the Minutes. It was noted that the project was still at an investigatory stage and there was still plenty of work to be done. The Steering Group was hopeful that residents would see the value of the project and they would support it.
It was noted that Community shops succeeded as communities invested in the success and they were not focused on making a profit. The Steering Group would be happy to receive suggestions on how the project could be communicated to residents.

A query was raised on why the Steering Group was not looking at use of either of the two unoccupied premises at the harbour end of the village. There was concern that approval of a temporary building could set a precedent as well as worry about the possibility that the two empty units may become unviable.
The Steering Group confirmed that the project was no longer considering it as a temporary venture and the venues being considered were being looked at on a permanent basis.
The Parish Council agreed that it could not dictate to owners how their premises should be used.
The benefits of having the venture based at the Memorial Hall with its central location and good parking facilities were highlighted.

108/14C Free Hazard Assessment for the trees within the parish.

Details of a full Free Hazard Assessment of all trees in and around the Parish areas which have not been surveyed or maintained in a number of years had been circulated to Councillors. The assessment will highlight any health and safety issues and provide a suitable and cost effective answer.
The Chairman commented on the responsibilities of tree owners highlighting some high profile cases where there had been problems where land owners of public bodies had not undertaken risk assessments of the trees on their land. The Parish Council had responsibility for trees along Shipton Green and around the Village Pond.

The Chairman closed the meeting.
Mr Green advised that as a land owner he had faced similar concerns about liability and that the County Council regularly inspected the highways and would advise when they considered a tree hazardous. At that stage he would need to take action.
It was noted that the situation may be different when Trees overhang the public highway.
Mr Dunn expressed concern about having such an assessment done and suggested the Parish Council should consider paying an independent company to undertake such a survey. There was concern that the free offer would come with strings attached and that the Parish Council may be beholden to the company providing the report.

The Chairman resumed the meeting.

The Parish Council agreed it had a duty of care to have the trees inspected and ensure their safety. It was noted that any work done would have to be done in conjunction with the District Council Tree Officer.
It was agreed that the parish Council would take up the offer of the survey.

109/14C Traffic Regulation Order.

There had been a good response to the Parking Survey from residents. Like most surveys it had been fairly inconclusive. On the whole the proposal had been favoured by residents on or near The Street and not wanted by residents living further away. Additional ideas have been suggested and the Parish Council will review these and any alternative options in the spring.

110/14C Encroachments on the Common.

Cllr Colbourne had reported on matters relating to Travis Perkins and Mulberry Cottage at the last meeting. The owners of Mulberry Cottage had provided some documents relating to the driveway that needed looking into before any action is considered.
It was suggested that the Clerk be asked to write to Travis Perkins asking them to confirm their acceptance of the boundary of the Common as discussed with them. Once any such confirmation is received then the Parish Council needs to consider what if any action it might want to take.

The issue of sight lines by the Shipton Green junction had also been raised. There remain some uncertainty over whether hedging had been planted on the Common or not. It was noted that the hedging had been planted some years ago at the specific request of the Parish Council. The Parish Council had previously sought advice from the County Council Highways Officer. At the time the Highways Officer had advised that there was not a problem with the line of sight. It was agreed to ask the Highways team to review the situation.

111/14C Clerks Report.

<u>Parish Council elections</u>

The next Parish Council elections will be held on 7 May 2015 and all current parish councillors will formally retire on 11 May 2015. Should a casual vacancy occur after 11 November 2014 then the Parish Council has two options. The first option is not to fill the vacancy and await the election of parish councillors on 7 May 2015. The second option is for the Parish Council to decide to try and fill the vacancy by co-option. The Parish Council is not obliged to fill the vacancy. Should the Parish Council fill the vacancy under this option the person co-opted should be informed that they will only serve until 11 May 2015. Should they wish to stand after that date they will need to take part in the nomination process which will commence in March 2015.

<u>A27 Campaign</u>

West Sussex County Council is campaigning for improvements to the A27 throughout the County. As part of this work a draft study on the impact of noise from traffic is being undertaken. Full details of the study were circulated to Councillors. The Council was asked to consider whether to put its name to the campaign. The Parish Council felt that the biggest issue with the A27 was not the noise but congestion.
Proposals for the A27 which had been commissioned in the last couple of years were highlighted.

Information relating to the A27 in the context of the Local Plan enquiry were also highlighted. It was noted that the proposals put forward be developers improved traffic flow along the A27 itself but would not help traffic on the Peninsula.
Consideration of introducing a flyover, underpass or increasing size of the Stockbridge roundabout had been ruled out as they were not cost effective.

112/14C Finance.

112.1 Half yearly budget figures

Details of expenditure to date as well as commitments for the remainder of the year had been circulated to Councillors. The Clerk advised that there was in addition £400 of reserves that had been earmarked for the Diamond Jubilee plaque that was being organised by the Itchenor Society.
It was noted that the commitments for the remainder of the year should also have included £1500 towards the Neighbourhood Plan. This meant that the Parish Council had no surplus funds at the present time.

112.2 Grant requests

A request for funding to support the Manhood Project Officer had been received. The Council was also reminded of the request from the Church that had been held over from the September meeting.
It was noted that the Manhood Peninsula Partnership had been very helpful in drawing the parishes on the Manhood together and were very supportive of all of the parishes. The Parish Council was happy to support local projects but less certain about financing other organisations.
It was agreed that the Parish Council would review the requests when considering the 2015/16 budget.

112.3 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £3,922.38 be made. See appendix 1 (November 2014)

112.4 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts up to 31 October 2014 was **APPROVED.**
See appendix 2 (November 2014).

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.
The 11 members of the public left the meeting.8.16 pm

113/14C Legal Matters relating to the Common.

The Clerk reported on the findings from the District Valuers report.
RESOLVED that a letter setting out the Parish Council's position be sent.

It was reported that contractors working on a new build on the Common were from time to time parking on the Common and not utilising the layby opposite. The Clerk was asked to write requesting that in view of the winter weather that the Contractors use the layby opposite for parking of vehicles in the first instance.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would renew its efforts to register title to the Common.

114/14C Matters relating to local businesses within the Parish

Concern had been raised as to what may happen with local businesses.

Resolved that the Chairman be authorised to seek a meeting with the relevant owner.

115/14C Items for referral to the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 12 January 2015.
No additional items were raised.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed_____Date_____
Chairman