West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Wednesday 8 July 2015 in Itchenor Memorial Hall.

Present: Mr G Colbourne, Mr J Dunn, Mr C Mead-Briggs, Mrs S Taylor
Mr A Spencer (Chairman), Mr C Watson

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), Mrs E Hamilton (CDC), Mr G Barrett (CDC), 3 members of public.

The meeting commenced at 7 pm.

56/15C Chairman's Welcome

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

57/15C Questions/comments from members of the public.

No questions were raised.

58/15C District and County Councillor Reports.

A report from the District Councillors had been circulated to members. Mr Barrett expanded on some of the issues raised in the report. Southern Water were now going to clean out the pipes along the network in West Wittering every three months. The problem is manhood wide. The Leader of Chichester District Council will be meeting with Southern Water this month and these issues would be raised.
Problems with developers not meeting planning conditions with regard to sewerage and the use of Building Inspectors from outside the Council were highlighted.

It had been discovered that the Birdham Road Travellers had been putting hard-core down which had been disguised with woodchip. A letter had been sent to their solicitor and reported to the Enforcement Team. The implications of the Article 4 directive which had been served with immediate effect were explained. The Conservancy has been involved with the case and pressure was being put on parties to clear the site. A recent Test case is also being looked at.

Mrs Hamilton reported that she had a free cycle rack spare if the village would like it.

59/15C Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Trevelyan.

60/15C Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Taylor declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 (Neighbourhood Plan) as the District Councillor Cabinet member for Housing and Planning.

61/15C Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 18 May 2015

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 18 May 2015. The Minutes were **AGREED** and the Chairman duly signed them as being a true record of that meeting.

62/15C Matters arising from the minutes of 18 May 2015.

47.15/C Northshore
The Conservancy has decided to approach Northshore directly before seeking enforcement action. The Parish Council had been advised by the Enforcement Team that this issue was a low priority case and that the site users had been told they must put in an application for change of use. The case officer had reported that he would wait until the end of the week before taking any further action.

Although there may be a dispute over ownership of the moulds the enforcement action is taken against the users of the site.
Cllr Watson will chase information on Tree GPS services from The Tree Council and report back at the next meeting.
Cllr Watson had been speaking to PCSO Rose Bainbridge regarding the 20mph speed limit and did the Parish Council want her to help pursue this matter. It was agreed that this was currently in hand.

53/15C – Clerks report
It was noted that the Parish Council's lease with the Woodger Trust had revealed that the Parish Council was not responsible for any work on trees within the leased area.

63/15C Minutes of Planning Committee meetings held on 26 May and 29 June 2015.
The Minutes of the Planning Meetings held on 26 May and 29 June were duly **NOTED.** The Planning Committee had agreed to put on the Agenda for the next meeting an application for a Solar Farm in Bosham which was within the AONB. Attention was drawn to the Natural England comments on the site and it was suggested that the Planning Committee might read this before the Planning meeting.

Old Haven continues to cause concern as nothing has happened. It was noted that the Applicant felt the District Council was being unreasonable. The Applicant has been advised that he can come back with fresh designs and these will be subject to the normal consultation process.

64/15C Terms of Reference for the Environment Committee.
Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated for approval. It was noted that the members of the Environment Committee wished to operate as a working party and notes from any meetings would be made available on the website.
The Environment working party, plan to meet over the next few months to get to a stage where a paper detailing policies and procedures could be presented to the Parish Council for adoption. After this the group may then convert to a full committee of the Council.
The Terms of Reference were approved by the Council.

65/15C Operation Watershed fund.
The Parish Council holds £13,100 of Operation Watershed grant money for work relating to the ditches within the village. The scope of the tender for the work had been circulated to Councillors.
It was suggested that the Environment group should agree the priorities for any work and make a recommendation to the Parish Council. This was agreed.
It was also suggested that a review of the work should be undertaken in case there were areas where funds from other sources could be better used to undertaken any of the work. The Environment group would talk to Paul Cann about the possible diversion of the ditch around the land next to The Oast.

The ditch opposite Little Court was inspected recently and appeared to be completely blocked. Clearing this will be difficult. It was agreed that work should start from the crossing points under the road so that the ditches could be set to the correct depth.
It was also noted that some ditches have trees in them which shouldn't be there and there may be difficulty moving these from the Conservancy's point of view.

It was agreed that Cllr Dunn would write a short piece on the work of the Environment Committee for the newsletter.

66/15C Neighbourhood Plan.

A report from Cllr Mead-Briggs detailing a view on what the Neighbourhood Plan means for Itchenor and whether there is a need for a Neighbourhood Plan was circulated.

It was noted that the Chancellor had announced in his Budget speech that further Planning legislation would be announced on Friday. The Council was reminded that there had been a mandate from residents at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2013 for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Itchenor.

Two questions were raised 'What are we seeking to achieve by writing a Neighbourhood plan for Itchenor? What are we wanting to avoid putting in the NP – for example proposals/ideas that will become a hostage to fortune.' There was some discussion on what would be achieved with a Neighbourhood Plan and the need for a balance with what residents wanted to avoid. It was noted that the emphasis that had been placed on the requirement for development had been off putting. It was pointed out that housing itself did not have to be part of the plan and that details on sustainability were confusing.

Some members of the Council felt it was important to discuss the future of a Neighbourhood Plan as many people in the village seem to be supportive in general terms. The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) carries more weight than the Village Design Statement (VDS). It had been suggested that the Parish Council takes the important parts of the VDS to put into the NP as this has stronger legislative influence. There may well be development in Itchenor and it is important for village to take view on what development it wants. There was a need to be clear on the aspects of not being sustainable in the plan. It was unlikely that anything would go in the NP that would enhance sustainability.

It was also noted that the NP was voluntary and the Parish Council did not have to undertake one. A NP would also have to conform to the Chichester Local Plan.

Some members felt that the village was already well protected by the Chichester Local Plan, the Harbour Management Plan and harbour guidelines and there might be a danger of the NP conflicting with these.

It was suggested that the NP did not have to conflict with these documents and that when an application was referred to the Planning Inspector the NP would carry more weight than the VDS. It was also felt that the NP would also give more influence to the VDS.

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

Mr Barrett commented that West Wittering were having a similar discussion on their NP. They would be unlikely to attract future Community Infrastructure Levy money as the housing allocation had already been reached. As half of the area was in the AONB the Parish Council were considering whether to update the VDS instead.

A resident commented that the mandate referred to was based on results of the questionnaire but that the Parish Council had not explained the consequences of the questionnaire. It was questioned whether you can create a NP without any housing development as there seemed to be no clear answer.

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

It was noted that at a conference last year a Government spokesperson had reiterated that if possible every Parish Council should have a NP and that Government was enthusiastic about this.

It was suggested that Planning Inspectors were only interested in meeting government targets. However there was a mandate from residents given at the Annual Parish meeting in 2013 to proceed with the neighbourhood plan; a vote had been taken.

It was proposed that the Parish Council holds a meeting for residents where the reasons why it was considered important to pursue the NP were put forward alongside the reasons why a NP was considered not to be appropriate for the village of Itchenor. As there were so many variables and unknowns residents could consider all the points raised and give an indication as to whether they wished the Parish Council to proceed or not.

Therefore, it was agreed that a meeting for residents would take place on Friday 2 October, subject to the hall being available.
The Clerk was asked to let the District Council know that the NP was on hold whilst a further consultation on whether to proceed took place.

Cllr Mead-Briggs was thanked for his very informative paper.

67/15C Website.

A paper outlining sites recommended by the Sussex Association of Local Councils and questions on what the Council wanted for the website was previously circulated.
Discussion took place on creating more links with local businesses and organisations and it was agreed that there should be a disclaimer on the relevant page to the effect that the Parish Council was not responsible for the content of external sites.
It was suggested that external links should be grouped together under relevant headings such as 'Local Businesses, Local organisations'.
It was noted that if people searched for Itchenor the Parish Council website does not immediately appear and a suggestion as to whether the Parish Council should look at purchasing the domain names such as Itchenor.org and itchenorparishcouncil.org and have these pointing to the existing website. It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange to purchase these two website names and direct them to the existing Parish Council website. The Clerk was also requested to put a disclaimer on the website relating to external links.

68/15C Lease for the Pond.

Although the lease does not expire until September 2019 the issue relating to being charged for work on the leased part of the pond had highlighted a need to review the situation.
It was noted that under the terms of the lease the Parish Council had been charged £1 a year which had been paid in a lump sum at the beginning of the lease. The Woodger Trust at the time then made a donation to the Parish Council of £20.00
The Council briefly discussed whether it might wish to seek renewal of the lease or let the Woodger Trust maintain this part of the pond.
The Clerk was requested to make enquiries with the Land Registry to see if title had been registered and also to ask the Agents for a copy of the lease including the plan of the Pond.

Concerns raised included; ensuring that the Woodger Trust would maintain its part of the Pond effectively to ensure its drainage function was not impeded and the potential ongoing liabilities and costs of maintaining this area.

It was agreed to defer this to the Environment group to review the situation once all the information requested had been obtained. This would then be reported back to the full Council.

69/15C Clerks Report.

The Clerk explained the purpose of the Circulation File of general information. Cllr Mead-Briggs took the file as the first to read the contents.
Further details of the County Council Boundary Review had been circulated to Councillors. It was noted that there was little effect on West Itchenor as a result of the Boundary Review
For communication purposes the Clerk asked Councillors to advise her when they were going to be on holiday.

70/15C Finance.

70.1 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £2110.01 be made. See appendix 1 (July 2015)

70.2 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts up to 30 June 2015 was **APPROVED.**
£18,000 has been moved from the current account into the deposit account so that it would attract some interest until such time that the funds were required.
See appendix 2 (July 2015)

71/15C Items for referral to the Parish Council Meeting on Weds 9th September 2015.

No additional items were raised.

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 3 members of the public and the District Councillors left the meeting.

72/15C Staff Matters.

The Parish Council undertook a review of the Clerk's salary. **RESOLVED** that the Clerk's salary be moved to spinal column point 30 with effect from 1st April 2015.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed_____ Date_____
Chairman