West Itchenor Parish Council

Minutes of a Meeting of West Itchenor Parish Council held on Monday 13 November 2017 in Itchenor Memorial Hall.

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

In attendance: Mrs C Smith (Clerk), Mrs E Hamilton (CDC), Mr P Montyn (WSCC), 8 members of public.

The meeting started at 7 pm

92/17C Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Parish Council meeting. Thanks were given to Alex Webb for her support during her time as Chairman of the Itchenor Society.

93/17C Questions/comments from members of the public.

None made.

94/17C District and County Councillor reports.

Mr Barrett had sent his apologies.

Mrs Hamilton mentioned the CDC campaign against littering. Plain clothes enforcement officers from East Hampshire will be patrolling areas and will fine people seen littering.

Mrs Hamilton highlighted the District Council's Warmer Homes Initiative where up to £5000 may be available for an energy efficient heating system for the whole house and thermal insulation for people on low incomes.

The District Council was due to make decisions on the council tax reduction scheme and southern gateway scheme in the coming week. It was noted that Council Officers had looked into the free flow scheme put forward but had said that it was not viable.

It was reported that many people had felt that the choices within the consultation were poor and so they had not responded at all.

Mr Montyn reported that the County Council was still putting its budget together, the Select Committee meets next week, again in December than approval would be sought from the County Council members in February.

The Harbour Conservancy had made an application for a dark skies discovery site. This has now been approved for Itchenor, Thorney Island and Chidham. An explanatory board will be installed to explain this. In February there will be a start gazing night.

The Harbour conservancy will be requesting a 2.6% increase on the precept request to the County Councils.

The County Council is likely to effect an increase of 1.9% on its general fund and 2% for Adult social care.

95/17C Apologies for absence.

None.

96/17C Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Mead-Briggs declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 - Old Haven as a nearby resident.

97/17C Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 September 2017.

The Chairman called for the approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11 September 2017. It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Parish Council

meeting on 11 September 2017 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting and they be signed by the Chairman.

98/17C Matters arising from the minutes of 11 September 2017.

Minute 82/17C – with regard to the adverse possession claim. A map of the Highways land had previously been submitted and it was confirmed that no-one can claim adverse possession on highways land.

Minute 87/17C – the newsletter was in hand and would be expedited by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Minute 85/17C – the question of who is responsible for verge by The Oast was raised. It was suggested that this was the County Council's responsibility and would be followed up under Agenda item 12.

99/17C Minutes of Planning Committee meetings - 18 September, 2 and 16 October 2017.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18 September, 2 October and 16 October 2017 were noted.

The issue of the Northshore moulds was raised, there were still moulds and ironwork in the fields. The owner of Northshore had not yet returned the field as it should be. It was agreed that there was a need to keep the pressure up. The Clerk was asked to raise the issue again with Shona Archer (CDC- Planning Enforcement Manager).

100/17C Rule 6 Party in the appeal for APP/L3815/W/17/3182257 – Old Haven, The Street, Itchenor - Appeal against the decision to refuse application WI/17/00448/FUL.

Cllr Mead-Briggs had prepared notes on this for the Council. The applicant has requested a three day public inquiry. Councillors had met with Caitlin Body (CDC-Planning Officer) who had suggested that if the applicant was successful then it would be a good idea for the Parish Council to apply for Rule 6 status. Ms Body is of the opinion that a hearing should be adequate for a householder application. The cost of holding an inquiry is huge. As yet there has been no decision on where the Planning Inspector is going yet. It was pointed out that there were advantages and disadvantages on applying for Rule 6 status. Cllr Mead-Briggs highlighted the possibility of being awarded third party costs although this was only likely to happen if the Planning Inspector felt that the Parish Council had acted unreasonably for example by wasting time in the process by failing to provide our evidence on time.

A brief resume on how Old Haven had been designated a Heritage Asset was given.

Once the Planning Inspector approved the appeal the Parish Council would only have four weeks in which to make the necessary statements.

The costs for this first stage were given at around £2000 and it was suggested that the Parish Council considers working alongside the Itchenor Society to undertake this.

The next stage could cost between £25,000 - £40,000 in appointing a barrister to take on the case. It was understood that this instruction would be undertaken by the Itchenor Society and not the Parish Council.

It was suggested that the Parish Council start the process with Cllr Mead-Briggs and the Clerk being delegated to work with the District Council and Itchenor Society to submit the application and raise the necessary funds.

Residents raised concern that unless we defended the refusal this appeal could undermine the West Itchenor VDS. In addition, there was concern about the impact of taking down the house and rebuilding would have a devastating impact on the village.

It was noted that proper governance and procedures needed to be put in place. The point was made that contracts may have to be entered into in the future and it should be made clear that the obligation to enter into those contracts will be the Itchenor

Society and not the Parish Council as the Parish Council can not undertake responsibility for unknown liabilities.

It was proposed that the Parish Council would work jointly with the Itchenor Society who would be responsible for the fund-raising side. Many people would want the amounts pledged to be confidential and this could be more easily achieved by the Itchenor Society rather than the Parish Council. Advice had been sought on how best to secure pledges from the Chairman of the Birdham Village Residents Association (BVRA) regarding their recent successful appeal at Birdham Farm.

A proposal was put forward that the Parish Council put forward £2000 to make a statement of case.
RESOLVED that the Parish Council approved expenditure of up to £2000 to apply for Rule 6 status.

101/17C Assets of Community Value.
Deferred to the next meeting.

102/17C Environment Working party update.
A report from the Environment working party was submitted and is appended to these Minutes.

An application to open up ditches in Redlands Lane with Operation Watershed funds has been refused. It is not impossible to get funding but more community involvement is required.

Cllr Colbourne declared an interest in this discussion as a resident who backed onto the rife.

At the recent public meeting, it was suggested that the Parish Council purchased a suitable measuring system, costs were awaited before the Parish Council agrees to take this on.
At the public meeting the consensus was that the riparian owners were looking for assistance from the Parish Council to manage any work on the rife. It was agreed that there was a benefit to the entire village that the rife is maintained.

The rife is a watercourse that needs to be well managed and is essential for whole community. It may be that the rife needs dredging and as a common concern to the whole parish, costs could be put into the precept request. There was some debate on whether the owners (residents) should be responsible for this. Management would ensure that work was not carried out piecemeal and that there was due consideration to the wildlife. For this reason, it was suggested that the Parish Council would be best placed to take on the management. Discussions ensued on whether the affected residents should actually form their own committee and pay for this work to be actioned as riparian owners of the rife.

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow for public comments.
If the sea wall was not there, then there wouldn't be a problem, the openings in the sea wall were the issue and they were not big enough.

The Chairman resumed the meeting.

The following points were put to the Parish Council for decisions.

1. The Environment Agency (EA)to supply details of suitable measuring devices for tide heights for the Parish Council to consider a purchase.
2. The Rife landowners have requested that the Parish Council consider managing the

regular maintenance of the Rife and adding the costs to the Council Precept.

3. The Stream within the Rife has not been dredged for many years and it's relationship with the Outflow level uncertain. The Parish Council to consider investigating this further and how this could be managed to ensure that the runaway is as efficient as possible.
4. Insufficient data is currently available to assess the flood risk level in more detail than just "1 in 20" by the EA. Any new data that might benefit those living behind the sea wall as well as the village as a whole cannot be gathered without private funding. Either the EA or other consultants could be engaged if the money is raised, but there is no current plan to proceed without local funding.

It was noted that eleven properties were affected by point 4. The chances of all eleven properties contributing towards the costs was very unlikely.
The costs of dredging the rife were currently unknown.

1 member of public left the meeting at 8pm

The Chairman suspended the meeting to allow for public comments.
What happens if the people who own the properties along the rife decide not to let water from the pond come through the rife?
The Chairman resumed the meeting

There followed some debate on the issues.
It was important to clear up the issue of who/how the rife should be maintained. The landowners don't know what to do. Some people think the sluice gates are too small. If the rife is dredged the water will clear more quickly to the sea wall then go nowhere. The sluice gates open for two hours each side of low tide. Bigger gates may not make much of a difference, so some research should be undertaken first. Someone needs to manage the process; will the Parish Council undertake this or not.
It was suggested that measuring equipment was not necessary as Cambermet was very useful and accurate and this could be used.
It was noted that the Environment Agency had suggested that water levels were already higher than anticipated and they had agreed to come back to the Parish Council to discuss this.

It was suggested that it was sensible to differentiate between the rife and the land around it, should the Parish Council have responsibility to look after the rife itself with riparian owners taking responsibility for the land surrounding it. The last survey for levels of the rife and the outflow had been requested.

Cllr Dunn commented that he was happy to meet with the relevant landowners and give then all the information he had.

Those attending the public meeting had been given data about tidal heights in 100 years' time and how this will overtop the sea wall. In reality, the sea wall is likely to overtop on regular basis in about 10 years' time when it will start to create a salt water lake. The sea wall is in an appalling condition, a salt water lake land side of wall will damage the sea wall further.

The Environment Agency retains responsibility for the sea wall and it was recommended that the Parish Council let them know that the wall in state of disrepair.
It was suggested that the EA should also have the responsibility to collect the data required themselves. Reports had been seen that a bigger pipe would also help the situation.

The EA and WSCC knew that some of the information given at the public meeting was not correct. They were not as prepared for the meeting as they should have been.

Issue of raising of sea wall in West Wittering (Snowhill) to protect properties there was highlighted. Fundraising had started with residents with public bodies then also making some funding available. The EA and WSCC had confirmed that if they saw the residents were putting funds in then they would help.

It was confirmed that funding would be given to the Flow group for mapping the trees. Cllr Watson would be assisting in this work. A report on work on trees had been circulated for approval. It was noted that any work on Woodger Trust land would be reimbursed by the Woodger Trust. Trees where there is a problem with drainage need action soon. The existing budget had some funding for this. It was agreed that the Parish Council should undertake site visits for some of the work. **RESOLVED** that the last two jobs on the tree report should be undertaken immediately.
A plea was made to the Itchenor Society to help with clearance work along with the suggestion that the work which takes place on the last Friday of the month requires rebranding and better promotion.

A vote of thanks was made to Cllr Dunn for all of his extensive work in getting together the relevant information and agencies to raise awareness of the issues within the village.

103/17C Community Green Offer (CGO) Pilot Project.

Details of the Community Green Officer pilot project had been circulated. It was noted that the Chichester District Association of Local Councils (CDALC) did not support the idea. It was noted that WSCC was reducing work on non-statutory duties in order to make cuts to the budget.
There was concern that the Parish Council has enough to do and that local residents already do a lot of this work. The offer was noted and it was agreed that the Parish Council would carry on the work that it currently organised.

104/17C External meeting reports.

A report on the last Chichester District Association of Local Councils meeting held on 27 October 2017 had been previously circulated.
Parish Online mapping, an offer had been to train Councillors. Cllr Dunn reported that the Environment Working party was already using mapping that is more sophisticated than parish online. The usefulness of Parish Online was highlighted and the Chairman offered to undertake training for Councillors who wished to use the system.

105/17C Clerks Report.

Katy Bourne (Sussex Police Crime Commissioner) has launched a county-wide consultation to ask the public if they would be prepared to pay more for policing in Sussex. The consultation will close on Friday, 5 January, and the results will help inform a decision which will be reviewed by the Police & Crime Panel at its meeting in January.

Chichester District Council, in partnership with local GPs and other health professionals, are working to develop a Social Prescribing project which aims to support individuals to tackle issues in their lives that impact on their health and wellbeing. Social Prescribing is defined as the skill of connecting people to services and support in local places. It is a service for GPs and other health professionals to refer patients who attend appointments with problems that are essentially nonmedical and require more holistic community based interventions. We want to develop this service initially over a 2 year period across Chichester District starting in April 2018.

It was agreed that the Chairman would speak to Elaine Thomas (Community and Wellbeing Manager – CDC)

Mrs Hamilton, Mr Montyn and 4 members of public left the meeting at 8.47pm

106/17C Finance.

106.1 Draft Budget for 2018/19

The draft budget was presented. It was agreed to look at funding a possible Rules 6 application from reserves. Although the budget had not yet been spent this year for pond activities this will be needed in future years.

The question of whether the Parish Council wanted to continue to maintain verges on an ongoing basis was made. Should the Parish Council contract externally for someone to undertake maintenance of some of the verges not maintained by residents.

It was agreed that it should be calculated how much this would cost to each household in one year. This item to be added specifically to the January agenda.

It was agreed to refine the budget at the January meeting.

106.2 Schedule of Payments and Receipts

RESOLVED that the payments listed in the schedule of payments and receipts totalling £2305.89 be made.

106.3 Statement of Accounts

The statement of accounts up to 1 November 2017 was **APPROVED.**

107/17C Meeting dates for 2018.

Meetings will take place on the second Monday of January, March, May, July, September and November 2018.

108/17C Items for referral to the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 8 January 2018.

Community Assets, Rule 6 status, Old Haven appeal. Response to community work being contracted out.

Three Members of public left the meeting.

109/17C Legal matters relating to the Common

A report on a recent meeting attended by Cllr Mead-Briggs and the Clerk was made.
The issue of the ruts created opposite the entrance to Travis Perkins was raised and the Clerk was requested to write to Travis Perkins and ask that they make good the affected areas.
The issue of the for sale sign outside Mulberry Cottage was raised and the Clerk was requested to write further to the Estate Agents to get the sign moved back within the curtilage of the property.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed_____Date_____
Chairman