

MIDDLETON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held in the back of Jubilee Hall, Elmer Road, Middleton-on-Sea
On Thursday 28th April 2005

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman), Aldridge, Copeland, Edey, Jeffrey, Mrs Mills, Mrs Ross, Wilkinson, the Clerk, District Councillor Mrs Oakley and Mr Morrison.

1. **APOLOGIES** – Councillors Chandler, Mrs Farley, Mansfield, Mrs Willis and County Councillor Mrs Freeman.
2. **MINUTES** – The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 24th March 2005 having been circulated were approved and signed.
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Mrs Ross declared a personal interest in Item 5 (i) as she has nearby business premises and in Item 7 (ii) being a member of the Middleton-on-Sea Association.

4 ITEMS not otherwise on the Agenda but which the Chairman considered to be matter of urgency due to special circumstances – The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from both the County Secretary's Office, WSCC and County Councillor Mrs Freeman regarding County Local Committees. At the February 2005 meeting, following the receipt of correspondence from the County Secretary and in discussion with County Councillor Mrs Freeman, it was resolved that this Parish Council would agree to become a member of the Joint Downland Area Committee (JDAC) whilst remaining on the Western Arun Highways & Transport Partnership. The latest correspondence now advises that it will not be possible to remain a member of both bodies. Further, JDAC voted against Middleton becoming a member at a meeting of its committee on 4th April 2005 despite County Councillor Mrs Freeman's belief that it should become a member. The options available therefore appear to be (a) to continue to press for membership of JDAC or (b) await the creation of the Western Arun Area Committee (WAAC) which is expected in July 2005. The final decision will be taken by the County Secretary WSCC, in conjunction with various elected representatives. Members discussed the options at length, recognising the various strengths and weaknesses that membership of either JDAC or WAAC will provide. The key issue for members was to ensure that pressure for junction improvements at Comer Corner was maintained. The Clerk was therefore instructed to write to the County Secretary's Office for further clarification and the item will be placed on next month's Agenda.

5. MATTERS ARISING

a) Allotments

The Clerk advised that Cllrs Mansfield and Mrs Ross met the Head of Parks & Greenspaces on the 4th April and identified a potential site for allotments on the land to the north of the Poultry Farm which has both a water supply and reasonable access.

Positive indications were received that the District Council may be prepared to lease initially 1.5 acres with the option to increase this to 3 acres if sufficient demand for allotments was demonstrated. Mr Copeland said that 146 respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire had expressed an interest in having an allotment but Mr Aldridge said that does not mean they actually want one. After some discussion it was resolved, by an overwhelming majority, that the District Council should be approached with a view to opening negotiations, albeit recognising that the Parish Council can still withdraw if appropriate terms cannot be agreed. It was also resolved to request details of the precise location of the parcel of land together with confirmation of unfettered access and the availability of a water supply. Once details are firmed up then it will be possible to ascertain the level of public interest in allotments so that a committee of allotment users can be established to manage the site. The Clerk was instructed to write to the District Council.

b) New Waste/Recycling Scheme

The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting at Arun District Council, together with District Councillor Mrs Oakley, to discuss various issues with Verdant and obtained confirmation that their operatives must replace dustbin lids. Verdant raised the issue of seeking indemnities from private estates and also road damage issues. The implications being that if agreement cannot be reached, then residents of the private estates may, in some cases, be required to take their rubbish to a public road for collection. There were significant concerns about this and District Councillor Mrs Oakley confirmed she had written to Arun District Council's Solicitor. Mrs Ross said she also had concerns about the system as rubbish bags have to be left out overnight and that she has recently had to retrieve both rubbish bags and a wheelie bin from the beach, after they had been thrown there by vandals. The Clerk was instructed to keep the matter on the Agenda.

c) New Material Recycling Facility, Ford

An email from Clymping Parish Council was circulated to members providing an update on the current situation. It would appear that Viridor are now looking at the financial and legal implications of their contract with WSCC and have made temporary arrangements to send recyclables to Southampton and Ipswich. They are also undertaking some form of traffic optimisation study and are looking at other site options including the Burgess Hill Waste Transfer Station which may be a large enough site on which to build the MRF. The option to appeal the original planning decision still remains. The Chairman received a letter from Reclaim and the Clerk was requested to place it into circulation.

d) Off Site Play provision, Section 106 agreement

The Clerk advised there was nothing further to report. It was agreed to retain the item on the Agenda.

e) Proms in the Park

A letter was received from Bognor Regis Town Council (BRTC) seeking a contribution of £300 towards the cost of the weekend concerts in Hotham Park and on the Promenade following Arun District Council withdrawing its support for the events. Four other Parish Councils have been requested to provide similar support. The Chairman queried what

contribution BRTC had made and Mr Wilkinson asked what was the total cost of organising the concerts. Mr Copeland said the contribution should be made if all the other parishes agreed. After some discussion it was agreed to defer a decision until the next meeting and the Clerk was instructed to write to BRTC to ascertain the total cost of the concerts and how much BRTC was contributing.

f) Rife Clearance – Kingsmead Road/Ancton Way

The Clerk reported that he had received a response both from the Environment Agency (EA) and also the Land Drainage Officer at Arun District Council. The EA advised that the watercourse was not their responsibility and that responsibility for the clearance rests with the riparian owners. The Land Drainage Officer concurred and said that the ditch appeared to be blocked beneath the footpath and sought assistance to ascertain who owned the narrow strip of land between the ends of Kingsmead Road and Ancton Way. Mr Edey said the Ancton Way side was owned by Elmer Sands Ltd, who had previously paid for the ditch to be cleared, and thought the other side may be owned by WSCC. The Clerk was instructed to write to WSCC and to provide copies of correspondence to the parishioner who originally brought this matter to the Parish Council's attention.

g) Speedwatch Project

Funding of £600 towards the proposed Speedwatch Project (Total cost £1,000) which is to be operated by the Middleton LAT was agreed by the Parish Council on 28th October 2004. For the project to be established a minimum of 6 volunteers are required albeit only 4 have come forward to date. A complaint was received from the Chairman of a Residents Association that it was inappropriate for the Parish Council to be involved in such a project and threatened to withdraw his assistance in the distribution of Middleton News if funding was not withdrawn. The Chairman therefore agreed to place the matter before the Parish Council for a full discussion. A letter was also received from a member of the LAT which advised that the scheme, which will operate under the control of the Police, will not use volunteers in their own parishes to avoid any suggestion of undue bias and the roads will be chosen by the Police and WSCC Highways. If drivers exceed the speed limit they will receive letters advising them accordingly. Fixed penalty notices will only be issued for persistent offenders. Speeding had been identified as a problem by 55% of respondents to the Parish Plan questionnaire. Mr Copeland said he would deliver Middleton News on the affected estate if the threat was invoked and that whilst the project was a good idea in principle it cannot proceed until at least 6 volunteers come forward. Mr Edey said there had been an adverse reaction to Speedwatch in Elmer and Mrs Mills said we can't ignore local opinion. Mrs Ross said speeding had to be tackled and felt there were misunderstandings about how the scheme would operate. Comment was also made that the Police should be undertaking the speeding checks with Mr Wilkinson saying 'why keep a dog and bark yourself'. Mr Morrison advised that at a recent Neighbourhood Management Team meeting the Police had stated the cost of the project had now reduced and a Parish Council's contribution is likely to be £200. Mr Copeland proposed a resolution "*To continue to agree with the Speedwatch Project in principle but not to pursue it until full details are known. The £600 is to remain earmarked for the project*". The proposal was seconded by Mrs Ross and was agreed by a overwhelming majority with one against and one abstention.

h) Insurance Renewal

The Parish Council's insurance falls due for renewal on 1st June 2005. Following circulation of a paper and discussion, Mr Wilkinson proposed that cover was amended to Buildings cover £80,000, deletion of the mower cover and increase in general cover in line with revised parish census information (5,105). This proposal was seconded by Mrs Ross and agreed unanimously. The Clerk was instructed to write to the insurance company.

i) Bus Shelter Grants Scheme

Details of WSCC replacement bus shelter scheme was circulated to members together with a paper containing details of the inappropriate use of Merry End bus shelter, both by a vagrant as sleeping accommodation and youths as a gathering point in the evenings which caused noise and alcohol related problems. After discussion it was agreed not to pursue the scheme.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 6th and 20th April 2005 had been circulated to members and were noted. A letter received from a resident of Tudor Close regarding the proposed telecommunications mast in the Southern Water Compound, Middleton Road was received by the Chairman. The Clerk was instructed to pass the letter to the Development Control Committee.

7. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

An email was received from Elmer Sands Ltd regarding the destruction of the hedgerow in Ancton Lane. Mrs Ross said she had tried to approach a farmer about this but that it did not work too well and she also discussed the matter with the Parish Tree Warden. Mrs Ross remains unsure who cut back the hedgerow and trees but will continue to pursue it. She noted that Ancton House is a Grade II listed building.

The Clerk advised:

- (a) Details of WSCC Public Rights of Way maintenance was received together with confirmation that a further visit will be made in 9 months time.
- (b) A Red Leafed Norway Maple had been planted at the rear of the Sea Lane bus shelter to replace the tree which had to be felled adjacent to it.
- (c) Details of the Urban Grass Cutting timetable were circulated to members.

ii) Joint Sea Defence & Land Drainage Advisory Sub Committee

A request was received from the Middleton-on-Sea Association to assist in the cost of a Greensward Survey which is being undertaken by a Chartered Civil Engineer at a cost of £575. £100 had already been granted in January 2005 and Mrs Mills proposed that a further £150 was provided on the basis that the Parish Council receives a copy of the Survey report. This was seconded by Mr Copeland and agreed by an overwhelming majority. The Clerk was instructed to contact the Association.

A copy of the First Government Response to the consultation exercise on Making Space for Water has been placed into circulation.

iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk advised:

- (a) A copy of Mrs Willis' note about the recent Neighbourhood Management Team meeting had been circulated to members.
- (b) The PCSO's April/May schedule had been circulated to members.
- (c) The SALC update had been circulated to members.
- (d) Arun District Council's Draft Statement of Community Involvement was circulated to members and the Chairman requested that it should be referred to the Development Control Committee for action.

iv) Projects Advisory Sub Committee

Mr Jeffrey advised that the Committee was supportive of the proposal to inject £5,000, comprising a £2,500 Arun CDRP grant (for which agreement in principle was held) together with £2,500 matched funding from the Parish Council (from the Brought Forward Contingency), into the Larksfield Skate Park project. The project is being co-ordinated by Arun District Council, with £17,000 already confirmed. Mr Copeland said a £10,000 Living Spaces grant had been set aside and Mrs Brown confirmed that the Jubilee Hall committee had committed £1,500. This makes a total of £28,500 and with the Parish Council's contribution will take the total to £33,500. Mr Copeland said he was very supportive of the new facilities at Larksfield and Mrs Mills proposed that the £5,000 should be used for the Skate Park project. This was seconded by Mr Wilkinson and unanimously agreed. The Clerk was instructed to liaise with Arun District Council and Arun CDRP.

v) Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee

- a) The Clerk reported that there had been two personal injury accidents at Comet Corner on the 15th and 24th April respectively. In the first accident, Mrs Brown was hospitalised and is now recovering at home. Rev Brown said she was improving although full recovery will take some time. The Chairman said he was pleased she was improving and all members wished her well. Mrs Mills said she hoped the accidents were a wake up call to WSCC and that they will start the major junction improvements promptly.
- b) The Clerk reported that Comet Corner had been included in the Highways and Transport programme for 2005/6 and 2006/7 albeit an email received from County Councillor Mrs Freeman advised that the WSCC Cabinet Member for Transport placed a caveat on the project that 'the programmes are funding reliant and subject to changing priorities to meet the unexpected'. The WSCC Local Highways Manager has now advised that the cost estimates for Comet Corner are now in and that a meeting will be arranged with Parish Councils to discuss the matter further.
- c) Recent road works at Comet Corner involved island widening and red surfacing as part of the A259 route speed management scheme and a Vehicle Activated Sign is to be installed.

- d) Mr Wilkinson said that this Parish Council had always been non-political and that when the Unity Group of Parish Councils was formed to try to advance the Bognor Regis Relief Road he believed that it was also a non-political association. He was therefore extremely concerned to receive a brochure from a local political party with the candidate seeking to exploit his involvement in the Unity Group for political advantage and there was also a picture of the candidate holding a Unity placard. In view of this, Mr Wilkinson proposed that the Parish Council should immediately withdraw from the Unity Group on the above mentioned grounds. This was seconded by Mrs Mills who said the Parish Council should disassociate itself immediately. This was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was instructed to write to all Unity members and advise them accordingly.

8. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Clerk advised:

- (a) Temporary repairs had been made to the playground netting and a new net is being ordered. The local contractor who was normally used for this type of repair has ceased to undertake playground repairs and Arun District Council's contractor has therefore been used.
- (b) The Mobile Library parking space sign has been vandalised in Shrubbs Car Park. The matter has been reported to Arun District Council.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

1. Defra Quality Parishes and Parish Planning
2. Arun Volunteering Information Point
3. Mr A L Rainger - Letter
4. Sussex Village of the Year 2005 – Application Form
5. Wellspring - Newsletter
6. West Sussex Public Partnership Forum - Newsletter
7. WSCC Foster Care Fortnight - Brochure
8. Trafalgar Weekend - Brochure
9. Safer Communities Highlight Report

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Bank Accounts -

The Clerk reported on the following **Bank Accounts**

Current Account	£ 1,250.00
Business Reserve	£19,900.13
Total	<u>£21,150.13</u>

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(i)	Arundel Arboretum – Tree purchase (Cheque issued 13.04.05)	£ 36.55
(ii)	Arun District Council – Dog Bin Clearance	£ 391.62
(iii)	Arun District Council – Contribution to Shrubbs Car Park	£1,780.00
(iv)	Canon UK – Final photocopier account	£ 26.94
(v)	Hall Signs – Middleton Green sign	£ 129.25
(vi)	D Fradgley – Collection/planting of tree adjacent to bus shelter	£ 65.00
(vii)	PBC UK – New photocopier rental	£ 54.03
Total		<u>£2,483.39</u>

(c) Accounts 2004/2005

The Clerk reported that the draft accounts had been prepared and passed to Mr Copeland (Chairman, Finance Committee) for examination prior to submission to the full council for approval.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none

12. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Mrs Mulvaney said she could not understand the difference between (a) reporting someone for speeding and (b) Neighbourhood Watch reporting incidents of vandalism. It was a question of attitude to the law.

A resident of Yapton Road said that he had been in correspondence with County Councillor Mrs Freeman regarding the installation of yellow lines in Yapton Road and had been encouraged to obtain a petition from local residents and maintain a diary of events. He believed it was hazardous for a pedestrian to traverse the footpath between Ilex Way and the Post Office.

Rev Brown spoke positively about the additional funding for Larksfield Skate Park project and hoped it would be installed promptly. Mr Copeland said installation times were in the hands of Arun District Council and their contractors although he hoped it will be installed this year.

Mr Rees commented on rubbish collections and Mr Ayton said it was all very well for those at the far end of the Elmer Road (being a no through road) to be selfish about speeding, however, those nearer the village centre had to put up regularly with speeding vehicles.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded Members that the next Meeting will be held on 26th May **at 6.30 p.m.** and the Meeting closed at 8.17 p.m.