

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 24th July 2003

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman), Aldridge, Chandler, Copeland, Mrs Farley, Jarvis, Mansfield, Mrs Mills, Mrs Ross, Wilkinson, Mrs Willis, the Clerk, District Councillor Mrs B Oakley and County Councillor Mrs C Freeman.

1. APOLOGIES – Councillor Ough and Mr Morrison.

2. MINUTES – The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 26th June 2003 having been circulated were approved and signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

4. ITEMS not otherwise on the Agenda but which the Chairman considered to be matter of urgency due to special circumstances – There were 4 items in this category:

a) – Location of Benches

The Clerk explained that agreement had previously been given to repair 3 benches along Elmer Road, however this proved to be cost ineffective so 3 new benches had been purchased. Local residents had, however, objected to the refitting of a bench at the junction of Elmer Road/Lane End Road and a letter had been received from Mr Phillips also objecting to the proposed revised location. In order to pass a Special Resolution, in accordance with Standing Orders 33 (a) & (b) to enable the previous resolution to be varied, 6 Members signed an appropriate request. The matter was fully discussed, both by Members and the public with Mr Mansfield suggesting 3 alternative sites and others suggesting a further 2. A show of hands vote from all present showed the most popular location for the bench was the Village Pond/Green with a majority of 11 votes. Mrs Farley therefore proposed that the bench is sited at the Village Pond/Green, this was seconded by Mr Mansfield and was passed by an overwhelming majority.

b) – Anti-Social Behaviour

Following further vandalism and anti-social behaviour on Shrubbs Field, the Clerk had circulated 2 letters received from local residents to Members for their consideration. He also provided feedback from the Field Warden and read an email received from Inspector Ali Darge. The latter stated that PS Gaffney is currently on sick leave and is not expected back until September. Insp Darge accepted ‘that currently we are not deploying officers to provide a high visible presence’ but ‘will as the Force grows in numbers’. ‘Sussex Police are also employing another 10 Community Support Officers 5 of which will come to Arun District. It is our intention to use these new staff members to begin tackling the anti-social behaviour problems which are affecting the local communities’. Mr Wilkinson expressed concerns that since 2001/2 to date, the Council Tax percentage given to the Police had risen by 65%. The Chairman said it had risen 40% this year and

believed a substantial amount was being used to fund pensions. Mr Mansfield was concerned about youth problems particularly with the onset of the long school holidays and Mrs Willis felt Special Constables could be better utilised. Mr Aldridge stated that Police crime numbers were only down owing to lack of reporting and the public were advised to report all crimes, by 999 if necessary, and to get a crime number. It was unanimously agreed to instruct the Clerk to request that a Police representative should attend the next meeting and to also write to Nick Gibb MP regarding the ongoing problems.

c) – Removal of BT Payphone – Junction of Elmer Road & The Layne, Elmer

The Clerk advised that a 42 day consultation period notice had been received the previous day relating to the removal of the above mentioned telephone box. Members and the public advised that the Payphone had already been removed and the Clerk was instructed to investigate the matter.

d) - School Governor – Bishop Tufnell Infants School

The Clerk advised that the term for the Parish Council's nominated school governor, Sue White, expires on 31 August 2003. She has requested that she is allowed to continue in this role until 2006 and this was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was instructed to advise WSCC School Support Team accordingly.

5. MATTERS ARISING

a) Wreath – Ford Airfield Remembrance Service – November 2003 -

At the November 2002 Parish Council meeting it was agreed to consider funding a wreath to be laid at the Remembrance Service at the July 2003 meeting. A budget of £25 was agreed, nem.con and the Clerk was instructed to contact Mr B Hills.

b) Homeless Strategy for Arun-

A copy of the Strategy was received from the Council for Voluntary Service. Members agreed that it should be placed into circulation.

c) Consultation Paper on Indemnities for Relevant Authority Members and Officers -

The Clerk advised that the Consultation Paper had been received and contained the proposed criteria for funding of any legal costs relating to any Code of Conduct investigations. Responses have to be with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by 6 October 2003 so the Clerk suggested that the paper should be placed into circulation. This was agreed, nem.con. and the Clerk was instructed to place on September's Agenda.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Mr Mansfield advised that the committee had met twice and reviewed many plans. The committee had objected to only one set of plans, being M/74/03. He was most concerned that a mechanical digger had been used initially to dig the trenches associated with the new telecommunications mast being erected in Elmer Road, being contrary to the planning approval. This was stopped and he now noted that manual digging had commenced. He stated that there was no suitable buildings to be put forward for the Conservation Area Advisory Committee Design Awards 2003. The Clerk reported that a diary of events was being compiled for the alleged car sales and repairs at Brambles,

Comet Corner and that the Site 6 Consultation Draft Development Brief had been received. This was passed to Mr Mansfield and at his request will be included on the 6th August DCC agenda.

7. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

a) Country Park -

Nothing to report.

b) Footpaths -

The Clerk detailed the work undertaken by WSCC in respect of the routine maintenance of the Public Rights of Way. Further maintenance will be undertaken in approximately 9 months.

c) Public Health and Keep Arun Tidy (including Seaweed problems) -

The Clerk advised:

- a) Arun District Council's Public Conveniences Subgroup meeting has been delayed in view of the increased workload following the take over of the cleansing contract by Verdant Group.
- b) Arun District Council will be undertaking a review of its existing maintenance contracts in September and enquired whether the Parish Council wished to amend the present arrangements. It was agreed to leave matters unchanged.
- c) It is hoped new dog bins will be installed on the WSCC footpaths leading to the sea from Southdean Close and Southdean Drive within the next 2 weeks.

Photographs showing overflowing dog bins at the end of West Drive were provided by a member of the public and the Clerk was instructed to write to ADC.

d) Tree planting and Village Pond –

Mr Mansfield had drawn up a Plant A Bulb order, total cost £71.60, which will cost the Parish Council £35.80. The Clerk was instructed to place the order. The Clerk reported that Arun District Council's Conservation & Design Adviser had written to advise that following consultations with WSCC it was considered inappropriate to place Tree Preservation Orders on the trees on Middleton Green. The Clerk further confirmed that an order had been placed for the planting of 15 trees across 5 sites in November 2003 and that the work will be supervised by the Parish Tree Warden. The latter confirmed that he had completed further treatment on the damaged Whitebeam tree on Middleton Green and reported that it was in quite good health. Following Mr Mansfield's request it was agreed that in future there will be separate agenda items for both Tree Planting and Village Pond.

ii) Joint Sea Defence and Land Drainage Advisory Sub Committee

Details of the Environment Agency Sussex Flood Warning Road Show had been received as their maps show that areas of the Parish fall within the flood risk area. The exhibition is in Emsworth on 10 September 2003. Mr Mansfield reported that ground water levels were 0.8m above the datum mark which was quite low for this time of year. The Clerk reported that the invitation to the MOS Association sea defence meeting, which was being attended by Nick Gibb MP, was restricted to one Member only. It was agreed that Mrs Willis should attend.

iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

a) ADALC, Area Partnership Panel and associated matters including Code of Conduct -

The Clerk reported:

- (a) A copy of the Bognor Regis masterplan had been received and was placed into circulation on 19 July.
- (b) A letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister relating to the New Ethical framework Regulations had been copied to every Member on 8 July.
- (c) A copy of Arun District Council's Performance Matters 2003/2004 had been placed into circulation on 4 July.
- (d) Arun District Council had written to enquire whether the parish would be interested in hosting a Question and Answers Session. It was unanimously agreed to request such a session and the Clerk was instructed to write to arrange a suitable date.

b) Newsletter -

The Clerk advised that more than 30 people, excluding Members, had accepted invitations to the reception. He asked Members to support the function and indicated that the September edition of Middleton News should be available on 12 September.

c) Police Panel and Police Liaison -

A crime prevention meeting was held on 16 July for those parties who had an interest in the general vicinity of Shrubbs Field. A further meeting will be held on 15th October.

d) Residents Association Committee –

Mr Copeland reported that the next meeting will be in September.

e) Vital Villages Scheme -

Mr Copeland asked for Member's comments on the latest draft questionnaire which is due to be distributed in September. He confirmed that it had been amended to allow up to 6 people to complete the questions in each household. Mr Mansfield said Question 4 was intrusive and Mr Copeland confirmed it had been removed. Mr Mansfield also queried Question 19 and asked what the Parish Council's involvement was in the questionnaire and whether one can disassociate oneself from the questionnaire. Mr Copeland said that the group drawing up the questions comprised 3 councillors and 13 others with the councillors taking a back seat. It will be made clear that this is not a Parish Council document. Mr Aldridge wanted to know what will be done with the information and said that it was more intrusive than the census. Mr Mansfield concurred. Mr Copeland stated that the information would be collated and would then show what the people of the parish wanted. Mrs Farley said Questions 6 & 8 on the youth questionnaire repeated themselves and Mr Copeland said he would take the comments on board.

f) Young People –

Nothing to report.

iv) Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk reported that he had spoken to the Local Highways Manager about Comet Corner junction who advised that the road markings are to be enhanced with red strips next month, that a reactive sign should be installed during the financial year commencing April 2004 and that the traffic light scheme will go forward to Government in this year's

Local Transport Plan although an answer is unlikely until the year end. County Councillor Mrs Freeman stated that she had received 44 letters about Comet Corner and that following 3 discussions with County Councillor Pemberton, WSCC Cabinet Member for Strategic Environmental Services, and also David Hill, WSCC Highway Network Manager, a letter had been formulated and was sent to all those who had written, including a lady who lived in Devon. She said this had taken up a lot of her time for a relatively small group of people and she advised that the problem regarding Comet Corner improvements was cost and that there was no funding available. A member of the public said that specific questions in his letter had not been answered. Mr Mansfield called for a vote of thanks for Mrs Freeman and alleged that the letter sent to her at the behest of the General Purposes Committee was a demand rather than a request. Mr Jarvis said that the Parish Council had been trying to get improvements to the junction for many years and WSCC had always used the excuse of cost which was remarkable given they owned land that is adjacent to the junction. Mrs Mills said the situation at the junction was not being taken seriously and that with 700+ houses being built at Felpham and more at North Bersted there will be a significant increase in traffic movements even if only 50% of the increased traffic travelled eastwards along the A259. This will make the Comet Corner junction even more dangerous. She suggested that some of the funding available from the developers at Felpham should be used to improve the junction. Mrs Freeman said that the situation with the A27 at Chichester, Arundel and Worthing will become serious now Government has withheld its road improvement funding and they will have to choose between houses and roads.

8. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

a) Playing Fields -

The Clerk confirmed that Mrs Horne had been appointed the part time Field Warden and that there had been a noticeable reduction in litter left on Shrubbs Field since she had started work. He suggested a welcoming letter and this was unanimously agreed.

b) Bus Shelters and Notice Boards -

A budget of £1,500 was sought to finance the cost of the 3 new benches and their fitting which is to be taken from the Brought Forward Contingency. This was proposed by Mr Mansfield, seconded by Mr Chandler and was approved overwhelmingly.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

1. Action in rural Sussex – Village Hall briefing
2. Arun Voice – Newsletter
3. BTCV – Conservation Newsletter
4. BURA –Questionnaire
5. Clerks & Councils Direct
6. Eyedeals Club – Donation request
7. Local Council Review
8. Serpa – Newsletter
9. Sussex Safety Camera Partnership – brochure
10. WSCC - Connections

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Bank Accounts -

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

Current Account	£ 1,250.00
Business Reserve	£25,492.79
Total	£26,742.79

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(i) Canon (UK) Ltd – (Photocopier)	£ 71.64
(ii) MOS Playing Fields	£2,000.00
(iii) SALC (New Councillors' Guide)	£ 24.00
(iv) Mrs A Waller (Newsletter)	£ 50.00
(v) R P Huskisson (Internal Auditor)	£ 100.00
(vi) Royal Mail (Freepost licence for questionnaires)	£ 106.00
(vii) Anchor Fast (3 replacement benches)	£ 909.45
Total	£3,261.09

(c) Internal Audit 2003

The Clerk reported that the internal audit had been completed and that the 2002/3 Accounts had been sent to the External Auditors for final audit.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk advised his holiday dates. Mr Mansfield asked who decided such a ludicrous time as the summer to undertake the regeneration works in Bognor Regis. Mrs Freeman said she believed it was the Bognor Regis Working Partnership. Mrs Mills said she attended the Bognor Regis Transport Forum on 15 July. She was disappointed and felt it was a waste of time as it had no power, was being divided into sub committees and that 5 days written notice of anything you wished to discuss had to be given. The next meeting will be on 11 November at 2.30 p.m. which she will be unable to attend. Mr Wilkinson asked why WSCC had just resurfaced Sea Lane when heavy lorries will have to use it shortly to transport the heavy rocks to the end of Sea Lane for the sea defence work. District Councillor Mrs Oakley said she will be attending the MOS Association sea defence meeting, that she shared the concerns expressed about the vandalism and had raised it with the Cabinet Member at Arun District Council. She also mentioned that the local Country Dance club had been in continuous existence for 70 years and she believed it was the oldest club in Sussex.

16. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Mrs Brown reminded those present that the village fete takes place on the 3 August. Miss Rees said the standards of youths had declined and Mr Rees expressed concerns about steel road pins being left on the field and drew attention to the overflowing rubbish bins. Mrs Mulvaney mentioned the problems with vegetation spilling over onto the verge/pavement adjacent to Elmer Road/St Nicholas Lane. Another member of the public complained about the overflowing dog bins in the area of Saxons Reach and said he had spoken to Richard Nicholls (ADC) but little action had been taken. He asked who

had overall responsibility at ADC and the Chairman advised him it was Kevin Basford. He also referred to comments in the local press quoting Ken Scutt which suggested there may be advantages in Parish Councils working together as when divided they were weak. The Chairman said there was a need to look at the real agendas. Middleton had reviewed this in the past and there were no advantages for them. Mr Phillips thanked the Parish Council for listening to public opinion regarding the siting of the bench.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded members that the next Meeting would be held on 25th September 2003 **at 6.30 p.m.** and the Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.