

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 25th September 2003

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman), Aldridge, Chandler, Copeland (departed 8.25 p.m.), Mrs Farley, Jarvis, Mansfield, Mrs Mills, Mrs Ross, Wilkinson, Mrs Willis, the Clerk, District Councillor Mrs B Oakley and County Councillor Mrs C Freeman and Mr Morrison.

1. APOLOGIES – There were none.

2. MINUTES – The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 24th July 2003 having been circulated were amended in paragraph 7 (iv) by the deletion of “too harsh” and the insertion of “a demand rather than a request”, 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 none.

5. MATTERS ARISING

a) Sussex Police – PS Gaffney -

Sergeant Gaffney answered a number of wide ranging questions posed by both Councillors and members of the public for some 30 minutes. Topics included motorised scooters, One Stop shop, anti-social behaviour, intimidation and powers of citizens arrest. Sgt Gaffney acknowledged that owing to reduced team numbers responses were sometimes slow but was optimistic that his team would soon be up to full strength (7). He further advised that crime numbers for the last 6 months (90) were down on the previous 6 month period (118). The Chairman thanked Sergeant Gaffney for attending the meeting.

b) Councillors Allowances -

It was initially agreed to just pay a Chairman’s Allowance, however, Mrs Willis raised the issue of paying travel allowances. The Clerk advised that a parish remuneration panel would have to be established if travel allowances were to be paid. The Clerk was instructed to seek clarification on this matter and place the issue on October’s Agenda.

c) Code of Practice – Complaint Handling

As a disputes procedure was already written into the Clerk’s contract it was resolved that no further action was required.

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

It was agreed, nem.con, to take no action on this matter.

e) Christine Swan’s Retirement

A letter from SALC had been circulated to all members. It was agreed that each member should deal with the matter on an individual basis.

f) £10m Public Liability Insurance quotation

As WSCC require contractors or councils to have a minimum of £10m Public Liability Insurance cover if they intend to work on WSCC land, the Clerk obtained a quotation (£225.33) to increase PLI cover to that level for a full year. Mr Mansfield said that this would assist him when dealing with tree planting and he proposed the increased cover should be implemented. This was seconded by Mr Copeland and unanimously approved. The Clerk was instructed to arrange an increase in the level of PLI cover.

g) Letter from Mr Baker re refurbishing ‘fingerpost’ road signs

Mrs Willis said she had received the letter from Mr Baker who felt that the ‘fingerpost’ road sign at the junction of Elmer/Middleton/Yapton roads was in need of refurbishment. WSCC had previously refurbished a similar sign outside Middleton Post Office and the Clerk was instructed to ask WSCC Highways to refurbish the other sign. Mrs Willis also said the ‘Middleton-on-Sea’ sign at the western end of the village was damaged and needed repair. The Chairman thought it was maintained by Arun District Council. The Clerk was asked to ascertain if this was correct and was also requested to establish the cost of a more ornate wooden sign.

h) Removal of Elmer Payphones

The Clerk advised that BT Payphones had made an error in sending out the ‘42 day Consultation Letter’ as the payphones had been removed in March/April 2003 following consultation with Arun District Council.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Mr Mansfield provided a report and advised that the result of the Public Inquiry relating to Manor Farm, Elmer Road was in favour of Arun District Council and that changes to the buildings will have to be made. The committee had objected to M/97/03 (6 flats - 131 Elmer Road) and M/98/03T (Crown Reduction of Oak Tree – 6 Juniper Close). The former had yet to be determined and the latter had been refused. The Clerk advised he had attended a Tetra mast seminar at Arun District Council on 23 September and Mr Copeland said he had been advised that Manor Farm was allegedly being used for business purposes. It was confirmed that the Parish Council had already written to Arun District Council regarding this matter.

7. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

a) Country Park -

Nothing to report.

b) Footpaths -

The WSCC access ranger visited the footpaths in early September to ascertain if any maintenance is required.

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

The Clerk advised:

- a) Arun District Council had now installed dog bins along the footpaths adjacent to both Southdean Close and Southdean Drive.
- b) A letter of apology had been received from Arun District Council in response to the Parish Council’s letter and email regarding the overflowing dog bins.
- c) Arun District Council had been requested to clean the bus shelter adjacent to the Jubilee Hall.

Mr Wilkinson said the dog bin in Southdean Drive had been overflowing but was promptly cleared following his telephone call to Arun District Council.

d) Tree planting –

Mr Mansfield asked for volunteers to assist with planting bulbs.

e) Village Pond -

Mrs Willis circulated a report and confirmed that she, and the Clerk, had met the WSCC Coastal Ranger and had obtained approval to the siting of a wooden bench by the pond and planting a reed bed in the ditch on the north western side of the pond which will act as a filter to pollutants. The ranger was not in favour of a duck house preferring a floating platform instead. A letter had been received from Mr Coster criticising the design of the recently installed concrete/wooden benches in Elmer Road and this was discussed. Mr Mansfield said he had sympathy with his comments, the Chairman said they needed to weather and were of a design which will last. Mr Aldridge agreed. Mr Copeland said he had received complaints that a bench had not been installed between Elmer Post Office and Elmer. In order to comply with WSCC's requirements at the pond, the wooden bench presently fitted near to the pond and adjacent to the pedestrian safety barrier in Middleton Road will be moved to the pond and the remaining concrete/wood bench will replace it. Mr Mansfield asked for his objection to the bench to be minuted.

A request from the MOS Association to pay the volunteers' insurance (£166.25) for a further year was proposed by Mrs Willis, seconded by Mrs Ross and approved by a majority. The Clerk was instructed to seek confirmation that the Personal Liability Insurance element was for at least £10m to conform with WSCC requirements.

ii) Joint Sea Defence and Land Drainage Advisory Sub Committee

Mrs Willis reported that she had attended a meeting on 30 July organised by MOS Association and attended by Nick Gibb MP regarding local sea defences. She also requested that Professor Alan Johns was co-opted onto the Advisory Sub Committee and this was agreed nem.con. The Clerk was requested to provide copies of the Coastal Defence Strategy Study notes and the Southdowns Shoreline Management Plan, 1st Review, to Mr Mansfield.

iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

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

The Clerk reported:

- (a) Receipt of The Standards Board 'Guidance for monitoring officers and Standards Committee' booklet.
- (b) Receipt of a letter relating to Arun District Council's 'State of the District Debate' which had been circulated to all Members.
- (c) Receipt of a questionnaire from Arun District Council regarding 'Consultation on Council Finance'. After discussion the Clerk was instructed to write to ADC indicating that the Parish Council understood the need to increase Council Tax by the rate of inflation but expressed deep concern on any substantive increases as it will affect elderly people and those on fixed incomes.
- (d) Copies of the SALC Summer 2003 County Circular had been copied to all Members.

- (e) Copies of the NALC Policy Update titled “The Electoral Commission - the shape of Elections to come - An Executive Summary” had been circulated. Mr Wilkinson said he was horrified by the staggering presumption that local elections will be by postal ballots with no witness signature. The Chairman shared his concerns and it was resolved that the Clerk should write to Nick Gibb MP expressing concern.
- (f) A letter from defra relating to “Rural services standard 2003” had been placed into circulation.

The Chairman reported that he had attended a joint meeting of the Western Area Partnership Panel and had taken part in a facilitated workshop about parish plans. The Findon plan was circulated and it was interesting to note that 70% of the questionnaires issued had been returned. The questionnaires were professionally analysed and the total cost of the exercise was £450.

b) Newsletter -

A letter received from Mrs Waller thanking the Parish Council for agreeing to the reception was circulated. The Chairman said the reception was excellent and Mr Copeland thanked Mrs Waller, the Clerk and all those who helped with the organisation of the reception, both before the event and on the evening. Mr Jarvis concurred.

c) Police Panel and Police Liaison -

The Clerk advised:

- (a) Nick Gibb MP had responded to his letter about local policing and shared the Parish Council’s concerns. He had written to the Chief Constable and Inspector Darge and said he would write again when a response was received.
- (b) A letter was sent to the Police regarding enforcement of the No Parking restrictions at the end of Sea Lane following a fatal incident, which occurred on 6th August. An Ambulance and the Coastguards were delayed in getting to the incident when they could not gain access to the Emergency Gate owing to illegally parked cars. A Police response had been received advising that the Traffic Wardens were aware of the situation and will attend Sea Lane whenever possible.

d) Residents Association Committee –

Mr Copeland advised there was nothing to report.

e) Vital Villages Scheme -

Mr Copeland advised that the questionnaires had been distributed with Middleton News and that about 10% had been returned so far. He said there had been a good response to the request for volunteers.

f) Young People –

Mr Copeland reported that the Youth Event held on Shrubbs Field on 24 September had been very successful. A lot of youngsters came along to the event, together with a number of Clubs and Societies. The Arun District Council team, led by John Stride, worked very hard and were there until after 10 p.m. clearing up after the event. The Clerk was instructed to write to thank John Stride. The Clerk advised that a Security Survey of Shrubbs Field had now been received from the Police’s Community Safety Department and had been circulated to all attendees of the next Crime Prevention Meeting which is being held on 15th October at 7.15 p.m. Mr Copeland said he had attended a Youth Gathering Forum the previous week.

iv) Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk confirmed that letters from County Councillor Freeman, County Councillor Pemberton, an email from WSCC Local Highway Manager and the unapproved minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the General Purposes Committee had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. Mrs Mills provided a full report about the Comet Corner Action Group and said support had now been received from the Police, Arun District Council, Clymping Parish Council and Yapton Parish Council, the latter being very vocal. County Councillor Pemberton had agreed to a closed meeting with Mrs Mills, and the Clerk and she will make arrangements for this in due course. She also proposed the establishment of a 'Hotline' for people to report any accidents at Comet Corner. It was agreed, nem con, that the Clerk's telephone number and email address will be used. The Chairman asked whether Felpham Parish Council had responded and was advised that they had not, to date. A number of members commented that traffic lights were needed as a matter of urgency and that temporary lights could be deployed, if necessary. Mrs Oakley said temporary traffic lights usage should be restricted to peak times only. County Councillor Freeman commented that a community spirit had been engendered, led by the Parish Councils of Middleton and Yapton, and that this was one of the most important community issues. She suggested a public meeting but after some discussion it was agreed not to proceed at this time but to keep it on the table. Mrs Freeman said she had attended a meeting with County Councillor Pemberton, Nick Gibb MP and WSCC officers after the petition presentation and positive steps were now being made to improve the Comet Corner junction. She had also just received a letter from Colin McKenna, WSCC Head of Transport Planning Services, which indicated survey work was being undertaken at Comet Corner for a more accurate costing to be completed and it appeared that traffic lights may be the best option. Red road markings were being laid on 30 September. The Clerk referred to the email received from WSCC regarding the 50 mph speed limits and after some discussion it was agreed, nem.con, to instruct the Clerk to write to WSCC agreeing to the unconditional installation of the 50 mph speed limit.

8. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

a) Playing Fields -

Mr Aldridge reported that he had ordered a complete new top for the picnic bench to replace the existing one which had been severely damaged by fire.

b) Bus Shelters and Notice Boards -

Nothing to report.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

1. Arun District Housing Forum - Minutes
2. Arun District Council – District Guide
3. Action in rural Sussex – Workshop details
4. Bus Shelters Ltd - Brochure
5. Campaign to Protect Rural England – Skills Seminar
6. Clerks & Councils Direct
7. CVS – Arunwide – Networking Lunch

8. Miss Kendell – Letter of thanks re Newsletter Reception
9. Local Council Review
10. Ms N Macleod – copy letter re Wavelength Survey
11. Municipal Waste Management Survey for West Sussex
12. Mr T Rees – Letter re Shrubbs Field
13. Mr J Rook – Copy letter addressed to County Cllr Freeman re Comet Corner.
14. The Local Channel – Brochure
15. Turftax – Brochure
16. WaterVoice – Annual Report 2002-3
17. Wellspring – Newsletter
18. WSCC – Transfer of Care Homes for Older People
19. West Sussex Health & Social Care – Any Questions 2

County Councillor Freeman said that Mr Rook's letter (item 13) had been copied to a number of people and contained 3 suggested solutions for Comet Corner. She had replied and was awaiting comments from WSCC, County Hall when she would respond again.

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Bank Accounts -

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

Current Account	£ 1,250.00
Business Reserve	£22,535.11
Total	<u>£23,785.11</u>

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(i) Elmer Builders – Bench removal/fitting (Chq issued 20 August)	£ 975.00
(ii) Mrs A Waller (Newsletter fees)	£ 254.79
(iii) Jubilee Hall (Village Action Group hiring costs)	£ 42.00
(iv) D F Allsopp (Village Action Group tombola prizes)	£ 131.71
(v) D F Allsopp (Newsletter 1 st Anniversary Reception)	£ 229.34
(vi) D F Allsopp (Quarterly fee and expenses)	£2,539.56
(vii) D F Allsopp (Quarterly postages and telephone calls)	£ 61.59
(viii) Selsey Printing & Publishing (Newsletter)	£1,050.00
(ix) Selsey Printing & Publishing (Questionnaires)	£ 477.00
(x) MOS Association (BTCV Insurance)	£ 166.25
Total	<u>£5,927.24</u>

(c) Additional budget request for bench installation

The Clerk reported the budget for benches had a remaining balance of £151 available (Budget £1,900 – Expenditure £1,749) and that the wooden seat had to be relocated to the pond and the concrete/wood bench had to be installed in substitution. An increase in the budget of £500 was proposed by Mr Chandler, seconded by Mr Jarvis and agreed by a majority. The Clerk further mentioned the forthcoming budget round for 2004/5 and asked Committee Chairman to submit their budget requests by 31st October.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Mansfield asked for an item to be included on the October Agenda that no unapproved minutes are sent to anyone. The Clerk was instructed accordingly.

16. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Mr Jeffery asked what the Parish Council's position was on Tetra masts and was advised that a position had not been taken. He agreed to write to the Council. Mrs Oakley said some District Councillors were very concerned however there were various sides to the argument. Mrs Mulvaney commented that the Middleton Road/Elmer Road sign near Greenfields was dirty.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded members that the next Meeting would be held on 23rd October 2003 **at 6.30 p.m.** and the Meeting closed at 9.04 p.m.