

MIDDLETON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Held in the back of Jubilee Hall, Elmer Road, Middleton-on-Sea
On Wednesday 21st October 2009

PRESENT – Councillors Wotherspoon (Chairman arrived at 7.30 p.m.), Copeland (In the chair until 7.30 p.m.), Mrs Claxton, Mrs Hall, Mrs Haywood, Jeffrey, Mansfield, Mrs Mills, Mrs Phillips, Redman, Watson, the Clerk, and PCSO Morge.

1. APOLOGIES – Councillors Gamester, District Councillor Mrs Oakley and County Councillor Mrs Coleman.

2. MINUTES –The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 16th September 2009 having been circulated were approved and signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Wotherspoon declared an interest in item 11(b)(3) being a deliverer of Middleton News. Mrs Haywood declared a personal interest in Items 6(e), 6(f) and 6(h) being the owner of The Manor House and a member of Middleton Sports Club.

4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

The two members of the public present asked no questions. Mr Brookland arrived during Item 5.

5. ITEMS not otherwise on the Agenda but which the Chairman considered to be a matter of urgency due to special circumstances – The Clerk advised of the sad death of Norman Morrison on 17th October. Norman had been a staunch supporter of Neighbourhood Watch for many years and regularly attended Parish Council meetings. A minute's silence was held in his memory.

6. MATTERS ARISING

a) Co-option of a Parish Councillor

At September's meeting, members agreed to co-opt three new Parish Councillors. Two were co-opted at that meeting, however Mrs Phillips was unable to attend and it was agreed that she could be co-opted at October's meeting. Mrs Phillips therefore signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office together with her Written Undertaking to Observe a Council Code of Conduct. Each document was witnessed by the Clerk. Mr Copeland welcomed Mrs Phillips to the council. The Clerk will advise Arun District Council accordingly.

b) Insp Clare McKnight – Bognor Neighbourhood Policing Team

Insp McKnight introduced herself and advised that this was the third time she had worked in Bognor Regis. Her team comprises three sergeants, eight PCs and fifteen PCSOs. PCSO Clive Morge said that the Neighbourhood Management Forum met on 7th October and set the three key issues as speeding, parking and anti-social driving. There has been ongoing monitoring of the Zebra Crossing with seven parking tickets issued for double line infringements together with three tickets for parking within the zig-zag lines which

carry a £60 fine and 3 penalty points. He also provided Halloween posters and copies of his police blog.

Mrs Mills asked why anti-social behaviour generally had not been considered as a key issue and was advised that the others had been chosen.

An extended question and answer session ensued with Insp McKnight which covered, *inter alia*, policing of the Zebra Crossing but mainly focused on why the Police will not support the recently submitted £8,000 JWAAC grant application and will merely adopt a neutral stance. Insp McKnight maintained that the crime statistics suggested it was not required, however she did confirm that if CCTV was installed that she would wish to use the pictures obtained, where appropriate, as evidence in police enquiries/prosecutions. Further, she refused to disclose, even when closely questioned, who had taken the decision within the Sussex Police chain of command. Numerous councillors provided evidence that CCTV was required and even quoted from the Sussex Police website and ACPO statements which showed how cost effective the use of CCTV was. Additionally, PSCO Morge's blog of the 3rd August suggested the use of CCTV for additional security. The Clerk also drew attention to the Village Action Plan, of which the police are required to take due cognisance, which showed that 95% of parishioners who responded to the questionnaire were in favour of CCTV.

It became clear that everything within the police force is now driven by statistics so residents were implored to report every incident of anti-social behaviour – however minor (0845 60 70 999).

c) Ted Chandler's cancelled reception

The Clerk reported that Ted Chandler's reception had to be cancelled at short notice as he was indisposed. The Clerk then provided an update and all members signed a "Get Well Soon" card which will be delivered to Mr Chandler.

d) Bishop Tufnell Junior School Planter project

Members discussed a letter from Bishop Tufnell Junior School regarding the creation of a new seaside garden where currently there is an overgrown planter and also to paint a mural on the toilet block's northern wall. Councillors were very positive about the garden but were unanimously opposed to the mural as they had concerns that it will encourage graffiti. The school had requested £100 for that project which was clearly no longer appropriate, however, it was proposed by Mr Copeland, seconded by Mr Jeffrey, and agreed by an overwhelming majority that the £100 will still be available for a pre-approved project within the planter area. It was suggested that a small sign acknowledging the school's involvement could perhaps be installed by the planter, and if this was to be pursued then Mrs Phillips will need to become involved. The Clerk will write to the school.

e) Middleton Village Pond – Portsmouth Water

The Clerk circulated a detailed paper about the options available following Portsmouth Water's (PW) refusal to refill the pond because water is a valuable resource and the pond should be allowed to follow its natural cycle. PW have always topped up the pond in previous years under an agreement negotiated by the Parish Council. Two options offered by PW required the Parish Council to fill the pond via a small bore standpost

which can only discharge water at the rate of 40 litres per minutes i.e. one cubic metre every 25 minutes. Based on the size of the pond it would take approaching six days to fill it from empty and the hose would have to be staffed at all times. This is clearly impractical. The other option, which was subject to many caveats, was for PW to fill the pond at an hourly operative charge + water charge. This cost will absorb the majority of the council's Pond and Green budget. It was further recognised that large quantities of chlorinated water have a potentially adverse effect on wildlife.

Mrs Hall proposed, and Mr Watson seconded, *a resolution that the pond should no longer be filled and should be left to its natural cycle of filling during the winter months and then gradually evaporating until it runs dry in the summer months.* The resolution was unanimously supported. The Clerk will advise Portsmouth Water accordingly.

f) Middleton Village Pond – MOSA grave concern

Mrs Mills received a letter from the Chairman, Middleton-on-Sea Association (MOSA) relating to their concerns over the upkeep of the pond. A number of issues were raised including why the pond had not been cleared of debris and why the overhang at the back had not been cleared when it was dry. Also whether a pond and green clear-up was proceeding this year. The letter was circulated to all members.

Mrs Mills said that in this age of litigation it would have been inappropriate to permit people to walk on the pond bed as they could have easily slipped in the mud and injured themselves. The other issue was the time it would have taken to organise a working party. She firmly believed it was important to undertake a village clear-up as it is an annual event which involves many local people & John Knight (WSCC Ranger). When complete the Green always looks much better.

Mr Mansfield (Pond & Green Warden) answered a number of questions raised in the letter and stated that he had personally removed debris from the dry pond on three occasions and that there was no longer any debris in the pond. He said there was no problem with the overhang at the rear of the pond and this had been confirmed by the independent tree audit. He added that a contractor had cleared the northern end of the green recently and a third party had cleared the southern area. With regard to algae growth on the white posts he said it was a natural process which helps them blend in with the surroundings.

Mrs Haywood said that currently there was not a lot to do on Middleton Green, however, the ditches down Sea Lane needed clearing and perhaps MOSA could get involved with that clearance. It was pointed out that the ditches were the house owners responsibility.

Mrs Mills proposed that the Pond & Green Warden set aside a day for an annual clear-up. This was seconded by Mr Jeffrey and agreed by an overwhelming majority. Mr Mansfield said it can be arranged when the tree audit tree work had been completed (usually during December) therefore he hoped that the clear-up will be on the first Saturday in January (2nd January 2010) but this will be subject to final confirmation. The Clerk was instructed to respond to MOSA's letter.

g) Garden Buddies

Following on from item 8 (i) September 2009, when the idea of a “Garden Buddy” scheme was suggested, the Clerk had undertaken some research and submitted a paper to all members. The Scheme, usually called “Garden Partners”, is successfully operating in various parts of the country including Totnes, Isle of Wight and Wandsworth. In the latter’s case, it is operated by Age Concern who have employed a full time co-ordinator for 2 years, funded by the local NHS Trust, and supported by Wandsworth Town Council. All applicants are CRB checked and interviewed with insurance being provided through Age Concern.

The Chairman said he would be supportive of such a scheme and Mr Mansfield said he will be prepared to take it forward on a caretaker basis until a co-ordinator was appointed. It was agreed not to trigger the scheme until ‘the criteria are met’.

The Clerk also read an extract from the Parish Council minutes dated 24th June 1976 in which the then Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the NFU giving no hope of land being available for allotments and the council deciding it had done all it could to find land for allotments, without success. Since that time much of the farm land has been developed for housing.

h) Noise Complaints Concerning Middleton Sports Club

Before the item was discussed, the Chairman made a statement to advise that he could not take part in the discussions because of his role as a Cabinet Member at Arun District Council. (Should legal action be required in respect of noise it will be his role to sanction legal proceedings and he must remain impartial). He said he will listen but will take no part in the debate, or vote.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council had been invited to send representatives to a meeting at Middleton Sports Club on 22nd October to discuss noise complaints which have been received by Arun District Council’s Environmental Health Service concerning noise from music entertainments held at the club. (*Subsequently Mrs Claxton agreed to attend the meeting*).

i) Service of Remembrance Sunday 8th November 2009

The Clerk advised of details relating to the Service of Remembrance at Ford Memorial Garden. As no member came forward to lay the wreath, the Clerk will approach former councillor, Bernard Hills, who usually lays the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

7. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Copies of the minutes dated 16th September and 7th October 2009 were circulated and noted.

8. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

i) Countryside and the Environment Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk advised receipt of Arun District Council’s new Orders relating to the control of dogs (copies in circulation) together with the new Byelaws for Pleasure Fairs.

Mr Mansfield enquired whether the Tree Warden had prepared the plans for the proposed planting of trees in Sunnymead Close and Cootes Lane. The Clerk confirmed these had yet to be received. **The Clerk was instructed to request Mr Gamester to prepare the plans by the General Purposes Committee meeting.** If not prepared by that time Mr Mansfield will prepare them.

(ii) Joint Sea Defence & Land Drainage Advisory Sub Committee

Nothing to report

(iii) Liaison Advisory Sub Committee

The Clerk advised:

- The Standards Committee agenda for 8th October 2009 had been placed into General Circulation.
- Action in Rural Sussex will hold their AGM on 6th November 2009.

iv) Projects Advisory Sub Committee

Nothing to report

v) Roads & Transport Advisory Sub Committee

Mr Jeffrey circulated a note covering a Felpham Site 6 meeting held on 22nd September and also provided a report about his attendance at the JWAAC Highways & Transport Group on 6th October. This included confirmation that a new “Free Car Park” sign had been installed in Elmer Road and that the Highway Rangers will now cut back overgrown hedges.

9. PARISH LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Nothing to report.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

The following items had been received:-

- (1) Mr Birch - Allotments
- (2) CVS Arunwide – Voice newsletter
- (3) Miss K Ellingsen – Shrubbs Field incident
- (4) Environment Agency – Arun to Pagham Flood consultation (*Circulated*)
- (5) Ford Parish Council – Remembrance Day details
- (6) West Sussex Connections

11. FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Bank Accounts -

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

Current Account	£ 1,250.00
Business Reserve	£47,400.71
Total	<u>£48,650.71</u>

(b) Accounts for payment -

The following payments were approved nem.con and made:

(1) Danwood Finance (Photocopier lease charge)	£	43.91
(2) Danwood Group (Photocopier usage charges)	£	16.40
(3) D F Allsopp (Middleton News Distributor vouchers)	£	190.00
(4) Royal British Legion (Wreath)	£	25.00
(5) J Robinson (Village Pond maintenance)	£	15.00
Total	£ 29	<u>£ 290.31</u>

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that he had attended Felpham Parish Council's Quality Council presentation evening on 28th September, which was very poorly attended.

Mr Mansfield enquired whether anything could be done about the Lloyds Pharmacy external shutters.

Mrs Claxton said that she had taken on additional Neighbourhood Watch duties following the death of Norman Morrison.

Mrs Hall enquired whether it would be more appropriate to give the Royal British Legion a £25 donation rather than purchasing a wreath. The Clerk explained that the Parish Council had been one of the councils which was involved in the creation of the Ford Memorial Garden and had traditionally laid a wreath at the Remembrance Service.

Mrs Haywood said that there was an increase in the number of seagulls and that they were starting to nest on house roofs. She said people should be discouraged from feeding them and agreed to write an article for Middleton News.

Mrs Phillips raised the issue of visibility when driving behind a bus which stops close to the Zebra Crossing. She was reminded of the Highway Code rules regarding overtaking close to such crossings.

There being no further business the Chairman reminded members that the next Meeting will be held on **16th December 2009 at 7.00 p.m.** The meeting closed at 8.57 p.m.