West Meon Parish Council Meeting Minutes
2nd December 2024; 6.00pm
West Meon Village Hall

Present: Cllr H Davies (chair), Cllr R Gedye; Cllr V Burke; Cllr G Silk
In Attendance: Cllr Pett (WCC; from 7.30 pm), Cllr Wallace (HCC; from 7.30 pm). Two members of the public and the Locum clerk, Tom Brindey

Item No.	Item	Decision
2865	Apologies for absence	None
2866	Chair's remarks	None
2867	To Appoint a Locum Clerk	Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Tom Brindley of Todeka Limited as locum Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer and the chair was authorised to sign a contract.
2868	Disclosable pecuniary interests	None
2869	Public questions	Members **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing orders to allow for public participation. No members of the public spoke.
2870	Resume SO	Members **RESOLVED** to resume Standing orders
2871	Report from outside bodies: District Council	**District Council.** 1. Cllrs Jerry Pett and Neil Bolton had tabled a written report. The report was noted. 2. Neither Cllr was present, verbal report deferred, See 2871 deferred.
2872	Report from outside bodies: County Council	**County Council.** 1. Cllr Malcolm Wallace had tabled a written report. The report was noted. 2. Cllr not present, item deferred verbal report deferred. See 2872 deferred
2873	Mins of previous meetings (01/11/24)	Members **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes as a true record and the chair was authorised to sign.
2874	Working groups and outside bodies	Members considered suspending some working groups while the council membership was below normal. a. Planning — Not suspended b. Community Housing and Recreation — Suspended c. Finance and Administration — Suspended d. Highways and Transport — Suspended e. Environment — Suspended f. Communication — Suspended Flood Action Group — Suspended
2875	Review representation on or work with external bodies	1. West Meon Village Hall Committee Members **RESOLVED** not to appoint a representative 2. West Meon & Warnford Sports Club Members **RESOLVED** not to appoint a representative 3. Rifle Club Members **RESOLVED** not to appoint a representative 4. Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) Cllr Gedye appointed

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2876	To Review Community Liaison representatives	1. Touchet Trust Members **RESOLVED** not to appoint a representative. 2. Footpaths and Rights of Way Cllr Graham Silk was appointed as liaison. 3. Village Shop Committee (West Meon Community Shop Association). Cllr Davies agreed to find out more about this position. 4. Bob Russell Trust. Cllr Davies agreed to find out more about this position. 5. Neighbourhood Watch. Cllr R Gedye appointed.
2877	Flood Action group	1. Members noted that papers had been signed with Hydrock survey. 2. A grant of £10,230 was due. 3. Cllr Davies agreed to follow up with SSEN
2878	Clerk's report	1. A report will be produced for future meetings
2879	Clerk recruitment	1. Deferred to end of meeting
2880	Christmas activities	1. Trees will be delivered December 5th or 6th. 2. Members discussed the erecting of the wall mounted trees and electrical connections to lights. 3. Members noted that a Risk and Method statement was required from the installers.
2881	Councillor vacancies	1. Members noted that one vacancy had moved to co-option and four were awaiting the expiry of the call for election period. 2. One application and one expression of interest had been received. 3. Mr Tim Main had applied to join the council. Members **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mr Main. 4. Cllr Main signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took his seat.
2882	Car Park Extension	1. Members confirmed the need and desire to extend the Village Hall car park, recognising the challenges involved. 2. The locum clerk was asked to contact SDNP for pre-app advice.
2883	Internal auditor report	Members reviewed the action list from the Internal Auditor report.

Test	Auditor comment	Council action
B	**MINUTES** The minutes of the council include multiple items on which the council cannot decide. There is also more detail than adds to long term transparency. The council is a government body with a paid proper officer. Minutes should focus on decisions within its powers.	Members noted the need to ensure the new clerk produces minutes listing those present, and decisions made without extraneous detail. New clerk to be or work towards CiLCA qualification.
C	**POLICIES** The council has some policies that are not within its powers and in other places contradictory (eg overnight parking at the Village Hall). Best practice should be sought for a coherent usage policy for the whole recreation ground and car park. This should then be adopted.	Members noted the comment. The new clerk will be asked to review all council policies.

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	D	**RESERVES** The level of reserves held by the council is significantly above best practice. The council should actively seek to bring projects forward to benefit residents.	Members have reviewed surpluses and identified capital reserves for the car park extension, ongoing maintenance, funding for replacement play equipment and tree work.
	D	**BUDGET MONITORING** Quarterly financial reports are not included in the permanent minute record. All budget reports should be kept to support minutes	New clerk to identify a suitable accounting system which will aid the production of reports. Reports to be loaded onto website and held as hard copy along with the minutes.
	E	**LEASES and RENTS** The council is owed peppercorn rents from the Village Hall and the Rifle Club which have not been received for several years. The arrears should be settled and the payments collected annually in conjunction with the lease/agreements issue.	Members were unsure as to the status of leases. New clerk to track down leases and check compliance.
	J	**LEASES AND TENANCIES** The council has been in legal discussion with the village hall and the rifle club about rights and responsibilities over Parish Land. It does not appear that the land in question has been registered. The land registry omission should be remedied without delay. Appropriate sector specific expert advice should be sort to resolve the issue (also raised last year).	Members noted the comment. The new clerk will be instructed to liaise with the Village Hall and the Rifle Club and to seek appropriate legal advice on resolving these issues.

2884	External auditor report	1. The External auditor had raised concern at the high level of unassigned reserves. The locum RFO advised that a Capital Reserves were set up to account for the money: • Car Park Extension Reserve • Car Park repairs sinking fund • Play equipment replacement sinking fund. 2. Members **RESOLVED** to set up capital reserves.
2885	Bank account signatories	1. Bank account signatories removed for Angela Trenchard, Malcolm Edwards, Allan Thompson and Joanna Tester 2. Signatories were now: Cllr Virginia Burke, Cllr Graham Silk, Cllr Robin Gedye, Cllr Hannah Davies 3. Primary business contact had changed to Cllr Hannah Davies. 4. Members **RESOLVED** that the new permanent clerk would be added to the bank mandate 5. Banking address. The clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of using the Village Hall as a postal address and installing a post box. This would need the agreement of the Village Hall trustees and the address would need to be registered with Royal Mail.
2886	Locum clerk access to bank accounts	Members **RESOLVED** that the Locum Clerk be authorised to speak with the bank but would not be a signatory.
2887	To note the bank balances as of 30th November.	• Current account 51,924.55 • Deposit Account 54,369.74

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2888	Year End forecast	1. The locum clerk presented a year end forecast. Members made suggestions for forthcoming expenditure and the forecast was updated to show a year end figure of £99,268 of which 90,000 was held as capital reserves and £9,268 was free reserve.
2889	2025/26 budget	1. The locum clerk presented a draft budget. Members made suggestions for expenditure in 2025/26. 2. The locum clerk was asked to update the budget and present it in January, when the precept would also be set.
2890	Payments	**Payee Service Net VAT Gross Method** **Computer Problems** IT Support 60.00 0.00 60.00 FPO **HugoFox** website charge - Dec 2024 9.99 2.00 11.99 DD **Cloud Next Ltd** Hosting 2024/25 (est) 83.00 16.60 99.60 FPO **Todeka Ltd** Locum clerk services 435.00 87.00 522.00 FPO
2891	Grants	1. Members **RESOLVED** to award a grant totalling £1,210 to West Meon Parochial Church Council: £460 for mowing and £500 for tree work in the churchyard and £250 towards a parish newsletter.
2892	Planning	1. **SDNP/24/04505/HOUS Culverkeys, Church Lane West** Members **RESOLVED** not to object to the application provided that comments made by Hampshire Highways and Historic England were noted. 2. **SDNP/24/04509/TCA** Apple Tree Cottage, Station Road No objection
2893	Planning applications received post agenda	**SDNP/24/04904/FUL** No objection
2894	Planning decisions	**SDNP/24/03699/HOUS 7 Meonware Crescent** Decision: Approved
2871 deferred	Report from district councillor Gerry Pett	1. District Cllr Pett gave a verbal report to the council. The planning application for ??????had been approved. 2. Natural England had approached Meon S compensation habitat. 3. Southern Water abstracting 4. Cllr Pett advised that VAT recovered on the recent playground refurbishment should be ringfenced for flood defence and recorded as Community Infrastructure Levy funding. **5.** South Downs Local plan consultation end on 17th January 2025. The plan includes how the River Meon will be managed.
2872 deferred	Report from county councillor Wallace	1. County Cllr Wallace gave a verbal report to the council. **2.** Cllr Wallace advised that VAT recovered on the recent playground refurbishment should be ringfenced for flood defence and recorded as Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
2895	Date/time of next meeting	1. Tuesday 7th January 2025 at West Meon VH; 6.00pm.
2896	To exclude press and public	1. Members **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

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2897	Recruitment of new clerk	1. Several applications had been received and considered. 2. Members **RESOLVED** to offer the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the chosen candidate, subject to contract including a probationary period and satisfactory references. 3. The locum clerk was instructed to prepare a contract. 4. The new clerk would start on 13th January 5. The locum clerk would continue to oversee a smooth handover.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm

Signed: **Name:**
(Chair of meeting approving minutes)

Dated:

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