

**Parish Council Meeting
Held at East Meon Village Hall on
Monday 17 March 2025 at 18:30.**

Minutes

Present: Councillors Susan Davenport (Chair), Charles Ritchie (Vice Chair), Matt Atkinson, Steven Ridgeon, Sarah Round, Trudie Lang, Tom Tyrwhitt-Drake, Jerry Silence and Richard Downer. Sam Marchant (PC), and 5 members of the public attended.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mocatta.

2. To receive any declarations of personal or prejudicial interest

None were received.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Chair asked Councillors to consider whether they felt the minutes were a true record of the meeting held on 20 January 2025. Councillors who had attended the meeting confirmed that they were, and they were approved as read.

Proposed by Cllr Silence and seconded by Cllr Downer and duly signed as a full and correct record.

4. Open Forum

The Chair invited those present to make their comments, none was made.

5. EMPC Report

The Chair presented the report for March which had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

There were no comments made on the matters in the report.

6. Reports and Updates

a) Footpaths and Highways (MA)

Cllr Atkinson reported that due to the dry weather over the past few weeks the footpaths appeared to be in good condition. Regarding highways and the calming measures planned he had no further news, but he would look to get an estimated date for works.

(MA)

b) All Sports Pavilion & East Meon Vets (CR)

Cllr Ritchie reported that the football team had a further two games planned for the season and that they had so far paid most of the subs with an outstanding £100 expected soon. He had asked the team if they would like to be involved with the May Fair and have a stall to promote themselves and if they would like to enter for the tug of war. He had also asked whether the Ferguson tractor they use could be on display for the day.

He said that he had been pleased with the new caretaker and that the water for the allotments had been turned on at the Workhouse Lane site, but this would be monitored while cold weather could still be expected.

(CR)

c) Lengthsman: to note works done and call for jobs (TL)

Cllr Lang informed Councillors that she had spoken with the Lengthsman that day and planned to meet with him when he next came to the village.

Two of the jobs included on the previous worksheet jobs had been completed, clearing of the leaves on the Coombe Road corner and clearing of the nettles at the Recreation Ground. He would look to clean the village signs along with any new jobs he was given.

It was considered that further clearance of debris on the Coombe Road corner was needed and that weeding along the wall by the river and clearing the footpaths behind Hill View should be added.

A repair to a wooden rail at the Football Pitch was discussed, the Lengthsman would be asked to quote for this.

(TL)

d) VE-80 Day Celebration of Peace 8 May arrangements (SD)

The Chair reminded Councillors that the VE-80 Day celebrations would take place on the evening of Thursday 8 May. The film, VE Day: Forever in Their Debt, will be shown in the Village Hall by Moviola there would be no charge although there would be a paying bar. At 9:30 a beacon would be lit by Cllr Tyrwhitt-drake on Park Hill. Posters would be put up around the village and volunteers were needed for the set up of the Village Hall.

(SD)

e) APA arrangements (SD)

The APA was to be held on 28 April at 7pm in the Village Hall, the Chair asked Councillors to arrive early to help with the set up. Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake confirmed he was happy to organise the refreshments which would follow the talk from the Energise Souths Downs team.

f) Environment & Nature (SR)

Cllr Ridgeon reported on behalf of the Nature Group that the Toad Patrol was underway and that the Butterfly Count would begin in April, with hopes that numbers would be up on the previous year.

He noted that the Beavers recently introduced in the area had been receiving some publicity.

Once the findings report from the Energy Landscape workshop held on 5 March had come through this would be circulated to all Councillor.

(SR)

7. Matters Arising

a) Village Hall (RD)

i. Framework document: for approval

Cllr Downer had put together the framework as agreed in the January meeting, this had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Councillors unanimously agreed to adopt the document.

(RD)

ii. Village Hall Committee Statement: for approval

The proposed statement had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting along with an explanation of its purpose.

Councillors unanimously approved the statement to be used by the Village Hall Committee when applying for grants etc.

iii. Village Hall Committee Survey proposal: to review

Councillors considered the proposed survey and David Pepper asked for any general comments.

It was asked whether a marketing professional had reviewed the survey, David confirmed that they had and that revisions had been made as a result.

Delivery of the survey and receipt of responses were felt to be a challenge. The plan was to hand deliver the survey to every household and that if responses were not forthcoming then at least the Village Hall Committee had made every effort to engage.

The survey would also be made available online and on local social media platforms. It was suggested a dedicated email address for replies could be used.

David would be correlating the information collected from responses.

It was thought that a further option of a reduced plan outlining the most pressing issues with the building's restoration should be offered.

Councillors emphasised that a neutral stance should be kept in the wording of the survey.

David said that the Village Hall Committee would review the survey taking into consideration the points raised.

iv. Village Hall grant request for Audio Visual Equipment: for approval

The estimate, supplied by David Pepper had been circulated to Councillors.

Following discussion it was agreed that once the Clerk had confirmed with the auditor and SDNPA that the project was approved for CiL funding, the PC would fund the equipment in full but expressed a hope that the Village Hall Committee would try to find less expensive alternatives where possible. The Village Hall Committee had arranged for free installation of the AV equipment.

(PC)

b) SDNPA Call for Projects 2025: to receive project ideas (SRound)

Cllr Round said that replacing the playground equipment would be a possible project for the future but not for this round of grant funding.

Refurbishment of the village finger signposts was discussed, Cllr Tyrwhitt-Drake offered to investigate contractors for this.

(TTD)

c) All Sports Court cleaning: to consider quotes for approval (SRound)

Cllr Round informed Councillors of the quotes and recommendations she had received.

Councillors agreed for Cllr Round to go ahead with the quote of £400+VAT supplied by Housden Courts and to determine whether any protection would be applied to the surface.

(SRound)

d) Hire of Football Pitch for Wedding Marque: to review & agree fee (SD)

The Chair informed Councillors that the terms had been finalised and were agreeable to the hirer.

After further consideration Councillors agreed the fee of £1750 and confirmed there should not be more than two hirings in a calendar year.

(SD)

e) Citizens Advice Bureau grant request: for approval (SD)

Councillors considered the request and agreed to donate £400 to Citizens Advice Bureau.

(PC)

f) FM allotment trees: to receive quotations (SRound/TL)

Cllr Round informed Councillors that she planned to meet with two contractors to explore options.

Councillors agreed a maximum of £2000 for works.

(SRound)

8. County/District Councillor report

Cllr Mocattas' report can be found on the Parish Council Website.

9. Planning Committee written report: including SDNPA Local Plan details (SR)

a) Report

The Planning Committee visited and reviewed 10 applications since the last meeting. Of these, 5 were dwellings, 4 trees and 1 for a farm. There were no objections.

Past applications: An application to change an area of land at Westbury Park (not associated with Westbury House) to horticultural use, to grow native hedging for commercial sale, requiring fencing around the plot, was refused due to its 'unacceptable impact on the landscape of the South Downs National Park'. So far, only one planning application for the various parcels of land on the site has been approved - to allow camping for a limited number of pitches and nights.

There are currently at least 5 applications for new 'windfall' dwellings which have been approved, the same number as one of our Neighbourhood Development Plan sites. The Chair asked Cllr Ridgeon if it was possible to find out how many windfall dwellings had been approved since the NDP was made.

b) Parish Council response to South Downs Local Plan Review: for approval

Cllr Ridgeon proposed to submit the response circulated to Councillors and asked for any comments. He also wanted to thank his colleagues for all their help with this.

Councillors had no comments and agreed for the document to be submitted immediately after the meeting.

(SR/PC)

10. Finance

a) Finance including payments and receipts report (15 January – 10 March)

The RFO presented her report on all payments and receipts between the dates of 15th January and 10th March. Councillors unanimously approved.

b) Retention of Documents & Storage Policy: for adoption

The document was agreed and adopted.

c) Standing Orders: to review

The document was reviewed and adopted.

d) Finance Risk Assessment: to review

The document was reviewed and adopted.

e) Asset Register: to review

The Asset Register was reviewed and adopted.

f) Insurance Pre Questionnaire & changes: to review (RD)

Cllr Downer had taken on the responsibility and would look to speak with the insurance brokers regarding Directors or Managers Cover.

To review at the May meeting.

11. Confidential Section

a) To pass a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press from discussion of 11b where publicity might be prejudicial to the special nature of the business.

No resolution was necessary as all members of the public had left before Councillors began to discuss item 11.

The Clerk left the room for discussion of this agenda item.

b) Clerk/RFO increase in hours & pay review

Councillors agreed the proposed increase in pay to begin on 1 April 2025 with an additional back payment for 2024/2025 to be incorporated.

Councillors agreed for the Clerks hours to be increased from 10 hours per week to 12 hours per week.

12. Any other business including correspondence of note.

None were raised.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8:25pm.

Signed:

Date: