



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
For East Meon Parish Council held at the Village Hall
At 7.00pm on Monday 24 April 2023**

Present: Parish Councillors Cllr Susan Davenport (Chair), Cllr Steven Ridgeon (Vice Chair), Cllr Andrew Hales, Cllr David Cooke, Cllr Charles Ritchie, Cllr Matt Atkinson, Cllr Tom Tyrwhitt-Drake, Cllr Sharon Sillence, Cllr Sarah Round, Cllr Rob Mocatta, Sam Marchant (Parish Clerk & RFO) and 60 Parishioners.

The Chair welcomed residents to the APA.

- 1. Apologies for absence were received from:** Three residents.
- 2. Minutes of the last Parish Assembly** (April 2022) had been circulated and posted on the Parish Council website. They were signed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by a resident and seconded by a resident.
- 3. The Chair's Report** had been posted on the Parish Council website and in the most recent edition of Meon Matters.

The Chair reported that since her report had been published in Meon Matters she along with Cllr Mocatta had continued to press Southern Water regarding the sewage issues in Workhouse Lane. She informed residents that the Penny Mile Development was now due to be completed 2 months later in September.

The Chair also explained that it had been decided that there would be no Parish Award this year.

4. Financial Report

The Parish Clerk presented the Unaudited Accounts for the year to 31st March 2023.

Income

The Precept had been received as expected at £28,853.

Expected income received from the Allotments and the Frogmore car park.

The Cricket Club contribution which had come in under budget now that the Cricket Club pays for actual costs of Water, Electricity and Rates – this year totaling £494.

Two Grants from EHDC were gratefully received - £500, to go towards the new Speed Sign purchased at the beginning of the year and £1000, to go to TWiG for the hedge planting projects on The Green and the Recreation Ground.

CIL monies of £7,229 received from the South Downs National Park this year to be added to the £2,500 received the year before. These funds have to be used within 5 years for projects within the community for the benefit of residents.

Harvest Football Club payments. The agreement with the football club continues, however, due to matches being cancelled the income was lower than expected at £720.

The actual income received was £51,438.14 against a budget of £31,542.73 therefore an excess of £19,895.41.

Expenditure

Administration expenditure included the Clerks salary, caretaking costs, insurance, training, the website, and sundry expenses, this is under budget with no unexpected costs.

Allotments, the water in Frogmore came in under budget however there was an unexpected large bill for the water at the Workhouse Lane point, this meter supplies both the Sports Pavilion and the Allotments, action has now been taken to calculate how much each of these sites use to ensure payments are being fairly distributed in the future.

Capital Projects and Improvements expenditure included the Speed Sign, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Plaque for the commemorative tree and the gate on the Recreation Ground to prevent young children running into Frogmore Lane. Due to two of these items being funded fully or partially by grant money this section came under budget. Donations, the council donated £500 to All Saints' Church for the maintenance of the churchyard and £3,000 towards the Village Hall generator to be used in the event of a power cut as experienced the previous year.

The cost of maintaining Parish land covers grass cutting, mowing and the maintenance of trees and hedges. Petersfield Town Council continued to be contracted to cut the grass at the Recreation Ground and The Green with Chris Smith mowing the smaller areas.

Play Areas, each year RoSPA carry out an inspection of both play areas and identify works required to ensure the continued safety of those using the equipment. The beam holding the swings at the Playground next to the Village Hall was found to be unsafe with a replacement beam then shipped from Wales. As this was the only major repair this section was kept within budget.

Subscriptions, the Council is a member of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

The actual total expenditure was £38,735.05 against a budget of £30,310 meaning an overspend of £8,425.05, this was mainly due to the donation for the VH generator and the Sports Pavilion repairs which were then covered by an insurance claim.

Budget 2023/2024 (Set in November 2022)

The budget for income is £33,703.

Following guidance from the internal auditor and the predicted rise in costs the RFO had recommended that the Precept should increase by 6.5% to £30,728. In addition, there will be the forecasted income from the Allotments, Frogmore Car Park, the Cricket Club and Harvest Football Club.

The budget expenditure had been set at £33,655 plus the expectation of CIL funded projects. The opening balance on the 1 April 2022 was £28,698.68.

Closing balance on the 31 March 2023 was £39,971.74.

5. County Council and District Report

Councillor Mocatta reported that potholes on local roads were currently being repaired and asked residents to continue to use the Hampshire County Council website to report potholes and to support reports with photos. Also regarding highways Cllr Mocatta spoke about the proposed 20mph limits to be introduced in towns and villages in the area and that East Meon could be chosen to be included in the pilot scheme for this.

With regard to the sewage issues in the village he expressed the need for evidence to be collected to improve the chances of Southern Water taking further action. It is hoped that the length of the River Meon from the source to Titchfield Haven could be protected by a SSSI designation, which would also help with the campaign.

He then went on to talk about BOATs and the time and work that has been put in to bring in measures to protect them from damage over the winter months caused by motorbikes and 4WD vehicles. To help with this he asked residents to take photos with a timestamp, if possible, to support.

Finally, he reminded residents that in order to vote in the upcoming elections voters would need to bring photo ID.

6. Parish Forum

The Chair opened the meeting to residents to ask questions.

A resident asked for his thanks to be noted to Cllr Ritchie, David Pepper and Matt Millward for the work on the Sports Pavilion at Workhouse Lane, especially with the new security cameras and the general tidying of the site.

A resident asked whether he could claim for a broken wheel on his vehicle as a result of hitting a pothole. Cllr Mocatta suggested going onto the HCC website where he could report potholes or make a claim for damage. Cllr Mocatta offered to assist with this.

A resident added that in the past he had been advised to carry a tennis ball to measure the depth of potholes when taking photo evidence.

A resident asked whether the local member of Parliament, Damian Hinds, could assist with the closing of BOATs to motorised leisure vehicles, he was informed that he was already involved.

A resident and landlady of the Izaak Walton Pub requested that the writing on the road which should say 'KEEP CLEAR' on the bridge outside the pub be repainted as it has become feint, and there were issues with cars being parked there obstructing the entrance to the pub carpark. Cllr Mocatta asked Mrs Lucus to email him for him to assist

A resident asked about what to do in the event of fly tipping. Cllr Mocatta advised that photo evidence is useful which should then be sent onto EHDC for them to clear, however if this happened on the South Downs Way it can be more complicated to determine responsibility. The clearing should then be down to Hampshire CC, or if on private land it will be the landowner's responsibility.

A resident asked whether the Environmental Agency Environmental Order could be used to force Southern Water to act. The Chair advised that the Environment Agency had tested the River Meon many times. However, by the time the sewage had reached the river it had been so diluted by the surface water runoff that it did not register high enough on ammonia tests.

A resident asked whether the damage to the verges and ditches in Frogmore Lane resulting from the extra traffic when the Clanfield road had been closed last year for water main works could be repaired and cleared. The Chair suggested having the Lengthsman carry out the clearing of the ditches and that Cllr Atkinson report this issue to Hampshire Highways.

A resident pointed out that the closures of the Clanfield Road and the High Street had resulted in all verges being damaged by the extra traffic on the diversion routes. He asked whether there could be compensation from the contractors to fix the damage and potholes caused. The Chair said that she would investigate the possibility of claiming compensation or getting remedial work done. She also reported that Cllr Atkinson had successfully improved signage which before had led traffic travelling west through the village from the A3.

A resident then thanked The Chair and all Cllrs for their dedication and hard work.

At 7:45pm the Chair introduced the Guest Speaker, and the formal part of the meeting was closed.