

Medbourne Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL MONDAY 2nd APRIL 2012

Present: Cllrs Polito (Chair), Tweddle, Clarke, Palmer and Pilkington
Cllr Beaty
Parishioners: Tom & Ann Price, Claire Pierce-Smith, Laurie Smith, Keith Sandars, Karl Jenkins

1.0 APOLOGIES: Rennie Barbour

2.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH APRIL 2011:

Resolved: The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
Proposed: Karl Jenkins Seconded: Cllr Beaty

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR – Cllr Polito:

The year started with Parish Council elections, at which our vice chairman Laurie Smith and Allan Caldwell decided not to put themselves forward for re-election. We owe them both a considerable debt of gratitude for their unstinting efforts on our behalf over many years. We are most grateful to Louise Pilkington and Stuart Palmer, who volunteered to fill the vacancies.

Development Of Pagets Farm. The original planning permission proved to be undeliverable due to the fact that Alan Hinch would not permit the cutting down of the garden hedge. A revised scheme was put forward, which included the turning of the field into pony paddocks. As usual this created a wave of criticism and was eventually turned down at a meeting of the HDC Planning Committee on March 6th following a lengthy verbal submission from the PC, with telling support from Councillor Beaty. We now await further submissions from Brudenell Estates.

Village Web Site. In July, David Tuffs who had taken over the village website, kindly agreed to administer the MPC website and incorporate it into the Leicestershire Villages website. We now have an excellent and informative website of which we can be justifiably proud. Our sincere thanks to David for all his efforts.

PARISH MAINTENANCE.

War Memorial. Our thanks are due to Keith Sandars for his immaculate keeping of the War Memorial, which is maturing nicely despite the occasional abuse from large articulated lorries!

Village Benches. Our thanks to Peter O'Donnell for once again painting the village benches, which now look excellent for their age.

Towpath Mowing. In order to keep the precept as low as possible, it was decided to mow the towpath through volunteer mowers rather than through contractors.

Pack Horse Bridge. On March 19th, I had a response from Malcolm Smith at County Hall, to say that they were monitoring the state of the railings and would be seeking a re-design to ensure that there was no repetition of this problem.
He was hoping there might be some money available in the next budget.

Beer Festival. The Nevill Arms held a very successful Beer festival in July, which occasioned a number of complaints of unsavoury behaviour. The VHC Committee in collaboration with the Nevill Arms have addressed the issues and have assured the village that there will be no repeat of these incidents.

Policing. In June we decided to join with 9 other villages, to purchase a police operated speed gun in an attempt to combat speeding through the village. Whilst a number of tickets have been issued and many cautions given, we have not yet cracked the issue of speeding bikers.

There is a more visible police presence in the village these days and PC Andy Cooper and Tim Hayward are seen around on a regular basis. This has led to a marked reduction in reported crime in the Welland Valley.

Councillors Duties. During the year Councillors duties were as follows –

Paul Polito	Chairman LAPLAC representative
Pat Tweddle	Vice Chairman Medbourne Charities representative Taxi Voucher Scheme Administrator Bowls Club Representative
Ian Clarke	Sports Club representative Footway Lighting Warden Village Hall Representative
Louise Pilkington	MEFT Representative
Stuart Palmer	Planning Representative Heritage Warden

During the year the Parish Council was assisted by a number of volunteers:

Keith Sandars	War Memorial Warden
Bryan Smith	Keeper of the Hollow Tree / Brook and Flood Warden
David Tuffs	Village Website Administrator
Peter O'Donnell	Keeper of the Village Benches
Carolyn Frostwick	Internal Auditor
Richard Hammond	Legal Adviser

All Councillors carried out their duties without claiming any expenses.

I would like to personally thank the councillors, the assistants and the many volunteers, who help to make this village such a special place in which to live.

Finally, the year has ended with the resignation of Jenny Sandars, who has been our clerk for the last 11 years and to whom we all owe a huge debt of gratitude for her efforts on behalf of the whole community and especially of course to the councillors and to me in particular.

We are very fortunate that Fiona Smith has agreed to take over from Jenny and we wish her well in her challenging new role.

5.0 PARISH PROJECTS FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

There are no projects which require special funding at the moment.

6.0 PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS – Jenny Sandars (Clerk):

A copy of the draft accounts detailing the projected position at 31st March 2012 were circulated at the meeting. The final bank statements would not however be received until after 7th April 2012. The final accounts would therefore be presented to councillors for approval at the meeting in May.

The **Statement of Assets** presented this year shows a total of £10,575.52 held in the Parish Council accounts, of which £534.22 is designated to “The Hollow” and represents monies raised within the village for continued maintenance and enhancement of the area.

The sum of £752.60 is also designated to the Taxi Voucher Scheme and represents the balance of monies raised from the appeal for donations by the village to help sustain the scheme.

This leaves a balance of £9,288.70 in the General Funds of which £3,561 is set aside for provision of contingencies the Parish Council needs to finance from time to time as shown on the Statement of Assets.

The balance in the separate Mower Fund Account held at Barclays presently stands at £4,640.09.

Looking at the **Projected Receipts & Payments Summary:**

The amount of interest earned on our various bank accounts remains very low due to the ongoing effects of the banking crisis.

Turning to payments throughout the year:

- **Administration Expenses:** This only consists this year for purchase of an ink cartridge and postage stamps.
- **Insurance:** By opting for A Long Term Agreement to continue with our present insurers for four years, together with a ‘No Claims’ discount we secured a small reduction in the premium.
- **Legal Fees:** No legal fees were incurred this year.
- **Subscriptions & Donations:** There has been an increase in the donations made this year. Firstly the annual donation of £400 towards running costs of the Youth Club has been re-instated following the withdrawal of funding by Leics County Council. Along with a

number of other villages in the Welland Valley we had also made a contribution of £243 towards the cost of a speed gun purchased for use by the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

- **Election Costs:** Following the election in May, although it was uncontested we were still required to meet the administration costs incurred by HDC for the nomination process.
- **Mower Costs:** We have only incurred the cost of one minor repair to the parish mower, as the annual service being undertaken by Brooksby Agricultural College as part of a scheme for students to gain experience in maintenance and repair of various types of equipment.
- **Street Lighting Repair & Maintenance:** The increased cost this year is only due to the normal quarterly account for the period up to 31st March being received before the end of the financial year instead of in early April.
- **Grass cutting:** A reduction in the cost of mowing the towpath had been achieved this year due to the number of times that it had been overlooked by the Service Team.
- **Village Maintenance:** The only cost incurred this year was for re-painting of the village benches.

When all the above are taken into account there was little change in the overall budget for the year, other than our contribution towards purchase of the speed gun that hadn't been budgeted for.

Carolyn Frostwick kindly undertook an internal audit of our accounts for the year ending 31st March 2011, following which the official Statement of Accounts was submitted to the External Auditors and the certificate issued. Carolyn has again kindly agreed to act as Internal Auditor for this year's accounts.

7.0 PRECEPT: Allowances have been made for the annual fee being charged from the 1st April 2012 by Leicestershire County Council for use of the Parish Council Website, together with a donation of £150 towards the cost of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations . This has resulted in an increase in the overall precept requirement for the forthcoming year of 4.91% ie £274.

8.0 PLANNING – Cllr Palmer

Over the past 12 months there has been a general mix of planning applications, most of which have been passed.

The planning application regarding Paget's Farm development and change of use etc has, however, caused a great deal of opposition as could be seen by the amount of emails and letters sent to the District Council. Planning regarding the change of use has been declined for the time being which is encouraging as it means our opinions have been taken into consideration.

As we all know planning policies are changing both nationally and locally with new policies and guidelines coming into force. Hopefully, Medbourne will not be too affected by them but I do feel the District Council are encouraging new building works on quite a grand scale.

At the end of last year, I attended a meeting at HDC where an option was given to Parish Councils to set up their own planning committees. This would, however, entail a great deal of work. It was also made known that if HDC wished they could over-rule any decisions made.

The general feeling of the Parish Council at this present time, is that we would not take up the option as the current planning system will continue to function.

9.0 PARISH LIGHTING Cllr Clarke:

A year of standard charges with only normal street lighting repairs and maintenance required. No major issues to report.

10.0 LOCAL CHARITIES – Cllr Tweddle:

The Medbourne Charities exist to apply the income of the Charity in relieving, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Parish of Medbourne or Nevill Holt, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

Apart from the usual payments for winter fuel, which are re-assessed annually, no other payments were made.

If anyone knows of any parishioner who requires help with food, cooking or heating facilities, transport, medical costs, or other services such as wheelchair or disabled aids, please contact a Trustee. Our remit is fairly wide and we also assist young people with the costs of tools for their chosen trade or book requirements when taking further education. We have to ensure that all other avenues have been explored but we do wish the funds to be used for the purpose intended.

The trustees for the Charity are: Mr A R H Pocock, Mrs M P Tweddle, Mrs D Burrows and Rev. S Bishop.

11.0 MEFT – Cllr Pilkington:

The MEFT has had a very positive 2011/2012.

There are 2 entities owned by the MEFT, the playground and half of the Medbourne playing field.

With regard to the playing field, to date there has been no formal lease with the Medbourne Sports Club for the use of the land but a lease is being drawn up by Richard Hammond and it is hoped that we will be able to formalise this arrangement in the near future.

Any lease agreement will, however, have to satisfy the MEFT's constitution.

In terms of the village playground, there has been an increase in awareness that this facility is in fact owned and maintained by the MEFT and is not funded by or the responsibility of the Harborough District Council or any other Council.

The playground was able to support itself financially until recently via income earned from a small investment it has in a managed fund. Interest rates being what they are at present, this amount dwindled to approx £410.00 in 2011 – not enough to cover the insurance cost for that year.

A fundraising campaign was initiated and the villagers have been extremely supportive, participating in fundraising events and providing moral support when the MEFT has attempted to obtain grants to assist with essential maintenance work. In particular, the efforts of the Autumn Club must be recognised as it chose the playground as one of its charities for support and very generously donated £500 from its Christmas fundraiser.

New swing seats have been purchased, one of the rides and two of the wooden panels have had repair work undertaken, and further maintenance in the form of the painting of some of the play frames is to be undertaken shortly. The fence around the playground has also been repaired and will hopefully have further work undertaken on it shortly.

A grant from the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Community Foundation has meant that the MEFT has been able to replace the safety platforms on the main play unit from worn wooden panels to a much hardier metal surface.

2012 sees the continuation of the fundraising for ongoing costs and maintenance, with a goal to raise money for the replacement of the safety surface in the next few years.
In all, a good year for the MEFT.

12.0 VILLAGE HALL – Cllr Clarke:

There have been many changes since last year. We have a new Chairman Karl Jenkins and a new Treasurer Carolyn Frostwick who took over from Allan Caldwell and Tim Smith respectively.

The previous year had seen a loss incurred as major repairs to the roof had been required and a large legal fee had been incurred over re-negotiating the lease. Looking forward it was recognised that the income from the hall needed to be maximised, as the Village Hall not only needs to cover the day to day running costs but also needs to generate funds for future repairs and improvements. The previous committee had already identified that rate rises were required and this was already on the agenda.

Projects identified as needing funding include re-roofing – at around £20k a major expense; the building of a disabled access ramp from the front gate (planning application to be submitted shortly); replacing the boiler and upgrading the central heating and hot water system. The committee has identified the costs of these items together with general repairs to the building envelope.

The charges for hiring the hall have been reviewed and marginally increased. Bookings have increased over the last year and the draft accounts show a profit for the year to 31 March 2012.

In the next few weeks the Trustees will be issuing a questionnaire to the village to help identify the usage requirements of the Village Hall to all residents. It is hoped that this will start a process that will enable the Trustees to apply for funding from various public bodies and charities to assist with the major projects identified. Part of this process involves sorting the constitution and having a building survey and both of these are in progress.

Bookings Secretary Susie and her husband Michael are a real asset and with their help along with others there is encouraging news on booking enquiries.

The dilapidation survey associated with the new lease has been received.

A crack appeared in the building structure above the Kitchen this year and a surveyors report identified the cause to be the Beech tree adjacent. Planning permission has been given to take this tree down.

I am confident that the Hall will continue to be an important and flourishing part of village life. The Village Hall AGM is to be held 16th April 2012 at 7.30pm and everyone is invited to attend.

13.0 HERITAGE WARDEN'S REPORT – Cllr Palmer:

There is little to report this year as the County Council have undertaken virtually no action regarding surveys on flora and fauna etc. which have been undertaken in the past. This is due to funding cuts.

Last year I attended an all day conference regarding the role of Heritage Warden at which many topics and projects were discussed. None, however, have come to fruition. Again, I can only

assume due to the lack of funding.

The condition of Packhorse Bridge was brought to my attention a couple of weeks ago by David Tyler, who, over the past few years has kindly sprayed and tidied it. He feels, however, he can no longer continue to carry out the work. I spent a couple of hours clearing the weeds on and around the bridge and am happy to carry on doing this. I did notice some of the timber is not in great shape as I believe was mentioned at last year's meeting. I feel some maintenance work needs to be carried out in the near future and will look into the matter further.

14.0 TREE WARDEN'S REPORT – Incorporating 'The Hollow'

The Hollow. More snowdrops and bluebells have been planted among the trees. The gorse at the top of the bank has been cleared due to die back and replanted with common broom and *rosa rugosa* to continue providing food and nectar to the birds and insects. There is a lot of frogspawn again this year and sticklebacks have been seen. Kingfishers are regular visitors with moorhens and ducks nesting. There are a lot of tits, finches, dunnocks and robin at the feeders but we have again had to stop feeding for a while to reduce the spread of trichomonosis (finch disease). There will again be a dawn chorus walk in May open to all.

All the bird food is purchased from Eye Brook Birds Feeds at Great Easton and the costs are now in the region of £600 per annum. We are holding two Sunday Teas on August bank holiday Sunday and Monday again this year to assist with buying the food. The success of all year feeding is shown by the number of birds using the feeders. All feeding costs are met by the 'Hollow Fund' which is not funded from the parish precept but entirely separate.

Village. Some ash whips have been planted in gaps in hedges on Ashley Road, Hallaton Road and Uppingham Road. The young horse chestnuts on Ashley Road and Drayton Road are all affected by the leaf miner disease. Barn owls have again used boxes erected previously with two broods totalling five young reared last year. There is still no clear evidence on the decline in fish stocks in the brook despite water testing by the Environment Agency. Otters have been seen in the brook through the village and there is evidence of regular visits throughout the area.

Our grateful thanks go to all the dedicated bird feeders and to those who have donated trees and nest boxes. If any person wishes to help with general maintenance or wishes to put forward any ideas for the future please contact Mr Bryan Smith

15.0 TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME – Cllr Tweddle:

At present we have three people regularly using the scheme. We have a balance of £752 in the fund as at 2nd April 2012.

If any parishioners would like to use the scheme, who do not have access to a car, please contact Pat Tweddle on Tel: 565770 for details.

16.0 SPORTS CLUB – Cllr Clarke:

The Club is very prosperous at the moment across all sports and socially. The extension fund stands at £89000. The extension to form a larger Club House should start to be built early summer 2012. This extension is needed due to the amount of activity and continued success of the Sports Club. The Club has recently failed in obtaining one large grant but is hopeful of another that is still being considered.

Fund-raising events continue and will continue even after the extension is built. There is a feeling that a new impetus will be generated when building works commence.

Cricket Club: We have 7 Junior Teams and 3 Senior Teams. Junior Cricket and coaching of juniors is very well supported, with all teams achieving a good standard at various levels. The club once again set new standards with more County and District players than ever before. The First Team dropped from Division 1 of the Rutland League but managed to put a very young and competitive team out each week. It was the first year of putting a team in the Northants League and we managed to gain promotion, which was a great and enjoyable achievement. The Club, together with working parties and some local sponsorship, formed a new practice net area. Coaching is available for all ages and standards.

Football Club: We now have 5 Junior Teams and 2 Senior Teams. Junior football and coaching of juniors is available to most age groups and very well supported. All junior teams are playing to a reasonable standard. Home games are very well supported by locals and parents. Most areas of the field now have football pitches and a huge amount of time and effort is being put into maintaining and improving the standard of the playing surfaces.

Tennis Club: There have been many changes at the Tennis Club this year with virtually a new committee now in place. Many changes have been made to coaching and more events are planned. The Tennis club continues to thrive.

Skittles Team: This is well supported and is a good additional social side to the club.

Bowls Team: These facilities are used on a regular basis and are a very welcome addition to the social side of the club.

The Sports Committee have plans to open the Club House more to try and become a focal point for the village community. Other regular users include the Whist Team, Holiday Club and the British Legion.

No major expenses were incurred on the gang mowers this year. Sponsorship of diesel for the mowing is greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to quite a few individuals, but in particular Colin Lawson, John Burrows and Ian Stevens who do a huge amount of unpaid work keeping the whole sports ground looking immaculate and a credit to Medbourne as a village.

17.0 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN:

There were no questions raised.

18.0 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

Tom Price asked whether help with funding for the playground run by the MEFT could be included within the precept. Cllr Polito replied that the council have not wanted to set the precedent of favouring any particular group over another.

Keith Sandars thanked all councillors for their hard work and dedication over the past year.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.