

Medbourne Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL MONDAY 7th APRIL 2014

Present: Cllrs Polito (Chair), Pilkington, Clarke and Gidley Wright.
11 members of the public

1.0 APOLOGIES: Cllr Cory and Cllr David Beaty

2.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8th APRIL 2013:

Resolved: The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
Proposed: J Sandars Seconded: D Tuffs

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

In the last few months we have had the resignation of Councillors Matt Oliver and Steph Dunckley and our clerk Fiona Smith. I would like to personally thank them all for their efforts on behalf of our community. Fiona has been an outstanding clerk and will be a hard act to follow. Two new councillors - Jo Cory and Tim Gidley Wright were co-opted onto the council at an Extraordinary Meeting on March 24.

Daniel Ray has been appointed as our new clerk and took up his position on April 1st. Dan currently works for East Northants District Council as a Planning Officer, so his expertise in this field will undoubtedly be of great benefit to the PC.

Community Open Day.

This event, together with the new Medbourne Directory was sponsored by the PC, but organised by Tom Price and his committee, who did a wonderful job in harnessing the enthusiasm of many of the village clubs and societies to promote themselves to the village as a whole. Our grateful thanks to all those involved in this venture.

Policing.

Due to cutbacks in police staffing levels, the regular speeding checks in Medbourne have recently been suspended. We have been advised that this situation will be addressed in the coming months and we await further information from the police.

Parish Repairs & Maintenance.

In December a contract was placed with Treespace for a height reduction of 30% and general tidy up of the ash tree on the towpath. This will be done during the coming year. Problems relating to the horse chestnut tree near Brook Terrace were tackled by LCC and the tree is now in a much safer condition.

Peter O' Donnell has prepared a survey of the village benches and we shall be carrying out a limited refurbishment programme this year. The bench at the Paynes Lane junction has been replaced.

Our thanks to Keith Sandars for his immaculate tending of the war memorial and his efforts in

obtaining a substantial Heritage Lottery grant for its' refurbishment– to Bryan Smith our tree and brook warden who successfully obtained two free lots of trees for Leviathon Wood and to our volunteers Graham Doe and Ian Dunckley who mow the towpath.

New Agenda Format.

During the year there were two planning applications on land which I own, which have caused major divisions of opinion within the village. At times this has resulted in unacceptable behaviour at the meetings.

Advice was sought from LRALC as to best practice on conducting a PC meeting. This has resulted in a new agenda format, which is different from the more relaxed format of old.

Super Fast Broadband.

Medbourne is now part of the newly formed Welland Broadband Group, comprising Ashley, Horninghold, Weston by Welland, Stockerston, Slawston, Hallaton, Nevill Holt, Bringhurst and Drayton. At this stage these communities are not part of the LCC/BT superfast broadband rollout and as such we have a lobbying group with the express intention of ensuring that do not become 'the forgotten few'.

Councillors Duties.

Paul Polito	Chairman LAPLAC representative Parish Maintenance
Louise Pilkington	Vice Chairman MEFT representative
Ian Clarke	Sports Club representative Street Lighting Warden Taxi Voucher representative Medbourne Charities representative
Matt Oliver (Jan)	Planning representative
Steph Dunckley (Feb)	Village Hall representative

During the year the PC was assisted by a number of volunteers

Keith Sandars	War Memorial Warden
Bryan Smith	Keeper of the Hollow Tree & Brook Warden
David Tuffs	Information Resource Advisor
Peter O'Donnell	Keeper of the village benches
Roger Lee	Internal Auditor
Richard Hammond	Legal Advisor

All Councillors carried out their duties without claiming any expenses.

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

5.0 PARISH PROJECTS FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

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

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS – Fiona Smith (Retiring Clerk):

A copy of the draft accounts detailing the projected position at 31st March 2014 was circulated at the meeting. The final bank statements will not however be received until after 7th April 2014. The final accounts will therefore be presented to councillors for approval at the meeting in May.

The **Statement of Assets** presented this year shows a total of £10,955.42 held in the Parish Council accounts, of which £570.22 is designated to “The Hollow” and represents monies raised within the village for continued maintenance and enhancement of the area.

The sum of £52.60 is 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. (It is anticipated that this will be used up in the forthcoming year, with no replacement funding foreseen).

This leaves a balance of £10332.60 in the General Funds of which £3,761 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 £5,752.04.

Projected Receipts & Payments Summary:

Elements to note in receipts and payments throughout the year are:

Other Income: A New Homes Bonus payment of £341 was received from Harborough District Council

Clerk Salary and Expenses: The increase is due to a realignment of the timing of payment and therefore represents eighteen months of salary. Previously the six months Oct – Mar salary was paid in arrears in April – effectively in the wrong year.

Payroll Processing: With the introduction of HMRC real time information an outside supplier was appointed to provide a payroll processing service.

Directories: The cost of printing the directories was offset by fundraising (Open Day).

Audit Fee: There was a saving of £120 over last year as the audit was carried out with no additional clarification required and income and expenditure was under £10,000. Therefore no fee was charged

Insurance: The cost of insurance was reduced following a competitive quotation exercise. A new 3-year long term agreement is now in place.

Subscriptions & Donations: Payments were less than the previous year due to the jubilee donation made in 2013.

Village Hall: An additional donation of £200 was paid to the Village Hall Committee as contribution for a project for which they were applying for a grant.

Grass cutting: No costs were incurred due to volunteers taking on the task of mowing.

7.0 PRECEPT: The precept for 2014/15 was increased by £840 due to the main change of increasing the clerks salary to represent payment for 4 hours a week rather than 2. The total precept for 2014/15 was therefore £7193 representing an increase to the parish element of council tax of £4.89 (Band D).

8.0 PLANNING – Fiona Smith (Retiring Clerk)

The past year has seen a general mix of planning applications, with planning related items frequently featuring prominently at meetings.

Applications regarding the Old Slaughterhouse on Springbank (amendments and retrospective to the application originally passed in February 2013) and The Paddock on Drayton Road provoked much discussion, debate and disagreement, which was well documented through the year. The eventual outcomes were refusal of planning permission for The Paddock and approval for The Old Slaughterhouse.

Harborough District Council held a second Local Green Space call for sites consultation (the original was held in May 2012) requesting that parishes resubmitted information and giving a general opportunity for the public both to submit sites and to comment on any sites submitted. The issue of Neighbourhood Planning was raised with specific regard to a Plan for Medbourne and will be revisited and discussed further over the coming year.

9.0 PARISH LIGHTING Cllr Clarke

Only issue of note is the problems with Street Light 19 on Ashley Rd which have now been resolved. Other than that a year of standard charges with only normal street lighting repairs and maintenance required. No major issues or expenses to report.

10.0 LOCAL CHARITIES – Cllr Clarke

The Medbourne Charities exist to apply the income of the Charity in relieving either generally or individual persons resident in the Parish of Medbourne or Nevill Holt, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress. The Trustees shall so apply the monies as they think applicable.

During the year the charity has made a donation to allay the theft of funds from the village hall, a contribution towards works to trees and travel costs to hospital and doctor plus the customary relief of need payments in December.

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, Mr I Clarke, Mrs D Burrows and Rev. S Bishop.

11.0 MEFT – Cllr Pilkington

The MEFT has had a positive 2013/2014.

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

field.

With regard to the playing field, discussions are continuing between the MEFT and the the Medbourne Sports Club regarding the terms of a lease and it hoped that we will be able to formalise this arrangement in the near future.

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

It is hoped that the terms of the lease will be such that the annual cost of the insurance for the playground and its statutory inspection will be covered, with a very small amount in reserve for maintenance. At present we have to fundraise each year to cover these basic running costs.

The MEFT is also in the process of finalising a new constitution and governing document to better reflect its current purpose and activities.

With regard to the playground, the playground has been able to support itself financially this year through fundraising and donations. It is only as a result of fundraising and donations that this is possible – and in this regard I would ask that you all purchase raffle tickets for the Easter raffle. For the last 3 years this raffle has paid the cost of the insurance so it is vital that the village supports it.

As a result of a donation of part of the proceeds raised by the Truck Pull (and thanks again to Gary Gardiner for his vision and all of his hard work in relation to that event), further maintenance work has been undertaken on the playground including the replacement of the wooden frames around the flooring. These were rotten and have been replaced with cement frames which will hopefully be more durable – and certainly look better! Other maintenance was carried out in accordance with the recommendations made in the annual safety inspection.

The MEFT would like to thank those members of the community who mow the lawn at the playground – for those who don't know, volunteers are rostered to keep the grass cut. Thanks to Gilly Oliver who has again drawn up the roster for 2014. If anyone is interested in helping out with the roster or the upkeep of the playground in general, please let me know – we'd love your support.

2014 sees the continuation of the fundraising for ongoing costs and maintenance, with our continuing goal of raising money for the replacement of the safety surface in the next few years.

12.0 VILLAGE HALL – Report supplied by Karl Jenkins (Chair of village Hall Committee)

While there has been some movement in the personnel of the village hall committee with the departure of Wendy and Nickie, together with Steph as the PC officer, the committee has been reduced somewhat, however with Amy taking the position from Keith as Secretary, we have become a stronger team, working new initiatives to raise money.

It was disappointing that the planned village party had to be cancelled due to poor ticket sales. However the Committee are arranging events in forthcoming months that it is hoped will be of interest. A film night is to be arranged and an Antiques Road Show Event is being planned for Thursday 19th June.

We ended the year with surplus income in excess of £4000 and we are looking to use some of that to replace the old crockery/table linen to improve the presentation of Sunday Teas.

The disabled ramp is set to start the second week in April 2014 together with some other relaying of slabs which should tidy the front up and gain better access.

The tenders are still coming in for the roof and gutter repairs and we are as a team looking for new grants all the time.

We are currently looking at how to extend the village hall and will be inviting local architects to tender for the planning, although it is a long process.

We are still looking for and about to advertise for local people who can give any amount of time per month to the village hall for help in either painting to gutter cleaning to weed pulling. Every little helps.

As you are aware an extension would be a great asset for the village hall accommodating a larger kitchen and meeting room both out for hire in a more professional way for both the village and business users, although the planning of the project from getting an architect on a pro bono basis is difficult together with such a large project, fortunately with the added help gained from David Tuffs at the side line this process should be well ordered, with transparent clarity.

13.0 INFORMATION RESOURCE ADVISOR'S REPORT: David Tuffs

Village Web Site

The main feature since last year has been the introduction of the Medbourne Village email list and the Twitter feed (@Medbourne565), the latter being administered by Amy Hayward-Paine. Both have been well received with the email list now numbering 50 subscribers and the Twitter feed having 115 followers, including local press, influencers and businesses. Given that each feed potentially informs a family we could be reaching half the village via these streams. Our email and Twitter scheme was presented at the Leicestershire County Council conference for web site administrators in October and was extremely well received.

The emails and Tweets refer back to the Village Web Site, particularly the Events page. As a result, the annual hit rate for the site has exceeded 48,000 as compared to 41,000 in last year's report. The other positive outcome is that more local event organisers routinely post their events in the online diary (as this is the source data for emails and Tweets).

Since last year Keith Sandars has taken over as editor of the History pages of the web site, and he has added several interesting contributions. Work is in hand to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I with some Medbourne-specific history.

<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/medbourne>

Parish Council Web Site

The Parish Council web site remains much the same as last year. It is fully up-to-date in terms of meetings and minutes but will require significant updates in the short term to include the new councillors and the new Parish Clerk. An option exists for the new Parish Clerk to take over maintenance of this site; this is yet to be discussed.

It's worth reminding everyone that, in addition to Medbourne Parish Council matters, this web site and the Village web site both provide access to all planning applications currently under consideration by Harborough District Council, including all their supporting documentation. There has been no audit of the Parish Council web site by Leicestershire County Council since last year's report.

<http://medbourne.leicestershireparishcouncils.org>

Church Web Site

Whilst this site caters primarily for churchgoers, it also carries uploads of the monthly Parish Magazines. Consequently, a link to the latest online Parish Magazine is now provided in every monthly email sent to the Village list.

<http://www.sixsaintscircaholt.org>

14.0 TREE WARDEN'S REPORT – Provided by Bryan Smith (Tree Warden)

With grants of trees from The Woodland Trust and the welcome help of the local community we have planted another 840 trees in the Leviathan Wood this year! Another 420 have been applied for, with October delivery, so we hope to see many people helping if we are successful again.

The most noticeable gap in the village tree scene has been the removal of the old diseased Oak in the churchyard. The Ash along the brook towpath is scheduled to have some limb removal and lowering of the crown plus some Sycamores in the garden of the Old Hall. The fish ramp on the Nevill waterfall, installed with the advice of the Environment Agency, had some limited success with enabling the breeding fish to migrate upstream – on going project.

Willows on the larger island in the Hollow have been considerably reduced as their growth was threatening to interfere with the electricity cables but this will allow the other smaller trees more room and light. We hope that all dog walkers will respect the area by keeping to the path and not allow their dogs to disturb the wildlife. The adjoining fields are all private land and not a Right of Way. With the help of others, the snowdrops around the Hollow have been split and replanted in other areas to encourage their spread plus planting of winter Aconites among the bushes.

Unfortunately Muntjac deer and rabbit are still attacking the broom and the Gorse has not regenerated to the degree that we planed when they were planted.

We have a considerable flock of Goldfinch, Chaffinch and Green Finch feeding at the moment, Siskins were spotted feeding on the Alder trees and Blue Tits, Great Tits, Red Kite and Buzzard are becoming common sites in the area.

The Hollow fund received a donation from the village hall to compensate for the disruption and loss of income from the Monday teas and the birdfeeders have booked for the August Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday for this year. It is the funds raised from the teas which enable us to continue feeding and attract and increase the bird presence.

14.0A WAR MEMORIAL REPORT – Keith Sanders, War Memorial Warden

After negotiations spread over nineteen weeks and the filling in of numerous forms, I am pleased to say that we have now received official confirmation from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that approved a Grant of £4000 to refurbish the memorial together with associated heritage projects. This fund can only be used for “Approved Purposes” designated by the HLF, these being:

- Cleaning and re-lettering of the memorial
- Researching the lives and deaths of the persons named on the memorial and posting an article on the history page of the village website
- Giving talks and exhibitions on our findings
- Holding a re-dedication service in August 2014 when the refurbishment is complete

The memorial is a Grade II Listed Building and planning permission was refused for our original ideas to carry out the re-lettering. Subsequently a very productive site meeting was held with the relevant planning persons and Barham Stone the experts who are to carry out the work. As a result of the meeting we were advised the Planning Permission was not required for the actual cleaning and this is to be carried out by the specialist company on 24th April. Following the cleaning a further site meeting will be held with the Planning Officers and Barham Stone to agree on a mutually acceptable way of carrying out the re-lettering. When the method has been agreed the Planning Department will advise as to whether or not formal planning consent will be required before the work can be carried out.

All our projects have to be completed by 1st December 2014 and any funds left over have to be returned to the HLF. It has to be stressed that any expenditure made has to fall within the 'approved purposes'. If not HLF will ask us to refund the money, for this reason any one wishing to undertake any work related to this project should speak to me (Keith) first.

We are also required by the HLF to publicise the fact that they have awarded us the grant and put our ideas to them as to how we intend to carry this out. I have written to them with our proposals and await their reply.

15.0 TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME – Cllr Clarke

The taxi voucher scheme is drawing to a close with limited funds available. The scheme will not be renewed.

16.0 SPORTS CLUB – Cllr Clarke

The Club is prosperous at the moment across all sports and socially as well. Major improvements have been made to the Club House this year. Un-paid volunteers have worked hard this year to try and make the extension funds go further. A difficult winter Weather wise reducing Bar Takings and with many Football games cancelled the football season is likely to extend well into the Cricket Season.

Fund-raising events will continue this year but there should be a break in the Building Works.

Cricket Club: Thriving Adult and Junior sections. Senior teams will now play in Leicestershire & Rutland Leagues. Senior Saturday Team won their League. Senior Sunday Team finished mid table. Junior Cricket is very well supported, and most teams achieving a good standard. No significant drop off in numbers as some had expected. New volunteers are getting involved which should help give the club some continuity. There are still plans in place to have double practice nets, which will aid practice and coaching.

Coaching is available for all ages and abilities.

Football Club: Thriving Adult and Junior sections. Junior football and coaching available for most age groups which is well supported.

A frustrating season weather wise with loads of games being cancelled. All junior teams are playing to a reasonable standard. Home games are very well supported by local residents and parents. Most areas of the sports field is now set out for and used as football pitches. There is a huge amount of un-paid volunteer time and effort put in maintaining and improving the standard of the playing surfaces.

Tennis Club: A well supported Club with a lot of members. Tennis available for all ages and abilities. Coaching available for all ages and abilities. Changes made again to the structure and committee again this year. Junior and Senior Teams involved in competitive league matches.

Skittles Team: Well supported team using the facilities during the winter. Gives the Sports Club vital income and are a good addition to the social side of the club.

Bowls Team: Have managed to complete all their matches but have struggled for players from time to time. Use the facilities on a regular basis and are a very welcome addition to the social side of the club.

General

The Sports Committee have plans to open more often when Building works are in a suitable position.

No major expenses were incurred on the gang mowers this year.

Special thanks to quite a few individuals, but in particular Colin Lawson, John Burrows and Ian Stevens who do a huge amount of un-paid 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

Keith Sanders raised concern that there is a continuing problem with parking on the sports pitch.

Cllr Clarke has asked those whom are not safely/appropriately parking to not park dangerously, however the request was not well received.

Carol Almond asked that if there is a need for money for other charitable purposes, can money be realigned/be put to better use.

Cllr Clarke advised that anyone who is in need should approach the charity and agreed with Carol that this could be advertised wider. Cllr Pilkington also commented that the MEFT would approach the charity, but only as a last resort.

Tom Price conveyed his thanks to the Parish Councillors for their time and effort over the previous year.

Cllr Polito wanted to thank Fiona Smith, the retiring Parish Clerk, on behalf of Medbourne Parish Council for all her time and effort over her time as Medbourne Parish Clerk.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.