

## MEDBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

The main topic raised at the Annual Statutory Meeting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010 was in relation to the signs that had been erected on the sports field as a result of the continuing problem of dog fouling on the playing surfaces.

Cllr Polito explained that the sports field was owned 50% by both the Parish Council and the MEFT. That part owned by the Parish Council is leased to the Sports Club and a similar lease is presently being arranged by the MEFT.

Whilst everyone appreciated why it had been decided to erect the signs it had raised the following points:

- The MEFT considered they should have been approached before the signs were put in place especially as historically that part of the sports field near the playground had been viewed as open land and there was a view by some of the committee that it should remain accessible to everyone. If notices are erected they should read that dogs be kept on a lead, looked after and kept off the playing surfaces.
- The Parish Council's view mirrors that of the MEFT and also questioned whether the signs would be legally enforceable in view of the public footpaths running across the field. It is also thought that the matter could have been dealt with in a more sympathetic manner especially as it affects many people in the village, including both dog walkers and those using the playing field facilities.
- Ian Stevens, representing the Sports Club, agreed that the signs should have been worded differently and had not been approved by the committee. It had however brought the problem into the open and will be addressed at the Sports Club AGM on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010. It is realized that it would be very doubtful that dogs could be banned in view of the public footpaths and that it is incumbent upon the Sports Club to resolve the situation.
- The position about prosecution of people not clearing up after their dogs needs clarifying as Enforcement Officers are only responsible for offences on public land, whereas the sports field is private land. There is the question, however, of public footpaths running across the playing areas. Additionally the sports field has been designated as a Dog Fouling Free Area and appropriate signs erected a number of years ago, when the dog walk was put in place.

Being a small community it is felt we should be able to resolve the problem of dogs fouling the playing surfaces ourselves, as it is in no way acceptable that the clubs using the playing surfaces should have to clear up after people's dogs before matches can be played. The various legal aspects relating to this therefore need to be looked at.

The Sports Club have been asked to determine what the legal framework is in order that a decision can be made, in conjunction with the Parish Council and the MEFT, about use of the sports field for people exercising their dogs, otherwise there would be no other option but to go down the prosecution route. Cllr Beaty, who was present at the meeting, will speak to the Legal Dept at HDC and Ian Stevens asked if he could be given answers to the various questions raised in time for the Sports Club AGM.

**DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.**