

# Medbourne Parish Council

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL MONDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011

**Present:** Cllrs Polito (Chair), Smith, Tweddle, Clarke & Caldwell.

Parishioners: Keith Sandars, Stuart Palmer, Louise Pilkington, Karl Jenkins & Sue Smith.

**1.0 APOLOGIES:** Rennie Barbour, David Beaty & Peter Jackson.

**2.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2010:**

Resolved: The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Proposed: As no Parishioners were present who had attended the meeting a proposal that the minutes be accepted as a corrected record was given by councillors Smith & Tweddle.

Seconded: Cllrs Clarke & Caldwell.

**3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES – Incorporating  
CHAIRMAN’S REVIEW OF THE YEAR – Cllr Polito:**

In many respects this has been a relatively quiet year, with the exception of two controversial issues – namely the banning of dogs from the Sports Field and the development of Pagets Farm.

***Banning of Dogs from the Sports Field:*** After some heated exchanges between the Sports Club and the Dog Walkers, a meeting was held at which a compromise was agreed, which permitted dogs to be walked under control on the dog walk and on the public footpaths which cross the Sports Field, but not on the playing areas. This has greatly improved the cleanliness of the Sports Field. Although some dog walkers felt aggrieved by the ban and have found alternative areas on which to walk their dogs, many others continue to enjoy access to the dog walk on the Sports Field.

***Development Of Pagets Farm:*** Rarely has a proposed development in the village created such an adverse reaction from residents. Although the conversion of the existing buildings was generally welcomed, the access to the site was considered to be totally inadequate for the increased traffic which would be generated by the development. Despite numerous representations from the Parish Council to Harborough District Council and letters of objection from residents, it is sad to report that none of these had any effect whatever on the outcome. This merely reinforces the perception that local feelings are little more than an irritant to the planners.

***Parish Maintenance:***

***War Memorial:*** Our thanks are due to Keith Sandars and Bernard Hanraads for the redesign and construction of the War Memorial surround, which has been greatly admired.

***Pack Horse Bridge:*** I regret to report that we are still no further forward with the replacement of the rotten railings on the Pack Horse Bridge. Despite many emails we do not yet have a timescale for this to be undertaken.

***Policing:*** There is a more visible police presence in the village these days and PC Andy Cooper contacts me on a regular basis to see if we have any specific problems. As a result of speeding complaints and subsequent monitoring, there will be a speed trap set up in the next few weeks!

### ***Councillors Duties:***

Paul Polito	Chairman LAPLAC Representative
Laurie Smith	Vice Chairman Medbourne Charities representative
Pat Tweddle	Taxi Voucher Scheme Administrator Bowls Club Representative
Allan Caldwell	Chairman of the Village Hall Committee Heritage Warden MEFT Representative Planning Representative
Ian Clarke	Sports Club Representative Footway Lighting 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
Peter Jackson	Village Website Organiser
Peter O'Donnell	Keeper of the Village Benches
Carolyn Frostwick	Internal Auditor
Richard Hammond	Legal Advisor

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.

My grateful thanks go to Jenny, our clerk, who works tirelessly to make sure that we do not stray too far from the straight and narrow.

## **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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 were circulated at the meeting. The final bank statements would not however be received until after 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The final accounts would therefore be presented to councillors for approval at the meeting in June.

The **Statement of Assets** presented this year shows a total of £11,005.62 held in the Parish Council accounts, of which £573.23 is designated to “The Hollow” and represents monies raised within the village for continued maintenance and enhancement of the area.

A sum of £1,647.60 is also designated to the Taxi Voucher Scheme and represents the balance of monies received in donations from Medbourne Charities, and monies raised from an appeal for donations by the village to help sustain the scheme.

This leaves a balance of £8,784.79 in the General Funds of which £3,528 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 £5,421.62. We are however expecting a payment into the account of £250 from the Sports Club in respect of their annual contribution to the fund.

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

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

Turning to payments throughout the year:

- **Administration Expenses:** This only consists this year for purchase of an ink cartridge.
- **Insurance:** By opting for a Long Term Agreement to continue with our present insurers for four years we had secured a reduction in premium,.
- **Legal Fees:** This consists of two fees of £50 to the Land Registry – one in respect of the Deed of Easement for The Shieling and the second for the new lease for the Village Hall.
- **Subscriptions & Donations:** A reduction in donations due to the sum given to the Youth Club this year being £200 as a result of improved funding being secured from Leics County Council. However, as funding for 2011 will be significantly lower, our donation will return to £400.
- **Village Hall:** A sum of £3,700 is included in this figure which represented solicitors fees incurred for drawing up the new lease for the Village Hall. These costs are offset however by a receipt for the same amount from the Village Hall Committee as shown under Income.
- **Street Lighting Repair & Maintenance:** The maintenance cost for the street lighting has increased significantly this year, although it was a little less than anticipated.
- **Servicing of Dog Bins:** We have benefited from the change of contractors in April last year for servicing of the dog bins resulting in a reduced cost of £388.75.
- **Grass cutting:** The invoice of £229.36 was for cutting of grass on Parish Council land which we are now responsible for .
- **Village Maintenance:** We incurred significant costs for pruning of a willow tree along the towpath as the tree is on land owned by the Parish Council.

As a result, when all the above are taken into account there was little change in the overall budget for the year.

Carolyn Frostwick kindly undertook an internal audit of our accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 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 the forthcoming year.

#### **7.0 RATE PRECEPT:**

Allowances have been made for an increase in the cost of Grass Cutting, Street Lighting, Servicing of Dog Bins, together with the anticipated administration costs to be charged to the Parish Council by HDC based on an uncontested election in May. The increase in the overall precept requirement for the forthcoming year has been calculated 2.3% ie £126.

#### **8.0 PARISH LIGHTING Cllr Clarke:**

Although only the normal street lighting repairs and maintenance were carried out during the year the cost have increased significantly.

#### **9.0 LOCAL CHARITIES – Cllr Smith:**

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, only one other payment was made during the year as a donation to the Taxi Voucher Scheme agreed in 2010.

The balance retained in the bank has been reduced due to the current low interest rates, which the trustees may need to address in future years.

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 L Smith, Mrs D Burrows and Rev. S Bishop.

#### **10.0 MEFT – Cllr Caldwell:**

To the best of my knowledge, only two meetings have taken place over the course of the past twelve months, the last of which was at short notice last Thursday which I was unable to attend as I was on holiday. However, following last months Parish Council meeting I was able to advise the MEFT Chairman of the kind offer from one of our parishioners to take a more active stance with regard to the Playground and understand that a meeting has now taken place. I have also advised MEFT Chairman that I will be standing down on the Committee in favour of the new Chairman of the Village Hall Committee when he or she is elected at their forthcoming AGM.

## **11.0 VILLAGE HALL – Cllr Caldwell:**

Over the past year the Village Hall has generally managed to cover its day to day costs with the activity income it has received. Capital outlay was exceptionally high this year due to the legal costs we had to bear for our new lease which was finally completed.

Following the loss of Margaret as our Bookings Secretary late last year, her daughter-in-law, Susie, has taken over the role and has contributed wonderfully well in the circumstances. There has been an encouraging flurry of new booking enquiries recently and I am confident that, under the forthcoming new chairmanship, the Hall will continue to be an important and flourishing part of village life.

In the last few days, however, I have to report the sudden and unexpected resignation of our recently appointed Treasurer which, as you can imagine, has left the committee with a difficult problem to overcome at short notice before our AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, but we are ‘working on it’.

Finally, I would confirm that we have formally requested a Dilapidation Report from Martyn Jones Associates which should be available to us in the next two weeks.

## **12.0 HERITAGE WARDEN’S REPORT – Cllr Caldwell:**

Over the past year activity has reduced considerably as funding for this section for rural affairs has been severely cut back by Leics CC.

The Heritage meetings, that generally take place on a quarterly basis, now include Archaeology Wardens and their activities and will also be extended to include War Memorial Wardens in the near future I understand. In my opinion, one person should be able to carry out the role for all three activities given the present level of involvement that currently takes place. The Heritage Conference is due to take place on 9<sup>th</sup> April and I have forwarded a copy of the Agenda to our Parish Clerk for distribution.

Once I know who will be taking over the current role of Heritage Warden for Medbourne I will be happy to forward the required details to the Centre for a joining pack to be issued.

## **13.0 TREE WARDEN’S REPORT – Incorporating ‘The Hollow’ – Cllr Smith:**

**The Hollow:** Some of the goat willows have been cut down to open up the islands and the trees under the electricity cables have been reduced in height. More snowdrops and bluebells have been planted amongst the trees. There is a lot of frogspawn again this year but no sign of any sticklebacks as yet. No kingfishers have been sighted as yet and it is believed they may have perished in the hard winter. All the bird food is purchased from Eyebrook Bird 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, plus broad leaved lime. The young horse chestnuts on Ashley Road and Drayton Road are all affected by the leaf miner disease. Barn owls are again using boxes erected previously with two broods 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.

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.

#### **14.0 TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME – Cllr Tweddle:**

At present we have four people regularly using the scheme. We have a balance of £1,347.60 in the fund as at 23 February 2011.

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.

#### **15.0 SPORTS CLUB – Cllr Clarke:**

The Club is very prosperous at the moment across all sports and socially as well. The extension fund stands at £82000. This is for a larger Club House which is needed due to the amount of activity and continued success of the Sports Club. The Club has arrived at a point in the fund-raising process where they expected the possibility of large grants, but in reality it's not a very good time to seek funding. The Fund-raising Committee keeps soldiering on and the fund is still increasing, albeit very slowly.

***Cricket Club:*** We have 7 Junior Teams and 2 Senior Teams. Junior Cricket and coaching of juniors is very well supported, all teams achieving a good standard at various levels. The club has more County and District players than ever before. The First Team managed to stay in Division 1 of the Rutland League, which was a great achievement. The Club is working on 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:*** We now have 2 Men's Teams, 2 Ladies Teams and 1 Mixed Team. There is also 1 Junior Team for U16 boys. Free coaching is offered on Thursday's for members. Plans are in hand to have the courts cleaned and re-painted this year and probably re-surfaced next year, with new netting at a cost of around nearly £40,000. Individual and group coaching is available. Club night is Thursday evening starting from 5<sup>th</sup> May.

***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 social side has dropped off slightly during this year due to the weather. The Sports Committee are trying to have the Club House open more to try and become a focal point for the village community to meet and socialise. 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 un-paid work keeping the whole sports ground looking

immaculate and a credit to Medbourne as a village.

**16.0 QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN:**

**16.1 *Parish Website:*** Cllr Caldwell questioned development of the Parish Website as there is still minimal information available.

Although the Clerk has obtained a copy of the Manual and spoken to Tim Heeley who administers the site, the instructions do not seem particularly 'user friendly' and problems are being encountered with adding information.. It may therefore be necessary to ask Tim to come over and give some initial training.

**17.0 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** No questions raised.

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