

MILFORD-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

‘The Old Clock House’ ~ Milford-on-Sea ~ Hampshire ~ SO41 0QD



FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE

Minutes of the **268th**. Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes** Committee held:

Monday 7th March 2011 at 6.30 p.m.

In the Village Hall

MEMBERS **p** = Present ~ **w** = Working ~ **h** = Holiday ~ **u** = Unwell ~ **b** = Bereavement

Bob Bishop	p	Susan Whitlock	p	Julian Davis	p	Brian Giles	p
Jim Read	p	Paul Noble	p	David High	p	Peter Jennions	p
Mark Owen	w	Maureen West	p	Sophie Beeton	p		

IN ATTENDANCE

K & M Brooks, Mr & Mrs Hetherington, F Murray, S Pople, D Hodgson, Jenny Spenser, Eve Hodgson, Paul Dyer, Mrs. Anne Jenks, Ian Bye Mrs Jean Halliday and three other residents, District Cllr. Michael Pemberton and the Parish Clerk – Keith Metcalf

The Chairman – Cllr Bishop took the chair.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs. Jennions and West declared a Personal Interest in matters relating to the Bowling Club and Cllr West in the item relating to Rooks

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

With the agreement of the members, it was agreed to bring the following items forward on the agenda; Item 6) Sites & Development Management (DPD), Item 8c) Rooks behind Kivernell Road and 7) Grazing Studland Common.

6) SITES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

The Chairman asked whether residents wanted to speak first on this item. The residents wished the Council to provide some background to the process for this District Council public consultation. The Chairman asked the Clerk to provide this information. The Clerk said that NFDC's Core Strategy document was adopted by the District Council following a district-wide public consultation in October 2009. The Core Strategy document was the outline strategy for the New Forest District Council area outside of the National Park. The Clerk said that the Sites & Development Management Document is the first of several detailed consultation documents that will come out of the Core Strategy process and be published for public consultation. It was noted that a six-week public consultation period is the usual length of time given by NFDC. It was noted that the details of the public consultation was published twice by the Parish Council through the Village Voice newsletter distributed to every household in the parish for January & February and March & April 2011. David Long's Milford-on-Sea website carried extensive coverage of the public consultation and the newsletters and the website suggested that all residents should become involved in looking at the proposals for the parish. Notices of the presentation organized by NFDC at the Community Centre were placed on all public notice boards and that there had been front page coverage of the process in the Lymington Times. The draft Sites & Development document was drawn-up by NFDC and approved by the District Council for public consultation in early December 2010. The consultation period was agreed to be run between January and mid-March 2011 and that publicity and promotion of the consultation would be given by a series of local meetings and publication in full on the NFDC website. The meeting held by the District Council for Milford residents in this process was held in the Community Centre and attended by approximately 160 residents. The Clerk said that resident and Parish Council views would be taken into consideration by NFDC and a revised Sites & Development Management Development Plan Document would be decided upon sometime in the summer of 2011. The new document would then be adopted by NFDC.

The Chairman then outlined the options in the NFDC Plan for affordable housing, which included two potential sites, which if adopted could provide up to 30 homes on the School Lane site or 20 homes on the Manor Road site. The District Council has said that if the Plan were to be adopted, only one of these two sites would be allowed to come forward. The Chairman said that nationally there was consensus that there was a proven need for more affordable homes. Recent indications from the District Councils housing needs register and an earlier independent survey, confirm that there is a recognised shortage of at least 35 affordable homes in Milford-on-Sea parish for people with a clear local connection. The Chairman said that over many years, the Council had looked at numerous potential sites within the existing village envelope, but had been told very firmly that no such sites would be financially viable, the only way to provide affordable housing would be on greenbelt land that warranted being treated as 'exception' sites for this purpose. The Chairman quoted from the public consultation work that had been produced by the Parish Vision 2020 community group and published as the village 'Action Plan' in 2007. In the Plan, 529 residents, (71%) of those who responded to the survey supported the following:

"Release small areas of land near to school and other suitable locations to build, in perpetuity, affordable houses to enable young families to remain and set up homes in their village. Properties should be high quality and eco-friendly, some of which should be shared equity for local first time buyers to get onto the first rung of the housing ladder."

The Chairman said that the Parish Council recognised the sensitivity of the proposal and therefore had taken the view that in order to limit any impact, affordable homes should only be built in small clusters around the village and should remain affordable housing in perpetuity.

Cllr Davis declared a Personal Interest as Chairman of the School Governors. Cllr Davis said that the previous head teacher had supported the provision of additional sports and recreational facilities, changing facilities, a small number (4, 5 or 6 units) of affordable houses to act as a buffer between the school and School Lane and a 'drop-off/pick-up' area. Cllr Davis said that there is a proven need for affordable housing and supported the view that there should be a small number of carefully designed houses that should remain affordable and for local people with a strong connection to the village in perpetuity. Cllr Davis also said that the access should be via a roundabout at the junction of Manor Road with Lymington Road and not via School Lane, which should be protected.

Cllr Whitlock said that the Parish Council had always been under the impression that any occupier of housing provided by an housing association, would not have the right to buy/acquire or to be able to 'staircase' (the ability for occupants to increase their share of the ownership of the property beyond a certain level – often a maximum of about 80%). Cllr Whitlock said that over the years most council-owned properties had been sold. Cllr Whitlock said that in discussions with NFDC, the Parish Council has always believed that any proposed development land in the green-belt would come under the policy for Rural Exception Sites and that these properties would be retained, in perpetuity for local people. However, information received today from the District Council indicated that Rural Exception Sites are designated only to communities with up to 3,000 residents and that although new properties would in the first instance be allocated by NFDC to people with strong local connections, they could not guarantee that these properties would remain with local people in perpetuity. Cllr Whitlock said that she had asked the Chairman of Bransgore Parish Council (approx. 4,100 residents), if their village was being treated as a 'special case'. Cllr Whitlock said that although the District Council could place a restrictive planning condition or set up special restrictive legal agreements between the housing association and the occupier, there was no guarantee that these would not in the future be challenged and the properties subsequently lost from the affordable housing stock.

The Chairman asked whether residents now wished to give their views.

Resident from Lymore Lane said that he does not mind a few houses, but the numbers should be restricted as 30 would be far too many on one site. The resident did not have a view on perpetuity.

Lymore resident; Jenny Spenser said that she supported affordable housing in general, but that they should be provided in smaller pockets around the village and that they should be provided to local people in perpetuity. Jenny did not want to see any development on green belt land. Jenny also said that it was important that all infrastructure matters were resolved before any development took place.

Resident Paul Dyer asked whether both sites could be used to build a small number on each. It was reported that the District Council had indicated that only one of the two nominated sites would be brought forward in the Plan.

Residents made the following additional comments:

- that only 70% of properties would be affordable homes, while the remaining 30% would be low-cost market housing
- could the old 'Instaweld' site be considered for affordable housing?
- that it was important that 'infrastructure' be considered before any construction takes place
- that if the MoS1 site was adopted for affordable housing access from School Lane was a nonsense

- that small sites would be less attractive to developers and would be more costly to construct

The Chairman thanked residents for their views and asked councillors for their thoughts: The following comments were made:

- that the Parish Council had viewed several affordable housing sites around the New Forest, including one in Brockenhurst and that you would not know that the properties had been part of an affordable housing development
- that it was important that the properties were in keeping and that the area be well landscaped
- that it would be difficult to support any scheme unless the properties were available in perpetuity
- that it was recognised that there was a need for the 30 properties included within the Core Strategy but that they must be in small clusters

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and views. The Chairman said that an initial draft response to the Public Consultation would be amended to take into consideration the additional points raised at the meeting as follows:

1. That the Parish Council recognise the need for more affordable housing
2. That the Parish Council understood that there were about 35 families currently registered as having a strong local connection
3. That the Parish Council recognise that the pace of affordable housing provision generated under current rules as a result of commercial developments will make little impact on the overall provision required
4. That the Parish Council recognises that the financial reality precludes building separate affordable housing within the village boundary
5. That the only option to provide further affordable homes is to encroach into the greenbelt via exception site policies
6. That there would be two fundamental conditions that must be met before affordable housing is pursued:
 - i. that all properties should remain available for renting and shared-equity by local people in perpetuity i.e. that there should be no right to acquire or staircase to full ownership and
 - ii. that any development should be limited to small areas of land to provide small clusters of housing
7. That the Parish Council support the use of site MoS1 with a limit of up to 10 sympathetically designed and well landscaped units accessed via a new roundabout to be located at the junction of Manor Road and Lymington Road
8. That School Lane should be protected and not used as access into the MoS1 site
9. That other potential sites be re-considered by NFDC to meet the target of up to 30 affordable homes up to 2026
10. That the MoS 2 site was not suitable and was not supported

It was agreed that all other proposals outlined in the draft plan be supported with the exception of the following:

- MoS3 Cycle Route Provision of pedestrian/cycle access into the MoS1 site should be via the existing Rights of Way paths identified by Cllr Whitlock and Policy (MF/T/2): if the route is proposed to bring cyclists through private woodland, or through The Orchard estate, this would not be supported

It will be noted that the Parish Council is disappointed that the planned cycle route excludes the suggested link from the western end of the parish along the sea front to link into the Ancient Highway

- That a local consultation should be conducted with residents of Carrington Lane, Carrington Close, Northfield Road and other affected roads, if the District Council wish to construct a footway along Carrington Lane as there would be serious concerns about the displacement of parked vehicles that currently park along this narrow lane.
- That the Parish Council support the raised speed table across the B3058 (Near Church Hill) and other traffic calming measures on the approach (MF/T/12) **subject to** further consultation between Highways and the Parish Council
- That the Parish Council would welcome further consultation with the Highways department to see what type of scheme might be practical for MF/T/13 – The uncontrolled crossing & footway improvements along High Street.

Cllr Read proposed that the Parish Council approve the amendments to the outline draft. Cllr Bishop seconded this proposal.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the draft response to NFDC's public consultation be amended in accordance with the minutes and submitted to NFDC by the Friday 11th March deadline.

The Chairman thanked residents for their contribution towards the debate and the majority of residents left the meeting.

8c. INCREASED ROOK ACTIVITY IN LOWER PLEASURE GROUNDS & THE OLD MILL

The Chairman invited resident Mrs Anne Croll to speak. Mrs Croll said that she had lived in the village for 51 years and that she was concerned about the large rookery that has grown over the last five-years. Mrs Croll was concerned about the well-being of the residents of the lower end of Kivernell Road, which was being affected by noise and pollution. Mrs Croll handed the Clerk details from Natural England about an application for a culling license. Mr Heatherington said that the majority of nests were in poplar trees in the garden of the Old Mill and said that he wished to approach the owner about pollarding these trees to discourage the rookery or to have the birds relocated to a location outside the parish, where there were suitable trees for them to nest. Mr Heatherington was particularly concerned about fouling and noise which commenced at about 5.15 am through until 8pm. It was reported that some rooks were aggressive and were swooping towards residents. The Chairman asked the Clerk to comment. The Clerk said that there had been a large increase in the local rook population and that the removal of trees in Sea Road car park may have caused the birds nesting there to relocate behind Kivernell Road. The Clerk said that if trees were felled or pollarded it was likely that the rooks would simply relocate to another suitable site behind residential properties in the Pleasure Grounds and that culling was unlikely to be a popular resolution. The Chairman thanked residents for their comments. District Cllr Michael Pemberton said that he would contact Environmental Health and ask them to contact Mr Heatherington and arrange a suitable site visit.

7. STUDLAND COMMON GRAZING PROJECT

Cllr Bishop said that the New Forest Land Advice Service (NFLAS) had made a presentation to members of the Council and representatives from the Milford Environment Group, the Wildlife Recording Group, dog walkers and Hugh Corry – Woodland Advisor. Cllr Bishop said that Julie Stubbs and Mark Larter from the NFLAS had suggested an alternative management programme by grazing the common instead of tractor flailing.

Copies of the NFLAS power-point presentation were circulated to all members. The outline of the scheme would be to re-define the whole of Studland Common (a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation and designated Local Nature Reserve) which would be separated into two sections so that only one of the two compartments would be grazed at any one time so that walkers who were not comfortable with walking through fields being grazed could use an alternative route into the un-grazed field. The aims of the scheme would be to:

- reverse scrub encroachment on the current un-grazed part of the common to a balanced mix of grassland and scrub to somewhere nearer to the level of mix of 1971 (about 50% scrub 50% grassland).
- increase the botanical interest by conserving wildlife habitat, which had deteriorated leading to species loss
- engage in a sustainable future by grazing the Common
- educating and setting an example for future generations and others to follow
- balancing conservation and public enjoyment opportunities and
- to support a Young Commoner

These objectives would be met by:

- opening up some of the older poor quality denser scrub areas
- maintaining all access points to the site
- improving infrastructure (e.g. replacement fences and gates and provision of water)
- no change to dog access (just keeping dogs under close control)
- introducing New Forest Ponies and removal of shod horses from Studland Common and Baskets
- major reduction in the length of time animals are grazed (from 10 months down to 3-4 months)
- reduction in the number and size of animals to be grazed

Baskets grazing field at Keyhaven and Hordle Grazing Field would be brought into the scheme. There would be no change to horses grazing at Hordle, but New Forest Ponies could be introduced at Baskets and the period of grazing would be shortened to allow the SSSI field to recover from over-grazing.

There would be reduced income from Studland and Baskets graziers, but with a ten-year income from the scheme there would be a net financial benefit to the Council. The capital costs for replacing fencing and gates and the introduction of water into the upper grazing compartment would be covered by a separate capital grant from Natural England, who had in principle agreed for the Council to make an application to commence in April 2012.

Resident - Amanda Tanner provided details of a number of concerns raised by dog walkers. Julie Stubbs had been given a copy of these concerns and had provided outline responses, which could be passed on to dog walkers. Copies of the concerns and responses were given to all members for information.

Following discussion, the Chairman suggested that the next step would be to invite Julie Stubbs and Mark Larter to make a further presentation to the community at a public meeting. It was agreed that the Clerk would arrange a public presentation to be made at a convenient time for NFLAS and to allow sufficient time to publicise the event widely to the community.

Residents, Anne Jenks, Jean Halliday and Amanda Tanner left the meeting.

The Chairman returned to the formal order of the agenda.

3. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr. Owen (working).

4. **MINUTES OF THE F & GP MEETING HELD 24th JANUARY 2011**

Cllr. Whitlock proposed that the minutes be adopted. Cllr West seconded the proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes were a true record of the meeting and were duly adopted and signed by the Chairman.

5. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) **Expenditure Report (January and February 2011):**

Cllr Whitlock proposed that the Expenditure Reports for January and February be adopted. Cllr Read seconded the proposal.

EXPENDITURE: (January 2011) £4,290.29

EXPENDITURE: (February 2011) £13,615.21

It was **RESOLVED** that the Expenditure Reports for **January & February 2011** be approved and were duly signed by the Chairman

b) **Year to Date Budget Income & Expenditure Report (April 2010 to February 2011)**

The Clerk presented the report as follows:

<u>INCOME:</u>	<u>April 2010 to February 2011</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
		£98,117	£111,246
<u>EXPENDITURE:</u>	<u>April 2010 to February 2011</u>	£95,089	£91,305

c) **Reconciled Bank Account Statements**

Un-reconciled bank statements for the Parish Council Current and Money Manager Accounts were circulated for information. The balances shown below exclude un-presented cheque payments and receipts as at:
1st February 2011.

<u>CURRENT ACCOUNT</u>	£22,239.45	<u>MONEY MANAGER ACCOUNT</u>	£36,912.44
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The VCCC Building Fund Account closures will be dealt with at Year-end 31st March 2011.

d) **Parish Office Rent for 2011**

The Clerk confirmed that the RPI stood at 4.8% as of the end of December 2010 and that the monthly rent for the office would increase from £614.40 per month to £643.89 per month with effect from January 2011. Cllrs Davis and Giles had signed the mandate to HSBC to increase the monthly standing order accordingly. It was noted that the difference between the old and new rates for January and February had been paid separately by cheque and that the new figure would be paid via the HSBC with effect from March 2011.

e) **Appointment of Grounds Maintenance Contractor – Three-Year Contract reviewable at the end of each twelve-month period, with six monthly bonus reviews**

The Clerk reported that only two of the three tenders had been received. The two quotations included a number of additional management tasks that the Clerk wished the Council to approve. These were for pruning hedges at Barnes Lane Recreation Ground, Carrington Lane Play Park and Milford Village Green and to manage the area between the two gates leading into Studland Common grazing field, all of which had not previously been included within the contract. The Clerk confirmed that the two prices were £18,681 + VAT and £13,605 and that the lower tender, including the extra maintenance costs would be £339 above the budgeted sum for 2011/12.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Read that the cheaper of the two tenders be approved for a three-year contract period to be reviewed annually, including the extra maintenance programme and that the six-monthly bonus reviews would be retained as an important incentive to ensure that the Contractor maintained standards. This was seconded by Cllr. Jennions.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the cheaper tender at £13,605 pa + annual inflation, for a period of three-years, which includes the £1,000 six-monthly bonus review, the additional maintenance as above and that an annual review would be conducted.

6. **SITES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT** See pages 1-3

7. **STUDLAND COMMON GRAZING PROJECT** See page 4

8. **NEW PROJECTS**

a. **20mph Village Centre Traffic Calming**

The Clerk reported that information from Traffic Management (Area West) had been circulated to all councillors regarding the proposed introduction of the 20mph speed restriction through the village centre. It was confirmed that additional road marking signs and the bright yellow luminous signs behind the 20mph roundel signs would not be required within this scheme, but there would be a need to place pairs of (60cm diameter) signs at each of the approach roads i.e. at the top of Church Hill, Park Road, Sea Road and High Street and that the whole area from the top of Church Hill and the High Street approach towards the Sea Road/Church Hill junction would be included within the 20mph restricted area.

Cllr Bishop said that the build-outs, coloured road surface and raised island areas had had a calming effect on speeds within the village centre and that the required signage would have a detrimental environmental effect on the street scene. Cllr Jennions said that elderly residents still had difficulties in crossing the roads in the centre of the village and that the proposed scheme should go ahead. No other supporting views were expressed.

Cllr Read said he doubted any vehicle exceeded 20mph in the areas and therefore proposed that the 20mph traffic calming scheme be dropped. Cllr Noble seconded the proposal.

Members voted to drop the proposal by six (6) votes for, one (1) against and there were three (3) abstentions.

It was RESOLVED to ask Highways to drop the proposed 20mph speed restriction through the centre of the village.
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Cllr Jennions asked for his vote against the proposal to be formally recorded. It was also noted that if funds from the dropped 20mph scheme could be used in another Milford-on-Sea traffic calming scheme, this should be pursued. Noted

b. **B3058 Raised Zebra Crossing Proposal**

The Clerk reported that he had spoken with Hampshire Highways to see if it would be feasible to introduce a raised zebra crossing to help slow traffic along the B3058. This would have the effect of slowing traffic approaching the village green from the west and after leaving the village in a westerly direction towards New Milton. It was noted that some service providers, like the Police, Fire, Ambulances and bus and coach drivers might have strong views against raised humps, but this could be quite effective in slowing traffic along this section of road. The Clerk circulated copies of the signage (triangular sign with raised hump) that would be necessary at the approach to both sides of the zebra crossing should the project be pursued.

Following discussion it was **agreed** that the Clerk should follow up the scheme to see if a proposal to Hampshire Highways might be funded and supported. It was noted that funding for the 20mph scheme in the High Street might be transferred to the raised zebra crossing project. The Clerk was asked to follow up this idea.

c. **Rook Activity** See page 4

d. **Youth Football – Co-application for Grant**

The Clerk reported that the Youth Football Club were seeking the assistance of the Council in making a bid for grant funding from the Football Foundation as they required proof of security of tenure. It was agreed that providing the Club were content to complete the application, the Clerk would provide as much help as was needed to make the re-application.

e. **Youth Football Club – Water Heaters**

Following discussion, it was **agreed** that the Council would fund the cost of replacing the two water heaters providing the Club arrange to have them installed. The Clerk to work with the Club to have these replaced as soon as possible.

9. **PROJECT UPDATE REPORT**

a) **Bowling Club - Draft Lease –**

The Clerk reported that he had submitted the draft lease agreement to Hugh Whitlock Solicitors and had asked Mr Whitlock to produce the first draft proper. The Clerk said that Mr Whitlock had been unable to complete his check of the draft before submitting it for this evenings meeting. However, it would be ready soon and will be circulated for comment initially to the

working group members before circulating it in time for the next F & GP committee meeting.

The Chairman said that the legal cost for producing the lease would be about £650 plus expenses and that it might be reasonable for the Club to be responsible for paying these costs. Cllr Read said that as the lease proposal in the first year was for a peppercorn rent, before increasing to a nominal sum for subsequent years, the Club would no doubt appreciate the first year easement.

b) Keyhaven River Users Forum

It was reported that the initial meeting had been deferred until a later date to be advised due to the non-availability of several members.

c) Keyhaven Road – Kingfisher Walk Sponsored Bench

Following discussion, it was agreed by members that a two-seat bench could be located at the entrance to Kingfisher Walk. Cllr Noble agreed to find a sponsor and to speak to the Last Post to obtain prices.

d) NFDC Proposed Sign at Keyhaven Quay

Cllr Jennions reported that he and Cllr Read had met members of the Keyhaven Yacht Club and had agreed the position for the sign, which would replace the existing club parking sign. It had been agreed that if NFDC were prepared to carry out suitable landscaping around the base of the sign, the Club would plant it up and maintain it.

e) Sewerage System Meeting with Southern Water & Design Team

Cllr Read said that he had met Southern Water and had agreed arrangements to install the new system. Cllr Read said that he had asked Southern Water to hold a public meeting to address any concerns that the scheme might raise. Southern Water agreed to arrange this event. The scheme will commence mid-August 2011 and would have to be completed by 31st March 2012, when the scheme would need to be signed off by Ofwat. It was noted that the problem relates to pipes in Keyhaven Road not being able to cope with the various surges and that no work will be required at Sturt Pond Nature Reserve, which is at the systems lowest point and why there had been severe back-up at this location. A full account of Cllr Read’s meeting with Southern Water will be circulated to all members for information. Southern Water agreed to submit to the Clerk a press release which could be used in the next issue of the Village Voice (May & June).

10. CORRESPONDENCE

Letter 28.02.11 from the Audit Commission giving details of their appointed auditor – Jackie Bellard for 2010/11 and future years. The audit will in future be carried out via their Bolton office.

Letter 18.01.11 from the Lymington Amateur Rowing Club advising that their annual regatta will be held on Saturday 28th May 2011.

11. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

The Clerk reported that he was currently following up NFDC’s woodland and tree management scheme, which might now allow the Parish Council to tap into using Liz Becket for tree inspections and their new contractor to benefit from their competitive pricing arrangement. Noted.

The Clerk reported that temporary remedial work to the sea front play park was in hand and that the cost was likely to be in the region of £250. Noted

It was reported that horses from Studland Grazing field had been escaping into the upper common. The grazier was asked to put them back on two separate occasions and has also been asked to repair and maintain the fences along the dividing boundary to ensure that the horses were contained within the grazing field. It was noted that the fences had deteriorated since the grazier has become tenant and that under the terms of the existing agreement; the grazier is responsible for their maintenance. Noted

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at **8.45pm**

Signed:
Chairman

Dated: