

MINUTES OF THE MOTTISFONT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Held on Wednesday 26th April 2017 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall

PRESENT: Parish Cllrs. Jeff Channing (in chair), Andrew Simmonds, Gareth Jenkins, John Millns and Julia Barnett. Clerk: Sue Holder. Guest Speakers Borough Councillor Ian Jeffrey, County Councillor Andrew Gibson and Louise Govier, National Trust and Peter Barnett, parish plan. Three members of the public were also present.

APOLOGIES: - None

1. CHAIRMANS REPORT – Given by Cllr Channing.

First may I thank all the parish councillors and our two councillors from Test Valley and Hampshire all of whom have given up their time to help support the parish this past year. And I would also like to thank Sue our Clerk for her work.

Parish statistics A bit of background. The parish has an area of just under 30,000 acres and we had an estimated population in 2016 of 384 people in 148 households. Mottisfont does not have an especially elderly population because over 40% of residents are aged under 40 and half of those, 20% of the parish, is under 19 years old. 12 people are recorded as being in poor or bad health.

In terms of housing, 79 homes are rented and 60 owner-occupied. So whereas 70% of homes in Test Valley are owner occupied, the equivalent figure for the parish is 40% and that reflects the ownership by the National Trust of a lot of tenanted homes. The average house price in Dunbridge is around £420,000.

Budget: So what this tells us is that Mottisfont is a big parish with few people and consequently we find it difficult to sustain many services. It also means that the parish council has a large area to cover with very little money. We started the year with £15,815 in the bank account. The precept – which is the parish's share of the council tax – is just over £6,500. We have spent all of that and will close the accounts with approximately what we started with.

In terms of main items of expenditure, as a statutory body we need to employ a Clerk. Secondly we pay rent and insurance for the village hall which is £550, and we make an annual payment to the Church for the upkeep of the burial ground in Church Lane which we think is a parish responsibility.

In addition, this year we have made a one-off payment of £1,000 to the bus committee to help fund **replacement of the village bus**. This service is valued by many in the parish and some people are actively involved in the bus committee and driving the vehicle. So the council thought that this would be a good use of parish funds to make a contribution alongside other funding from Hampshire, Test Valley and Broughton parish council.

We also have a small budget for the Parish lengthsman scheme. The lengthsman does some hedge trimming, grass cutting, cleans signs etc.

Traffic The dominant issue for local residents is traffic volumes and traffic speeds. Frankly the parish council is not making much impact on the problem although not for want of trying. We have discussed what to do about speeding on Barley Hill in Dunbridge and we are frustrated at not making progress about pedestrian safety on Hatt Hill. There are now roads in this parish – especially Spearywell Road and Hatt Hill - where it is simply no longer safe to walk and the parish council really does not think this is acceptable.

Major traffic calming measures such as a suggested at Barley Hill costs more money than we have. We have previously requested a review of speed limits and speeds have been monitored in previous years but there is some doubt that they have much effect without enforcement. Our PCSO has in the past suggested that parish volunteers should set up a community speedwatch – it does work in other parishes but in Mottisfont we have had few volunteers. I've been in touch with the Police and Crime Commissioner and with the Police themselves and requested a speed trap and I have suggested that the parish council might be prepared to pay for police time to improve enforcement. That offer has not been taken up but the Police are looking at whether they can set up speed traps and I hope we will get some action.

Mottisfont village Traffic in Mottisfont village has long been an issue and it is getting worse. Some of this relates to Mottisfont Abbey which had 366,000 visitors over the last 12 months, three times what it was just a few years ago. As well as volume of traffic, car parking is the issue in the Village although the Trust is trying to manage it actively by discouraging parking on grass verges and a new layout in the main car park.

Our concern as a parish council is especially the safety of pedestrians in the village – mostly Trust visitors and walkers of the Testway – and people walking around the blind corner at the Social Club. At last year's AGM we reported that Hampshire was offering us a traffic calming scheme in the village centre to which we were asked to make a parish contribution. There was some protracted negotiation about the cost but when the scheme finally came before the parish council we were not convinced that it would resolve the problem. We asked instead for a modified scheme. I am pleased to say that Hampshire will mark out a 'virtual footway' which is essentially white lines on the road designating a route for pedestrians plus some signage and this is going ahead although I don't have any timings. The parish council continues to want an extended virtual footway to the Abbey car park but so far that request has not been acknowledged.

Planning The parish council is consulted about planning cases. None of the two or three housing cases that were referred to us were contentious and we saw no need to comment but we have been dealing with Test Valley planners on three planning enforcement cases. Two of these have been resolved and are now closed – the development over the graves at Ebenezer Chapel on Spearywell Road which was found to be permitted development and the second was the late Mr Lambert's occupancy of Lime Kiln Meadow. That land is now believed to be up for sale. A further case remains open which concerns residential occupation of farmland in the north of the parish.

Boundary reviews The parish council thinks it is important that Mottisfont retains its identity as a rural mid-Test Valley parish and that we are not grouped with the more urbanised southern Test Valley. So we have responded to two consultations by the Local Government Boundary Commission. On the first, we objected to Hampshire's initial proposal to move us into another electoral ward so with Cllr Gibson's help, we remain in Test Valley Central. On the second consultation, we agreed with Cllr Jeffrey that we should become part of a new mid-Test ward and have responded to the Boundary Commission accordingly.

Parish plan This is elsewhere on the agenda.

Challenges Finally, a few challenges for next year.

- Firstly, we have some money in our budget that we have saved for a Mottisfont village centre scheme. If we are comfortable with the virtual footway, that money could be used for a small project elsewhere
- We will set up a new parish website not only for council business but as a service for the whole community

- I hope we can make some progress with footpaths and traffic. Cllr Simmonds is in contact with Hampshire about repair of the footway by Hatt Farm and to try to get it extended
- The parish council also wanted to invest in some children's play facilities. There are quite a few children in the parish and we proposed to the Village Hall committee investing in some kick-about facilities but they did not agree. We should like to revisit that

Other parishes, such as Houghton, are now taking steps towards creating statutory neighbourhood plans. We have considered this before but will need to look again at Mottisfont's policy in relation to statutory plans.

Cllr Simmonds added the following to the report:

- Hatt Hill Footway – whilst the County Maintenance Team are looking at this, money is an issue.
- Lengthsman – An initiative from the Rights of Way Team is to deploy the Lengths man increasing on maintaining footways. This year we have used some of our budget to improve signage on footways in the parish.
- Potholes – continue to be repaired, increasingly a stretch of road at a time now.
- Drains – continue to be cleared out.
- Station – nearly 30 thousand used the Mottisfont and Dunbridge station last year.

Questions for the Chairman:

- Would Community Speed Watch be useful in our village? The Chairman responded that we had received little response from the parish to operate a scheme and that it was limited to 30mph areas only.

2) COUNTY COUNCILOR'S REPORT: Cllr Andrew Gibson reported on the following:

3) BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORT: Cllr Ian Jeffrey gave this report;

- Re-organisation has happened recently at National, County and Borough Level.
- It was reported that Cllr Ian Carr, the Test Valley Borough Council Leader for 18 years has stood down.
- The ward re-organisation was likely to result in a bigger ward than currently exists called Mid Test Ward covered by 3 councillors only not 5.

4) NATIONAL TRUST REPORT: Louise Govier gave this report:

- Another busy year was reported and whilst the reviewed parking scheme had helped over Easter there was still some verge parking.
- A break in was reported at the Farmyard, resulting in a financial loss to The Trust. It was understood to be organized crime and security will be improved as a result.
- Flytipping in tenant car parks was reported.
- A 'son' of the Oakley Oak has now been planted.

- Concern about the position of some tenant wheelie bins has been addressed for safety reasons.
- The Trust support the parish council proposal for a virtual footway in the village centre for pedestrian safety.

5) PARISH PLAN: Peter Barnett gave a report on the progress of the parish plan.

It was reported that 145 questionnaires had been sent to residents, and 78 returned – a response rate of 54%. As a result, there were 9984 items of data to then analyse and a summary version of the results will go out to all those who responded and an electronic version will also be made available. (Copy results to be appended to this report) Since the survey however the village pub has closed and Annie's tea rooms is under new management which may affect the findings. It was noted that community support will be required to implement the findings.

The chairman thanked Julia and Peter Barnett for the incredible work undertaken on the parish plan.

6) PARISHIONERS QUESTIONS:

The meeting closed 8.50 pm