

Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 8.00pm at East Boldre Village Hall.

Present: Cllr B Hawker (Chair), Cllr I Moyse (Vice Chair), Cllr M Husband, Cllr A Rostand, Cllr M Urwin
In attendance: Liz Welch (Parish Clerk); 1 member of public

1. Welcome by Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Assembly, explaining the later start of 8.30pm.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr T Morrissey.

3. Minutes of last Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 March 2023 were approved and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. Chairman's Report to the Parish Electors

The Chair offered the following report which reflects on the last 12 months and the Council's performance:

Councillors are expected to:

- Assist parishioners with local issues
- Establish good working relationships with other stakeholders
- Act as a statutory consultee on local planning matters
- Provide allotments
- Set and manage the precept.

All meetings are held at East Boldre Village Hall and we carry out appropriate risk assessments.

Every 4 years on the first Thursday in May Parish Councils must conduct an election. As a result all councillors stood down on May 4th. At that time all councillors were re-elected and can continue to serve the community until the next election in 2027. Cllrs currently have one vacancy and can co-opt another councillor.

Cllrs said farewell to Cllr. Harris and welcome Cllrs. Poole as his replacement. Cllrs thank Cllr. Harris for his support and contribution to our debate over many years. Cllrs. Manns and Poole have been regular attendees on behalf of their respective councils. Cllrs are grateful to them both.

Local issues

- Chapel Stores (village shop). Recognising the importance of this valuable community asset, the parish council was happy to support this venture with a grant and note the community's support of the share offer. The shop and post office opened at the end of February this year and has been widely acknowledged for its choice of goods and competitive pricing. The Council wants to acknowledge the tremendous achievement and continuing commitment of the management committee of East Boldre Community Stores limited. Cllrs encourage parishioners to use the shop and support it by volunteering; this will assure its sustainability.
- School Fields Trust. Cllrs recognise the tremendous contribution to the community of the management team at the School Fields Trust. Cllr. Rostand has supported them through

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representation and the council made a grant of £100 towards equipment. They are seeking a volunteer to oversee fundraising activities.

- Coffee mornings. A group of local volunteers continue to provide a monthly coffee morning in response to an identified need. Cllrs note the continuing success of this venture and congratulate the organisers. The council facilitated the attendance of a representative of the New Forest District Council at a coffee morning; he supplied important information about managing the increasing cost of living.
- Speed watch. Cllrs have established a regular programme of Speed watch sessions supported by a team of volunteers. This has raised awareness of inappropriate speeding. Cllrs continue to seek additional volunteers.
- Hatchetts Pond. Forestry England have completed their planned work to remove the toilets and resite the car park. Cllrs are not aware of any significant problems following this work. Cllrs expect to receive reports from Forestry England about the improvement to water quality and other ecological benefits.
- Emergency plan. Mike Upton and his team of volunteers continue to maintain our emergency planning process. The plan was updated and presented to the Council in June 2023. The council is grateful for the team's efforts and the assurance it provides us. Mike attended a recent meeting about Community Resilience on behalf of the council; he was able to report East Boldre's relative strength in this area.
- Defibrillators and CPR training. The council is grateful to the volunteers who regularly check this equipment to ensure that it is fully operational. Mike Upton, chairman of the emergency plan team, supported by the council, continues to organize CPR training for local residents. First responders from the South Central Ambulance Service have trained over 15 residents in the last 12 months.
- Broadband. About 90% of residents have access to high quality broadband. This is a tremendous achievement. Cllrs. Husband and Moyes together with local resident Stuart Newey have done a tremendous job.
- Village Hall. The council recognises and supports the need to improve the village hall and at the parish council meeting earlier this evening a grant request was approved towards the renovation of the hall. Cllrs are particularly pleased that the Trustees have organised an exhibition to recognise the heritage of our travelling community. Meanwhile the council is grateful for the provision of the hall at no cost for CPR training and for providing a location for the Councils notice board.
- Village appearance. The council continues to monitor the appearance of the village and to initiate maintenance where appropriate. Cllrs are very aware that individual parishioners carry out their own 'litter picks'; Cllrs are grateful to them.
- Community Policing. PC Mark Roberts and PSCO Richard Williams have been briefed about local issues; will attend a coffee morning; and will conduct surgeries at Chapel Stores. The volume of recorded crime in the village continues to be very low but they will meet with Cllrs. to discuss any concerns.

Other Stakeholders

- Hampshire County Council (HCC). Cllr. Mans, deputy leader of the HCC regularly attends our meetings providing updates on relevant matters, support and wise counsel.

- New Forest District Council (NFDC). Cllr. Poole regularly attends and provides updates from the perspective of the NFDC, support and wise counsel.
- New Forest National Park Authority. Nick Gruber, Tree Officer, continues to provide professional support
- Councillors are represented on the New Forest National Park South East Quadrant; New Forest Association of Local Councils; New Forest Consultative Panel; and attend community forums. They provide feedback on matters relevant to the parish.

Statutory Consultee

The council dealt with over 19 planning applications during the year. Cllrs are grateful for the hard work of Cllrs Urwin, and Moyes, which informs our own comments on planning matters.

Provide allotments

The council continues to meet its obligation to make allotments available to local residents. The oversupply of allotments, and the related cost, had been alleviated by the closure of allotment 2. However, the provision continues to exceed the demand of parish residents.

The council continues to look to allotment holders to take responsibility for the effective day to day management of the allotments and is pleased that the allotment holders have formed an Allotment Association Committee.

The council has initiated a process of mapping the allotments to provide more accurate data about comparative allotment sizes and rental charges. As a result the Council is implementing a new strategy with particular emphasis on cultivation.

Set and manage the precept

- The council maintained the precept at £16,000 but is recommending an increase of £500 for 2024/25.
- The deficit on council business has been eliminated
- The council made a grant to the School Fields Trust
- The reserves stand at more than £10,000 which meets the minimum level of reserves required to demonstrate sustainability.

Councillors are volunteers and give their time generously on behalf of the community. I would like to thank them for their commitment and hard work. I would also like to thank those members of the public who take the time to join our meetings; raising matters of concern, and suggesting new initiatives for the council to discuss and support.

A special thank you to our hard working clerk who continues to provide us with support and sound advice. She is a great asset to our council.

5. Questions from residents to the Parish Council

The member of public asked about the precept. Cllr Moyse explained that it is paid to East Boldre Parish Council annually by the NFDC.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.