

# **MEDBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting**

**held on Monday 16 May 2022 at 7.30 pm  
in St Giles Church, Main Street, Medbourne**

Present : Parish Councillors Oakes; Kendall; Wooton; Shaen-Carter;  
Parish Clerk M Field, Cllr Rickman (HDC) and three members of the public

### **22APM1. Chair's Review of the Year (Cllr Kendall)**

*[The delivered report is recorded here in full]*

Thank you all for your attendance, you are all very welcome. Before I give my review of the year, I would like to briefly introduce myself to anyone who does not know me. My name is Seb Kendall, I have lived in Medbourne, on Ashley Road since 2011 with wife Jo and our 3 children Harry, Lucy and Sophy. I have very recently retired from the Royal Air Force after 38 years' service. I joined the Parish Council just over a year ago and was elected to be its Chair shortly after joining. As I reflect and give you my Review of the Year, I want to touch on a number of issues. But before I do that, I would like to thank all of the people who volunteer their own time, effort and resources, typically without reward to keeping the Village healthy and moving forward – Firstly, my fellow Councillors who you will hear from shortly.

To the uninitiated, the breadth and depth of what the Council does and has responsibility for is remarkable. In short, it is the first tier of government and is ran by predominantly unpaid, volunteer councillors who give up a significant amount of their time to ensure the smooth running of a multitude of things that make up the fabric of the Village, and hopefully incrementally overtime, improve aspects of village life. Crucially, the Parish Council is that vital interface between the Village and the next level of Government which in our case is Harborough District Council and beyond that, Leicestershire County Council, whose collective remit, resources and responsibilities are far greater than ours. Nevertheless, as the Parish Council we have the detailed and nuanced understanding that serves to shape and influence activities that directly affect us but are outside of our immediate responsibilities. Headline activities include commenting on all planning matters in the village - an activity underpinned by the excellent Medbourne Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council also liaise with, and report matters to LCC Highways on all matters to do with roads, pathways and trees. Furthermore, we have a role in supporting and participating with a number of village organisations such as The Sports and Social Club, the Medbourne Educational Foundation Trust and The Village Hall. As you can probably imagine, this list is not exhaustive.

I also want to pay tribute to the myriad of people, not on the council who do many things such as maintaining the War Memorial, keeping the Village Hall running, cutting the various Parish grassy areas not under Highways jurisdiction, maintaining the Medbourne Hollow, to picking up litter and many other things too numerous to mention. They all do it willingly, because it is the right thing to do, and because they have a sense of service to their local community and beyond which I recognise and salute.

As I previously mentioned, a foundational body of work which underpins our planning responsibilities is the Medbourne Neighbourhood Plan. To quote from the document itself:

***.....Neighbourhood Plans were introduced under the localism Act (2011) and give members of the community and Parish Councils greater influence over planning matters and how the Parish will develop.....***

First of all, if you have not read the MNP, I thoroughly recommend it and want to pay tribute to all those involved in putting the current version together which was promulgated in 2018. Given the influence it is supposed to give us, I have seen the good and the bad side. On the good side, we have engaged with developers using the MNP as a benchmark for our discussions, and it has worked. Equally though, I have also witnessed an example of where the MNP has effectively either been ignored or not upheld by higher planning authorities and this is something which we are very actively involved in trying to put right. The document covers the period from 2018 to 2031 but is due for review this year. A small committee has been formed to conduct the initial review and to scope out the magnitude of any revision that the plan may need.

Another area where vital work has been undertaken in the last year is Road Safety in the Village. We are taking measures to improve the adherence by motorists to the village speed limits. You may have noticed the recent installation of village 'gates' on the Ashley, Drayton, Hallaton and Uppingham Roads. This work will be completed later this year when the gates will be painted white. Work is ongoing to provide radar activated speed signs on all approaches to the village and we are also liaising with LCC Highways to see if the village speed limit signs can be re-positioned to improve speed limit adherence in the village, as part of that work, a survey is taking place which is why you will have seen the very recent placement of numerous cables spread across the roads on all approaches and departures to and from the Village. Some of you may have noticed the poor condition of the wooden railings over the Packhorse Bridge. The Bridge is the responsibility of Highways; the council is working with them to get these replaced as soon as possible with new railings that preserve the aesthetic and historic importance of the bridge. Unfortunately, despite pressure from the Parish Council, work on this is currently not scheduled to start until Autumn at the earliest.

As we look forward to the future, it is worth reflecting on our history as this can provide us with clues as to where we may be going. I have previously mentioned the excellent Medbourne Neighbourhood Plan. In it, there is a brief history which I will now quote.

***....It could be said of almost every parish in England that its history is what makes it unique. Medbourne residents certainly do believe this to be the case - and with good reason. It has been a Roman settlement, a 'Dark Ages' survivor an Anglian estate, a feudal Norman Manor and a prosperous medieval market town based on local agriculture. The signs may sometimes be subtle but Medbourne today looks the way it does because of its richly layered history.....***

We may not see it because we are living it day-to-day, but whilst preserving what has gone before, we are also, as a community, adding another layer to that rich history of Medbourne, and that inevitably means change. However, rest assured that as your Parish Council, we will try and manage that incremental development in the interests of the whole of the Village.”

22APM2. **The following reports and updates were received:**

2.1. Medbourne Educational Foundation Trust (Cllr Kendall)

After a Pandemic induced almost 2-year hiatus, the MEFT finally met in January this year. The MEFT for those of you that don't know is a charitable organisation that owns the bottom half of the Sports Field and the Children's Playground. The MEFT is looking to improve its financial stability and also its scope of activity beyond the fairly limited remit it currently has and has commissioned some work to develop a Vision, Strategy and Plan to take that work forward.

2.2. Village Hall (Cllr Easton)

A verbal report was received detailing the continued series of improvements being made to the Hall and the ongoing series of fund-raising activities and applications that remain the key means to achieve the practical implementation of the required works.

2.3. Information Resource Advisor (David Tufts)

*[The submitted report is summarised here]*

**Broadband and Mobile Services**

There is very little to report regarding broadband with both BT (and users of its network) and Gigaclear providing a mostly stable service. However, BT has been in the village within the last month repairing localised faults in both land line and broadband services.

I'm not aware of any further developments regarding the proposed mobile phone mast in Holt Road. This would alleviate the long-standing problems with poor-to-nil reception in some parts of the

village. More importantly, it should be assumed that the village **will not receive 5G services unless this new mast is erected.**

It is expected that the development, whenever it happens, will come under “permitted development”, following recent changes to the planning rules. Options to object or impede the proposal will be limited, so I think it’s advisable for the Parish Council to make this clear to residents.

### **Village Web Site**

Village web site: <http://www.medbourne.org.uk>

Parish Council Web Site: <http://www.medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk>

Activity on the Village web site has returned to normal after the pandemic. It is proposed to create a dedicated photo gallery for pictures of the Platinum Jubilee and an email will be sent out shortly inviting contributions.

The main outstanding issue affecting the web site is the need for the Parish Council sub-site to conform to accessibility legislation. It is now my belief that the current web site can be made accessible to an acceptable level. However, it is not possible to conform to the letter of the proposed standard. The main issue is that the accessibility legislation proposes a web site standard based on an international web standard written in 2018. Since our web site was constructed in 2016 it cannot conform and the tools I use to build it are also way out-of-date. However, I can’t see anything specific in that standard that affects accessibility. As far as the current web site is concerned it is largely compliant as it is possible to magnify text on screen and it is also possible to read any page aloud, including PDF files. Where we fall short is pages including tables which can’t be read aloud sensibly, and embedded pictures which do not have labels stating what the image is. These are easily fixed as there are only two pages with tabular data and very few embedded images. The other major issue is site navigation. As it stands, the site cannot be navigated in an accessible way, but this can be simply fixed by adding a *Site Map* page in text format.

The Parish Council is considering moving its site to a ready-made framework supplied by 2Commune, a respected local firm with considerable experience in this area. The domain *medbourneparishcouncil.co.uk* is already available for the migrated site.

[.....]

If the PC does migrate away from the current site then there are some considerations with respect to the remaining village sites. Firstly, the PC effectively pays the hosting fees for all 3 sites (Village, PC and Village Hall) by paying a single fee which covers all three. It is essential that this continues for the remaining two sites. Secondly, PC meetings are posted in the Diary on the Village web site along with their agenda and attachments. (The PC decided to stop posting minutes in the diary a few months ago.) I believe these meetings should continue to be posted and, with the PC site elsewhere, PC

minutes should be restored. (Note that all references to PC documents would be via links to the new site). Lastly, the close coupling between the 3 village sites is important and we should aim to maintain this even if the PC site moves.

### **Email and Twitter**

The number of email subscribers has risen from 210 to 223. There have been a number of new residents and I'm fairly certain that most of them have joined the list.

As ever there have been a few submissions to email that I have had to refuse. I also became aware (via the village grapevine) that some people disapprove of me filtering the emails I issue. It seems that people equate the email list with social media where anything goes. This simply cannot be the case as an email is a published document subject to the law of the land. To clarify the position I published a lengthy email explaining what I do and why I do it. The guiding principles are legality, veracity (truthfulness), community harmony, safety, privacy and scope. The only responses I received to this were very positive, so I have now posted the document on the Village web site. There is an argument in favour of this content also being added to the PC's Web Sites Policy document since as it also covers use of the email list for electioneering.

Last time we reported that we had 390 Twitter followers; we have only gained 1 additional follower. Engagements, namely "likes", "follows" and "clicks", were on a par with last year with a total of 200. The most popular posts were for Bottle Kicking and the Plant Sale, with the video of bell ringing also reaching a number of followers.

Thanks are again due to Amy Hayward for administering Twitter.

### **2.4. War Memorial (David and Mim Nance)**

As always we try to maintain some colour or interest throughout the year which is not always easy but the comments we get from those in the village make us realise that our efforts are worth it. We are pleased that many of the plants that we first planted have filled out the three beds and we will continue to attempt to provide plants to vary colour each year. We would however ask that if anyone has a bag or two of pebbles for the path areas they would be much appreciated.

### **2.5. Sports Club (Cllr Wooton)**

The Club's AGM had been held last week and the Chair had decided to step down from the Committee. Nominations to the vacant spaces on the committee were now being encouraged.

A clear focus in the coming periods would be expanding the village use of the existing facilities and to consider how to improve these for equitable access to all groups.

## **22APM3. Annual Budget Statement 2021-22 (Parish Clerk)**

MF provided a summary of the income and expenditure of the 2021-22 period, along with the figures formally noted for the annual internal audit, carried out through assistance from LRALC.

**22APM4. New website for Medbourne Parish Council, Spring 2022 (Parish Clerk)**

MF provided an overview of the new website and the manner in which information to be now posted on the PC's website will dovetail with other historic information on the existing village website.

**22APM5. Questions to the Chair**

There were none raised at the meeting.

**22APM6. Public Question Time**

- (a) Neighbourhood Plan : a series of discussions will be forthcoming to inform the necessary review of Neighbourhood Plan and its assessed compatibility with the recently adopted HDC Local Plan : a first 'table-top' review of potential issues will be undertaken by a dedicated parish working group and then discussed with HDC representatives.
- (b) The Government's White Paper on changes to constituency boundaries involves significant potential for changes to the Medbourne and HDC areas, and all parishioners are advised to keep an eye on how matters are progressed.
- (c) Medbourne Village Survey : this survey will be to encourage all parishioners to raise proposals, suggestions and concerns over local issues for the Parish Council to review.

***Finish***

*Seb Kendall  
Chair of Medbourne Parish Council  
8 May 2022*