



Medstead Parish Council

Minutes of the F&GP Committee Meeting – 28th May 2025, 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs. Mark Brayford (Acting Chair), Phil Quinlan, Frank Maloney

Also in attendance: Julie Russell (Parish Clerk)

	ACTION
Meeting started at 7.40pm after the Maintenance Committee	
25.01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING As the Chairman was absent, the Committee resolved to elected Cllr Brayford as Chairman for the meeting.	
25.02 OPEN SESSION No items from members of the public	
25.03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE The Committee received and approved an apology from Cllr Smith	
25.04 DECLARATION OF INTEREST None	
25.05 MINUTES Councillors resolved to approve the minutes of the F&GP meeting held on the 26 th March 2025	
25.06 TO REVIEW THE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE Councillors agreed to remove the following sentence from the 'Membership' section of the ToR, "From time to time the Full Council, at its discretion, may appoint additional councillors to serve on the F&GP committee". It will be replaced by the following sentence: "In addition, one "reserve" could be appointed who will have full Committee rights when attending as a member." Any decisions on appointing a reserve will be made after the council has filled its vacancies.	
25.07 TO REVIEW FEES a. Allotments The current rental fee for the Medstead Allotment Association is £175 and this has not gone up since the Allotments started. The Council reviewed the expenditure on the Allotments over the last five years and it is very variable from year to year but averages £219, and it is expected that significantly more will need to be spent in 2025/26. It is too late to increase the fee this year as the Association needs advance warning to determine its own membership fees, but F&GP recommends that fee be increased to £200pa for 2026/27. This proposal will be put to Full Council. b. Cemetery Fees The Cemetery fees have not changed since 2019 and they compare favourably with neighbouring burial grounds. F&GP agreed to recommend to Full Council an increase in fees by 5% with effect from 1 st July 2025, with the resulting amounts rounded up to the nearest £5	
25.08 TO CONSIDER LIABILITIES FOR ALLOTMENT REPAIRS The Committee reviewed the Land Registry documentation for the Allotments and the formal agreement with the Medstead Allotment Society. The Clerk had also searched through all documentation in the emails and on the laptop relating to the Allotments. It appears that the Council has liability for the collapsing bank, but the clerk will follow-up by	Clerk

<p>looking through any documentation on the older Gmail mail system, particularly any correspondence with Cala Homes.</p>	
<p>25.09 TO REVIEW POLICES</p> <p>Councillors reviewed the following three policies, circulated in advance, and resolved to recommend them to full council for re-adoption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Press and Media b. GDPR c. Complaints <p>d. The Lone Worker policy had been requested two days before the F&GP agenda went out, prompted by the parish office visit at the Annual Parish Assembly and so had been written quickly. The Committee felt that it is largely good, but needs further attention to terminology on roles and responsibilities and needs to factor in lone working for Councillors and volunteers. The Clerk had looked at a range of other council's Lone Worker Policies and the HALC template, but will look more widely to address the best way of incorporating councillors and volunteers. This will return to the next F&GP meeting</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>25.10 TO REVIEW THE RISK ASSESSMENT</p> <p>The Clerk had reviewed the Risk Assessment to factor in the new Parish Office and made some additions and amendments, but this was done sooner and more quickly than the planned scheduled. The Clerk and the Committee both felt that the Risk Assessment is fit for purpose to be re-adopted with the changes and so should be put to Full Council, but would benefit from a bit more time to a) do a deeper review and b) to look more widely at other Council's Risk Assessments for any good ideas and learning points. Therefore F&GP recommends that it goes to Full Council for adoption as an interim but also comes back to the next F&GP to see if it can be improved with further work, and it may be beneficial to set up a working party to contribute to it and review it.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>25.11 TO CONSIDER BROADBAND COSTS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE</p> <p>The Clerk looked at three routes to broadband for the Parish Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Buy a broadband service ii. Piggy back off the Village Hall by installing our own equipment iii. Get a third party to install a solution to piggy back of the Village Hall <p>On the first point, the Clerk spoke to all broadband providers active in the village,, but the only one that said it could install broadband to the Parish Office was BT. Even Talk Talk, which supplies the Village Hall, said it had no further free lines available at that location. The cost would be £27.99 a month with no upfront installation costs. It would initially have a two-year contract, with the rental going up £3 in the second year, and about a two-week lead-time on installation.</p> <p>On the second point, the Clerk looked at equipment options and costs for DIY installation, but felt that the risk of installing something that didn't work very well would be significant and with no come-back, and it would be a physical and skilled job for a councillor or village hall member to do. Hence the Clerk considered the third option and spoke to companies that could install a solution for us, and it would cost £300 to £400 as a one-off fee (subject to site survey). Other ongoing fees would be agreed terms with the Village Hall Committee for using their broadband.</p>	

F&GP agreed to recommend the first option to Full Council as that gives us full control over our broadband services, offers guarantees over its quality and more peace of mind over security.	
<p>25.12 TO AGREE THE PROCESS FOR BUYING OFFICE FURNITURE FOR THE PARISH OFFICE</p> <p>The Council had previously discussed buying used furniture for the Parish Office, or acquiring free items if possible, particularly when considering costs at budget time, and individual Councillors had also had conversations with the Clerk about used furniture. Therefore the Clerk asked F&GP if the costs of second-hand furniture items (typically £10-20) could be re-imbursed if a receipt was obtained from the seller. The Committee disagreed with this approach on the grounds that an auditor may not approve of this arrangement from a private seller, the furniture may not look good enough and would not have warranties, we would need to pick up equipment vs. getting it delivered. They asked the Clerk to get prices for new furniture and to list what was required. The Clerk asked that if reimbursement was out of the question then could free furniture be used as it is often available with a professional appearance, good quality and sturdy. The Committee were not keen on this, but the Clerk asked permission to send out suggestions anyway if good free items were found. This also has the advantage of giving flexibility to change the layout at zero cost by swapping items once the Clerk has experience of using the parish office. The Committee asked the clerk to also look at second-hand furniture companies.</p>	Clerk

There were no further matters to discuss and the meeting was closed at 9.26pm.

Signed Chairman

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