

# THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M1/2023

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30 ON 9 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: David Richardson (Chairman) DR  
Martin Smith, Paul Stubbs and R. Gurprashad (Councillors) MS/PS/RG

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO) Clerk/RFO  
County Cllr. C. Miller CM  
Wendy Meads (Village Hall Bookings Clerk). WM  
Two parishioners: Simon Ward and Jon Coleman

1. APOLOGIES: None.

2. PARISH COUNCIL:

2.1. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.

2.2. Vacancies: Simon Ward put himself forward for co-option. Cllr. R. Gurprashad proposed; seconded by Cllr. D. Richardson:

**RESOLVED:**

- To approve the co-option of Simon Ward; Clerk to forward DPI Registration for completion, Welcome letter etc.,  
Acceptance of Office to be signed before or at the next Parish Council meeting. Clerk

*Simon Ward left the meeting.*

2.3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.

2.4. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: There had been some success with the Land Registry; Clerk to share what information the PC holds regarding assets i.e., village hall. MS/Clerk

2.5. Code of Conduct: To be reviewed for next meeting. All

2.6. GDPR Policies: To be published on website. Clerk

2.7. Civility & Respect Pledge: To be reviewed for next meeting. All

2.8. Policies Review:

2.9. Reserves Policy: C/fwd.

2.10. Annual Review of Audit and Governance Documents: To be completed before the 31 March.

- a) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit
- b) Review of Internal Audit
- c) Asset Register
- d) Risk Assessments: Allotments, Parish Council, Village Hall, Play Area, Woodland Volunteers
- e) Financial Regulations. All

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

3.1: The Chairman welcomed Parishioner Jon Coleman; County Cllr. C. Miller and W. Meads to the meeting:

a) County Cllr. C. Miller reported:

- i. 20mph Application: Approved.
- ii. Councillors Priority Fund: Applications by the end of January.
- iii. County Budget: The process has been complicated this year especially with the cost of Social Care going up.
- iv. Community based Rural Transport: The council is considering where it can offer small scale support.
- v. Health: Is under new structure.
- vi. Botley Road: Effects of the Network Rail works.
- vii. Ploughley Road junction: Works due to finish in March; the single lane traffic should be finished in February.

b) Village Hall Bookings Clerk; W. Meads:-

- i. Village Hall Closure: The Parish Council confirmed that the Village Hall would remain closed until further notice due to the damage to the hall following a burst pipe. Any booking enquiries to be noted as evidence of demand.

c) Parishioner:

- i. Dog Faeces: Whilst acknowledging the addition of the signs on the play area gates and bins, there is still an existing problem with the bins being used to put poo bags in. Having spoken to several dog owners it is hoped that 'word of mouth' will eventually address the problem, along with anyone not clearing up after their dogs; general feedback was in support of further bin(s) being provided. The Parish Council agreed to look at the cost of bins, including the option to have larger ones; the parish would need to be consulted on the positioning of any further bins, and also agreed to Jon attempting to straighten the bent post to one of the existing bins.
- ii. Village Hall Windows: Jon had cleaned the windows and was happy to continue on a voluntary basis twice yearly.
- iii. Weeding: The Parish Council gratefully accepted Jon's offer to remove the ivy from the rear of the hall (weeds at the rear to be sprayed) and the recycling site sign and the clearance of weeds along the path on the approach to the village hall.
- iv. Fallen Tree: The Parish Council acknowledged Jon's assistance in cutting back the fallen tree.
- v. Paving outside the Nursing Home: He had temporarily resolved the drainage problem which has also been reported to O.C.C.

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*Having thanked County Cllr. C. Miller and parishioner J. Coleman for attending; they left the meeting.*

## 4. MINUTES:

### RESOLVED:

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14 November 2022 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved; to be signed by the Chairman Cllr. David Richardson.

4.2: The meeting scheduled for 12 December 2022 had to be cancelled as it was not quorate.

## 5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

### 5.1: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

- a) Play Area:
  - i. RoSPA Report: Action; to replace some missing bolt covers. DR/MS
- b) Recreational Area:
  - i. Bicester Vets Football Club: Postponed due to flooding of village hall. WM
  - ii. Rugby/Football Nets/Goal Posts: Update on installation: C/fwd. Agenda
- c) Village Hall:
  - i. Flooding: During the very cold spell there was a burst pipe which has caused significant damage to the hall; this has been reported to the insurance company (Claim Ref: MUK219268) and as a result Cllrs. D. Richardson, P. Stubbs and M. Smith met with the Loss Adjuster, who has been provided with a time-line of events and photos. Samples have been taken and being tested for asbestos, the results of the tests very much depend on how the Parish Council can move forward and the extent of the work required. In the meantime the electrics have had to be isolated (a new power bank has been fitted so that lighting could be provided for the meeting) and the hall closed until further notice.
  - ii. PAT Testing: Postponed due to flooding of Village Hall. Clerk
  - iii. Immersion: To be followed up along with cost of new tank should it need replacing. PS
  - iv. Village Hall Cleaner:
    - Contract and job description: C/fwd.
  - iii. Windows: See 3.1-c-ii.
  - iv. Stock Check: Cllrs. D. Richardson and M. Smith to carry out. DR/MS
  - v. Electrical Checks/Safety Alarms: Postponed due to flooding of Village Hall. PS
- d) Allotments
  - i. Vacancies: All allotments are let.
- e) Woodland: Cricket Bat Willows – Enquiry from supplier: C/fwd. Clerk/DR

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### 6.1: Merton Facebook Page: To consider/approve matters for Publication:

- Parish Council vacancies.
- Upon confirmation, approval of the 20mph Application had been published.

## 7. COMMUNITY:

### 7.1: Planning Applications:

#### a) Application No.: 22/03475/F

Applicant's Name: Mr Nicholas Turner

Proposal: Solar Panels are proposed for the the new extension which is attached to the rear of the house and the converted modern outbuilding in the garden.

Location: Merton Croft, West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG

Parish(es): Merton

Comments by: 12 January 2023

### RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council has no objections or comments.

Clerk

### 7.2: Decision Notices:

#### a) Application No: 22/02819/LB

Proposal: Reinstatement of opening between kitchen and store to create dining area with raised floor. New glazing to front, rear and side elevations. Removal of non-historic fire surround to kitchen. Replacement windows to first floor bedroom on side elevation

Location: West End Farm, West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG

Parish(es): Merton

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Date of Decision: 2 December 2022

#### b) Application No: 22/02821/F

Proposal: Reinstatement of opening between kitchen and store to create dining area with raised floor. New glazing to front, rear and side elevations. Removal of non-historic fire surround to kitchen. Replacement windows to first floor bedroom on side elevation

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Location: West End Farm, West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG

Parish(es): Merton

Permission for Development

Date of Decision: 2 December 2022

## 7.3: Planning Matters:

- a) NHS - Alchester Medical Group - RAOC -VHS - New Bicester Health Hub - CAS-149313-S1Z5F7 – Application granted.
- b) NHS - Montgomery House Surgery - RAOC - New Bicester Health Hub - CAS-149291-X4Y5N7 – Application granted.

## 7.4: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group': Arrangement for a meeting postponed until decision on 20mph Limit official.

- a) 20mph Limit Application: Chairman had received confirmation that the application had been approved and that the new signs should be erected during March. DR/Clerk
- b) Speedwatch: C/fwd.

## 7.5: Bus Stop Light: Land Registry Search: Nothing showing on land registry.

MS.

- a) Light/Solar array and LED fixture: C/fwd.

## 7.6: Overgrown Trees: Report of overgrown trees in The Butts. Clerk to follow up.

Clerk.

## 8: FINANCE:

### 8.1: Receipts: -

- a) Petty cash and Bookings:
  - November 2022: Two cheques to be banked for £47.75 and £75.00; there is a payment outstanding from a Caravan and Campers Club.
- b) Good Energy - Energy Bill Relief Scheme - The government Energy Bill Relief Scheme is a discount to the unit rates, for energy used from 1st October 2022 to 31st March 2023.

### 8.2: Account for Payment Prior to the Meeting: None.

### 8.3: Accounts for Payment:

#### RESOLVED:

- To approve the following accounts for payment (list presented to councillors prior to meeting): To be set up with Unity Trust Bank.
- a) Clerks Pay/Exp. November/December 2022 - £361.22.
- b) M. Day – Adopt a Site Agreement – July-Sept 2022 - £59.62; C.D.C. confirmed receipt of record sheet.
- c) W. Meads –Village Hall Cleaner – October-November 2022 - £112.50.
- d) M. Smith – Reimbursement for purchase of weed killer – Assured Products Ltd - £17.49.

#### RESOLVED:

- To pass a resolution not to be a member Community First Oxfordshire Membership 2023/24 – Population below 300 - £35.00 – Population between 301 – 1000 - £55.00 (2021/22 Population 279).

- a) Contribution to MPCC:-

#### RESOLVED:

- To carry forward approval of Contribution to MPCC; awaiting request letter.

MS

### 8.4: Quotes:

- a) Laptop: C/fwd. Clerk/DR
- b) Electrical Check and Safety Alarms: Postponed due to flooding of village hall. PS/MS
- c) Access to Church Clock: C/fwd.
- d) Hot Water Tank: Postponed due to flooding of village hall. MS
- e) Grass Cutting 2023-24: To be discussed with the Woodland Group at the next meeting.

### 8.5: Funding:

- a) County Cllr. Priority Fund: See 3.1-a-ii: To apply for funds towards replacement heating unit; three quotes to be obtained. MS

### 8.6: Spending under COMF Parishes

- i. Fund: Progress Form: Completed form submitted to C.D.C; awaiting response. Clerk

### 8.7: Training:

- a) Planning Enforcement Seminar – 5 December 2022: No attendance; information forwarded.

### 8.8: Banking:

- a) Unity Trust Application:
  - i. Electronic Payment Procedure: C/fwd. Clerk/RFO
  - ii. Debit/Payment Card: To establish if there is an incurred cost.

### 8.9: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Were accepted and approved:

- a) Bank Reconciliation 1.10.2022 – 31.12.2022:- (Unity Trust St. No: 012)

Balance B/fwd	£33,162.62
Add Total Receipts	£ 881.12
Less Total Payments	£ 3,401.87
Balance C/fwd	£30,641.87
- b) Budget Comparison: The following noted:-
  - i. Payments:
    - Open Spaces – Woodland grass cutting over budget £490.00

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- - Adopt a Site Agreement over budget £224.76 – Previous year payment.
  - VAT – over budget £923.57 – No budget for VAT.
  - ii. Receipts:
    - Village Hall – over budget £764.25 – Increased income following COVID.
    - VAT Reclaim – over budget £2,161.07 – Incl. previous year.
  - c) Balance Sheet: Accepted:-
    - Debtors £859.09.51
    - Add Bank/Cash £30,641.87
    - Less Funds £24,042.27
    - Less Creditors £683.34
    - General Funds £6,775.35
  - d) Verification by Internal Financial Control Cllr. M. Smith able to access bank statements now; verification c/fwd.  
MS
- 8.10: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021/2022:  
a) Internal Auditor Report: Actions from report (including those carried over from 2020/21): No update other than those covered by agenda.
- 8.11: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022/23:  
a) Merton Question Sheet: To be completed. Clerk
- 8.12: Budget 2023/24:  
a) MPC319(15): C.D.C. - Estimated Tax Base 2023-24 & Parish Precepts 2023-24: Tax Base for Merton 2022/23 – 141.2 - 2023/24 – 139.2.  
b) Draft figures were considered.
- RESOLVED:**
- To increase the budget contribution to the Village Hall Fund to £5,638.00.
  - Overall budget for receipts £2,395.00; payment (including contribution to funds) £22,395.00 giving a precept of £20,000.00; this will show as £143.68 on the council tax bill for a Band D property an increase of £26.96 on the previous year.
- 8.13: Precept 2023/24:  
**RESOLVED:**  
• To approve a precept requirement of £20,000.00. Clerk/RFO/All
9. GENERAL
- 9.1: The Clerks Contract and Job Description: Review: C/fwd. All
- 9.2: Correspondence for Action: The lists of correspondence M.P.C. 319 (Dec 2022) was considered prior to the meeting; all matters for decision added to the agenda: The following noted:-  
a) MPC319(10): Botley West Solar Farm: Noted.  
b) MPC319(39): Parishioners concerns with regards to the Parish Council's response to planning regarding the Pheasant Farm: Clerk to respond, explaining that Agendas and Minutes are published; meetings are open to the public; the District Council notifies neighbours of application and puts up site notices.
- 9.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:  
a) Matters for Further Information:
  - None.
- b) Matters for Further Discussion:
  - None.
10. NEXT MEETING: All meetings to be held in Merton village hall in-line with Government guidelines.
- 10.1: 13 February 2023 – 7.30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

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There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:16.

**Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:**

**Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman .....**

**Date .....**