

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M9/2022

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30 ON 14 NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT: David Richardson (Chairman) DR
Martin Smith and Paul Stubbs (Councillors) MS/PS

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO) TC
District Cllr. Gemma Coton GM
Wendy Meads (Village Hall Bookings Clerk). WM

1. APOLOGIES: Accepted from Cllr. R. Gurprashad, County Cllr. C. Miller and District Cllr. Angus Patrick.

2. PARISH COUNCIL:

2.1. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.

2.2. Vacancies: No applications.

Clerk

2.3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.

2.4. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:

a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: Ongoing.

MS

2.5. Code of Conduct: Review:

a) Training: C.D.C. holding on 23 November 2022 to be held at Bodicote House, Banbury 5-7pm.

All

2.6. GDPR Policies: Documents circulated prior to the previous meeting for review.

RESOLVED:

- To accept and adopt the following as working documents:

a) Privacy Notice

b) Communication Policy

c) Data Protection Policy

d) Document Retention Policy

2.7. Policies Review: Documents circulated prior to the previous meeting for review.

RESOLVED:

- To accept and adopt the following updated versions as working documents:

a) Social Media Policy

b) Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements

c) Equal Opportunities

d) Expenses

e) Health & Safety

f) Sickness & Absence

2.8. Reserves Policy: To be reviewed and amended for adoption: C/fwd.

Clerk/RFO

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

3.1: The Chairman welcomed Parishioner; District Cllr. Gemma Coton and W. Meads to the meeting:

a) District Cllr. G. Coton:

i. At the full council meeting held on 17 October 2022 :

- Two motions passed:

- A motion declaring Cherwell a 'no fracking zone'.

- A motion ensuring more transparency around sewage discharge into our rivers and making sure that treating sewage discharge is taken seriously by the council when making planning decisions.

- Two motions not passed:

- A motion ensuring that environmental protections and local democracy were respected.

- A motion calling on the council to take into consideration the goals of the Climate and Ecology Bill when making decisions.

ii. County Cllr. A. Patrick is organising an Enforcement Planning meeting to which councillors are welcome.

iii. Local Plan Review: Consultation from 14 December 2022 to 8 February 2023.

iv. Voting: C.D.C. will be introducing photo ID for future elections.

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

i. Village Hall Heating: Is not working again; Cllr. P. Stubbs has printed off the programming information and will have another look at the heating.

PS

ii. Hot Water: To be reviewed alongside heating; if the new part does not work the PC may have to consider purchasing a new water tank.

PS

iii. PAT Testing: Annual check to be arranged.

Clerk

iv. Disabled Toilet: Support bar needs re-fixing.

PS

v. The draw beneath the oven needs two new screws.

PS

vi. Floor Tiles: Spare tiles have been located in the store room; Cllr. D. Richardson to investigate if they can be used to repair the damaged/lifting tiles.

DR

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vii. Defibrillator: It was noted that this still needs registering; Cllr. P. Stubbs to follow up.

PS

4. MINUTES:

RESOLVED:

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 10 October 2022 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved to be signed by the Chairman Cllr. David Richardson.

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

5.1: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

a) Play Area:

- i. RoSPA Report: Action; to replace some missing bolt covers (PC has a supply).

MS

b) Recreational Area:

- i. Bicester Vets Football Club: There had been no further communication; W. Meads to follow up.
- ii. Rugby/Football Nets/Goal Posts: Update on installation: C/fwd.

WM

Agenda

c) Village Hall:

- i. Immersion: See 3.1-b-ii – Cost of new tank to be priced up.
- ii. Village Hall Cleaner:

PS

- Contract and job description: C/fwd.

- iii. Windows: Local window cleaner did not require any more work. The Parish Council accepted the offer from J. Coleman to carry out on a voluntary basis until a solution can be found; the PC did not accept the offer to weed the rear of the hall area as there are plans to spray the area with an environmentally friendly product.

DR/Clerk

- iv. Stock Check: Cllrs. D. Richardson and M. Smith to carry out.

DR/MS

- v. Electrical Checks/Safety Alarms: In hand.

PS

d) Allotments

- i. Leaking Tap: Replaced and a secondary tap fitted in order that watering cans can easily be filled.
- ii. Vacancies:

- Allotments 1 & 2; The Tenancy Agreement has been terminated and outstanding rental paid. Awaiting the return of a signed new Tenancy Agreement for Allotments 1 & 2; 1st payment required April 2023.
- One further enquiry; parishioner, having agreed, has been added to the waiting list.

Clerk

- e) Woodland: Cricket Bat Willows – Enquiry from supplier: Chairman of the Woodland Group had been unable to accept an invite to the meeting.

Clerk/DR

6. COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Parish Council vacancies.
- Play Area Bins: Advisory: Clerk had published on the Parish Council Facebook page along with a link to the O.C.C. website and linked it to the Village Facebook page.

7. COMMUNITY:

7.1: Planning Applications: None.

7.2: Decision Notices: None.

7.3: Planning Matters:

- a) C.D.C. - Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040: See 3.1-a-iii.

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

- a) 20mph Limit Application: County Cllr. C. Miller has assured the PC that O.C.C. is expected to officially confirm its decision on 17 November 2022; however the implementation of the signs may be delayed until March 2023. The PC will put an update on the Facebook page once the official announcement is made.

DR/Clerk

- b) Speedwatch: To be reviewed once official announcement is made regarding the 20mph limit application.

7.5: Bus Stop Light: Land Registry Search: No update.

MS/Clerk.

- a) Light/Solar array and LED fixture: The source of the power supply has been established.

- b) Maintenance: Painting to be carried out once the weather improves.

MS

- c) Book Library: Being utilised.

7.6: Dog Bins:

- a) Approval of public meeting: Whilst the PC is happy to facilitate a meeting, it felt that it should be village led.

- b) Signs: Purchased as previously agreed.

7.7 Overgrown Trees: Report of overgrown trees in The Butts. Clerk reported parishioners concerns to C.D.C., with no response to date; Clerk to follow up.

Clerk.

8. FINANCE:

8.1: Receipts: -

- a) Petty cash and Bookings:

- October 2022: Banked £157.50 cash and £220.00 cheques posted.

- b) C.D.C. – Remittance Advice – Adopt a Site Agreement – April-June 2022 - £59.62.

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- c) Allotment Rent Plots 1 & 2 – 2021/2022 – 2022/2023 - £64.00.
- 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:
- RESOLVED:**
- To pass a resolution to approve the Pay Increase based on the NALC Scales – SCP7 - £11.63 per hr applicable from 1 April 2022.
- b) Clerks Pay/Exp. Oct 2022 - £291.41 (Incl. Pay increase and £90.00 back pay to 1 April 2022).
- c) M. R. & J. S. Cross – Inv. No's: 131 - £156.00 (grass cutting Woodland 24 Oct 2022) – 132 - £222.00 (grass cutting recreational area 24 Oct 2022) – 136 - £300.00 (Cutting of Meadow Merton Woodland 2 Nov 2022) - Total £678.00
- d) Good Energy – Inv. No: I-0221692- £180.18 – Amendment to previous invoice I-0198274 - £196.63 – VAT - £9.83.
- e) CFO – Community Halls Annual Membership - £50.00
- RESOLVED:**
- To pass a resolution not to be a member.
- f) Contribution to MPCC:-
- RESOLVED:**
- To carry forward approval of Contribution to MPCC; awaiting request letter.
- 8.4: Quotes:
- a) Laptop: Clerk requested that the laptop be a 15" with full numerical keyboard. Clerk/DR
- b) Electrical Check and Safety Alarms: Some work had been completed; some will need referring back to company. PS/MS
- c) Access to Church Clock: C/fwd.
- 8.5: Funding:
- a) Queen's Jubilee £3m fund to help English village Halls: No further provided since May 2022.
- b) SPARK Funding: C/fwd.
- 8.6: Spending under COMF Parishes
- i. Fund: Progress Form: Completed form submitted to C.D.C; awaiting response. Clerk
- 8.7: Training:
- a) PAT Testing: No attendance.
- b) Internal Controls – 20 October 2022: No attendance.
- 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.
- iii. Authorisation of Payments: Councillors need to get in the habit of authorising payments following a meeting.
- 8.9: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Were accepted and approved:
- a) Bank Reconciliation 1.10.2022 – 31.12.2022:- (Unity Trust St. No: 009)
- | | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Balance B/fwd | £33,162.62 |
| Add Total Receipts | £ 691.12 |
| Less Total Payments | £ 2,234.28 |
| Balance C/fwd | £31,619.46 |
- b) Budget Comparison: The following noted:
- i. Payments:
- Village Hall Cleaner over budget £28.75 – Increased use of hall since COVID.
 - Open Spaces – Woodland grass cutting over budget £110.00
 - General costs over budget £995.78 – Purchase of Football/Rugby posts.
 - Adopt a Site Agreement over budget £224.76 – Previous year payment.
 - Play Area – Windblown Conifer Tree – over budget £300.00 – Contingency.
 - Admin – Internal Audit – over budget £20.00.
 - Election – over budget £100.00.
 - Bank/Internal Transfer to Unity Trust - £500.00.
 - VAT – over budget £801.99 – No budget for VAT.
- ii. Receipts:
- Village Hall – over budget £574.25 – Increased income following COVID.
 - Allotments – over budget £37.00 – Previous year outstanding rental.
 - VAT Reclaim – over budget £2,161.07 – Incl. previous year.
- c) Balance Sheet: Accepted:-
- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| Debtors | £737.51 |
| Add Bank/Cash | £31,301.58 |
| Less Funds | £24,042.27 |

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Less Creditors £2,384.26

General Funds £7,259.31

- 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: Budget 2023/24: Prepare draft figures; need to consider possible cost for heating/hot water tank.

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. 317 (Oct 2022) and M.P.C.318 (Nov 2022) was considered prior to the meeting; all matters for decision added to the agenda: The following noted:-

- a) MPMP317(36): C.D.C. - Invitation - Cherwell Parish Liaison Meeting - 17 November (response requested) 6.30-8.30pm.
- b) MPC318(08): CFO - Evening Networking meeting next Wednesday 9th November - A general discussion with other halls on sustainable heating and other energy saving ideas.
- c) MPC318(12): O.C.C. - Oxfordshire Community Foundation - Community Building Energy Support.
- d) MPC318(14): CFO - How to apply for the Community Building Energy Support Scheme

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: 12 December 2022 –7.30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:29.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation: Approved 9 January 2023 – Minute Ref: M1/2023 – 4.1

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman: D. Richardson

Date: 9 January 2023