

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M2/2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30 ON 13 FEBRUARY 2023

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

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO) Clerk/RFO
County Cllr. C. Miller CM
District Cllrs. G. Coton and A. Patrick GC/AP
Wendy Meads (Village Hall Bookings Clerk). WM
One parishioner.

1. APOLOGIES: None.
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 - 2.1. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.
 - 2.2. Vacancies/Co-option: None.
 - 2.3. New Councillor:
 - a) DPI Registration Form: Completed; to be submitted to C.D.C. Clerk
 - b) Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Signed and witnessed by the Clerk.
 - 2.4. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
 - 2.5. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:
 - a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: Land Registry, information relating to the village hall and woodland shared with MS; documents to be reviewed before the PC consider contacting Land & Property Registration for assistance. MS
 - 2.6. Code of Conduct:
RESOLVED:
 - To adopt the parish version of the Code of conduct 2022, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.
 - 2.7. GDPR Policies: To be published on website. Clerk
 - 2.8. Civility & Respect Pledge: To be reviewed for next meeting. All
 - 2.9. Policies Review:
 - a) Reserves Policy: Draft to include £2,000.00 reserves to be drawn up for approval at the next meeting. Clerk
 - 2.10. Annual Review of Audit and Governance Documents: To be completed before the 31 March.
 - a) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit
RESOLVED
 - To adopt updated document.
 - b) Review of Characteristics of Internal Audit:
RESOLVED
 - To adopt updated document.
 - c) Asset Register
RESOLVED
 - To adopt with the addition of one set of football/rugby combi goal/nets (to be added to Insurance policy), addition of three notice boards and two drain keys to be stored at the village hall.
 - d) Risk Assessments: Allotments, Parish Council, Village Hall, Play Area and Woodland Volunteers: C/fwd.
 - e) Financial Regulations:
RESOLVED
 - To adopt with a typo correction 16. Charities.
 - 2.11. Laptop: Back up to hard drive:
RESOLVED
 - To invest in a second back-up hard drive to be kept off site (not at Clerks). DR
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:
 - 3.1: The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting.
 - a) Village Hall Committee Demise: Remaining funds to be transferred to the Parish Council.
 - b) Parking on Main Street causing restricted vision and access onto the road; further investigation required. SW
 - c) County Cllr. C. Miller reported:
 - i. 20mph Application: No further updates.
 - ii. Budget: Highlights:-
 - Social Care
 - Investment into the 20mph scheme
 - Two million for Community Transport
 - Three million for Climate Change – O.C.C. invested in 'Planting Trees' in villages: See 9.2-f.
 - iii. Councillors Priority Fund: Village Hall costs to be consider for the new allocation of funding.
 - iv. Agreed to look into the possibility of a 40mph buffer at both ends of the village.

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- v. Ploughley Road: Flood and drainage works to be completed by 17 March 2023.
- d) District Councillors G. Coton and A. Patrick:
 - i. Cherwell Local Plan 2040 Review: No public consultation date yet.
 - ii. Executive: Reviewed land and supply for next 5.4yrs.
 - iii. Coronation Grant available.
 - iv. Council Tax £148.50 per year increase.
 - v. Application for 75 houses on the Blackthorn Road approved.

County and District Councillors left the meeting.

4. MINUTES:

RESOLVED:

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9 January 2023 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and 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. DR/MS
- b) Recreational Area: Nothing to report.
- c) Village Hall:
 - i. Flooding: Following a site visit by a rep from Belfor UK arrangements are in place to take up the floor on 6th March and dry out the hall; WM agreed to empty the kitchen cupboards on the back wall so that the soaked units can be removed.
 - Asbestos Testing: Asbestos to be removed.
 - ii. Immersion: Three quotes to be obtained for a new system; it was also noted that anti-freeze will be needed and lagging in the roof space. PS
 - iii. Village Hall Cleaner:
 - Contract and job description: C/fwd.
 - iv. Stock Check: C/fwd until works on the hall complete. Look at providing an operational manual for any successors; MS has set up a spreadsheet to provide a log of keys; stop cocks etc. DR/MS
- e) Woodland: Cricket Bat Willows – Enquiry from supplier: To discuss with Woodland Group. Clerk/DR

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1: Merton Facebook Page: To consider/approve matters for Publication: S. Ward to review and update information on the Facebook Page.

- Parish Council vacancies.

7. COMMUNITY:

7.1: Planning Applications:

- None.

7.2: Decision Notices: Noted:-

a) Application No: 22/01847/F

Proposal: Two storey side and rear extension & single storey rear extension - Alterations to off street parking Location: 6 The Cottage, West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG

Parish(es): Merton - PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Date of Decision: 17 January 2023)

7.3: Planning Matters:

- a) C.D.C. – Cherwell Local Plan 2040 review: Consultation deferred.
- b) 20230201-BZN_ACP_Design_Principles-O – Brize Norton Airspace Chance: No comments recorded.

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

- a) 20mph Limit Application: See 3.1-c-i. DR/Clerk

7.5: Bus Stop Light: Land Registry Search: See 2.5-a. 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:
 - December 2022/January 2023: None.
- b) C.D.C. – Remittance - £59.62 – Recycling Site (Adopt a Site Agreement).

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

8.3: Accounts for Payment:

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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. January 2023 - £181.05.
- b) Blackthorn Parish Council – Contribution to Home Working Insurance Policy for Clerk/RFO – (£106.00 paid in full by BPC) – Total Contribution £53.00.
- c) Good Energy - I-0244612 - £299.20 – Period 10.10.2022-1.2.2023.
- d) MS – repayment of Inv. No's: 72411008/73404940 - £9.54 each - Total £19.08 (Manhole keys).
- e) Information Commissioner – Data Protection Fee Renewal – Actioned required by 24 March 2023 – GDPR AND Data Protection Act 2018 and Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations 2018 (the regulations) must pay annual data protection fee unless exempt - £40.00.
- f) Contribution to MPCC:-

RESOLVED:

- To carry forward approval of Contribution to MPCC; awaiting request letter. MS
- 8.4: Quotes:
 - a) Laptop: To investigate if a laptop can be purchased on an invoice basis from PC World. PS
 - b) External Hard Drive: To investigate costs; see 2.11.
 - c) Access to Church Clock: C/fwd.
 - d) Hot Water Tank: Air Source Heating Pump (ASHP) element £72.00 plus £10.00 DPD – C/fwd pending quotes for new system.
 - e) Village Hall Air Source Heating: Quote for service £247.00 plus VAT – C/fwd pending quotes for new system.
 - f) Grass Cutting 2023-24: To be discussed with the Woodland Group at the next meeting; representative to be invited.
- 8.5: Funding:
 - a) County Councillor - Offer of funds to support projects in Merton parish – Application update on quotes for heating unit: See 3.1-c-iii. Clerk/RFO to review spending on woodland over the past five years and then see if the County Councillor Priority Fund can help. Clerk/RFO
 - b) The ACRE Platinum Jubilee Fund is now open and round one applications need to be completed by 20th; further application opportunities in February: To apply for funds towards replacement water tank. 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) OALC – Free for Clerks – Training Opportunities for Clerks and Councils - 23rd February, 7-8pm.
 - b) OALC - Allotment tenancy agreements and policies training -8th February – 10am – Members £30.00 plus VAT: No attendance.
- 8.8: Banking:
 - a) Unity Trust Application:
 - i. Electronic Payment Procedure: Unity Trust provides a Multipay Card which incurs a £50.00 set up fee and a £3.00 per month charge; to be compared with alternatives. Clerk/RFO
 - ii. Debit/Payment Card: To establish if there is an incurred cost: As above.
- 8.9: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Were accepted and approved:
 - a) Bank Reconciliation 1.10.2022 – 31.12.2022:- (Unity Trust St. No: 013)

Balance B/fwd	£30,641.87
Add Total Receipts	£ 402.37
Less Total Payments	£ 550.83
Balance C/fwd	£30,493.41
 - b) Budget Comparison: Accepted.
Balance Sheet: Accepted:-
Debtors £1,079.09
Add Bank/Cash £30,273.41
Less Funds £24,042.27
Less Creditors £729.25
General Funds £6,586.98
 - c) Verification by Internal Financial Control Cllr. M. Smith completed. 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):
 - i. Payroll: The PC is now registered with HMRC; downloading and setting up of the Basic PAYE Tool held over until laptop is purchased.
 - ii. Document Management: The Oxfordshire Archives Centre is currently closed.
- 8.11: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022/23:
 - a) Merton Question Sheet: Submitted. Clerk
- 8.12: Precept 2023/24: Requirement submitted to C.D.C.

9. GENERAL

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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) MPC320(15): Public Exhibition - Ploughley Road —Where: Ambrosden Village Hall, Merton Road, Ambrosden OX25 2LX - When: Thursday 2 February - Time: 15:30 – 20:30: Cllr. M. Smith attended.
- b) MPC320(16): Article for your local newsletter - Walking in Oxfordshire <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire>:
- c) MPC320(46): O.C.C. - Please help make every metre count for local schools.
- d) MPC320(49): Land & Property Registration - Help with property records: See 2.5-a.
- e) MPC320(56): C.D.C. - Annual Emergency Planning Unit Town and Parish Survey 2023 – Survey and GDPR form to complete – Rec/d 30.1.2023 –The deadline for returns is April 1st 2023.
- f) MPC320(57): O.C.C. – Parish Planting – Merton – Field Maple – Ambrosden to Merton Road on bend before Gulley Row – Consider involving residents in the first three years maintenance.
- g) MPC321(05): C.D.C. - Information for ward councillors covering Merton and Merton Parish Council – Change of election venue (one year due to village hall flooding) to the Church: Noted.

9.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:

- a) Matters for Further Information:
 - None.
- b) Matters for Further Discussion:
 - Dog Bins: To consider costs for dog bins; the option to have more or replace existing with larger ones.

10. NEXT MEETING: All meetings to be held in Merton village hall in-line with Government guidelines.

10.1: 13 March 2023 – 7.30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:53.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date