

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30 ON 13 MARCH 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
Mr F. Foxon (Merton Community Woodland Group) FF

1. APOLOGIES: None.
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 - 2.1. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.
 - 2.2. Vacancies/Co-option: None.
 - 2.3. New Councillor: Cllr. S. Ward tendered his resignation; effective from this date and left the meeting. C.D.C. to be notified. Clerk
 - a) DPI Registration Form: C.D.C. had returned the form as incomplete.
 - 2.4. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
 - 2.5. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:
 - a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: Ongoing. MS
 - 2.6. GDPR Policies: To be published on website. Clerk
 - 2.7. Civility & Respect Pledge:
 - a) To consider passing a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge: C/fwd.
 - b) To Review Statement and proposed policies: C/fwd. All
 - 2.8. Policies Review:
 - a) Reserves Policy: C/fwd. All
 - 2.9. Annual Review of Audit and Governance Documents: To be completed before the 31 March.
 - a) Asset Register

RESOLVED:

- To accept the updated Asset Register with the addition of one set of football/rugby combi goal/nets, addition of three notice boards and two drain keys to be stored at the village hall.
- The Clerk confirmed that the set of football/rugby combi goal/nets had been added to the insurance policy at no extra cost this year; it may incur a small increase next year.
- Awaiting confirmation that the litter bins (sited in the park) have been added to the insurance policy. Clerk
- b) Risk Assessments: Allotments, Parish Council, Village Hall, Play Area and Woodland Volunteers: Review had been carried out; the 'Parish Council' assessment represented as a 'Financial Risk Assessment'.

RESOLVED:

- To approve the adoption of the Risk Assessments with recommended amendments.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- 3.1: The Chairman welcomed attendees to the meeting.
 - a) Mr Foxon presented the council with a report from the Merton Community Woodland Group; planned works for October 2022 are almost completed and further areas of work were discussed; the volunteer group had welcomed a new member.
 - The notice boards/signage may need replacing; the PC may be approached for funding.
 - Proposals to create additional parking at the main entrance will need to be discussed further as approval would be required from the PC.
 - The quote for new fencing is a work in progress.
 - Cricket Bat Willows: Plans to prune the lower side-branches are in place to prevent them getting too big. In response to the enquiries the PC has had; it is recognised that they are a sustainable resource; the PC and the group intend to take responsibility for them once ownership is confirmed.
 - Woodland Grass Cutting: Details of a contractor to be passed to the PC.
 - b) County Cllr. C. Miller reported:
 - i. Budget: Has been set.
 - ii. 20mph Application: Signage in place; there is no update regarding the 40mph buffer.
 - iii. A41: Due to reopen; it was noted that, a large diameter of pipe had been installed to reduce the risk of flooding.
 - iv. Councillors Priority Fund: PC to provide quotes.
 - v. County matters include:-
 - East West Rail project.
 - Rail Freight Interchange at Ardley.
 - c) District Councillors G. Coton and A. Patrick:
 - i. Cherwell Local Plan 2040 Review: Proposed public consultation in July.

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- ii. Elections: Photo ID awareness, required for voting.
- iii. Budget: Has been approved at full council meeting.

County and District Councillors left the meeting.

4. MINUTES:

RESOLVED:

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 February 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; C/fwd. DR/MS
- b) Recreational Area: Nothing to report.
- c) Village Hall:
 - i. Flooding: The village hall flooring is in the process of being removed.
 - Asbestos Testing: Asbestos has been removed.
- d) Village Hall Cleaner:
 - Contract and job description: C/fwd.
- e) Woodland: Cricket Bat Willows – Enquiry: See3.1-a: Ownership to be confirmed; resource to be managed by the PC and Merton Community Woodland Group.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Parish Council vacancies.
- Clerk had put on Facebook pages:-
 - i. Voting ID:
 - ii. Road Traffic Orders.

7. COMMUNITY:

7.1: Planning Applications: None.

7.2: Decision Notices: None.

7.3: Withdrawal Notices: Noted.

- a) Application No.: 22/02447/F
Applicant's Name: Mr & Mrs Thomas Chalk
Proposal: Removal of existing timber workshop and construction of new garage and annexe building
Location: 2 Manor Farm Close Merton OX25 2NA
Parish(es): Merton

7.4: Planning Matters:

- a) C. O.C.C. - Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: No comments.
- b) Public Consultation Event At Caversham Lakes - Wednesday 15th March 2023 between 4:00pm and 8:00pm at Caversham Lakes: No comments.

7.5: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group': None.

- a) 20mph Limit Application: See 3.1-b-ii. Signage in place; Clerk tasked with removing from agenda and adding 40mph buffer zone to agenda. Clerk

7.6: Bus Stop Light: Land Registry Search: C.D.C. confirmed Parish Council ownership. Southern Electricity have attended site and connected the lighting; the PC acknowledge the volunteer works to clear the bus shelter. Clerk to remove from agenda. Clerk.

- a) Light/Solar array and LED fixture: See above.

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

7.8: Parking: Oxfordshire County Council Highways matter.

7.9: Spring Clean 2023: Chairman to make arrangements. DR

8: FINANCE:

8.1: Receipts: -

- a) Petty cash and Bookings:
 - February 2023: None.
 - Good Energy Advice - You'll receive £150 to help with your heating bills.

8.2: Account for Payment Prior to the Meeting:

- a) Dell Corporation Ltd - £549.00 – Laptop:

RESOLVED:

- Retrospective approval of purchase; in order to benefit from special offer: Delivery date to be followed up. Clerk.

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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.

- Clerks Clerks Pay/Exp. February 2023 - £181.77.
- OALC – Inv. No: M00194/2023/3 - £156.00 – Annual Renewal 2023/24 .

RESOLVED:

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

MS

8.4: Quotes:

- Laptop: See above 8.2-a.
- External Hard Drive: C/fwd.
- Access to Church Clock: C/fwd.
- Hot Water Tank: Under review, waiting for quotes.
- Village Hall Air Source Heating: Quotes being sourced.
- Grass Cutting 2023-24: See 3.1-a. To be followed up once contact details available.
- Dog Bins:

Clerk

PS

RESOLVED:

- To approve the purchase, from the general fund, of three larger 40litre bins to replace existing in order to meet demand; spending approved to the value of £150.00 each; old bins to be disposed of. The Litter Act 1983, subsections 5 and 6 gives the parish council the power to provide litter bins in streets and public places.

Clerk

8.5: Funding:

- County Councillor - Offer of funds to support projects in Merton parish – Application update on quotes for heating unit: See 3.1-b-iv.
- The The ACRE Platinum Jubilee Fund re-opens for stage one applications on 20th Feb: Noted.
- His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation Celebration Grant – Merton eligible for £400.00:
 - To consider if the PC is holding an event:

Clerk/RFO

RESOLVED:

- The Parish Council will not be holding an event.
- To consider transfer to village event: No current proposals to hold an event known.

8.6: Spending under COMF Parishes

- Fund: Progress Form: Completed form submitted to C.D.C; awaiting response. Clerk tasked with removing from agenda until there is an update.

Clerk

8.7: Training:

- OALC – Free for Clerks – Training Opportunities for Clerks and Councils - 23rd February, 7-8pm: Clerk attended an informative event regarding training opportunities.

8.8: Banking:

- Unity Trust: The addition of Cllr. S. Ward was no longer a consideration due to his resignation.
- Unity Trust Application:
 - Electronic Payment Procedure: Multipay Card considered at previous meeting.
 - Debit/Payment Card: Unity Trust only has the provision for the 'Multipay Card' discussed at last meeting.
 - Equals Card - Pre-payment Card: The annual platform fee of £50.00 will be an ongoing waiver; there will be a fee of £10 plus VAT one-off fee per user card (covers any loss, damage, replacements and renewals); £10.00 admin fee for lifting funds from Equals account back to the parish council bank account (usually only when leaving) and a £1.50 charge when used at an ATM in the UK (can be blocked).

RESOLVED:

- To approve the application for an Equals pre-payment card.
- Card to be in the name of the Clerk and will carry the name of the Parish Council.
- Card to be topped up with £50.00 to be used for small purchases.

Clerk

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

- Bank Reconciliation 1.1.2023 – 31.3.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 014)

Balance B/fwd	£30,641.87
Add Total Receipts	£ 402.37
Less Total Payments	£ 1,143.16
Balance C/fwd	£29,901.08

- Budget Comparison: Accepted.

Noted:

- Payments: Over pay of Clerks overtime (relative to previous year), grass cutting (frequency of cuts to be reviewed); village hall cleaner over budget and adopt-a-site (some payment/income belonged to previous year).
- Receipts: All allotments allocated so the £32.00 deficit should disappear in 2023/24.

Balance Sheet: Accepted:-
Debtors £968.02
Add Bank/Cash £29,901.08
Less Funds £24,042.27

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Less Creditors £487.77
General Funds £6,339.06

c) Verification by Internal Financial Control: 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):

- i. Payroll: The PC is now registered with HMRC; downloading and setting up of the Basic PAYE Tool held over until laptop received.
- ii. Document Management: The Oxfordshire Archives Centre to be contacted.
- iii. Generic Emails: In hand.

8.11: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022/23:

a) Merton Question Sheet: No update.

Clerk

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:-

- i. MPC321(19): CPRE - Abingdon Reservoir & 5 Year Housing Land Supply Rules – KEY CONSULTATIONS.
- ii. MPC321(22): Oxfordshire's Neighbourhood Plans Alliance - Invitation to workshop.
- iii. MPC321(26): Clerk Ambrosden PC - Notice of temporary road closure: Merton Road, Ambrosden - have received notice of a temporary road closure to a section of Merton Road, Ambrosden. The closure takes place from 24/04/2023, and is estimated to be in place until 19/05/2023 - The alternative route for traffic is via Ploughley Road, Murcott Road, Fencott Road, New Pond Lane, Gulley Row and vice versa.
- iv. MPC321(31): OALC Active Places - Sport England Active Places - MERTON VILLAGE PLAYING FIELDS – Questionnaire regarding facilities.
- v. MPC321(36): O.C.C. - Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice – S14 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Temporary Road Closure at The Old School, Street Through Merton, Merton – A temporary Notice is being made by Oxfordshire County Council to implement the temporary restriction and will operate from 30/05/2023 up to and including 01/06/2023.
- vi. MPC322(9) CFO - Community Emergency Plans (CEP): Both iii above and this road closure have an effect on the local bus services.

9.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion

- a) Matters for Further Information:
 - Damage to culvert has been reported on 'Fix my Street'.
- b) Matters for Further Discussion:
 - Completion of the transfer of the Village Hall Account funds.

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

10.1: 10 April 2023 – 7.30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:12.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date