

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M4/2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL
AT 19:30 ON 17 APRIL 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
W. Meads – Village Hall Bookings Clerk WM
The Chairman and Secretary of Launton Junior FC

1. APOLOGIES: None.
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 1. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.
 2. Vacancies/Co-option: None.
 3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
 4. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:
 - a. Joint Neighbourhood Plan: Ongoing. MS Clerk
 5. GDPR Policies: To be published on website.
 6. 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
 7. Policies Review:
 - a. Reserves Policy: To be amended and uploaded. Clerk
 8. Laptop: Clerk has received new laptop; noted that the purchase was made with limited access to Microsoft Office, which now requires upgrading to Microsoft 365, so existing documents can only be read and printed.
 9. Annual Independent Remuneration Panel's Members' Allowance: To consider the recommendations, amend these recommendations to form a Members Allowance Scheme or, alternatively, decide not to adopt a Members Allowance Scheme: The notice has been published on the notice board, recommendations to be considered at the next meeting. Clerk
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:
 - a. The Chairman welcomed the Secretary and Chairman for Launton Junior (Boys and Girls) Football Club to discuss the potential of hiring the recreational grounds to host sports (football training and matches). See 5.1-b.
 - b. Village Hall Bookings Clerk: No village hall bookings due to flooding works. The Tractor Rally is booked to use the recreational area and will require three tables and the tea urn for the event (no access to hall facilities). It was confirmed that keys are only left in the 'key box' when there is a hall booking.
4. MINUTES:
 1. That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 March 2023 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. David Richardson.
5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:
 1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
 - a. Play Area:
 - i. RoSPA Report: Action; to replace some missing bolt covers; C/fwd. DR/MS
 - ii. Insurance Cover: Zurich Municipal have confirmed that the play area bins are covered.
 - b. Recreational Area:
 - i. Launton Junior Football Club: The Parish Council considered the proposal; whilst it had no reservations about the use of a full size pitch and potential for smaller pitches to be marked out; it needs to consider the Terms & Conditions of hire, based on discussions, along with charges and would aim to present these to the club by July ready for the start of season in August.
 - c. Village Hall:
 - i. Flooding: The village hall flooring has been removed; awaiting date for self levelling; tiles will be replaced 'like for like'.
 - ii. Village Hall Cleaner: Contract and job description: In hand.
 - d. Woodland:
 - i. Cricket Bat Willows: Ownership and location to be confirmed.
6. COMMUNICATIONS:
 1. Merton PC Facebook Page:
 - a. To consider matters for publication: Various items of interest had been published.
7. COMMUNITY:
 1. Planning Applications:
 - a. Application No.: 23/00927/F
Applicant's Name: Mr Daniel Butcher & Ms Paige Morgan
Proposal: Proposed two storey side and rear extension and single storey rear extension; dormers to front and rear; alterations to off-street parking - Re-submission of 22/01847/F
Location: 6 The Cottages, West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG

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Parish(es): Merton
Comments by: 4 May 2023:

RESOLVED:

- That the PC had no objections or comments.
- 2. Decision Notices: None.
- 3. Withdrawal Notices: None.
- 4. Planning Matters:
 - a. O.C.C. - Oxfordshire County Council – Area weight restrictions engagement – The engagement runs from 10 March 2023 – 10 April 2023: No comment recorded.
 - b. Deddington Parish Council – Deddington Regulation 14 consultation – Deadline for comments 6 May 2023: No comments recorded.
- 5. Traffic Calming: Working Group to arrange a meeting.
 - a. 40mph buffer zone: No update.
- 6. Overgrown Trees: Clerk to follow up. Clerk
- 7. Spring Clean 2023: Deadline missed.
- 8. FINANCE:
 - 1. Receipts:
 - a. Petty Cash and Bookings: None recorded.
 - 2. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting:
 - a. Unity Trust – Service Charge £18.00 – Dec 2022-March 2023.
 - 3. Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
- a. Clerks Pay/Exp March 2023 - £181.05.
- b. Castle Water – Inv. No: 8691557 - £209.57 – Period 1.2.2023-31.7.2023.
- c. C.D.C. - Inv. No: 20010368 - £190.48 – Emptying 3 dog bins @ £1.85 per bin plus 10% admin fee – half yearly invoice.
- d. Dog Bins: Prices from Kingfisher Direct, Bin Shop, AJ Products Co. UK, Glasdon UK and Roadware UK had been compared, criteria for purchase; 40ltr capacity, green or red colour, sign on side, delivery and within budget.

RESOLVED:

- To purchase fixtures for each bin.
- e. Contribution to MPCC: No written request received.
- f. Microsoft 365: Purchase for laptop:

RESOLVED:

- Not to purchase; Clerk to download a free programme i.e., Open Office; Clerk expressed concern for compatibility with existing documents.
- 4. Quotes:
 - a. External Hard Drive: Clerk was handed a ScanDisk Ultra USB to use as a second backup.
 - b. Access to Church Clock: Clerk to remove from agenda until further notice. Clerk
 - c. Hot Water tank: ASHP element £72.00 plus DPD: See d below.
 - d. Village Air Source Heating: The PC is in receipt of three quotes for the whole system which currently runs both the air source heating and hot water tank. To also consider repairing the air source heating if feasible and replacing the hot water tank with a hot water cylinder with twin elements; a decision cannot be made until thorough checks are carried out, which cannot happen until the electricity is back on. PS
 - e. Grass Cutting: Clerk to establish if Mr Cross is responsible for carrying out the first cut of the recreational ground based on a rolling contract agreement; quotes for 2023 and advice for the woodland have not been formally considered as contacts for the cutting of the woodland have not been passed on yet.
- 5. Proposed Dog Bin Increases:

RESOLVED:

- a. To accept the proposed increases by C.D.C. from £1.85 per bin to £1.95 per bin for five bins or less.
- 6. Funding:
 - a. County Councillor – Offer of funds to support projects in Merton Parish: C/fwd.
 - b. TOE: TOE and supported by funds from Grondon Waste Management Ltd as part of the Landfill Communities Fund: To be reviewed as possibility of funding for the Woodland. All
 - c. COMF Funding: C.D.C. have confirmed that parish councils with any remaining funds can spend the money in-line with the original conditions for spending; to be reviewed at next meeting. Clerk
- 7. Training: Consider/approve any training costs:
 - a. OALC – New training opportunities with Parkinson Partnership: No interest expressed.
- 8. Banking:
 - a. Equals card pre-payment Card: Application carried forward until the requirement for signatories is clarified.
- 9. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Clerk unable to present Budget Comparison and Financial Summary as she has no access to Word or Excel: See 8.3-f.
- 10. Bank Reconciliation accepted and approved: 1.1.2023 – 31.3.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 016):
 - Balance B/fwd: £30,641.87
 - Add Receipts: £ 402.37
 - Less Payments: £ 2,047.93
 - Total C/fwd: £28,996.31
 - a. Verification by Internal Financial Controller Cllr. M. Smith: Not presented.
 - b. It was noted that the balance from the closure of the Village Hall account had still not been transferred.

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11. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021/2022:
 - a. Internal Audit 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 to be discussed with Internal Auditor. Clerk
 - ii. Document Management: The Oxfordshire Archives Centre to be contacted. Clerk
 - iii. Generic Emails: To be clarified with the Internal Auditor. Clerk
12. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022/2023:
 - a. External Audit: Moore Stevens – Official notification to submit your authority's return 2022/2023: Appropriately completed Exemption Certificate or AGAR 3 form and supporting documents on or before 30 June 2023.
 - b. Internal Audit:
 - i. Report: Clerk to meet online with Internal Auditor on 20 April 2023. Clerk
 - ii. Accounting Statement: In process of completing. Clerk.
9. GENERAL:
 1. Clerks Contract and Job Description: C/fwd. DR
 2. Correspondence: To note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda:
 - a. MPC322(14) Zurich Municipal - Merton Parish Council, When were your buildings last valued? Conveyancing documents being reviewed; summary of findings to be presented at the next meeting. MS
 - i. Fire proof safe to be priced up for storage of important documents and also a locking bar for the metal filing cabinet at the village hall. DR
 - b. MPC323(10) Public Sector - Digital mapping can help with your Neighbourhood Plan.
 3. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
 - a. Thanks were expressed for the hosting of the Film Club and for the return of the village hall tables.
10. NEXT MEETING:
 1. 8 May 2023 – 7.30pm – Annual Meeting of the Parishioners of Merton:
 2. 8 May 2023 – 8pm - Annual Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:35.

Minutes Approved – M5/2023 – 4.1

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman: D. Richardson.

Date 15 May 2023.