

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M5/2023

MINUTES OF THE **ANNUAL** MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL
AT 20:00 ON 15 MAY 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
District Cllr. G. Coton GC

1. APOLOGIES: County Cllr. C. Miller.

2. PARISH COUNCIL:

1. Election of the Chairman:

RESOLVED:

- That Cllr. David Richardson was elected Chairman; this was accepted; 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' signed and witness by the Clerk.
- 2. Election of Vice-Chairman: No volunteers.
- 3. Vacancies/Co-option: None.
- 4. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
- 5. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:
 - a. Joint Neighbourhood Plan: Second draft plan to be uploaded to the website for consultation with the village; to advertise the availability for comment on the parish council Facebook page linked to the Village Facebook page.
MS/Clerk
Clerk
- 6. GDPR Policies: Have been published on website.
- 7. Civility & Respect Pledge: Councillors to review.
 - 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
- 8. Policies Review:
 - a. Reserves Policy: To be revisited following advice from the Internal Auditor to include all funds (including ring-fenced). Clerk
- 9. Laptop: Zurich Insurance have confirmed that the laptop is covered on the insurance policy.
- 10. Annual Independent Remuneration Panel's Members' Allowance:

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council, having considered the recommendations, decided not to adopt a Members Allowance Scheme.
Clerk

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- a. The Chairman welcomed District Cllr. G. Coton:
 - i. District Council election results 2023 for Launton and Otmoor Ward: Julian Nedeclu for the Liberal Democrats elected.
 - ii. Cherwell District Council has no overall control and it is hoped that there will be an announcement tomorrow regarding administration.
 - iii. Parish Council Communications with the Village: Cllr. Coton agreed to forward their monthly update to be shared with the parish.
 - Suggested contacting the publishers of the 'Otmoor Review' to see if it could be extended to include Merton parish.

4. MINUTES:

- 1. That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 April 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
PS
 - Play area waste bins to be resited away from the fence.
 - Annual RoSPA/Playsafety Inspection for 2023/24 is scheduled for July 2023 or the following month if it is a busy period – Parish Council costs £75.00 plus VAT per play area with an additional fee of £3.50 per item over five.
 - b. Recreational Area:
 - i. Launton Junior Football Club: To consider Terms & Conditions of hire: C/fwd.
 - c. Village Hall:
 - i. Flooding: The village hall has now been signed off as dry; the Project Manager has attended site, viewed and photographed everything; Parish Council awaiting date for works to be carried out; he also identified that the condition of the roof insulation needed reviewing.
 - ii. Village Hall Cleaner: Contract and job description: In hand.
 - d. Woodland:
 - i. Cricket Bat Willows: Ownership and location to be confirmed: The Chairman had been contacted by another company; he confirmed that the Parish Council are not selling.

6. COMMUNICATIONS:

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M5/2023

1. Merton PC Facebook Page:
 - a. To consider matters for publication: Various items of interest had been published.
7. COMMUNITY:
 1. Planning Applications:
 - a. None.
 2. Decision Notices:
 - a. Application No: 23/00591/F Church View Bungalow Street Through Merton Merton OX25 2NF
Location: Church View Bungalow Street Through Merton Merton OX25 2NF: Clerk had notified C.D.C. that the Decision Notice had not been published on the website.
 - b. Application No: 22/03476/LB
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
PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
Date of Decision 28 April 2023
 - c. Application No: 22/03475/F
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
PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
Date of Decision 28 April 2023
 3. Withdrawal Notices: None.
 4. Planning Matters: None.
 5. Traffic Calming: Working Group to arrange a meeting.
 - a. 40mph buffer zone: No update.
 - b. It was noted that the Traffic Light system is being installed at the junction of Ambrosden/A41.
 6. Overgrown Trees: Clerk to follow up. Clerk

8. FINANCE:
 1. Receipts:
 - a. Petty Cash and Bookings: None recorded; village hall remains closed.
 - b. C.D.C. - Remittance Advice from Cherwell District Council - £10,000.00 – Precept first instalment.
 2. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting:
 - a. None.
 3. Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
- a. Clerks Pay/Exp April 2023 - £176.05.
- b. Overtime 2022/23 - £1,699.72:
- c. Good Energy – Inv. No: I--0267490 - £401.64 – Period 9.1.2023-1.5.2023: This is a revised invoice following submission of readings and includes an HM Government Alternative Fuel Payment of £150.00.
- d. M.R. And J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 150 - £156.00 (Grass cutting Woodland – 20 April 2023) – 151 - £222.00 (Grass cutting/trimming recreation grounds – 17 April 2023) – Total £378.00.
 - i. M.R. And J.S. Cross - Proof of Insurance: Provided for records.
- e. C.D.C. - Non-Domestic Rate Demand for the year 2023/24: £0.00.
- f. Contribution to MPCC: No contribution approved as no written request received.
- 4. Authorisation of Payments: Councillors to conscious of timescale following a meeting for approval of payments.
- 5. Quotes:
 - a. Hot Water tank: ASHP element £72.00 plus DPD: See d below.
 - b. Village Air Source Heating: Decision cannot be made until thorough checks are carried out, which cannot happen until the electricity is back on. PS
 - c. Grass Cutting Contract 2023/24: Mr Cross has carried out the first recreational/play area and Woodland cuts.

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council accepts the quote as no further contact details have been forwarded regarding the cutting of the woodland. Clerk
- 6. Funding:
 - a. County Councillor – Offer of funds to support projects in Merton Parish: District Cllr. GA agreed to follow up with County Cllr. C. Miller the possibility of funding for exterior doors for the village hall and/or insulation. GC
 - 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: Clerk to email a copy of the original conditions for spending; to be reviewed at next meeting. Clerk
- 7. Training: Consider/approve any training costs:
 - a. OALC – Employment Training via Zoom – 23 May 2023 at 10am - £30.00 plus VAT for members:
 - To approve cost if Clerk available to attend. Clerk
- 8. Banking:
 - a. Equals card pre-payment Card: The application process is requesting further details; this was to be put on hold until the Parish Council has had the opportunity to review the process for a 'Cash Plus Card'.

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M5/2023

- b. Cash Plus Card: See 8a.
9. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Were accepted and approved:
 - a. Bank Reconciliation accepted and approved: 1.4.2023 – 30.6.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 017):

Balance B/fwd:	£28,996.31
Add Receipts:	£10,028.50
Less Payments:	£ 581.05
Total C/fwd:	£38,443.76

 - i. It was noted that the balance from the closure of the Village Hall account had still not been transferred.
 - b. Budget Comparison: Being the first quarter everything is in-line with the budget.
 Balance Sheet: Accepted:
 Debtors £1,025.77
 Cash at Bank £38,996.81
 Cash Floats £28.00
 Creditors £1,105.69 (this does not include Clerk overtime)
 Clerk Overtime £1,699.72
 Fund Balance £30,210.27
 General Fund £8,734.62
 General Fund £7,034.90 (Including Clerk overtime)
 - i. Verification by Internal Financial Controller Cllr. M. Smith: Not presented.
 - ii. Woodland Group: Reported that £60.00 was raised through sales at the Otmoor Garden Sale.
 - c. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021/2022:
 - i. Internal Audit Report: Actions from report (including those carried over from 2020/21):

• Payroll: The Internal Auditor advised that, further guidance be sought through OALC or SLCC Employment advisors.	Clerk
• Document Management: The Oxfordshire Archives Centre to be contacted.	Clerk
• Generic Emails: To be clarified with the Internal Auditor.	Clerk
 - ii. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022/2023:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Internal Audit:

• Report: Clerk met with the Internal Auditor on 20 April 2023; further documents to be forwarded in order that a report can be completed.	Clerk
• Accounting Statement: To be submitted.	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? DR
 - b. MPC323(32) Golden Tree Surgeons.com - Tree Surgery and Survey Services: Noted.
 - c. MPC323(51) O.C.C. - Road closure - taxi service between Merton and Islip: Advertised on Facebook page; buses are currently running; noted that the road is due to close for a further five days.
 3. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
 - a. None.
10. NEXT MEETING:
 1. 12 June 2023 – 19:30 - Parish Council Meeting to be held in the Village Hall.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:09.

Minutes approved – Minute Ref: M6/2023 – 4.2

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

Date: 26 June 2023.