

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2024

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL
AT 19:30 ON 11 MARCH 2024

PRESENT:	David Richardson Martin Smith, R. Gurprashad and P. Stubbs.	(Chairman) Councillors)	DR MS/PS/RG
IN ATTENDANCE:	T. Charlesworth; Six parishioners. Village Hall Bookings Clerk W. Mead. District Cllr. G. Coton. County Cllr. C. Miller	(Clerk/RFO)	Clerk/RFO WM

1. APOLOGIES: None.
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST: To receive declarations of interest from councillors in relation to matters on the agenda and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct: None declared.
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The Chairman welcomed those parishioners present; the following matters were discussed/raised:-
 - a. Bus Stop Light: The Parish Council is not responsible for the light being permanently left on or for the cost.
 - b. Village Hall Booking: Consider having an inventory of supplies i.e., wine glasses, cups etc.
 - c. Defibrillator: The Parish Council confirmed that the defibrillator is registered and therefore when you dial 999 in an emergency, if required, you will be directed to its location and directed on use.
 - d. Traffic Calming Working Group: Met last Friday and are to revisit costings for SID devices.
 - e. Nursing Home: No update on ownership.
 - f. Village Hall Bookings Clerk:
 - i. Repair required to leak in ladies toilet.
 - ii. Oxford & District Campers and Caravanners are booked for the weekend coming.
 - iii. Football games have started.
 - iv. Folder created for hirers containing relevant information i.e., first aid, water, heating etc., 'No Smoking' village hall to be added.
 - g. District Cllr. G. Coton opened by apologising for the lack of attendance at meetings and reported as follows:
 - i. Budget has been set, presents a 5% increase for a Band D property.
 - ii. Planning Inspector Case: No five year land supply.
 - iii. Planning Validation Checklist: Last day for comments.
 - iv. Elections: ID will be required to vote; to note that the rules around postal voting has changed (need to register every three years).

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution members of the public left the meeting.

4. MINUTES: To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 February 2024 at 7.30pm previously circulated.
RESOLVED:
 - That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 February 2024 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. David Richardson.
5. REPORTS:
 - a. Chairman's Report: None.
 - b. Clerk's Report: None.
6. VACANCIES/CO-OPTION:
 1. Consider any applications: None.
7. PARISH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE:
 1. Civility & Respect Pledge:
 - a. Draft Statement: To be considered and approved: C/fwd.
 - b. Registration: C/fwd; Cllr. R. Gurprashad reviewing.
 2. Policies: Reviews: Need to be completed by 31 March: Clerk to formulate a list of policies for review as a control measure.
 - a. Expenses Policy: Review: To be circulated for consideration at the next meeting
 3. Annual Review of Audit and Governance Documents: To be completed before the 31 March.
 - a. Review Effectiveness of Internal Audit:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the re-adoption of the document incorporating any information relevant to the new internal auditor once appointed.
- b. Review of Internal Audit:
 - i. Internal Audit:
- Letter of Engagement(s): To consider and approve engagement of new Internal Auditor: The Parish Council having considered four proposed letters of engagement:

RESOLVED:

- To accept and approve the Letter of Engagement from Therese Goss as an Independent Internal Auditor; signed by the Chairman Cllr. D. Richardson.
- To approve the re-adoption of the Review Effectiveness of Internal Audit incorporating any information relevant to the new internal auditor.

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2024

- c. Asset Register: All Deeds and Titles to be established and shown on register: Title Deed Number for Merton Woodland entered onto the asset register and addendum noted for numbers relevant to land identified as the Village Hall; parking and recreational area.

RESOLVED:

- To approve and adopt the updated Asset Register.
- d. Risk Assessments: Allotments; Parish Council; Village Hall; Play Area; Woodland Volunteers: Review following Practitioners Guide: Following review:-

RESOLVED:

- To approve and re-adopt the reviewed risk assessments for the Allotments; Parish Council; Village Hall; Play Area; Woodland Volunteers.

- e. Financial Regulations:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the re-adoption of the Financial Regulations with no amendments. It was noted that the model Financial Regulations are under review and may need to be re-adopted with any recommended amendments.

8. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

- a. Play Area:
- i. Replacement of Safety Caps: C/fwd.
 - ii. Play Area:
- b. Recreational Area:
- i. Bookings Update: Bookings are coming in. See 3-f-ii and iii.

2. Village Hall:

- a. Flooding: Update on works by Belfor UK: Insurance Brokers have been provided with the necessary information to complete the claim including contributions to use of water, electricity and loss of earnings.
- i. Carpet Tiles:

RESOLVED:

- To accept the sum originally calculated in the scope of works for the carpet tiles.

3. Village Hall Cleaner: Job description/Risk Assessment: In hand;

- a. Risk Assessment: Having further reviewed COHS advice all cleaning materials (flammable) are currently kept off site (should be kept in a ventilated area) until a suitable container is sourced to store them in a ventilated area locked in the back room.
- b. Job Description: In hand.
- c. First Aid Kit: Very old kits have been disposed of; current kit is complete but needs reviewing.
- d. Good Energy: Make the grid greener with a smart meter: Update on installation of a smart meter: In hand.
- e. PAT Testing and Public Liability Insurance Certificates: Laminated for display in the village hall.

9. COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Merton PC Facebook Page:

- a. To consider matters for publication: Various items of interest had been published.

10. COMMUNITY:

1. Planning Applications: To consider all recent applications received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning applications submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the agenda being published and the meeting:

- a. None.

2. Decision Notices: To consider all recent notices received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning notices submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the agenda being published and the meeting:

- a. None.

3. Withdrawal Notices: None recorded.

4. Planning Matters:

- a. C.D.C. - Cherwell Landscape Character Assessment Consultation - The Consultation Hub will be open for comments until 6th March 2024: Closed.

- b. O.C.C. - Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy & Action Plan - Consultation open for feedback.

5. Traffic Calming: Working Group met last Friday and are revisiting costings for SID devices.

- a. 40mph buffer zone: See 12.

6. Defibrillator: To consider the possibility of a 'First Responder': Requirements to be reviewed.

11. FINANCE:

1. Receipts: To record and approve any receipts received listed on receipts and payments schedule.

- a. Village Hall income £105.00 (FC Recreational Area £30.00 – Village Hall hire £75.00) presented and verified; to be banked.

2. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting:

- a. ICO - Data Protection fee - Reminder to renew ICO:00015786557 - £40.00 - GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 - Data protection fee renewal - ACTION REQUIRED BY 24/03/2024

3. Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

- To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
- Salary February 2024 - £189.45.
- Expenses February £1.60
- Reimbursement of Administration Costs: £0.00

• **Total £191.05.**

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2024

- i. March 2024 - £189.45.
 - ii. Overtime till the end of February 2024 - £937.99 approved for payment to be included within the tax year and the 12th month payment on the PAYE system.
 - b. OALC Membership Invoice 2024 – Inv. No: M00194/2024/1 - £168.00.
 - c. Expertise Repairs – Inv. No: 20658 - £30.00 - Spending Power: Local Government Act 1972 s133: Provision of Parish or Community Buildings:
 - d. McAfee – Renewal Reminder – 1yr £32.99 – 2yrs £64.99: Two years at £64.99 approved.
 - e. Village Hall Cleaner – February 2024 - £96.40 (Incl. Mats £6.40).
 - f. Castle Water – Inv. No: 10001375626 - £37.86 included in Inv. No: 10001707417 - £57.05 – Period 1.2.2024-29.2.2024.
 - g. F. Foxon – Repairs to Woodland Fence – C/fwd as no invoice presented.
4. Quotes:
- a. Village Hall Insulation and Lagging: To follow up with County Cllr. C. Miller.
 - b. Tree:
- RESOLVED:**
- To accept and approve the quote from Oxford Tree Surgeons Ltd - To remove hanging conifer branch to include cutting; clearing and any recycling -- £100.00 plus VAT.
5. Funding: Information regarding funding for village halls emailed to councillors for consideration.
- a. County Councillor – Offer of funds to support projects in Merton parish: To follow up.
 - b. Village Hall Insulation and Lagging: To consider if there are any grants available to upgrade insulation and for cavity wall insulation: Quote to be obtained for insulation for works to be completed by PC. See 11.5-a.
6. Training: Consider/approve any training costs: None considered.
7. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation:
- a. Budget Comparison: The following noted:-
 - i. Payments:
 - Village Hall – General – Over budget – cost of heat source pump covered by Village Hall Fund.
 - ii. Receipts: In-line with budget.
 - b. Bank Reconciliation accepted and approved:
 - i. 1.10.2023 – 31.12.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 029– 31.12.2023):
 - Balance B/fwd: £38,314.98
 - Add Receipts: £ 0.00
 - Less Payments: £14,325.43
 - Total C/fwd: £23,989.55
 - c. Balance Sheet:
 - Debtors £ 945.05
 - Cash Bank £23,999.95
 - Cash Float £ 28.00
 - Funds £18,713.45
 - Creditors £ 733.55
 - General Fund £ 5,006.76
8. Financial Controls: Verification by Internal Financial Controller Cllr. M. Smith: Not completed.
9. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2023/24:
 - a. Actions from Internal Audit Report:
 - i. Payroll: HMRC:
 - PAYE: Submissions completed.
 - HMRC - Update on outstanding balances: Outstanding balances had been cleared with the credit on the account.
 - HMRC - P6(T) Notice to Employer of employee's tax code (or amended code) and previous pay and tax: Tax code updated in accordance with the notice.
 - b. Pension Regulator: Registration - Completion by 11 April 2024.
 - i. To consider and approve a Pension Provider/Scheme for the Parish Council: To be reviewed by Cllr. M. Smith – Internal Controller.
 - c. Document Management: Ongoing.
12. COUNTY COUNCILLOR: The Chairman welcomed District Cllr. C. Miller who reported at follows:
 1. 40 mph Buffer Zone: To follow up.
 2. Budget: Has been set for 2024/25 with cash for social care, SEND and highways.
 3. Consultations:
 - a. Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
 - b. Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy & Action Plan.
 4. Flooding: Ray Valley Flood Forum; representatives from local parishes have met to discuss issues and concerns. The culvert running under the road at Oddington Crossing is to be cleared to help alleviate flooding.
 5. Grants: Information regarding Scottish and Southern Electricity grants to be forwarded.
 6. Traffic in and out of Oxford: Plan has been adopted to place traffic filters at six points in the city.
13. CLERKS CONTRACT AND JOB DESCRIPTION: Draft To be reviewed by councillors.

RESOLVED:

 - To approve an increase in hours from 15 to 20 per month.
14. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN: C.D.C. - FOR ACTION: Community Emergency Plan Survey – 2024 – GDPR form to be completed for the Emergency Plan and plan to be uploaded – To be completed by 1 April 2024: To review the Parish Council's Emergency plan for uploading.

RESOLVED:

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2024

- To accept and approve the reviewed Parish Councils Emergency Plan.
 - Councillors approved the publication of their details in-line with GDPR- Consent form to be completed.
15. CFO -TERRORISM (PROTECTION OF PREMISES) BILL – also known as Martyn’s law. Consultation until 18th March – deadline is the 18th March: Consider comments: Information to be forwarded to Village Hall bookings clerk.
16. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS/TRAINING:
1. Meetings:
 - a. None.
 2. Training:
 - a. OALC - Play Training 6th March 2024 and more! Noted.
17. FREE PORTRAIT OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING FOR TOWN, PARISH AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS – Scheme opens on 12 February 2024 for Town, Parish and Community Councils - The deadline for all applications (including those public authorities that were covered in the first phase) is extended to 28th March 2024: Approve application.
RESOLVED:
- Not to submit application.:
18. GENERAL
1. Correspondence: Comments to be considered and any matters for the next agenda not already considered as part of this agenda:
 - a. MPC333(67): 27.2.2024 - C.D.C. - Confirmation of Council Tax and Precepts Approval for 2024/25 - scheduled dates for the instalment payments:10th April 2024 - 11th September 2024: To note contents.
 - b. MPC333(70): 28.2.2024 - Zurich Insurance - Are you planning an event to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day?
19. Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
1. Further Discussion: Agenda items:
 - a. Banking- Salary-To consider/approve setting up D/D payment.
 - b. Allotment – Review Policy.
20. NEXT MEETING:
1. 8 April 2024 – 19:30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:47.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date