

# THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M8/2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL  
AT 19:30 ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT: David Richardson (Chairman) DR  
Martin Smith, Paul Stubbs (Councillors) MS/PS

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO) Clerk/RFO  
Six parishioners.  
Village Hall Bookings Clerk.  
District Cllr. G. Coton

1. APOLOGIES: Accepted from Cllr. R. Gurprashad.
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: Draft has been amended taking on board comments from parishioners. Clerk has forwarded information and advice regarding 'Neighbourhood Planning'. MS
  5. Civility & Respect Pledge:
    - a. To consider passing a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge: Whilst the Parish Council has resolved to sign up in principal it needs to review the Statement:-
    - b. To Review Statement and proposed policies:

**RESOLVED:**

      - i. That as well as a training policy for the Clerk/RFO; the Chairman would carry out training with the councillors.
      - ii. That by our Parish Council signing up to the civility and respect pledge we are demonstrating that the Parish Council is committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their role.
      - iii. The Parish Council will register and agree to the civility and respect statements.
  6. Asset Register:

**RESOLVED:**

    - a. To approve the amended asset register to include 51 Cricket Bat Willows sited at Merton Woodland; estimated sale value £15,000.00.
  7. Insurance: Renewal Document review:

**RESOLVED:**

    - a. To accept and approve documents.
  8. Generic Emails: Councillors are in receipt of their new email address; once set up; to forward an email in order to confirm that they are working and in place. All
  9. Policies: Reviews:
    - a. Training Policy: To be drawn up and agreed; to also reflect a shared cost/training opportunities with Blackthorn PC.
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: The Chairman welcomed those parishioners present, the Village Hall Bookings Clerk and District Cllr. G. Coton; the following matters were discussed/raised:-
  - a. Poultry Farming: Health issues surrounding farming; the Parish Council, with the approval of the authors, will forward all email correspondence to County Cllr. C. Miller carrying the support of the Parish Council.
  - b. Traffic Calming Working Group: No update on proposed meeting.
  - c. Merton Parish Council Website: Noted that Minutes pre 2022 are currently not accessible.
  - d. General village clearing i.e., weeding, proposed that a plan be put in place for future maintenance.
  - e. Footpath behind the Church: Overgrown.
  - f. [Driving across recreational ground: Information noted.](#)
  - g. *The Chairman thanked those in attendance for their contributions before they left the meeting with the exception of the Bookings Clerk who remained.*
4. MINUTES:
  1. That the draft minutes of the [Annual](#) Parish Council meeting held on 10 July 2023 at 7.30pm were accepted and approved and signed by the Chairman Cllr. David Richardson with an amendment to the following:
    - i. 5.4-a 'owner's' should read 'owners'.
5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:
  1. Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
    - a. Play Area:
      - i. RoSPA Play Safety Inspection Reports 2023: To consider any action from report.: Noted actions; to replace safety caps.
      - ii. Replacement of Safety Caps: C/fwd. DR/MS
  2. Recreational Area:
    - a. Launton Junior Football Club: Terms and Conditions of Hire: No recent communication.
    - b. Bicester FC – Maintenance of the pitches has been raised as an issue; the Parish Council will not be able to proceed if there is no-one to maintain the pitches.

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- c. Caravan and Campers have cancelled their booking.
3. Village Hall:
- a. Flooding: Update on works by Belfor UK: Having previously been advised that Belfor would carry out the works to the electrics and plumbing, following a site visit they have now advised that the responsibility lies with the Parish Council. The loss adjuster has advised that no further works will be carried out until the old plumbing is repaired or removed. Cllr. P. Stubbs volunteered to take on the plumbing works. As much of the old pipework as possible will be removed by councillors; Cllr. P. Stubbs to organise a skip for rubbish on a pro-forma basis. District Cllr. G. Coton to provide information about grants for village halls. A new set of keys for the village hall had to be cut in order to provide Belfor access to the hall for delivery of the floor screed and for the screed workers to be able to carry out the work; it was noted that the materials for the floor screed have been delivered but no work done yet.. PS/DR/MS
- i. Urgent Removal and Replacement of Hot Water Tank: See iii.
- ii. Urgent Removal and Replacement of Loft Insulation: See 8.3-6-a; measurements and estimated costs to be calculated. DR/MS
- iii. Urgent Repair or Replacement of Air Source Heat Pump: Quotes in hand; Cllr. P. Stubbs to meet one company on site to review the heat source pumps, which have come down in price, and hot water tank and to provide a fresh quote, they offer further reduction if permission is given for the company to put up an advertising plaque.
- b. Roof Insulation: See 3-a-ii.
- c. Village Hall Cleaner: Job description/Risk Assessment: In hand. All
- d. Damaged drain/manhole cover at end of Village Hall Driveway: Work completed.
- e. Repair to the Path Leading to the Merton Village Hall: The Parish Council will use an RHS approved weedkiller to clear the path. All
- f. Defibrillator: Cllr. P. Stubbs confirmed that the defibrillator has now been registered in his name on behalf of the Parish Council; the pads have a shelf life of two years and had to be replaced as they had expired, see 8.2-e.
4. Woodland:
- a. Cricket Bat Willows: See 2.6-a.
5. Dog Bins:
- a. New Bins: Installation to replace the existing bins; jubilee clips to be purchased as not supplied; the old bins would be stored for now. PS
- b. New Bin Siting: The Parish Council considered the request to site a new bin along the Merton Straight for the bridal leading toward Wendlebury and concluded that it does not own the land and is therefore not responsible for providing a bin.
6. Allotments:  
**RESOLVED:**
- a. To approve 'no charges' for 2024/25 as the water had been turned off for the 2023/24 season due to the flooding and Insurance works to the village hall.

### 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.: 23/01715/F  
Applicant's Name: Mr Daniel & Paige Butcher & Morgan  
Proposal: Proposed sub-division of dwelling into 2no. Dwellings following two storey side and rear extension and dormers to front and rear, alterations to off street parking. As per planning permission 23/00927/F  
Location: 6 West End Lane, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NG  
Parish(es): Merton  
Comments by 10 August 2023

#### **RESOLVED:**

- The Parish Council made no comments or objections.

#### 2. Decision Notices:

- a. Application No: 23/01369/F  
Proposal: Single-storey rear infill extension. Alterations to roof over the first floor rear element to form gable.  
Location: 21 Main Street, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NJ  
Parish(es): Merton PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS –  
Date of Decision 17 July 2023
- b. Application No: 23/01456/LB  
Proposal: Replace 1970s single glazed windows in the 1970s extension to the original building with double glazed windows  
Location: Little Chippers, Merton, Bicester, OX25 2NF  
Parish(es): Merton  
REFUSAL OF PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT
- c. Application No: 23/01442/F  
Proposal: Change of Use of existing indoor arena to storage of cars  
Location: Merton Grounds Farm, Langford Lane, Merton, OX25 2NS  
Parish(es): Merton  
PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS  
Date of Decision: 26.7.2023
- d. Application No: 23/01293/F

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Proposal: Removal of existing timber workshop, excavating and new retaining walls (retropective) and construction of new single storey (relative to existing ground level) annex building – re-submission of 22/012447/F

Location: 2 Manor Farm Close, Merton OX25 2NA

Parish(es): Merton

Permission for Development subject to the Conditions set out in the Attached schedule

Date of Decision 17 July 2023.

3. Withdrawal Notices: None recorded.
  4. Planning Matters:
    - a. MOD.Gov - Brize Norton (BZN) ACP - The process to appoint an airspace and procedure designer is taking longer than anticipated. As a result, we have decided to pause the BZN ACP to prevent multiple delays to Gateways. We will inform you when we restart the process and have more information regarding designs: Noted.
    - b. C.D.C. - Cherwell Local Plan Review - Update for Town and Parish Councils: Consultation due to take place.
  5. Traffic Calming: Working Group to arrange a meeting.
    - a. 40mph buffer zone: Cllr. D. Richardson to follow up with County Cllr. C. Miller. DR
    - b. Community Speed Training: Parish Council to find out more information.
  6. Poultry Farming: Health Issues: See 3-a.
  7. C.D.C. - Community Planting Project Submissions: The CTWO team is looking for community planting projects: Information published on Facebook page.
8. FINANCE:
1. Receipts:
    - a. Petty cash and Bookings: July/August 2023: None recorded. Clerk tasked with removing item from agenda until village hall works complete. Clerk.
    - b. HMRC VAT Reclaim for £994.00.
  2. Accounts Paid Prior to the Meeting:
    - a. Lock & Key – Invoice No: 11553 - £348.00 – Amended invoice..
    - b. RoSPA – Playsafety Ltd – Inv. No: 73160 - £115.20 – Invoice in accordance with charges.
    - c. Verve Creations – Inv. No: 2191 - £60.00.
    - d. Good Energy - Urgent payment required to avoid further action – Inv. No: I-0290368 - £516.70 – Estimated (reading submitted 29.8.2023 – taken 22.8.2023 – no change recorded) .
      - i. Good Energy - Your energy rates are reducing: Noted.
      - ii. SMS - We're helping Good Energy Business to bring the benefits of smart to your business.
    - e. First Rescue Training & Supplies Ltd – Inv. No: DW-97836 - £77.94 – Adult/Child Electrode Pads; see 5.3-f.
  3. Accounts for Payment:

**RESOLVED:**

    - To approve the following for payment; to be set up with Unity Trust online banking:-
    - a. Clerks Pay/Exp. July/August 2023 - £350.20.

**RESOLVED:**

      - i. To pass a resolution to contribute up to £6 a week as a non-taxable contribution to the heating, energy and broadband expenses which the Clerk incurs as part of her working day.
      - ii. To add to Clerks contract in order that payment can be put in place.
    - b. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 201 - £252.00 (Grass cutting and strimming recreational area 17.7.2023) – 202 - £180.00 (Grass cutting Merton Wood 21.7.2023) – Total £432.00.
    - c. M.R. & J.S. Cross – Inv. No's: 205 (Grass cutting and strimming recreational area 16.8.2023) – 206 - £180.00 – (Grass cutting Merton Woodland 28.8.2023) - £432.00.
    - d. OALC – Inv. No: ORD509230-2 - £70.90 - 13<sup>th</sup> Edition Local Council Administration (shared cost with Blackthorn PC).
    - e. Bicester Shoe Repairs - Village Hall Keys – To approve reimbursement to DR - £82.40; see 5.3-a.
    - f. Zurich Municipal Insurance – Inv. No: 526337881 - £998.73 – Payment due 11 October 2023 and to be set up for payment on this date.
    - g. Wickes - Reimbursement of costs for cement to repair area surrounding manhole cover.
    - h. Contribution to MPCC: No written request received: C/fwd.
  4. Quotes:
    - a. Hot Water tank: ASHP element £72.00 plus DPD: See 5.3-a-iii; Clerk to remove from agenda as hot water tank to be replaced. Clerk
    - b. Village Air Source Heating: See 5.3-a-iii. PS
    - c. Speed Awareness wheelie bin stickers – '20 is plenty' £120.00 for pack of 100.

**RESOLVED:**

      - Not to purchase.
  5. Banking: Unity Trust Bank Plc - Important Information - FSCS annual Review 2023: Clerk completed and submitted.
  6. Funding:
    - a. County Councillor – Offer of funds to support projects in Merton Parish: The application process has re-opened; PC to look at the possibility of applying for insulation and pipe lagging. See 5.3-a-ii.
    - 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. Creative Play - Funding assistance for your playground.
    - d. O.C.C. - Community Transport grants: application form.
  7. Training: Consider/approve any training costs:
    - a. OALC - FINANCE TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS – BOOK NOW! - 7<sup>th</sup> September - Precept and Budget Setting – Only £30 for member councils.: Fully booked.
    - b. OALC - Training and Chairs Q&A - Managing Employee Performance – 18<sup>th</sup> September - Only £30 for member councils - course will run online from 10.00 – 11.30am and is aimed at Clerks with line management responsibilities

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- as well as Councillors: No attendance.
8. Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation:
- a. Budget Comparison: The following noted, otherwise in-line with budget.
- i. Payments:
- Admin-General/Reserves – over budget £90.00.
  - Admin-Postage – over budget £51.76.
- ii. Receipts: In-line with budget.
- b. Bank Reconciliation accepted and approved:
- i. 1.7.2023 – 30.9.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 021 – 30.7.2023):
- Balance B/fwd: £36,744.75
  - Add Receipts: £ 1,023.00
  - Less Payments: £ 3,710.20
  - Total C/fwd: £34,057.55
- c. 1.7.2023 – 30.9.2023:- (Unity Trust St. No: 022 – 31.8.2023):
- Balance B/fwd: £36,744.75
  - Add Receipts: £ 1,023.00
  - Less Payments: £ 3,710.20
  - Total C/fwd: £34,057.55
- i. Verification by Internal Financial Controller Cllr. M. Smith: Invoices checked against list of payments; form not completed.
- d. Balance Sheet:
- Debtors £ 563.98
  - Cash Bank £34,595.19
  - Cash Float £ 28.00
  - Funds £31,175.67
  - Creditors £ 2,171.98 plus £432 – Inv. No's: 205/206 – M.R.&J.S. Cross.
  - General Fund £ 4,181.68
9. End of Year Accounts 31 March 2023/24:
- a. Actions from Internal Audit Report:
- i. Payroll: The Basic PAYE Tool and Pension Regulator to be actioned as this is incurring costs from HMRC – Payments due as an Employer – commenced at £200.60 and has increased due to interest to £201.38.
- ii. Pension Regulator: See 9-a-i.
- iii. Document Management: To action.
- iv. Risk Assessment Review following Practitioners Guide: To action.
- v. Asset Controls: All Deeds and Titles established and shown on register: In hand.
10. Budget 2024/2025: To start process.
9. GENERAL:
1. Clerks Contract and Job Description: See 9.3-a-i; 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? It was noted that the Bus Shelter has no valuation as it was built by the village many years ago.
- b. MPC327(11) O.C.C. - 2023 NHT Public & Public Representatives Satisfaction Survey.
- c. MPC327(17) CFO - Electronic Vehicle Charging points- Expression of interest form from OCC - Please reply by September 15th if you are interested: None recorded.
- d. MPC327(28) Thames Valley Police & MedicAlert: Saving Lives – Posted on Facebook.
- e. MPC327(31) O.C.C. - Winter Preparedness - Sand bags etc. The Parish does not have grit bins.
- f. MPC327(32) O.C.C. - Highway maintenance open day invitation - Saturday 16th September 2023.
3. Matters for Further Information or Discussion: None.
10. NEXT MEETING:
1. 9 October 2023 – 7.30pm - Parish Council Meeting:

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:58.

**Draft Minutes subject to confirmation: Approved M9/2023-4.1**

1. with the following additions by the Clerk, an oversight:-
- 3-f: Driving across recreational ground: Information noted.
  - 5.6-a: Allotments:
  - **RESOLVED:**
    - To approve 'no charges' for 2024/25 as the water had been turned off for the 2023/24 season due to the flooding and Insurance works to the village hall.

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

**Date: 9 October 2023** .....