

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M6/2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL AT 19:30 ON 14 JUNE 2021

PRESENT: Tony Bradley (Chairman) AB
Martin Smith, Gemma Allen, Paul Stubbs. (Councillors) MS/GA/PS

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO). TC
County Cllr. Calum Miller.
Parishioner/Representative from the Traffic Calming Working Group: S. Ward. SW

1. APOLOGIES: None.
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 - 2.1. Election Of Chairman: The Clerk explained that when AB resignation becomes affective on 30 June 2021 the PC will not be able to function without a Chairman and if C.D.C. were to step in this would be at a cost to the parish council/parish; with no remaining councillor prepared to stand the Clerk was tasked with contacting C.D.C. for some advice. TC
 - 2.2. Election of Vice-Chairman: C/fwd.
 - 2.3. Notice of Resignation:
 - a) Resignation of Cllr. SK: Following the 14 day notice period there has been no demand for a by-election; the PC is free to fill the vacancy by co-option.
 - b) Resignation of Cllr. AB – Resignation received and effective from 30 June 2021. TC
 - 2.4. Vacancy:
 - a) One application received: Invite to next meeting.
 - 2.5. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None declared.
 - 2.6. COVID-19: Government Guidelines: Monitored.
 - a) Play Area: Open.
 - b) Village Hall: Is open for use if hiring requirement is compliant with regulations.
 - c) Meetings: Since the legal challenge was dismissed on 28 April 2021 the Parish Council has reverted back to physical meetings with processes in place to mitigate any risks.
 - i. Risk Assessment: Sanitiser had been provided on entry; 1 – 2 metre spacing between seats; a record of attendance (as above).
 - 2.7. Emergency Plan: Review: Ongoing, with a view to working through the document at a meeting once draft is completed. GA/JC
 - a) Welcome Pack: Will be reviewed as part of the Emergency Plan.
 - 2.8. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan:
 - a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: There had been no response to the emails sent to Ambrosden PC. TC
 - 2.9. ICO Registration: Awaiting receipt of the security code to enable updates on the system. TC
 - 2.10. Review of Standing Orders and/or Financial Regulations: To reflect proposed spending 'Trigger Point': Draft presented by AB was carried forward as several amendments have been proposed further to that agreed regarding 'Trigger Point' for spending. AB/All
3. COUNTY/DISTRICT COUNCILLOR(S) REPORT:
 - The Parish Council welcomed newly elected County Councillor Callum Miller; following introductions he advised that he is County Councillor for the Otmoor Division and is the Cabinet Member for Finance; he agreed to find out if there would be any funding available to support the traffic calming proposals for the village and would recommend the proposals for approval; SW (Traffic Calming Group) informed him that the group had considered different proposals, including speed reduction to 20mph, recommendations are to be presented at the Annual Meeting of Merton Parishioners on 21 June 2021.
4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:
 - Traffic Calming: SW (Traffic Calming Group) advised that the group had held two meetings since the last PC meeting and had worked through all of the options and potential alternatives i.e., build outs, rumble strips etc. The group recommends that the funding of £9,000.00 be spent on purchasing a Speed Indicator Device (SID) for each end of the village and for an extra £350.00 for each device they would be able to provide traffic data. A leaflet will be drawn up and delivered door-to-door with a 'returns' slip; in order that anyone unable to attend the meeting on the 21st can respond to the proposals.

County Cllr. C. Miller and SW left the meeting.

5. MINUTES: **RESOLVED:**
 - 5.1: That the draft minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on 3 May 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman. AB
 - 5.2: Minutes of the virtual meetings held during the past year were signed by the presiding Chairman of the meetings. AB

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6. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

6.1: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

- a) Oxford Cavaliers Rugby League Club:
 - i. Village Hall Proposals: The revised floorplans have been received; approval to be carried forward following village consultation.
 - ii. Village Consultation: Principal of the proposals to be set out and presented at the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners of Merton Parish; due to the topics being discussed and possible attendance and in order to mitigate any risks the following were considered:
 - Possible numbers in attendance;
 - In and out system if numbers are high;
 - Distance (in accordance with guidelines);
 - Sanitizer,
 - List of who is present and contact details (track and trace);
 - Signage;
 - Circulation regarding proposals to include explanation of process if too many present.
 - Provision to hold outside, weather permitting; if numbers too high.
 - iii. Review of Risk Assessment: OCRLC to provide a copy of its Risk Assessment. GA
- b) Football: Future lettings policy to be drafted for consideration: C/fwd. AB/All

7. COMMUNICATIONS

7.1: Parish Matters/Merton Facebook Page: GA was encouraged to continue with the good work:

RESOLVED

- a) To publish the following matters:
 - i. Defibrillator: Update.
 - ii. Vacancies and the need for a Chairman.

7.3: Newsletter: As agreed regarding Traffic Calming and Village Hall proposals.

GA

8. COMMUNITY:

8.1: Planning Applications: None received.

8.2: Decision Notices:

a) Application No.: 21/00893/F

Proposal: Timber weather screening to upper walls of existing menage building

Location: Merton Grounds Farm, Langford Lane, Merton, OX25 2NS

Parish(es): Merton

Permission for Development.

Date of Decision: 10 May 2021.

8.3: Planning Matters:

- a) Merton Nursing Home: It has been noted that the Home appears to have been sold. GA
- b) Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 - Village services questionnaire February 2021: No response; Clerk tasked with removing from agenda. TC
- c) East-West Rail Link: Consider proposals for Bicester railway crossing: The PC made no comments. All

8.4: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group': Meeting scheduled for 14 May 2021.

- a) Proposal for a survey of traffic: Update on 'Speed Traffic Monitoring' van: No update.
- b) S106 Agreement: To follow up. TC
- c) 20mph Speed Limit: Proposal to form partnership with neighbouring parishes: This has been considered by the Traffic Calming Group; *above 5*. MS/SW

8.5: Bus Stop Light: There is no obvious electricity supply to the bus stop; the area is to be cleared of Ivy to ensure there is no hidden supply. MS

8.6: Notice Board: Proposed local project: Maintenance works to be carried out next week. AB

8.7: Defibrillator: Has been installed with a light above; registration with the ambulance service is required before it can be used; to be followed up with SW; who should also pass on any relevant paperwork to the Clerk. PS

- To be added to Insurance Policy and Asset Register. TC
- Invoice for materials to be present. PS

8.8: Merton Burrow Pit: Proposed Cherwell District Wildlife Site enquiry: Information has been provided.

8.9: Breakfast Club: The Parish Council supports the proposal to run a breakfast club once a month; whilst it has funds available in the Community Fund to donate to the initial running costs the Clerk/RFO is to confirm that it has 'the power to spend'. TC

8.10: Parking outside Otmoor View: Having considered the matter, it has no jurisdiction over roads and would advise contacting Highways or the Police.

8.11: Travellers at Arncoth: Following a report that travellers are present in Arncoth the Parish Council, having considered the probability of them trying to access the recreational area, concluded that as the area is maintained and cars parked in the carpark no action was required.

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9: FINANCE:

9.1: Receipts: -

- a) Petty cash and Bookings:
 - May 2021: None.
 - C.D.C. – Remittance Advice – Ref: 30001297 – 550.00 – COMF Parishes Fund.
 - C.D.C. – Remittance Advice – 30000771 – 200.00 – Hall Hire Election 2021.

9.2: Account for Payment Prior to the Meeting: None.

9.3: Accounts for Payment:

RESOLVED:

- That the following accounts were approved for payment:
 - a) Clerks Pay/Exp. April 2021- £161.60 – Cheque No: 101590.
 - b) M.R. & J.S. Cross - Grass Cutting Contractor – Inv. No: 7 - Grass cutting and strimming at Merton Recreation Ground (28.4.2021) - £204.00 — Inv. No: 11 – 144.00 (Grass cutting Merton Woodland) – No: 12 – 408.00 (Grass cutting and strimming Merton Recreation Ground – 13 May/28 May) – Total 756.00 – Cheque No; 101591.
 - c) Oxford Tree Services – Inv. No: 849 – 520.00 – Cheque No: 101592.
 - d) Good Energy Ltd - Inv. No: 1-0042690 – 307.41 – Period 3.2.21 to 1.5.21 – Cheque No: 101593.
 - e) Village Hall Cleaner – Pay 2020-21 – 2021/22: Taking into account the extra work involved due to COVID-19 it was:

RESOLVED:

- To approve a payment of £15.00 per clean; presentation of payments for 2020/21 to be followed up. AB

RESOLVED:

- To decline the following:
 - a) OPFA – Membership Application – 30.00.
 - b) CFO - Payments due for the Community Halls Advice Service from CFO – 50.00. TC/AB

9.4: Quotes:

- a) Laptop: Recommendations and information to be forwarded to councillors including costs of upgrade to Windows365. TC
- b) Fallen/Damaged Trees: Work completed.
- c) Village Hall Plans: The original architect has now presented two lots of drawings and has been paid previously; it will not be necessary to engage the Architectural Technician. AB
- d) PAT Testing: C/fwd. GA
- e) Spending under COMF Parishes Fund:
 - i. 'Covid' Guidance signage: Clerk to place orders with Amazon account.
 - ii. Sanitiser: Clerk to place orders with Amazon account.
 - iii. Waste bin for park: Purchase up to the value of £200.00: To be sourced and ordered. GA/TC

9.5: Banking:

- a) Bank Signatories: No response received to date; with the resignation of AB affective from 30 June it was noted that none of the three remaining councillor are currently signatures on the account;
- b) The Parish Council to consider/approve change of signatories once AB resignation is affective.
 - Action whilst change of signatories is pending: Based on previous advice from OALC:

RESOLVED

- That whilst the change of signatory is pending the PC will be left with no current signatories once the resignation of AB becomes affective, although not legal to have a retired councillor signing cheques, in order for the council to continue to function and the Clerk's wages to be paid; the PC approves retired councillor L. Katz to continue to sign cheques along with retired Councillor A. Bradley following a meeting at which payments have been approved; whilst the PC endeavours to get the signatories changed as soon as possible or to change bank. TC/AB/MS/JC/GA
- c) Bank Account: Information to be circulated for consideration at the next meeting and to check Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with regards to the possibility of on-line banking. TC

9.6: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Presented and accepted. AB/TC

9.7: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021:

- a) Completion of Checklist: Had been completed along further information as requested; submitted; the Clerk/RFO had met virtually with the Internal Auditor on 8 June 2021 to complete the Internal Audit. TC
- b) Internal Audit Report: Consider any action required: The PC was not in receipt of the Internal Audit report and was unable to continue; to be c/fwd to an Extraordinary meeting (see below 11.2).
- c) End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021: Consider/Approve: C/fwd.
- d) The Annual Governance Statement: Completion of Section 1: C/fwd.
- e) The Accounting Statements: Completion of Section 2: C/fwd.
- f) Following approval, the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting sign the Annual Governance Statement and the Chairman signs the Accounting Statements
- g) Certificate of Exemption –To consider/approve whether or not the Parish Council meets the qualifying criteria for exemption.

RESOLVED that:

- During the financial year 2019/20 the higher of the authority's gross income for the year or gross annual expenditure, for the year did not exceed £25,000.
- The Parish Council was able to confirm the required statements and certified itself exempt.

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- h) Completion of Certificate of Exemption: The Certificate of Exemption was signed by the Chairman AB and the RFO; Clerk to send to the External Auditor (Page 3 only).
 - i) Exercise of Public Rights: RFO sets the commencement date: C/fwd
 - j) All required documents to be published on the website before the 1 July 2021. All/TC
- 9.8: Grant Applications:
- a) Update for Village Hall applications.
 - C.D.C. – Grant Information: C.D.C. currently not giving capital grants.
 - Viridor: Stage 2: GA to obtain login password from previous Cllr. SK in order to complete Stage 2. GA
 - 'Just Giving Page' – C/fwd.
 - Calor Rural Community Fund: Application process expired.

10. GENERAL

- 10.1: The Clerks Contract and Job Description: Review: AB and Clerk to arrange to discuss. AB/TC
- 10.2: Correspondence for Action: The lists of correspondence presented M.P.C. 298/299 (Feb/March 2021) were considered as matters not otherwise covered by the agenda; with no further actions.
- a) C.D.C. – Springclean 2021 – Arrangements have been made. AB
 - b) MPC 300(03): O.C.C. - TTRO (T7131) Temporary Footpath Closure , Merton and Wendlebury , Footpath's 295/1 ad 398/2 FURTHER EXTENSION GRANTED -NOVEMBER 2021: Noted.
 - c) MPC 300(08): CPRE - REMINDER Sewage, Flooding & Water Town & Parish Survey – Deadline 31st May 2021: No comments.
 - d) MPC 300(10): East West Rail - EWR Consultation | Reminder, second round of dedicated sessions for local representatives: No attendees.
 - e) MPC 300(25): East West Rail - EWR Consultation | Register for EWR's second round of dedicated sessions for local representatives: No attendees:
 - f) MPC 300(26): OPFA - FW: Grants closing next week - sports for development – Oxfordshire community: GA
 - g) MPC 300(31): Great Wolf Appeal – Noted.
 - h) MPC 300(34): C.D.C. - Invitation to Cherwell Parish Liaison meeting - 16 June 2021: No attendees.
 - i) MPC 300(39): C.D.C. - Project ideas for HM Government's Welcome Back Fund:
 - j) MPC 300(40): C.D.C. - Weston-on-the-Green Neighbourhood Development Plan: Noted.
 - k) MPC 300(42): Low Carbon - Ray Valley Solar - construction information: Noted.
 - l) MPC 301(01): Parish Bulletin – Digital upgrade: Pending.
- 10.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
- a) Matters for Further Information:
 - b) It was noted that the cutting of the corner of the verge up to the bollards of Merton Woodland, had been missed; 'Fix My Street' has advised that no action is required.
 - c) The maintenance of the Church gate has been actioned by MS.
 - d) Parishioner has raised a complaint about aircraft noise; The PC has no jurisdiction and would advise contacting Air Traffic Control.
 - b) Matters for Further Discussion:
 - Occupied Rabbit Hole: Siting of more rabbits.

11. NEXT MEETING:

- 11.1: Annual Meeting of Parishioners of Merton: To be held on 21 June 2021 at 7.30pm: Action as agreed above *see 6.1-a-ii*.
- 11.2: Extraordinary Meeting: To be held on 21 June 2021 at 9pm or as soon after following the Annual Meeting of Parishioners of Merton (9.7 above).

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 22:07.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date