

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M3/2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY in line with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 AT 19:30 ON 8 MARCH 2021

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

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO). TC
Parishioner R. Cunningham
Representatives from the Traffic Calming Working Group: F. Foxon; D. Richardson and S. Ward.

1. APOLOGIES: None recorded.
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 - 2.1. Notice of Resignation: Permission to co-opt.
 - 2.2. Vacancy: No application(s).
 - 2.3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None declared.
 - 2.4. COVID-19: Government Guidelines: Monitored.
 - a) Play Area: Currently open but will be closed whilst work is carried out.
 - b) Village Hall: Remains closed; has been approved as COVID secure for the elections 6 May 2021.
 - c) Meetings: Regulations allowing virtual meetings comes to an end on 7 May 2021: OALC have advised that whilst there is a huge amount of lobbying to allow virtual meetings to continue, the government has argued that primary legislation is required to allow virtual meetings to continue and that there isn't sufficient parliamentary time for primary legislation before May; this matter is ongoing and council has to be prepared to have to go back to face-to-face meetings (halls need to be COVID secure): Situation to be monitored.
 - 2.5. Emergency Plan: Review: Ongoing. GA/JC
 - a) Welcome Pack: Will be reviewed as part of the Emergency Plan.
 - 2.6. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan: Information circulated – C/fwd to next meeting. ALL

The Chairman changed the order of business on the agenda in order that 7.4 Traffic Calming could be discussed with the representatives of the Working Group so that they are free to leave the meeting.

3. Agenda Item 7.4: Traffic Calming: There had been no further progress since the start of lockdown; a meeting will be proposed once the group are able to meet face-to-face. The total funds available for traffic calming, including a further £3,000.00 budgeted for in 2021/22, are £9,000.00 and it was agreed to try and maximise funding in order that a 'build-out' could be achieved. Rebecca Cunningham volunteered to join the traffic calming group and through her knowledge and experience would carry out further investigations into the possibility of gaining funds through a S106 Agreement with either new or historic developments in Ambrosden and investigate the process and cost; the possibility of having a police traffic monitoring van in the village and establish if the funds from Cllr. D. Sames is specifically for the purchase of Vehicle Activate Signs.

Representatives of the Working Group left the meeting. The meeting continued as follows:

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Rebecca Cunningham, new resident, was welcomed to the village.
 - Grass Cutting: The PC confirmed that the grass cutting of the playing field and the paths to the woodland area are cut once a month, weather dependent.
 - Fundraising Events: Several ideas were discussed for an event following lockdown; GA would put a request for ideas in the Parish Matters. GA
- 2.7: Annual Review of Audit Documents:
 - a) Review Effectiveness of Internal Audit:
 - b) Review of Internal Audit.
 - c) Asset Register.
 - d) Risk Assessments: Allotments; Parish Council; Village Hall; Play Area; Woodland Volunteers.
 - e) Financial Regulations:
 - f) Standing Orders.

RESOLVED:

- To carry the items forward to an extraordinary meeting; see 11.2 below.

5. MINUTES: **RESOLVED:**

5.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 February 2021 were approved to be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting. AB

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

- 6.1: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:
 - a) Oxford Cavaliers Rugby League Club:

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- i. Village Hall Proposals: AB and MS had a meeting at the village hall with Oxford Cavaliers and a construction company in order to discuss proposals and costings; their quote was based on a different layout to the one previously agreed; would include dismantling the old extension but not electrical, plumbing or heating works; having reviewed the new layout it was proposed to amend the plans to contain the changing rooms at the rear end of the hall and move the kitchen; AB would approach the company to see if the proposal would affect their quote; new plans would have to be drawn up in order that all further quotes are based on the same plans. The PC would look at plans for a village consultation. GA/SK/AB/PS
- b) Play Area: Update on order:
- i. Repairs: Work had been completed and checked by GA; the invoice will reflect a reduction as it was decided not to risk dismantling the seized cone shaped roundabout but to treat it with lubricant; this action will need to be ongoing on an as and when needed basis.
- ii. New Equipment: Installation date had been changed due to weather conditions and would now commence the week beginning 15 March 2021; weather permitting. GA
- c) Football: **RESOLVED:**
- Permission granted to D. Marshall to use the field and toilets on 8 & 9 April for youth football training at a cost £30.
 - That the PC would not permit football teams to utilise the grounds until the regeneration of the village hall is complete as works will restrict access to the village hall.
 - The PC would put in place a policy to aid the decision to let to future applicants. AB/All
7. COMMUNICATIONS
- 7.1: Parish Matters: **RESOLVED**
- To publish the following matters:
 - Parish Council vacancies to include an insight into being a councillor and reasons why the PC needs support.
 - To publish contact details of councillors in parish matters
 - Traffic Calming: Update.
 - Fundraising Event: Ideas.
 - A Trivia or 'Did You Know' article. GA
8. COMMUNITY:
- 8.1: Planning Applications: None.
- 8.2: Decision Notices:
- a) Application No.: 20/03452/F
Proposal: Alterations to and conversion of existing barn to provide self-contained ancillary accommodation
Location: The Old Vicarage, Merton, Bicester. OX25 2NF
Parish(es): Merton
Permission for Development Subject To Conditions
Date of Decision: 4 March 2021.
- 8.3: Planning Matters:
- a) Merton Nursing Home: No update. GA
- b) Appeal against Refusal:
Application No: 20/00871/F
Proposal: Erection of a free range egg production unit, gatehouse and agricultural workers dwelling including all associated works – re-submission of 19/00644/F
Location: OS Parcel 3300 North of Railway Line Adjoining, Plamer Avenue, Lower Arcott
Parish(es): Arcott
Appeal Reference: APP/C3105/W/20/3265598
Appeal Start Date: 26 February 2021.
- 8.4: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group': See item 3 above.
- a) Proposal for a survey of traffic: MS/SW
- b) Questionnaire: Update.
- b) Insurance cover for Signs/Risk Assessment: C/fwd.
- c) 20mph Speed Limit: Proposal to form partnership with neighbouring parishes.
- 8.5: Dog Fouling: The PC had been unsuccessful in locating stickers with C.D.C; Clerk tasked with removing from agenda. TC
- 8.6: Bus Stop Light: Having established that a replacement bulb does not resolve the issue; the matter has been reported to 'Fix My Street' and passed to the relevant department; the matter will be re-reported if no response is received within six weeks. AB/MS
- 8.7: Notice Board: Proposed local project: Maintenance works to be carried out once the weather improves. AB
- 9: FINANCE:
- 9.1: Receipts: -
- a) Petty cash and Bookings:

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- March 2021: Hall hire income £0.00.

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. February 2021: £163.20 – Cheque No: 101578.
 - b) OALC Membership – Invoice No: M00194/2021/1 - £146.16 – Cheque No: 101581.
 - c) Good Energy – Inv. No: 112425433 - £145.54 – Cheque No: 101580.
 - d) Playdale Playgrounds Ltd – Inv. No: 101582 - £4,782.58 – Completion of repair works (see above 6.1-b-i).
 - e) London Hearts – Requested Donation – Donation No: 3127 – Defibrillator and external cabinet with keypad lock - £1,441.00 – Purchase approved minute ref: M9/2020-8.6-b – Payment of £600.00 from the Defibrillator Fund and the balance of £841.00 to be met from general funds – Cheque No: 101583.
 - f) ICO Registration – L. Katz forwarded reminder to Clerk/RFO; to confirm whether this is for reimbursement or payment as still being issued in her name and to look at changing contact name.
- That the following accounts be held over until invoices presented.
 - a) Pest Control - £475.00: A further visit to be made at no extra cost; invoice will be presented on completion.
 - b) Trimming the brambles etc. from the footpaths in the woodland - £360.00 plus VAT: Works had not been carried out yet due to weather conditions.

TC/AB

9.4: Quotes:

- a) Laptop: The Clerk informed the PC that Blackthorn PC saw this as an opportunity to go independent providing all information pertaining to the council can be extracted safely from the joint laptop; with this in mind the Clerk was tasked with doing further research into the suitability and cost of a new laptop including 'Chromebook' for Merton PC.

TC

9.5: Banking:

- a) Bank Signatories: Further paperwork as requested by Barclays submitted; awaiting response.
- b) On-line Banking: No action at present; to be reconsidered in the future.

AB/MS/JC/GA

9.6: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Presented and accepted:

9.7: Internal Auditor: Appointment:

- a) Letter of Engagement:

RESOLVED:

- That the Parish Council was satisfied that Jane Olds as an acting internal auditor would be completely independent of the council and would not be involved in the preparation of management or financial accounts and would not have any involvement in or responsibility for the financial decision making, management or control of the authority, or with the authority's financial controls and procedures.
- That the Parish Council accepts and approves Jane Olds letter of Engagement and Agreement of Terms and awards the Internal Audit to Jane Olds based on the retirement of its current Internal Auditor; the late notice of retirement and one month to go before end of year.
- RFO/Parish Clerk and Chairman to sign Agreement of Terms on behalf of the PC.
- Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit to be amended to reflect the above decision to be approved at the next meeting.

9.8: Grant Applications:

- a) Viridor: First round of application completed; require three quotes.
- b) Calor Gas: To make enquiries.
- c) Cherwell District Council: To follow up on their requirements.

SK

SK

AB

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) M.P.C. 297(13) O.C.C. - Consultation launched on Oxfordshire's draft transport blueprint – from 15 February to 28 March on a draft blueprint for the future: No comment.

10.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:

- a) Matters for Further Information: None.
- b) Matters for Further Discussion: None.

11. NEXT MEETING:

- 11.1. 12 April 2021 at 7.30pm: The meeting will be held virtually in line with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.
- 11.2. Extraordinary Meeting: 29 March 2021 – Audit documents.
- 11.3. Annual Parish Council Meeting: Monitor decision regarding virtual or face-to-face meetings; see 2.4-c above.
- 11.4. Annual Parish Meeting of Merton Parishioners: Monitor decision regarding virtual or face-to-face meetings; see 2.4-c above; advice is to hold the meeting as late in June as possible.

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There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 22:24.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date