

# THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M4/2020

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 19:45 ON 15 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: Tony Bradley (Chairman) AB  
Jo Copping, Lucy Katz, Steve Kelly (Councillors) JC/LK/SK  
IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO) TC

1. APOLOGIES: None.

2. PARISH COUNCIL:

2.1. Vacancy: The Parish Council had received Cllr. DR resignation. C.D.C. has been notified and the 'Vacancy for a Councillor' notice has been put on the notice board for a period of fourteen days.

2.2. Co-Option:

a) To applications received: None.

2.3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interest: None declared.

2.4. C.D.C. – Members' Allowances: None to be put in place.

2.5. COVID-19: Government Guidelines:

a) Meetings: This meeting was 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 which came into force on 4th April 2020 and are time limited until 7 May 2021.

b) Allotments: Continued Use/Current Advice: Following OALC and the National Allotment Society advice in-line with Government instructions; allotment tenants are currently permitted to visit their plot, to take daily exercise alone or with members of their household; current guidelines state that you are able to meet outdoors with groups of up to six people from different households however, it is vitally important that the current advice about social distancing and hygiene is followed ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

c) Play Area: The Play Area remains closed in line with Government guidelines; the recreational area remains open to allow daily exercise; social distancing guidelines to be followed.

d) Woodland: As the recreational area (see c).

e) Village Hall: To remain closed until further notice.

- Cleaning: No cleaning until hall reopens.
- Bookings: Bookings Clerk to be advised when the hall reopens.

f) Helping Vulnerable Residents: Following the circulation of a flyer offering support, although three people volunteered to help there were no residents requiring support; this had been met by other means. AB took the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all volunteers for their sterling work in supporting residents.

2.6. Emergency Plan: Contents to be reviewed and updated along with the 'Welcome Pack'. LK

2.7. Election of Chairman: AB agreed to continue as Chairman until the end of October. Recruitment to become a priority; circulation of a leaflet and a notice in the Parish News and on Facebook; LK was prepared to cover the period between October and January to allow time to recruit. AB/LK/All

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None present; meeting ID had been published as part of the agenda.

4. MINUTES: **RESOLVED:**

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16 March 2020 were approved to be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting. AB

4.2: Cancellation of proposed meetings scheduled for 20 April 2020 and 18 May 2020 (Annual Parish Council Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting of Merton); noted that both meetings had been cancelled due to COVID-19 and in accordance with guidelines.

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

5.1: Village Hall:

- Adopt a Site Agreement 2020/21: **RESOLVED:**
- To adopt the agreement between C.D.C. and Merton Parish Council (referred to as the Recycling Group); to be signed by the Chairman and returned. TC/AB

5.2: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

a) Allotments: Vacancies: Outstanding rents for 2020/20 to be followed up. AB/TC

b) Oxford Cavaliers Rugby League Club: The clubs Governing body have advised that training for children can restart; having considered the possible implications and Government concerns that; children's fitness has fallen back during COVID-19 it was **RESOLVED:**

- In principal that the PC agrees with the proposal subject to the agreement of its Insurance company and the provision of the documents as required from OCRLC (see *iii below*).
- That the Clerk, having firstly confirmed that the recreational area is covered by its Insurance policy; queries with its provider the proposal and what if anything they require the PC to do to make this a safe option and to report back to the council. TC

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- iii. That the Club provides the PC with a proposed start date; guidelines/Risk Assessment and that they are advised that the village hall facilities will not be open for use. SK
- iv. No contribution towards grass cutting would be required this year as there would be no matches.
- v. That a proposed hire fee for each training session of £30.00 be discussed with the club. SK
- Funding: With the Rugby World Cup next year the club may have access to funding; the CAVS have arranged to meet with LK; JC to attend if available, next week to look at the village hall in order to put together a proposal. Clerk tasked with adding to next agenda for consideration. LK/JC/TC
- c) Football Enquiry: AB to arrange to meet proposer to discuss further the possibility of a club playing matches on Saturday afternoons from September 2020 to April 2021. AB
6. COMMUNICATIONS
- 6.1: Website:
- a) The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018: The Clerk having attended Webinar training advised the PC that the regulations had to be met and an Accessibility Statement prepared and published by September 2020. Clerk to ask the website provider to quote for the work to be carried out. TC
- 6.2: Data Protection: Database: Clerk and LK to arrange a 'zoom' meeting. LK/TC/All
7. COMMUNITY:
- 7.1: Planning Applications:
- a) Application No.: 20/01251/F  
Applicant's Name: Mr F Pereire  
Proposal: Change of Use of building from horse stabling to provide auxiliary space to existing adjoining workshops/stores  
Location: Merton Grounds Farm, Langford Lane, Merton, OX25 2NS - Parish(es): Merton - Expected Decision Level: Delegated.  
**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council made no observations or objections.
- 7.2: Decision Notices: None.
- 7.3: Planning Matters:
- a) Merton Manor: Contact had been unsuccessful; Clerk to refer to previous minutes for names or company details. TC
- 7.4: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group':
- a) Proposal for a survey of traffic: No update; it was noted that 'Drive Carefully' notices had been put up. JC to follow up with 'Working Group'.  
• Insurance cover for Signs/Risk Assessment: C/fwd. JC
- 7.5: Parish Magazine/Newsletter: The following to be published:
- Parish Council vacancies.
  - Thank you to volunteers and assistance of villagers during COVID-19.
  - OCRLC: Proposal to restart children's training sessions. AB/LK
- 7.6: Dog Fouling: Update on stickers; AB to follow up. AB
- 8: FINANCE:
- 8.1: Receipts: -
- a) Petty cash and Bookings:
- February/March £530.00 banked.
  - April/May 2020:
- b) County Councillors Discretionary Fund £2,500.00 specifically for Traffic Calming.
- c) C.D.C. – Precept £8,000.00.
- d) Allotment No's: 1 & 2 - £64.00.
- e) Allotment No's 5 & 6 - £27.00. AB
- 8.2: Account for Payment Prior to the Meeting:
- a) 101525 - £192.00 – Grass Cutting
- b) 101527 - £180.18 – Dog Bin Emptying
- c) 101528 - £68.62 – Electricity
- d) 101529 - £165.21 – Clerk Pay/Exp.
- e) 101530 - £159.87 – Water Supply: It was noted that invoices would now be issued half yearly; this would be monitored as the invoice was being issued in advance based on a meter readings taken on 25.9.19 and 10.1.2020 for the period 1.2.2020 – 31.7.2020 (182 days).
- 8.3: Accounts for Payment: **RESOLVED:**  
That the following accounts were approved for payment:
- a) Clerks Pay/Exp. April/May 2020 - £322.18 – Cheque No: 101534:
- b) Emergency Work to Leak to Ceiling: The Contractor did not respond. **RESOLVED:**  
• That SK contacts the OCRLC to discuss; information to be relayed to the Chairman by Wednesday; dependent on result; the PC approves a spend limit of up to £300.00 to accept a further quote from TZ Surowiec. AB
- c) Printer – Consider/approve shared cost with BPC for the purchase of a printer – total £105.44 total excluding VAT – £52.72 – Cheque No: 101533.

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- AB to look at the option of a monthly contribution to the cost of inks verses each Parish Council alternately purchasing inks as required. AB
  - d) SLCC Membership – Consider/approve shared cost with BPC – Total paid by BPC £92.00 - £46.00 - Cheque No: 101533.
  - e) SLCC – Consider/approve shared cost with BPC for Webinar – Website Accessibility - £120.00 exclusive of VAT - £60.00 - Cheque No: 101539.
  - f) National Non-Domestic Rate Demand for the year 2020/21 - £0.00: Noted.
  - g) Electricity Supply - Statement. No: 2580591 - £544.54 – (Estimated): AB to query invoice, based on estimated readings, as it was high given that the hall had not been used during COVID-19. AB
  - h) OALC – Subscription Invoice – Inv. No: M00194/2020 - £140.42 – (previously paid by Cheque No: 101522 – assumed lost in transit) – The payment was approved for re-issue once the PC had confirmation that cheque No: 101522 had been cancelled with Barclays Bank. AB
  - i) Grass Cutting – Inv. No: 4006 - £192.00 (Recreation ground 14.4.20) – 4011 - £384.00 (Recreation ground 2.5.20/18.5.20) – 4012 - £132.00 (Merton Woodland 18.5.20) – Total £708.00 - Cheque No's: 101532/101535 and 101538.
  - j) Village Hall Cleaner: Period 28.11.19-11.3.2020 (hall closed due to COVID-19 outbreak) - £70.00 - Cheque No: 101531.
    - Clerk tasked with adding an agenda item to next meeting to discuss duties and pay. AB/TC
- 8.4: Bank Signatories: It was **RESOLVED**:
- That following the resignation of Cllr. DR; he be removed as a signatory on the Barclays Bank account and JC would be added as a signatory; forms to be completed and submitted. AB/JC
- 8.5: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Documents accepted. TC/AB
- 8.6: Quotes: To be considered/approved:
- a) Village Hall Flooring: Given the cost and possible proposals from OCRLC for funding it was agreed to remove this from the agenda and investigate further as a possible option through OCRLC. TC
  - b) Memory Storage: C/fwd. TC
  - c) Village Hall Blinds: C/fwd. LK
  - d) Play Area: Swing Seat: As DR is no longer a councillor play area suppliers contact details to be forwarded to AB. AB/TC
  - e) Storage Shed: C/fwd. AB
- 8.7: Accounts Year Ended 31.3.20: COVID-19: Change of dates for completion and publication: Moore Stephens has published a two month extension to key deadlines: For Category 1 authorities:
- The deadline for authorities to publish draft financial statements moves from 31 May to 31 August 2020.
  - The deadline for publication of final (audited) financial statements moves from 31 July to 30 November 2020.
- For Category 2 authorities (**smaller authorities**):
- The deadline for authorities to publish draft Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) moves from 31 May to 31 August 2020.
  - The deadline for publication of final (audited) AGAR moves from 30 September to 30 November 2020.
- For both Category 1 and Category 2 authorities, the requirement for a 'common' inspection period has been removed. The requirement to hold a 30-working-day inspection period remains, but for 2019-20 both Category 1 and Category 2 authorities can commence the inspection period at any time, **except it must commence no later than 1 September 2020**. This will allow authorities to produce their draft accounts and commence their inspection periods as soon as they are able.
- a) Arrow Accounting – Internal Audit Report: Consider and approve any actions: The Internal report had been received and presented no further actions for the PC. All
  - b) Moore Stevens – Official Notification to submit AGAR: Change of dates noted (above).
  - c) End of Year Accounts 31 March 2020: Consider/Approve: C/fwd along with items d) to j).
  - d) The Annual Governance Statement: Completion of Section 1.
  - e) The Accounting Statements: Completion of Section 2.
  - 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.
  - h) Completion of Certificate of Exemption: Signed by the RFO and the Chairman; Clerk to send to the External Auditor (Page 3 only).
  - i) Exercise of Public Rights: RFO sets the commencement date.
  - j) All required documents to be published on the website.
- 9: GENERAL
- 9.1: The Clerks Contract and Job Description: Review: AB and LK to review the prepared draft which will then be discussed with the Clerk. LK/AB
- 9.2: Correspondence for Action: The lists of correspondence presented M.P.C.287 (April 2020) –M.P.C.288 (May 2020) –M.P.C.289 (June 2020) were considered as matters not otherwise covered by the agenda: The majority of correspondence was COVID-19 related with other matters not relative to a small parish council.
- 9.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
- a) Matters for Further Information:
    - The bridge on the footpath to Wendlebury is still expected to be repaired/rebuilt this year.
    - Parish Council to be mindful that it may be required to carry out a 'system flush' on the village hall before re-opening.

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b) Matters for Further Discussion:

- None.

10. NEXT MEETING:

10.1. Monday 20 July 2020; time to be confirmed: 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.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:38.

***Draft Minutes subject to Confirmation.***

**Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman .....**

**Date .....**