

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF MERTON M1/2022

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN MERTON VILLAGE HALL
AT 19:30 ON 10 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: David Richardson (Chairman) DR
Martin Smith, Deborah Smith, Andrew Yearsley and R. Gurprashad (Councillors)
MS/AY/DS/RG

IN ATTENDANCE: T. Charlesworth; (Clerk/RFO). TC
Wendy Meads (Village Hall Bookings Clerk). WM
District Cllr. D. Hughes DH
County Cllr. C. Miller CM
Fred Foxon (Woodland Committee)

1. APOLOGIES: Accepted from Paul Stubbs (Self isolating).
2. PARISH COUNCIL:
 - 2.1. Election of Vice-Chairman: C/fwd.
 - 2.2. Vacancy: No applications.
 - 2.3. To Receive Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:
 - a) RG declared a Pecuniary Interest in 7.1-a: Application No: 21/02966/F and left the meeting whilst the application was discussed.
 - 2.4. COVID-19: Government Guidelines: No further update.
 - a) Letter of Support for Remote Meetings: C/fwd.
 - b) New variant 'Omicron': PC to consider proposed delegation by OALC:
RESOLVED: *"In response to the continuing Covid-19 outbreak and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority after discussion with the Chair. To make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place".*
 - 2.5. Welcome Pack: To be presented at the next meeting. MS
 - 2.6. Merton Village Neighbourhood Plan: An application had previously been made by the PC in 2013; Clerk to forward any relative information to AY. AY to arrange a meeting with a contact at C.D.C. to discuss further. AY
 - a) Joint Neighbourhood Plan: There has been no response from Ambrosden PC.
 - 2.7. ICO Registration: To action. TC
 - 2.8. Annual Review of Audit and Governance Documents: To be acted upon before 31 March 2022.
 - a) Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit;
 - b) Review of Internal Audit;
 - c) Asset Register: Noted amendments; disposal of old village hall chairs and purchase of new; purchase of notice boards.
 - d) Risk Assessments: Allotments; Parish Council; Village Hall; Play Area and Woodland Volunteers; Covid-19.
 - e) Financial Regulations;
 - f) Standing Orders: Any amendments regarding the trigger point for spending. All
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:
 - 3.1: WM confirmed that she had been putting the blue and green dustbins out for emptying. TC
 - 3.2: Recycling Site: Clerk to contact C.D.C. with regards to changing the person responsible for the recycling site under the 'Adopt a Site Agreement' and to inform WM what the job entails. TC
 - 3.3: Merton Woodland: The committee and volunteers had met for the first post festive meeting on Sunday 9 January 2022 and following discussions present the following proposals in order to tidy up and maintain the entrance to the wood:
 - To cut back the vegetation overgrowing the fences on either side of the entrance trackway;
 - To extend the post and rail fence on the Merton side up towards the road to replace the old and decrepit chain-link fence; to be commissioned and funded by the PC;
 - Erecting a 'Merton Community Woodland' sign.
 - To dig out and replace the rising bollard with a new bollard or other means of preventing unauthorised access which could be installed further down towards the main gate offering more parking and cutting back vegetation on either side; to be commissioned and funded by the PC.
 - To source professional advice from a tree surgeon and wildlife specialist regarding the two large Lombardy poplar trees on the Ambrosden side of the entrance as they are heavily overgrown with ivy exposing them to wind damage or falling.
 - 3.4: County Cllr. C. Miller:
 - a) 20mph Speed Limit Application: O.C.C. is currently going through its budgeting process but, the presumption is that it will shift in favour of funding the legal process of the 20mph Speed Limit proposals; this being the case PC's may not need to evidence their applications.

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- b) Bus Shelter: Having established that it is not owned by O.C.C. the next step would be to search Land Registry; MS advised that there is a cost to carry out searches. MS
- c) Consultations drawn to the PC attention:
 - i. Consultation on support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Oxfordshire – running from 10 January – 10 March 2022.
 - ii. Local Transport and Connectivity Plan – Consultation running from 5 January 2022-16 March 2022.
- d) Signage on A41: Agreed to look into the possibility of warning signs on the A41.

County Cllr. C. Miller left the meeting.

4. MINUTES:

4.1: That the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 December 2021 at 7.30pm were approved to be signed by the Chairman DR. DR

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT:

5.1: Recreational Field/Play Area/Allotments:

- a) Village Hall:
 - i. Air Source Heat Pump: Update on possible leak and/or service requirement: The leak has been diverted with a paving stone to prevent it soaking into the wall. PS
 - ii. Recycling Site: The PC thanked WM for putting the green and blue bins out for collection. See 3.2. TC
 - iii. Village Hall Cleaner: **RESOLVED:**
 - That WM would be the cleaner for the village hall and be paid £15 per clean as previously agreed on 14 June 2021 – Minutes M6/21.
 - Contract and job description to be finalised. TC/DR
 - iv. Blinds/Curtains for Village Hall: Fitted.
 - v. Electrical Check and Safety Alarms: Checks carried out today; awaiting report and invoice.
 - vi. Broken Toilet seat:

RESOLVED:

- That MS assesses for repair or replacement and carries out the work before the next confirmed hire date. MS
- vii. Charges:

RESOLVED:

- £7.50 per hr for residents – Village Hall
- £10.00 per hr for non-residents – Village Hall
- £10.00 per pitch per night for camping/caravanning.
- £50.00 for the Village Hall for the duration of stay for camping/caravanning.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1: Parish Matters/Merton Facebook Page:

- a) To consider/approve matters for Publication:
 - Queen's Jubilee: Village Hall to be provisionally booked for an event; request for ideas and volunteers to run the event.
- b) Parish Matters: To confirm who will publish articles on behalf of the PC:

RESOLVED:

- That Cllr. AB would be taking on the role. AB

7. COMMUNITY:

7.1: Planning Applications: RG left the meeting whilst the following application was discussed.

- a) Application No.: 21/02966/F
Applicant's Name: Mr Roy Gurprashad
Proposal: Convert an area of walled garden into a tennis court - Location: West End Farm, West End Lane, Merton, OX25 2NG
Parish(es): Merton
Comments by 11 January 2022.

RESOLVED:

- That the PC had no observations or objections to application No: 21/02966/F. TC

- a) Application No.: 21/04119/F
Applicant's Name: Weston Wood Shoot
Proposal: Steel frame building for rearing game birds
Location: Brashfield, Street through Merton, Merton, OX25 2NF
Parish(es): Merton
Comments by 28 January 2022

RESOLVED:

- That the PC had no observations or objections to application No: 21/02966/F. TC

7.2: Decision Notices:

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- a) None.
- 7.3: Planning Matters:
- a) O.C.C. - Oxfordshire County Council - Local Transport and Connectivity Plan - The consultation will commence on the 5th January 2022 until the 16th March 2022.
- 7.4: Traffic Calming: Report from 'Working Group': DR/TC
a) 20mph Limit Application: See 3.4 – a. DR
- 7.5: Bus Stop Light: MS
a) Solar array and LED Fixture: See 3.4-b. MS
b) Book Library: In hand.
- 7.6: Defibrillator: PS
a) Registration: It is understood that the documents are now with PS.
- 8: FINANCE:
- 8.1: Receipts: - TC/DR
a) Petty cash and Bookings:
• December 2021: £290.00 received from the second camping and caravanning booking.
- 8.2: Account for Payment Prior to the Meeting:
a) Village Hall Cleaner – Final payment - Cleaning Village Hall/2.7.2021-18.11.2021 - £105.00 – Cheque No: 101621.
b) Village Fabrics – Deposit - £774.00 – Cheque No: 101622.
- 9: DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: The Chairman welcomed District Cllr. D. Hughes; reported:-
a) Neighbourhood Planning: Offered support to the PC.
b) C.D.C. – Financially sound for the coming year and is extending 'New Homes Bonus'.
- 8.3: Accounts for Payment:
RESOLVED:
• That the following accounts were approved for payment:
a) Clerks Pay/Exp. December 2021: £166.94 – Cheque No: 101624.
b) Viking – Inv. No: 8145346 - £65.94 – Cheque No: 101623.
a) Village Fabrics – Final payment £774.00 – Cheque No: 101625. DR
- 8.4: Quotes: TC
a) Laptop: Clerk to send some information regarding laptops that may be suitable from Viking. TC
b) Goal Posts: To follow up. GA
c) **RESOLVED**
• To accept and approve the proposed C.D.C. – increased charges for the dog bin service from £1.75 - £1.85 as from April 2022 due to increased charges to themselves.
- 8.7: Spending under COMF Parishes Fund: Progress Form to be completed. TC
i. 'Covid' Guidance signage: Displayed in the village hall.
ii. Sanitiser: See 8.3-d: Positioned in the village hall.
iii. COVID-19 Notice Board: Clerk awaiting approval from C.D.C. for the purchase: Order to be placed upon approval.
- 8.8: Training: None.
- 8.9: Banking: TC
a) Unity Trust: Clerk to resend reminder email requesting councillors details in order that the account can be applied for.
- 8.10: Financial Reports and Bank Reconciliation: Presented and accepted.
Bank Reconciliation 1.10.2021-31.12.2021 (Barclays St. Issued 16.12.2021)
Balance b/fwd: £25,806.17
Add Receipts £ 1,880.00
Less Payments £ 4,981.81
Total C/fwd £22,243.82
- 8.11: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2021: Ongoing. TC/All
a) Action from Audit:
i. Review of Risk Assessment: MS/TC
ii. Payroll Controls: In hand. TC
iii. Asset Controls: Deed and Titles. TC
iv. Reserves: To provide detail.
v. Pension Regulator: To be actioned.
vi. County Archives: To speak to J. Olds.
- 8.12: End of Year Accounts 31 March 2022: To be reviewed for consideration at the next meeting.
a) Annual Review of Documents for Audit:
i. Review Effectiveness of Internal Audit:
ii. Review of Internal Audit.

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- iii. Asset Register.
 - iv. Risk Assessments: Allotments; Parish Council; Village Hall; Play Area; Woodland Volunteers.
 - v. Financial Regulations:
 - i. Standing Orders. ALL
- 8.13: Budget 2022/2023: Draft Budget with amendments as previously agreed was considered.
RESOLVED:
- To approve the draft budget.
- 8.14: Precept 2022/2023:
RESOLVED:
- To approve a precept requirement of £16,480.00; a 3% increase on the previous year. TC
 - Clerk to submit requirement to C.D.C. TC/DR
- 8.15: Scribe Accounts: Clerk to forward virtual video if possible to the Chairman. TC/DR
9. GENERAL
- 9.1: The Clerks Contract and Job Description: Review: In progress. DR
- 9.2: Correspondence for Action: The lists of correspondence presented M.P.C. 307 (December 2021) were considered as part of the agenda.
- a) MPC307(07): C.D.C. - Cherwell District Council budget consultation 2022/23.
 - b) MPC307(08): O.C.C. - Oxfordshire County Council's budget consultation 2022/23 - have your say.
 - c) MPC307(15): CFO - What to do if you have a positive Covid-19 case in your hall.
 - d) MPC307(19): C.D.C. - Estimated Tax Base 2022-23 & Parish Precepts 2022-23.
 - e) MPC307(25): OALC - Operation London Bridge – Zoom Meeting.
 - f) MPC307(26): OALC - OALC December Update for member councils.
 - g) MPC307(27): Land and Property Registration - Is all your land registered?
 - h) MPC307(28): CFO - Plan B changes- Updated information for halls
- 9.3: Matters for Further Information or Discussion:
- a) Matters for Further Information: None.
 - b) Matters for Further Discussion: None.
10. NEXT MEETING:
- 10.1: Merton Parish Council meeting to be held on 14 February 2022 at 19.30.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:18.

Draft Minutes subject to confirmation:

Approved and Signed by the Presiding Chairman

Date