



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Martin Parker Clerk/RFO: Rosemary Martin



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH APRIL 2018 IN ST PETER'S CHURCH AT 6:30 PM

Prior to the start of the meeting, Robert de Grey, and his agent Geoff Armstrong spoke, and answered questions, about their proposal for 3 dwellings to be built off Crows Lane. (See Appendix)

The Parish Council meeting was then convened at 7:05 pm

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Present: Councillors: Parker (Chairman), de Grey, Dunn, and Riley, and Rosemary Martin (Clerk); 33 parishioners in attendance.

765. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Macro who is unwell.

766. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr de Grey declared an interest in §771 b).

767. To agree and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2018

A motion not to accept the minutes was proposed, but not seconded, so could not proceed. It was then proposed by Cllr Parker and seconded by Cllr Riley that the minutes were a true record. A vote was taken, and the motion was passed with three votes for and one against. The Chairman then signed the minutes.

768. Matters arising from the previous minutes (for information only)

Pockthorpe (§763)

Highways have issued an Own Motion that the route is a "Byway Open to All Traffic". The landowners have 6 weeks to object, in which case the matter will go to a public enquiry.

Proposal to remove hedge and ditch at Burnt Tree Corner (§761)

Cllr Parker held a meeting on site with David Hill and some councillors and parishioners. It was agreed that, if a suitable application for planning permission was put forward, the Parish Council would, most likely, support it.

Liz Truss(§763)

Not able to come.

Aviva £100 Award(§763)

Currently carrying out due diligence on our project.

Precept (§759)

First instalment received. Grant now reduced to £13.00 per year

769. To adjourn the meeting for Parishioners' Questions

The Chairman said only questions not relating to §771 b) could be raised during Parishioners' Questions. Parishioners would be allowed to speak on §771 b) when the Parish Council debated that topic. (See Appendix)

The meeting was adjourned.

The meeting was reconvened¹.

770. Finance

a) Routine Finance: invoices for payment

CFS Fabricant	Cheque #100234	£144.00
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¹ Actions: Ask BDC to enforce replacement of hedge between SPA and Peddars Barns; it appears to be dead (Clerk). Ask Lord Walsingham to cut the ivy on trees on The Green (Jo de Grey).



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This cheque was issued since the last meeting. CFS Fabricant would not deliver the steel column for the Village Sign without a cheque. (\$760)

b) Bank Account balances

Community Account (60629359)	£2442.32
Bus Saver B (80836257)	£1675.99
VHRP Community (03142361)	£2245.91

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c) Village Hall funds raised

Collect your Coins	£115.36
Donations	£110.00
Easyfundraising	£58.08
Events	£827.66
Pledge a Plank	£1,190.00
Total²	£2,274.60

d) Draft Accounts for 2017 2018

The Draft Accounts for 2017/2018 had been circulated to the Parish Council ahead of the meeting. There were no questions. The accounts and the final Budget vs Actuals report can now be found on the website.

e) Insurance Claim

Claim raised with Came & Co for damage to seating round exterior of bus shelter. Policy excess is £250. If quotes are under £250, get work done and do not proceed with insurance claim

f) Norfolk ALC

Norfolk ALC had sent last year's membership details to our old email address. A membership form for 2018/2019 will be sent to the correct address shortly. Resolved to continue with Norfolk ALC membership. (\$732)

g) Insurance Renewal Offer from Came & Co

Came & Co had sent 3 different quotes to choose from. These need to be reviewed (Cllr Parker), and a decision taken at the next meeting (next agenda).

771. Planning

a) 3PL/2018/167 Ms Kate Hipperson & Mr Alburn

One and two storey side extension to 5 Tottington Terrace

BDC had granted permission ahead of the due date, without informing the Parish Council, having reverted to an email address the PC last used in early 2016. This has now been corrected. There were no objections to the planning application.

b) Robert de Grey Proposal for 3 dwellings off Crows Lane (see Correspondence: Armstrong Rigg, and Appendix)

After parishioners had had their say, the Chairman asked for a show of hands. A large majority were against the proposal, with only two supporters. The council then tried to reach a decision. Of the 4 councillors at the meeting: one could not vote due to declared pecuniary interest; one was against; one was for; and one did not feel there was enough information to make any decision. The councillors were therefore unable to make a decision, pending further information. Clerk to write to Robert de Grey asking for a lot more detail on the proposal, and whether he would grant access to the site for a species survey.

² Discrepancy with Bank Account due to not all pledges having been received.



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772. To review strategy for Village Hall Restoration Project

The Village Hall Working Party had met and reviewed the strategy. Their recommendations had been circulated to the Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting viz.:

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- Continue with fund raising as at present. This year make the Village Event on The Green open to more than just parishioners. Provisional date 17th June. Advert to be placed in May and June editions of the Waylander (Clerk)
- Abandon simple restoration project as building is now too far gone for this. Consider instead replacing existing structure with wood frame building on the same footprint, or, one half the size. (Jayne Wesley Smith getting quotes). Either of these options might require planning permission³.
- Aim to provide sustainability without needing to run a business or rent out part of the hall to a business.

After discussion, the Parish Council adopted these recommendations.

773. To consider action regarding further damage done to corner of The Green near the water hydrants

After discussion, resolved to preserve the corners of The Green as at present. Write to Anglia Water to ask that the level of the covers near the hydrants be dropped. (Clerk)

774. To receive correspondence

Correspondence available to view at the meeting

Highways	Pockthorpe Road update	See §768
Armstrong Rigg	Application for 3 dwellings off Crows Lane	See §771 b)
Pete Myhill	Oak Tree outside 6 Tottington Terrace	Filed
3/PL/2018/1675	5 Tottington Terrace One and Two storey side extension	See §771 a)

775. To Confirm the date of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 22nd May 2018 in St Peter's Church, directly after the Annual Meeting of the Parish which will start at 6:30 pm.

Meeting closed 8:10

³ BDC previously informed the Clerk that planning permission would be required (email from Tom Donnelly Feb 2017)



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APPENDIX

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Presentation

Robert de Grey provided an overview of the proposal; nothing yet set in stone; just to give villagers an idea of what is proposed.

He introduced Geoff Armstrong who then spoke, and answered questions, about the proposal. BDC's new housing policy, likely to be adopted later this year, will, in exceptional circumstances, support the development of new houses in villages, such as Merton, with no settlement boundary. The developer would need to demonstrate support from the Parish Council, and benefit to the community to gain the permission. Geoff Armstrong then provided further information and answered questions from parishioners.

Questions	Answers
What are 'exceptional' circumstances?	Eg need, benefits to the village (such as funding/part funding a new Village Hall).
Aware that the site is of strong archaeological interest?	No. Would look into that before building.
Incorporate nesting sites for birds?	Can't guarantee that.
Undertaking not to build on any other sites?	In theory no limitation on sites, but no plans to do so.
Aware that Merton is classified as a 'farmstead', so no building allowed?	Not aware; will check.
Why this site, with access directly onto Crows Lane, which is a rat run and at this point with blind bends?	Central to village, infill site, will speak to NCC Highways about access.
Would access be onto Crows Lane	Yes.
Aware of historically important medieval ditch on the site?	Not yet done archaeological (or ecology) assessment.
Will the access to/from the highway require crossing or covering (culverting?) any existing drainage ditches? (written submission sent to Robert de Grey ahead of the meeting)	Not yet looked at this level of detail.
If crossing/covering any drainage ditches, where and how will this be done so that the function of the ditches is not impaired? (written submission sent to Robert de Grey ahead of the meeting)	Not yet looked at this level of detail.
How and where will access to/from the main (public) highway and the 3 proposed dwellings be provided? (written submission sent to Robert de Grey ahead of the meeting)	Not yet looked at this level of detail.



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Open discussion on §771 b)

Noted that:

- there are 14 other sites in the parish which have been offered to BDC for building.
- worried that precedent would be a concern.

Need:

- more clarity and a lot more detail on the proposal
- surveys should be done before not after planning is supported
- to know whether Merton has been designated a Farmstead

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