



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Louise Hyde

Vice-Chairman: Stephen Mouser



Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Merton Parish Council held Tuesday 9th February 2021

Present: Cllrs Hyde (Presiding Officer), Wesley-Smith, Mouser, and De Grey; Clerk and 15 members of the public

1.0 Presiding Officer's Opening Remarks – Cllr Hyde welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Apologies for Absence – NCllr Eagle tendered his apologies via email.

3.0 Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest in items on the agenda and to consider any requests for dispensation – No declarations made

4.0 Public Session

Flooding - Discussion took place in the public forum whereby parishioners expressed their ongoing concerns with flooding in the village. Cllr Hyde recommended further comments be reserved for Item 6.0 and invited the Public to contribute to Cllrs discussions on this issue when appropriate.

It was also **NOTED** that multiagency meetings are being held to look at flooding issues in the County and it is hoped that a long-term plan will be agreed shortly. A Highways task force is being formed to look at local issues such as blocked pipes and filled ditches to try and make the existing water system work more efficiently

Diversion – Development Site – Watton – This issue was brought to the fore by residents who reported damage to verges and dangerous mud residue resultant of unprecedented levels of traffic seeking a shorter route outside of the official Traffic Diversion put in place by Norfolk County Council. The matter has been reported to Highways, Breckland and District and County Councillors. Curative work to roads damaged had been promised by Highways but recent heavy snowfall may have delayed this. Clerk to follow-up as appropriate confirming the work required and checking agreed time-frames.

5.0 Planning

5.1 To receive and consider any new planning applications received

3PL/2021/022/F – Change of use of land from equestrians (sui generis) to residential Amenity Lane (C3) – Grove Farm, Watton

The proposed change of use and its relation to historic applications was discussed at length along with the potential implications of the site's close proximity to the Village Hall site as well as the latent effect on ecological issues. The Presiding Officer reminded the public of the importance and impact of raising individual comments in addition to a Parish Council submission. Cllr Hyde **PROPOSED** that the Council raise **OBJECTION** to the application. **SECONDED** by Cllr Wesley-Smith. Unanimously **AGREED**. Clerk to formulate comments for submission to Breckland.



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6.0 Flooding

6.1 To receive and consider any update on agree decisions regarding flooding from meeting held 19th January 2021, and identify and agree any further interventions required

The matter was again fully debated and the public were invited by the Presiding Officer to have further input. It was **NOTED** that all actions identified at the previous meeting had now been undertaken. Since the previous EPC, Cllr Mouser has undertaken an accompanied inspection of the drainage courses around the village in order to ascertain a clearer picture of the issues arising. Various site visits have also been undertaken by Cllr De Grey to survey locations in need of attention; it was **NOTED** that despite confirming some ditches were clear, the Moat at Merton Hall continued to breach. To date, other landowners identified have not been able to commence remedial work; Clerk to follow-up and update Cllrs accordingly.

7.0 Role of Chairman, Merton Parish Council

7.1 To receive, note and accept resignation of former Chairman, Martin Parker

Cllr Hyde confirmed receipt of Cllr Parker's resignation that took effect from 27th January 2021. Cllrs formally accepted this resignation. Cllr Hyde made a **VOTE OF THANKS** to Cllr Parker for the longevity of his service and dedication to the role as both Cllr and Chairman; this was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** by all Cllrs.

7.2 To formally receive any nominations for Chairman Elect and voting

Cllr Hyde – Nominated and **PROPOSED** by Cllr De Grey and **SECONDED** by Cllr Mouser - All **AGREED** – Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed at a later date.

7.3 To formally receive any nominations for Vice-Chairman Elect and Voting

Cllr Mouser – Nominated and **PROPOSED** by Cllr Wesley-Smith and **SECONDED** by Cllr De Grey – All **AGREED**. Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed at a later date.

8.0 To give public notice of a vacancy on Merton Parish Council and note publication of Vacancy by Breckland District Electoral Services – Closing date – 22nd February 2021 for By-Election.

The Chairman Elect formally confirmed that the notice of vacancy was currently displayed on the noticeboard and the website. Pending no call for a By-Election, the vacancy can be promoted and formally advertised from 23rd February 2021.

9.0 Clerk's Resignation

9.1 To receive, note and accept the resignation of the Clerk

The Chairman Elect asked Cllrs to **NOTE** the receipt of the resignation of the Clerk with a final working day of 19th February. The resignation was **ACCEPTED**.

9.2 To discuss and agree formation of a Working Party to undertake the recruitment of a new Clerk and to discuss and agree any potential contractual changes

Cllr Wesley-Smith to lead Staffing Working Party to undertake recruitment process. **AGREED**. Cllr Wesley-Smith asked Cllrs to **NOTE** the draft contractual details circulated prior to the meeting and drew attention to the suggested increase in contractual hours and hourly rate as recommended by NALC. These were **NOTED** and



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AGREED. Cllr Wesley-Smith to finalise and circulate documentation to Cllrs ahead of advertising.

10.0 Bank Signatories

10.1 To agree and progress administration of two new signatories on the Barclays Accounts

Removal of Cllr Parker and the Clerk from mandate required; it was **AGREED** that the new Clerk be added as signatory upon appointment. Cllr Mouser **AGREED** to be second mandatory signatory. Cllr Wesley-Smith to organise completion of mandate request forms

11.0 To review and agree adoption of updated Code of Conduct for review in March 2022

This was unanimously **AGREED** for adoption with review scheduled for March 2022.

12.0 To NOTE date and time of next ordinary Parish Council Meeting –

Tuesday 30th March 2021, 6pm - via Zoom

The Meeting closed at 19.14 hrs with no further matters arising