



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: M Parker

Clerk/RFO: Vicky Turner



Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Merton Parish Council held Tuesday 19th January 2021

Present: Cllrs Parker (Chair), Wesley-Smith, Mouser, Hyde and De Grey; Clerk, District Cllrs Suggitt and Cowen and 9 members of the public

1.0 Chairman's Opening Remarks – The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting to discuss urgent issues relating to flooding ahead of the scheduled meeting of 30th March 2021. He also warmly welcomed the two District Cllrs in attendance.

2.0 Apologies for Absence – None received – all present

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

4.0 Public Session

The Chairman summarised an email received from a resident regarding flooding at Home Lane – see Addendum A.ⁱ

Discussion took place in the public forum whereby parishioners expressed their growing concerns over exacerbated flooding in the village and the collective effect of individual homeowners' neglect in maintaining free-flowing watercourses on or adjacent to their properties. A summary of the cascade drainage flow throughout the village was given and maps shared to demonstrate this principle.

Cllr Cowen and Cllr Suggitt reassured parishioners that similar issues were ongoing in other Ward parishes and shared with the meeting, an Environment Agency Flood Model that predicted some the specific drainage issues highlighted by Cllrs and residents.

A resident with considerable knowledge of Merton drainage systems summarised the particular areas he considered pertinent in the village where lack of maintenance and blockages had inhibited run-out which had consequently developed in to choke-points whereby flow was restricted, causing water to escape and cause severe localised flooding.

A member of the public shared experiences of such flooding over Christmas and in to the New Year, emphasising these issues had been ongoing since 2017. This was **NOTED**.

Cllr Cowen explained the rights and expectations of Riparian ownership to clarify what should underpin each relevant homeowners' responsibilities. These were **NOTED**. Cllr Cowen also agreed to try and ascertain which Internal Drainage Board was responsible for the Merton area, if any, and update the Council.



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5.0 Flooding

5.1 To receive and consider any suggestions for mediation and measures of support to alleviate potential further flooding in Merton Village

The matter was fully debated and the public were invited to have further input to enable the Parishioners' Voice to be fully heard. District Cllrs were supportive and encouraged Members to take mediative action in the form of letters and dialogue (See Item 5.2 below), providing the Clerk with current legislative advice on Riparian ownership and arbitration. District Cllrs Suggitt and Cowen advised the meeting of the need to copy them in to future correspondence regarding these matters. Cllr Suggitt also offered to share Merton's issues with the new Flooding Partnership established by Country Cllr Connolly, George Freeman MP and other representatives whose aim is to bring together agencies and local Councils to help tackle ongoing flooding in Norfolk. This was **NOTED** and Members thanked Cllr Suggitt in advance of her help in this.

Ownership and Responsibility for ditches Nos 7- 12 The Green, Merton – Cllrs **NOTED** that conversations were ongoing with Breckland District Council and that their solicitor was currently seeking to confirm interpretation of Land Registry documentation: Clerk to circulate any updates as they are received.

5.2 To agree any permitted interventions and actions recommended in 5.1 above

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Wesley-Smith that three issues be addressed forthwith: To make contact with landowners to progress the following:

1. To clear ditch along field north of The Green so the water is channelled in the direction it should flow rather than flood on to the road on The Green; Cllr Wesley-Smith to progress.
2. To clear the ditch between the Dutch barn and property on Home Farm Lane, blocked due to conifer debris which two landowners have shared Riparian Ownership obligations to undertake – Cllr Wesley-Smith to make verbal contact with one landowner; Clerk to draft letter for circulation to Cllrs for edit and agreement for transmission to second landowner. DCllrs, NCC and the Environment Agency to be copied in. The Chairman **AGREED** to hand-deliver resultant correspondence.
3. Ascertain any potential blockages preventing water from flowing into the moat at Merton Hall; to ask landowner to ensure culverts are sufficient, to check outfall pipes and investigate any need to flush pipes where appropriate; to liaise with any adjacent landowners and Sentry where relevant, to ensure work is undertaken to clear blockages to enable flushing where required. Cllr De Grey to progress.

These actions were unanimously **AGREED** by all Cllrs. To be completed as soon as possible.

6.0 To consider any issues raised that the Chairman considers to be urgent

No further matters were raised.

7.0 To NOTE date and time of next ordinary Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 30th March 2021, 6pm - via Zoom

The Meeting closed at 19.20hrs with no further matters arising



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Dear Vicky and Martin

I hope you are both well and also family's during this time of a second national lock down which really does test us all.

Martin: it was great to meet you the other day and also you have my personal mobile should you need to get hold of me (cuts down social distancing, hopefully not for too long)

If you would both be so kind as to read the following at the meeting and have as a matter of record and response from myself.

Firstly I have received the above invite but assume this does not relate to myself (please let me know if I'm wrong). Martin as discussed the other day you can see that water is flowing through my ditch and of course we have requested work to be carried out to clear the ditch the request was submitted on the 28th December so fingers crossed should be occurring soon (obviously in line with current govt restrictions around necessity work to be carried out at this time). As you mentioned there is a field that is on a flood plain which I have also been able to research and confirm, clearly the removal of some branches won't negate a location being a flood risk but I will certainly do everything I can to reduce that risk further.

We discussed the pipe and once ditch is empty I am more than happy for you to see there are no bricks or other items, the construction has been like this for 20 plus years.

Hopefully this will allow less emails into your good self I assume the meeting does relate to another area in Merton ?

It was great to meet my neighbour the other day and I have conveyed the above so hopefully you are not harassing you again.

On a very different note I would like to thank all local community members who are active and make a real difference to local area. I did notice litter picking and think that's brilliant please let me know when you are next doing it as this would be an opportunity to get my son out to learn what a community can achieve together.

I noticed on your correspondence some mention of mediation which I think is another brilliant way to resolve local issues/ tensions. If you would like a volunteer to assist as a facilitator in any mediation locally then please let me know and give me the details and I will make contact on behalf of the parish council.

As always many thanks for your continued help and support and if I can be of any more help then please let me know.

Kind regards