



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Louise Hyde Vice Chairman: Stephen Mouser



Minutes of Merton Parish Council meeting held at 6.00pm on Tuesday 7th March 2022 at St Peter's Church, Merton.

Present: Cllr De Grey, Cllr Hyde (chair), Cllr Mouser (vice-chair), Cllr Roat and Cllr Wesley-Smith

Claire Prentice (clerk/RFO)

Cllr Eagle (County council)

1 member of public

18/22 Chairman's opening remarks

Chair welcomed all to the meeting and expressed that the council's thoughts are with all those people from and in Ukraine at this difficult time.

19/22 To receive apologies and approve absences

Cllr Cowen (district)

20/22 To receive declarations of interest in any items to be discussed and grant any dispensation requests.

None

21/22 Public Participation. (max. 30 minutes)

Council agreed to allow participation for specific agenda items at the time they are addressed.

No further points raised.

22/22 To receive reports

Clerk – circulated to all councillors prior to meeting.

- Chair responded in regard to litter pick and confirmed that one has been arranged by a resident for the 26th March which is organised in conjunction with Thompson.
- Chair asked for postbox to have own agenda item at next meeting.

Cllr Eagle (county) – Stated there is a small Ukrainian population in Norfolk, according to the last census it is 310 individuals. There is a slightly larger Russian population of just over 400 individuals. Just so everyone is aware. What is currently happening is tragic.

In regard to County Council situation, the council tax will go up by 2.99%. That will bring a revenue of approx. £4.68m. This amount equates to the adult social care budget. With other services and government grants that tends to be £1.5m that goes on services. County Council are being financially hit the same as anyone else, especially with the national insurance increase. Officers encouraged an increase on council tax which we went against, but we are now trying to find £27m for savings. Since 2010 we have lost over £200m. in government funding.

As a reminder there is a £10'000 personal environment and highways budget, some has already been spent on temporary flood barriers for use on tarmac and are available for parishes to use.

Also avian flu is still around. It is about to become the worst outbreak in Europe and this year 2022 there has been more outbreaks than the last three years put together. So it is asked that everyone please keep their birds inside as the disease is so easily spread.

Cllr Eagle apologised and left after his report.

Cllr Hyde (parish council chair) – Just to touch on the Jubilee celebrations being organised in Thompson, where they invited Merton to join them. We need to put something in the Waylander. There is going to be a pudding competition which they are holding on 8th May with a taster session at Thompson hall with the idea of the winning one to be made for the Jubilee event.

The chair had heard that several Merton residents had attended the Thompson coffee morning and they had volunteered to help with the Jubilee event.

There is an anonymous donor who has offered to pay for a jubilee coin for all the children in Thompson and they have offered to pay for all the children in Merton as well.

The chair has received correspondence from a resident concerned with people taking shortcuts to Sally's Walk. Whilst this is not a direct council matter it was felt that it should be raised at this meeting.

The question was raised about jubilee events due to the current situation in Ukraine.

Suggestion was also made to insert a flyer to be distributed with Waylander, rather than being in the Waylander.

It was decided in regard to the jubilee coin for children, that details be added to the flyer for the Waylander asking parents and guardians to request them giving their personal details and how many children.

In regard to the shortcut, the landowner responded that they were unaware of any issue, but they are aware that the owner of the sheep currently there, has been visiting the sheep whilst wearing a head torch which may have added to the concern.

A Cllr also commented that someone walks their dogs along the track around 4.00am, so again lights can be seen also causing concern.

Cllr Cowen (district) –

1. Council Tax setting:

You will by now be aware that at Council in February it was agreed that Breckland Council portion of the Council Tax would be increased by £4.95 per year so that a Band D property district council tax would be £100.68 per annum or under £2.00 per week. However, as 75% of our residents are in Bands A-C they will pay less. Breckland remains the lowest District Council Tax in the country providing some £750.00 worth of services to each household

2. Platinum Jubilee:

The national programme consists of the following:

Thursday 2nd June 2022: The Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour)
Platinum Jubilee Beacons

Friday 3rd June 2022: Service of Thanksgiving at St Pauls Cathedral

Saturday 4th June 2022: The Derby at Epsom Downs
Platinum Party at the Palace

Sunday 5th June 2022: The national Big Jubilee Lunch

To compliment these national celebrations, we Breckland Council are undertaking the following celebratory activities:

Queen's Jubilee Bursary Scheme (Open for applications on 2nd June 2022)

In honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Breckland Council will run a bursary scheme that provides financial assistance to individuals who might otherwise struggle to access higher education for reasons such as low income, care leaver, health status or vulnerability.

The bursary scheme should apply to students aged 16 and over, studying a formal qualification in subjects that provide a demonstrable contribution to enhance Breckland communities by improving wellbeing and/or enriching the environment.

Queen's Jubilee Community Grants (Please note open for applications on 4th April 2022)

The scheme will target those community groups and organisations (excluding Town and Parish Councils on this occasion) that wish to host a community project, activity, or events that looks to acknowledge and celebrate the Platinum Jubilee year, in line with the national calendar of events.

Grants will be offered up to £500, and a maximum total of £10,000 will be available for eligible groups

The scheme will open first week of April with a submission deadline of midnight on Sunday April 17th.

Decisions will be scored against the following criteria:

1. Alignment with the national calendar of events
2. Number of residents the project will engage
3. Diversity of reach (intergenerational etc)

Queen's Green Canopy

Breckland Council will be taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) by working with the Woodland Trust to plant **1000 trees** across sites at Attleborough, Dereham, and Watton. The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".



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Breckland Shop Front Trail

We will replicate the recent reindeer trail in shop windows on our high streets with a Jubilee Trail to incentivise visits to the high street by residents.

Breckland Beacon

We are working with Ecotricity and local lighting contractors to illuminate the wind turbine in Swaffham in the run up to the Jubilee.

Breckland Drone Photographs

We will commission 5 photographs using a slow exposure camera, to create photographs of an illuminated drone above key landmarks in each of our market towns. These photographs will be framed and given to each of the respective Town Councils in the run up to the Jubilee as a long-lasting reminder.

3. Ukraine:

The following link provides some helpful advice

[Factsheet: Home Office action on Ukraine - Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\).](#)

4. Flooding issues:

As reported on previous occasions I am unable to provide much support in the matter of flood prevention etc and following conversations with planners and others in Breckland what we can say is that flood events should be reported to Norfolk County Council as the County is the Local Lead Flood Authority and it is important that these matters are reported to them as and when they occur. Similarly, landowners who have Riparian responsibilities must take them seriously and again, please report any infractions to the County Council

23/22 To approve minutes of the meeting of council held on 20th January 2022

Approved and signed by chair.

24/22 Flooding related issues, to receive updates, discuss and decide on any action to be taken.

Parishioner commented that the tree remains in the ditch.

Clerk to 'phone' landowner regarding the issue of the tree in the ditch and the blocked pipes near bus shelter.

Cllr Wesley-Smith to forward ditch information for Breckland contact to Cllr Roat, for Cllr Roat to contact Breckland regarding recent correspondence on ditch ownership around the green.

25/22 Highways, to receive updates, discuss and decide on any action to be taken.

The drain cover has now been covered over with a mound of soil. It is believed this has been done by highways. This has now caused erosion on both sides of the road.

Clerk to look into passing points, signage and knock down posts for Crow's Lane.

26/22 Planning Matters, to consider any planning applications

None

27/22 Covid-19 plaque, to discuss and decide where and when to display plaque.

Chair to arrange for plaque to be fixed to bus shelter in doorway facing out with anti-tamper fixings.

28/22 Phone kiosk, to receive updates, discuss and decide on any action to be taken.

No further action to be taken.

29/22 Defibrillator, to receive updates, discuss and decide on any action to be taken.

No longer to be actioned due to loss of power source and no alternative location.

Article to go in Waylander offering to return funds to those who wish them back and also suggestions for alternative use of funds.

Agenda item to go on Parish annual meeting in regard to return of funds to those who wish them back and also suggestions for alternative use of funds.

30/22 Grant request, to consider any applications.

None

31/22 Policies and procedures, to consider, review and adopt accordingly, as well as set next review dates.

a) Risk management scheme - Approved

b) **Asset register** – Approved. Urn to be located at church once P.A.T is carried out. Cllr De Grey to contact thatcher is regards to replacement roof cost for bus shelter and maintenance costs and advice. Cllr Hyde to obtain rebuild cost for brick and stonework of bus shelter. Revised asset register for next meeting.

c) **Asset risk assessment** – Should be asset inspection report, to be presented at next meeting.

32/22 Finance: -

a) **Agree bank reconciliations**

PC Current Account

Closing Balance as per bank statement 4 th Feb. 2022		£2135.11
<u>Less</u> unpresented cheques:		
Net Balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£2135.11
The net balance reconciles to the receipts and payments account for the year as follows:-		
Opening Balance 1st April 2021:		£1618.77
Add receipts in year		£2577.56
Less payments in year		£2061.22
Closing balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£2135.11

PC Reserve Account

Closing Balance as per bank statement 4 th Feb 2022		£1683.34
<u>Less</u> unpresented cheques:		£0.00
Net Balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£1683.34
The net balance reconciles to the receipts and payments account for the year as follows:-		
Opening Balance 1st April 2021:		£1683.22
Add receipts in year		£0.12
Less payments in year		£0.00
Closing balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£1683.34

Village Hall Project

Closing Balance as per bank statement 4 th Feb. 2022		£2905.61
<u>Less</u> unpresented cheques:		£0.00
Net Balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£2905.61
The net balance reconciles to the receipts and payments account for the year as follows:-		
Opening Balance 1st April 2021:		£3231.11
Add receipts in year		£-325.50
Less payments in year		£0.00
Closing balance as at 4 th Feb. 2022:		£2905.61

Figures amended from those stated on agenda. All approved and Cllr Mouser to sign at next meeting.

Signed _____ Date _____



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b) **Payments since last meeting**, to approve accordingly

PC Current Account

Date	Payee/Reason	Cheque No.	Amount	Signatories	Approval
	None				

c) **Outstanding payments**, to approve accordingly

PC Current Account

Date	Payee/ Reason	Cheque No.	Amount	Signatories	Approval
08.03.22	Clerk salary + expenses	BACS	375.23	C.Prentice	Approved
08.03.22	HMRC	¹	4.40	N/A	Approved
08.03.22	Wave	BACS	51.64	N/A	Not approved*
08.03.22	Venue hire	BACS	20.00	C.Prentice	Approved
08.03.22	Norfolk ALC sub.	BACS	121.31	C.Prentice	Approved

*It was decided that the water supply should be disconnected, if it could not be proved that this had already been actioned (as it was minuted some time ago as disconnected). Minutes from Jan. 2020 show a final payment of £64.42.

Chair to contact previous chair regarding final payment and disconnection.

d) **Receipts since last meeting**, to approve accordingly

PC Current Account

Date	Payee/ Reason	Cheque No.	Amount	Approval
26.01.22	Village Hall project/ defib	Transfer	£342.16	Approved

PC Reserve Account

Date	Payee/ Reason	Cheque No.	Amount	Approval
	N/A			

Village Hall Project

Date	Payee/ Reason	Cheque No.	Amount	Approval
26.01.22	PC Current/ defib	Transfer	-£342.16	Approved

e) **Internal Auditor**, to receive updates, discuss and decide on any action to be taken.

Approved – Robin Goreham

f) **V.A.T.**, to approve claim accordingly

Approved. Clerk to claim as recommended.

33/22 Employment matters.

- **To consider the passing of a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for item 32/22 on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information).

¹ To be paid from unallocated payments and credits held by HMRC

No public remaining to exclude.

- **Appraisal**

Council and clerk agreed on an immediate informal discussion in place of an appraisal. All happy with discussion.

- **Holiday request**

Approved. Out of office message to state chairs contact details.

34/22 To confirm or amend the date and place of next meeting (annual meeting) as Tuesday 10th May 6pm Thompson Hall

Church to be booked if available, if not the small hall of Thompson village hall. Time and date approved.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____