



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: M Parker

Clerk/RFO: R Martin



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 10TH JANUARY 2017 IN ST PETER'S CHURCH

Present: Cllrs Parker (Chairman), de Grey, Dunn, Riley, Macro, Rosemary Martin (Clerk) and 4 parishioners in attendance

701. To receive apologies for absence

None received.

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702. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr de Grey declared an interest in §708.

703. To agree and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4th November 2016

Proposed by Cllr Dunn and seconded by Cllr Riley, that the minutes were a true record. All agreed and the Chairman signed the minutes.

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

The water hydrant at the edge of the green continues to be damaged by turning lorries. The land belongs to the Merton Estates. The Parish council will position a concrete bollard/large boulder there for protection.

705. To adjourn the meeting for Parishioners' Questions

Meeting adjourned.

Meeting reconvened.

706. Finance

a) routine finance

The bank account balances are:

Community Account £2512.82

Business Saver Account £1674.86

Cllr Parker presented the Plandescil invoice (£720) for payment. This payment was discussed previously (§698). Proposed by Cllr Riley and seconded by Cllr de Grey that this be paid. All agreed.

b) Clerk's Expenses (tba)

c) Agree Budget and Precept for 2017/2018

The Clerk circulated a final budget. This budget is based on leaving the precept for a further year at £1200 and assuming some of the expenses will be covered from existing bank balances.

707. To receive update on, and consider further actions relating to, the Village Hall Refurbishment Project (including grant applications) and to schedule further Working Party meetings

- Jayne Wesley-Smith has had some responses from builders asked for quotes
- Some of the questionnaire cards have been completed
- Vince Matthews has produced a detailed accurate plan of the proposed restoration, suitably for grant funding approaches.
- After the success of the event held on the Village Green in 2016, a further one will be held on 4th June 2017.

708. To receive update on complaints made to BDC regarding the granting of planning permission for the Home Farm barns and the actions which have taken place on the site and to decide what further action to take

(Previously -April 2016 meeting §674 - the Parish Council had resolved to put in a formal complaint to Breckland District Council regarding the granting of planning permission to 3PL2015/0657/F, Home Farm



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conversion of 2 barns to 3 dwellings)

Complaint

BDC's granting of the planning permission relied very heavily on the prior existence of a PDR, and on the Ecology Report submitted with the application, to the detriment of many of the objections raised by the Parish Council.

It was the belief of the Parish Council that BDC had not properly followed their due processes in granting either the PDR or the planning application. Furthermore, the Ecology Report submitted with the planning application was significantly inaccurate.

Progress

- a) The complaint has followed the BDC complaints procedure and is currently being looked at by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- b) The Chartered Institute of the Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) received a formal complaint about the ecology and mitigation reports submitted in support of the planning application for Home Farm Barns. The complaint was upheld and the ecologist, Mary Davies (Power) MCIEEM of James Blake Associates Ltd, has been found to be in breach of the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct (2016) has been reprimanded with sanctions.

The CIEEM Disciplinary Board were concerned with Miss Davies's (Power) analysis and understanding of the legislation required in relation to bats, birds, including EIA legislative requirements in relation to designated sites. In this respect, the current ecology report is flawed and the mitigation weak. Breckland/Capita Ecologists have requested a copy of the CIEEM's report on the disciplinary hearing in order to take the appropriate action.

709. To receive correspondence

BDC continue to claim that none of the Merton Councillors DPIs have been received, although Cllr Macro took the documents into BDC. All councillors asked to supply their DPIs to Cllr Macro again. She will take them into BDC again and make sure a receipt is given.

710. To Confirm the date of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place at 6:00 pm in St Peter's Church on 4th APRIL 2017.
The Clerk will present the draft 2016/2017 accounts for discussion at this meeting.

Meeting closed at 7:30pm

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