



MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: M Parker

Clerk/RFO: V Turner



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 7TH JANUARY 2020 AT THOMPSON VILLAGE HALL, 6.00PM

Present: Cllrs Martin Parker, Louise Hyde, Jo De Grey and Jayne Wesley-Smith, Vicky Turner (Clerk) and 9 Members of the Public

The Chairman officially opened the meeting at 6.00pm and welcomed all those in attendance.

880. To receive apologies for absence

Apology received and accepted from Cllr Macro. The Chairman proceeded to read Cllr Macro's letter of resignation from the position of Cllr to Merton Parish. It was **AGREED** by all Cllrs to publish a Notice of Vacancy as soon as possible. Clerk to contact Electoral Services to initiate. The Chairman **PROPOSED** a vote of thanks on behalf of the Parish Council in expressing gratitude to Cllr Macro for the longevity of her service and dedication in the village. This was unanimously **AGREED**.

881. To receive declarations of interest

None declared.

882. To agree and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th September 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2019 were read for accuracy. The acceptance of the Minutes as a true record of events was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Wesley-Smith and **SECONDED** by Cllr Hyde. Unanimously **AGREED**. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

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

The Chairman referred to Item 870 (C) and confirmed that the disconnection of water supply and sewage services at the village hall had now taken place and that there would be no further charges.

The Chairman referred to Item 872 and explained that the erection of fencing around the disused Village Hall site was in-hand and would be completed imminently.

884. Public Session

The Chairman invited comments and questions from the public gallery.

Members of the public asked if they would be permitted to speak about Agenda Items 8.0 and 11.0 - the Chairman confirmed he was content for public input.

The Chairman read correspondence submitted prior to the meeting from parishioners covering the following matters:

Village Green – Overhanging branches adjacent to the Bus Shelter – concerns over proximity to the shelter – the Chairman confirmed that the landowner responsible for the trees had been contacted and that the boughs in question were to be trimmed. Chairman to monitor to ensure remedial action is undertaken.

Sally's Walk – Overhanging Conifers – Request to trim the overhanging branches along this path to clear head-height - Cllr De Grey to investigate further.

Ash Tree opp. Telephone Box – Fungal Growth – Concerns around the growth of fungus at the foot of this tree have been reported. Cllr de Grey to investigate further.



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885. Routine Finance

- (a) **Invoices (paid since last meeting)** – The Chairman revised the Agenda which showed that the first cheque listed for payment to ANGLIAN WATER was in fact in respect of standing charges and **not** for disconnection. Cllrs **NOTED** this correction.

The Chairman also explained that the change of venue to the Thompson Community Hall and associated expenditure, had been necessary as St Peter's Church is closed for renovation work.

All payments **APPROVED**

Payee	Cheque No	Detail	Total Amount	VAT	Excluding VAT
Anglian Water	Cheque No 100247	Standing Charges for Village Hall (Final bill)	£64.42		£64.42
David Rodgers	Cheque No 100246	Grass Cutting	£60.00		£60.00
Veronica Turner	Cheque No 100242	Clerk's September 2019 Salary	£78.40		£78.40
Veronica Turner	Cheque No 100243	Clerk's October 2019 Salary and Mileage	£82.90		£82.90
Veronica Turner	Cheque No 100244	Clerk's November 2019 Salary	£78.40		£78.40
Veronica Turner	Cheque No 100247	Clerk's December Salary	£78.40		£78.40
Thompson Community Hall	Cheque No 100245	Hire of Hall for meeting on 07.01.2020	£10.00		£10.00

(b) Receipts

Savers Account	02/09/19	£ 0.84	Gross Interest
Community Account	26/09/19	£825.00	Precept
Village Hall Project	11/11/19	£ 28.44	Donations – Easy Fundraising

All receipts were **NOTED**.

(c) Bank Account Balances

Community Account	£2942.20
Business Saver Account	£1,681.87
Village Hall Refurbishment Fund	£3,211.63



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(d) To consider and agree budget for 2020/21

The proposed budget, previously circulated, was discussed. It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr de Grey that the suggested Admin Budget be increased to £200.00 This was **SECONDED** by Cllr Hyde. Unanimously **AGREED**. Clerk to amend projection.

(e) To consider and agree the Precept for 2020/21

It was **PROPOSED** that the Precept be raised to £2200.00. This was unanimously **AGREED**. Clerk to submit application.

886. To receive and consider a report on the Defibrillator Project

Cllr De Grey reported that grants from the British Heart Foundation were not available at present however she would continue to monitor this as well as investigate alternative options. With regards siting of the defibrillator, she reported that as no offer to host the device on private property had been forthcoming, the installation in the decommissioned telephone box was a favourable alternative. Cllr De Grey to report further at the next meeting.

887. To receive and consider update on the Village Hall Consultation

The Chairman explained that he had received 12 responses in total to the letter he had sent to Merton residents. A synopsis of these replies (please see the attached addendum to these minutes; also available electronically via the Parish website: <https://mertonparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/files/2020/01/village-hall-renovation-letters.pdf>) has been previously circulated to Cllrs for information. He indicated that the letters were available for Councillors to view. The synopsis was read aloud to the meeting and the Chairman **AGREED** to temporarily suspend the meeting to allow for public participation on this matter.

(a) To consider concerns over wildlife at risk at the Village Hall prior to the meeting, detailing concerns over the threat to wildlife particularly the Tree Sparrow, requesting that any future action should involve protection of wildlife and preservation of habitats. These concerns were **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** that any potential work at the site would involve cooperative working with naturalist advisors and be supported by any requisite ecological surveys.

(b) To consider and agree the next actions required for the Village Hall

Discussion took place and it was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman that in the first instance, the Clerk should approach Breckland to establish any initial costs associated with a potential demolition. This was **AGREED**. Cllr Wesley-Smith reminded the Council that in accordance with the terms of the Governing Document, the Trustees would need to advertise any proposed resolution and call a public meeting of Parishioners where a two-thirds majority of the meeting would be required to vote for, or against, any Resolution. Cllr Wesley-Smith to seek guidance and deliver an update. Pending these actions, it was **AGREED** that the matter should be deferred again until the next meeting.

888. To consider and agree actions to comply with Charity Commission governance and approve filing of outstanding Annual Returns

It was **AGREED** that Cllr Wesley-Smith approach the sole remaining Managing Trustee to obtain permissions to contact the Charity Commission and then seek advice on submitting the 2017 and 2018 outstanding Annual Returns.

889. To consider and agree alternative email address for the Parish Clerk

The Clerk's email address is currently problematic in its present operating system. As the passwords and permissions are unknown to Cllrs, potentially changing the address to a new one was discussed. It was **AGREED** that to continue with the current address was preferable; Cllr Dr Grey volunteered to liaise with the previous Clerk to see if she had a note of required passwords needed to change to the Google operating system.

890. Planning



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**(a) To review and consider planning applications received since last meeting
3PL/2019/1489/HOU – Mere Barn, Merton – Revision to previous permission.**

This is a proposed amendment to the specifications of the conservatory at the rear. Ongoing concerns over sitting water were discussed; it was **AGREED** that the Clerk write to owners of adjacent property to seek clarification on reported concrete in the ditch that may be exacerbating the situation.

There were no objections to this amendment to the original Planning Application and it was **AGREED** to **SUPPORT** it with the proviso that all conditions of any ecological reports were adhered to.

(b) To receive and consider results of Planning Applications

3PL/2019/0767/HOU – Mere Barn, Home Farm Lane, Merton - Single Storey Extension - APPROVED.

- 890. To receive correspondence (including that issued after issue of agenda)**
Correspondence was **NOTED**.

- 891. To consider any issues raised by Cllrs that the Chairman considers to be urgent**
Potential light pollution believed to be coming from outside lighting at Peddar's Barn was discussed. Considering imposed planning conditions, it was **AGREED** that the Clerk write to the owners in the first instance to alert them to any potential issues.

The closure of the post-box at the gate of Merton Hall was discussed. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk try and establish why the box has been closed for a second time.

- 892 To confirm the date of the next meeting**

It was **AGREED** to change the date of the next meeting to **6pm, Tuesday 24th March 2020**, as opposed to the previously agreed 7th April. The Venue will again be **THOMPSON VILLAGE HALL** as the Church will still be undergoing renovation.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.21pm.