

MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: M Parker

Clerk/RFO: V Turner

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held remotely on 8th SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Cllrs Martin Parker, Louise Hyde, Jo De Grey, Stephen Mouser and Jayne Wesley-Smith, Vicky Turner (Clerk) and 5 members of the public

913. Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

914. Apologies for Absence

None received – all Cllrs present

915. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mouser declared an interest in Agenda Item 7.1 - **NOTED**

916. Minutes of Previous Meetings

916.1 To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 9th June 2020

The Minutes were read for accuracy and unanimously **AGREED** as a true and accurate record of events

916.2 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2020

The Minutes were read for accuracy and unanimously **AGREED** as a true and accurate record of events

Both sets of Minutes to be signed by the Chairman.

916.3 To consider matters arising from the Minutes of previous meetings not considered on this Agenda (for information only)

All outstanding Clerk's Actions undertaken – no further matters arising.

917. Public Session

The Chairman opened the Public session.

Broken Window at the Village Hall Site – this was highlighted by a member of the public – the Chairman confirmed that this matter would be discussed under Agenda Item 10.0

Flooding – ongoing concerns were raised about localised surface water flooding during recent August rain – the Chairman confirmed that this matter would be discussed under Item 8.0. Comments were **NOTED**.

Flailing of Hedgerows – a complaint has been received from a member of the public with regards potential damage to nesting Hedge Sparrows – a letter to Norfolk Wildlife Trust has been sent by the parishioner and the Parish Council will be kept up to date with any response- **NOTED**

Home Farm Lane – A letter has been received from a member of the public regarding potential contravention of Planning Conditions that could be detrimental to the preservation of the designated SPA adjacent to dwellings. – The Chairman confirmed that this would be discussed under Item 14 on the Agenda.

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918. Finance

918.1 Invoice paid since last meeting

Cheque No	Amount	Details
Cheque No 100257	£102.90	Clerk's Salary for May, agreed overtime and expenses
Cheque No 100258	£218.40	Insurance Premium 2020/21
Cheque No 100259	£ 15.00	Max Bergin – Internal Audit Fees
Cheque No 100260	£ 72.00	NALC New Cllr Training Course – Cllr Mouser
Cheque No 100261	£197.56 (Incl £9.36 Expenses)	Clerk's Salary June – August – quarterly payment
Cheque No 100262	£47.00	HMRC – Tax Liability of Clerk

918.2 Receipts since last meeting at the time of issuing the current Agenda

ACCOUNT	SOURCE	AMOUNT
Savers Account		£0.45
Community Account		Nil
Village Hall Project		£19.48

918.3 Bank Account Balances as of 31.08.2020

Savers Account	£1,682.91
Community Account	£2,148.67
Village Hall Project	£3,231.11

918.4 To receive Quarterly Bank Reconciliation, the Income and Expenditure against Budget Report

Circulated prior to the meeting. The Reports were **NOTED**.

All unanimously **AGREED** to accept the Clerk's Reports. Clerk to publish on Website.

918.5 To review and agree any changes to the draft budget for 2021/22

Previously circulated, Cllrs discussed the draft budget proposal for the next financial year. Subject to a review of defibrillator viability to be undertaken by Cllr De Grey and reported at the next meeting, all **AGREED** to adopt this budget proposal in its current form, with the proviso that the £1000 earmark could be included/excluded before finalising.

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918.6 To review and consider the Clerk's Annual Pay rise in line with LGPS Scales, and backdated pay to April 2020 - £9.80 per hour to £10.01 per hour

Cllrs discussed Clerk's salary and it was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Mouser to increase the Clerk's Salary pay point from Pt 5 to Pt 6 wef September 1st 2020 – This was unanimously **AGREED** by Cllrs and the backdated salary accrued to April 2020, amounting to £8.21, to be paid with next salary payment. The Clerk is paid on a quarterly basis now through HMRC payroll – **NOTED**.

919. Planning

919.1 To receive and consider any new Planning Applications

3PL/2020/0868/LU – Two 5 bar gates at the edge of Mill Hill Barn, Home Farm Lane, Merton – Certificate of Lawfulness – for Information Only- **NOTED** with no issues arising.

920. Flooding

920.1 To receive and consider any issues relating to flooding in Merton

Residents' concerns over flooding in Home Farm Lane, and outside properties at The Green, Merton were discussed. These were **NOTED**.

920.2 To discuss and consider any remedial action to prevent exacerbated flooding

Cllrs discussed these issues and **AGREED** to attempt prevention of further flooding during Autumn/Winter weather. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should contact residents whose ditches may be blocked and alert them to any potential problem, asking if they could clear debris preventing drainage of surface water. The Clerk to also contact NCC Highways and Breckland to request clearing of publicly owned drains, gully and culverts.

921. Post Box Closure

921.1 To receive any update on continuing closure of mailbox adjacent to Merton Hall

Cllr De Grey confirmed that despite numerous attempts to establish when the Merton Hall box would be re-opened, there had been no further update and the box remains out of use. Cllr De Grey to try again to establish the correct reason for closure and when repairs will be undertaken.

922. Village Hall Update

The Chairman addressed Cllrs regarding continuing difficulties in liaising with the Charity Commission to seek advice on Trust compliance. It was **NOTED** that the need for a public meeting with Merton residents would be required to establish a new Managing Trustee Committee but because of current Covid-19 restrictions this was not possible at present. Cllr Wesley-Smith summarised the requirements of the Charity's governing document dated 1977 and emphasised the need to secure a plan for the future of the Hall once Covid-19 restrictions eased, which would include:

- the need to elect further members to make six Managing Trustees in total via adherence to respective Clauses in Governing Document
- clear differentiation between the remit of Custodian and Managing Trustees

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- the need for a quorate body of Managing Trustees for any business of the Charity to be transacted to prevent personal liability
- an AGM to be held between the period 1st March and 1st June when practicable
- the need for the Managing Trustee and Custodian Trustee (Parish Council) to decide together if it is necessary and advisable to discontinue use of the Hall. In which case a meeting of the inhabitants must be called under the terms of the Dissolution Clause

Cllrs **NOTED** Cllr Wesley-Smith's comments.

A member of the public has recently reported a broken window at the Village Hall – Cllr Hyde kindly offered to repair and make-safe this opening with the help of her husband. The Chairman tendered a vote of thanks to Cllr Hyde for her assistance with this.

923. Defibrillator Update

Cllr De Grey had no further updates on the project. It was unanimously **AGREED** that feasibility of the project was doubtful, balancing potential need and cost. It was **PROPOSED** that Cllr Grey would consider further and report back at the next meeting in January 2021 regarding viability. This was unanimously **AGREED**. Subject to this report in January, Cllrs will be asked to agree on whether the current £1000 earmark should be removed from the budget. Clerk to provide Cllr De Grey with a note of the amount raised thus far towards the Defibrillator fund.

924. Safeguarding

It was unanimously **AGREED** that the Clerk prepare a Safeguarding Template policy for consideration at the next meeting.

925. To agree the meeting dates for 2020/21

The following meeting dates were **AGREED**:

5th January 2021, 30th March 2021, 18th May 2021, and 7th September 2021 – all at 6pm unless otherwise notified.

926. To receive and consider correspondence of note since last meeting

Newsletters from Norfolk Police Stanta Live-Firing Schedules; Official Briefings on Coronavirus (COVID 19) from Breckland District Council, NCF and NCC; COVID 19 Guidance from NALC; correspondence from parishioner regarding protection of wildlife in hedging; correspondence from a member of the public about contravened planning condition at Home Farm Lane.

Cllrs discussed the issue of apparent breach of planning conditions regarding fencing of a property on the Home Farm Lane Development; it was **AGREED** that the Clerk should write to the owners of the property, drawing attention to this potential contravention, reminding them that compliant fencing must be used.

927. To consider any issues raised the Chairman considers to be urgent

Nothing to NOTE.

928. To consider and agree date and time of next meeting of the Parish Council – confirmed as 5th January 2021 at 6pm via Zoom.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.50pm.