

MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Annual General Meeting of Merton Parish Council was held in the Clinton Hall on Thursday 8th May 2008 at 8pm

Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr Tim Horner

Present: Cllrs Brian Nancekivell (chair) Chris Laughton, Philip Collins, Jan Sharpe, Ron Down, Mark Phillips, Paul Scantlebury PCSO Sandra Brown and two parishioners.

Cllr Nancekivell introduced PCSO Sandra Brown who addressed those present and gave the crime figures for the year. There were seven reported crimes and included burglary, one drink driver, allegation of assault, theft from vehicles including tractor parts and other valuable items. Unfortunately not all had been solved and were still on file. There is a new speed gun based at Torrington and all officers are being trained to use it, they will then be able to visit the villages with it. The speed flashers seem to be working quite well and this could be emphasised with the use of the speed gun. Data from this will be fed back to the Parish Council on a quarterly basis. Cllr Collins requested stats of the amount of vehicles passing through the village and the average speeds. It was stated that the speed guns have to be in a prominent and signed position to make them legal. PCSO Brown was thanked for attending and left the meeting at 8.15pm.

The minutes of the last AGM were read and signed as a true record.

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: The chairman, Cllr Nancekivell reported on the achievement of getting the flashing speed lights which hopefully are successful. The Parish Plan is going to print. He is disappointed by Torridge District Council on planning in the village, and suggested the Council keep lobbying for more houses, although at this time there is no development allowed.

He congratulated the Clinton Hall on the 10th Anniversary and thanked all involved with the Clinton Hall on their effort to keep it going so well and looking so nice. He reported that Princess Anne would be visiting on Tuesday 13th May for a Housing Trust Seminar. He thanked all the councillors for their continued support, thanks also to John Luxton, Cedric and Wendy Askew for their voluntary work keeping the flower beds tidy and planted.

Churchyard Fund Report: Cllr Collins reported that there was a balance of £2702 in the bank account of the churchyard fund. The AGM is due soon. The Yew trees have had a stay of execution, the bush yew trees between the main trees down the church path have been trimmed. Mike Ford the churchwarden has agreed to keep them trimmed back regularly. The tree on the corner of the churchyard has been trimmed back and tidied up.

Clinton Hall Report: Cllr Phillips gave a report on the Clinton Hall. The 10 year refurbishment has been completed in time for the Anniversary event. The committee are maintaining and improving the standards of the hall. Solar panels have been installed on the roof and the hall was successful in getting funding for this. The panels

convert sunlight into electricity by inverter and any unused electricity can be sold back to the grid for payment. There will be financial benefits to the hall. The hall are trying to get funding for solar hot water /heating. This would override the oil fired boilers, but not replace completely as they would be required as standby, which would make great financial savings to the hall. The hall would probably have to contribute £2000 - £3000 on the total spend of £65000-70000 if the grants applications are successful. Mark has stepped down from the hall committee now after 15 years. He reported there were new people joining the committee and this would mean continued success.

The accounts for 2007/2008 were presented by the clerk. Cllr Laughton proposed that they should be adopted and Cllr Scantlebury seconded this all agreed. The two parishioners present queried the extra council tax due to the rise in the precept for this year. It was reported that the extra funds will be used to repair the square. This will not be possible on one years precept but the council hope to do repairs in stages. It was stated that Torridge District Council are not able to provide funds for various organisations as in previous years when grants for local organisations were match funded by TDC so this meant the Parish Council had to award grants from the precept. This year a total of £600 was awarded to local organisations including Churchyard Fund, Merton Football Club, Friends of the Clinton School, Rainbow Pre-school, Friendship Club and the Clinton Hall. The accounts can be viewed by parishioners by prior arrangement with the clerk.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: Cllr Tim Horner nominated in his absence, proposed by Cllr Collins and seconded by Cllr Laughton all agreed.

Vice Chair: Cllr Mark Phillips nominated, proposed by Cllr Scantlebury and seconded by Cllr Down all agreed.

Hall Committee Rep: Cllr Jan Sharpe nominated proposed and seconded all agreed.

Churchyard Committee: All agreed to committee Cllrs Nancekivell, Collins and Down being re-elected.

Advisory Group Rep; Cllr Mark Phillips proposed by Cllr Collins seconded by Cllr Scantlebury all agreed.

AOB: It was agreed to publicise the meeting better when the precept is to be set to invite parishioners along.

There was no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 9pm.