

Merton Parish Council – Agenda Support Document

Agenda Item 8.3.20 (c): Invitation to TDC Climate Emergency Workshop

Torridge District Parish Council Climate Emergency workshop **Saturday, 21st March, 2020, 10.00am – 4.00pm** **Caddsdwn Business Support Centre, Bideford**

We are delighted to invite Parish Councils from across Torridge to a one day workshop to support in the preparation of Climate Emergency responses. The workshop, run by 361 Energy, will be a hands-on day exploring a variety of topics where Parish Councils can have a direct impact.

A summary of the topics to be covered include:

- Carbon foot printing and the adaptation journey to Net Zero
- Green Spaces, tree planting and biodiversity
- Building Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Transportation

Attendees will spend 45 minutes at each table, working with experts to develop understanding and explore how their Parish Council could take steps to address the issues, building a mini action plan during the course of the day.

After the workshop a virtual community will also be created to enable Parish Councils to continue to work together and share learning. The aim is also to provide practical support to make sure that Parish Councils can role out plans as quickly as possible.

As such, the event will also be attended by;

- Rural Community Energy Fund- providing details of the feasibility funding they can provide
- North Devon AONB team- sharing details of their small grants programme
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve team- providing information on biodiversity and tree planting opportunities
- Electric Vehicle infrastructure providers
- Renewable energy providers who will be able to share details of Community Energy projects, including solar and ground source heat pumps.

Refreshments and lunch will be provided and there will be a nominal £10 charge to cover venue, refreshments / lunch and material costs.

To book, please visit www.hereisalink.co.uk

Meeting on Monday 9th March 2020, 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall.

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Agenda Item 8.3.20 (d): Letter from Torrington TC re: The Plough.

Dear Parish Clerk,

The Plough Arts Centre

I am writing on behalf of Great Torrington Town Council following the shocking and worrying news of the shortfall of funding for the Plough Arts Centre. At last week's Council meeting, the Director, Richard Wolfenden-Brown and Trustee John Eeles reported to Members. Following this presentation Members agreed to fully support the Plough in its endeavours to recover from this situation, move forward, identify longer term funding opportunities and create a sustainable platform.

Whilst the Plough is of huge importance to Great Torrington it is also very important throughout the wider community and because of this Great Torrington Town Council respectfully requests that local parish councils surrounding Great Torrington consider whether there is anything they could do, such as lobby for support or provide any funding to support the Plough Arts Centre either in the short-term and/or long-term.

At last week's Council meeting, Richard Wolfenden-Brown set out the following information for Members;

- The current difficulties experienced by the Plough Arts Centre are the result of a number of factors. The delay in identifying issues has resulted due to the retirement of the accountant last year, followed by a series of failed attempts to re-recruit to this position. This matter has now been resolved.
- There is therefore a short-term challenge and a recognised need and intention to build in long-term sustainability in a business that has numerous variables. The Plough Arts Centre is a registered charity. In the past The Plough received 68% government funding, but this has reduced to only 3% in current times resulting in a 97% variable income situation which leaves the Plough vulnerable.
- There has been a shift in recent years which means previously awarded grant funding can now only be applied to capital/project costs and no longer for revenue costs. So not only has the Plough been hit by generally reduced funding, but have also found opportunities to apply for revenue costs have reduced.
- In the mean-time there have been increases in core costs, such as; minimum wage increases, pension contributions, increase in bank charges, increased utility costs and health and safety requirements. At the same time, income loss due to new laws prohibiting the passing on of bank charges to debit and credit card users.
- Attendance for activities and shows etc. is not the issue. There has been a 55% increase in people over the past 5 years and the Plough currently host across 17 venues in Northern Devon. Last year they sold over 41,000 tickets for films and live events. Thousands more visited the galleries or came for workshops, community activities and the cafe. Total footfall is in excess of 70,000 per year.

The Plough is looking at a number of actions to help reduce core costs as well as increase income, but essentially needs additional assistance which could bring sustainable stability for a period of time.

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The Town Council cannot emphasise enough how important this facility is for the local community and beyond. As set out above, there have been significant increases in attendance and the number of activities and venues in recent years. The Plough is unique in many ways and some examples are set out below;

- There are few Art Centres left in Devon and Cornwall and the only other Multi-Arts Centre is the Phoenix in Exeter.
- The Plough provides for multi genres of art & crafts, media, exhibitions, workshops and music and numbers attending these events have increased significantly over recent years.
- The Plough offers options for all sections of society; in addition to the general public the Plough works with and supports schools (for example, film screenings, a “real” theatre venue for GTS pupils to perform) and special need groups.
- The Plough is a central hub for all local and far reaching artists as well as the local craft industry.
- The Plough is a significant facility which brings people from near and far into the town centre which has an impact on footfall and impact on the retail businesses as well as cafes in the town centre.
- The Plough works in 17 other venues across Devon and for example, have brought St Anne’s in Barnstaple alive and transformed it into a successful venue.
- The Plough is the hub for the Torrington 100 project providing alternative options for social prescribing for an area of 100 square miles around Great Torrington which is working to improve wellbeing for the people and communities of North Devon and Torridge.
- Local Estate Agents sponsor events as they recognise the value of the Plough in relation to encouraging people to move into the area.

The Plough Arts Centre is the least-funded multi-functioning Arts Centre in Britain that still works. The amount of funding requested by the Plough, £50,000 in total is relatively small if all agents agree to contribute.

I am sure you will agree that the Plough Arts Centre is not only a significant facility for Great Torrington and the Torridge district but for the whole of Devon. Great Torrington Town Council fully supports efforts to ensure the long-term prospects of this facility.

Great Torrington Town Council has provided an unconditional grant of £9,000 for the past 5 years and will consider the current predicament at next month’s Council meeting.

The Town Council has also written to Torridge District Council, North Devon District Council, and Devon County Council in support of the request for an immediate response and a long-term consideration for funding for the Plough Arts Centre so that this unique facility can remain within the locality.

Yours sincerely, Karen Chapman, Town Clerk for Great Torrington

Agenda Item 10.3.20 (d): Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2020-21.

Mrs Melanie Bickell has indicated that she is happy to continue as Internal Auditor and that the fee for carrying out the 2019-20 year-end internal audit and completing related AGAR documents will be £150 plus mileage. Provisional date of 9th April has been offered and if accepted mileage costs can be split with Drewsteignton Parish Council.

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Agenda Item 10.3.20 (f): Annual Planner for May 2020 to May 2021

<u>Month</u>	<u>Matter</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Actions/agenda item</u>
May 2020	- Agenda published by 6th May. - Annual Parish Council Meeting 11th May. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall. - Policies due for review at Annual Parish Council meeting.	- Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs	- Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents - Election of Chair and Vice-Chair to take place at this meeting. Completion and signing of AGAR documents. Along with review of Annual Policies (see below) and Insurance Cover. Purchase of Remembrance Wreath to be approved - MPC 001 Standing Orders - MPC 002 Code of Conduct - MPC 003 Financial Regulations - MPC 004 Scheme of Delegation - MPC 005 Complaints & Grievances Policy - MPC 006 Data retention & disposal Policy - MPC 012 Risk Management Policy - MPC 013 Internal Financial Control Policy
June 2020	- Submission of AGAR documents - Purchase of Remembrance Wreath	- Clerk/RFO - Clerk	- No later than the 26th of June. - Clerk to arrange purchase of Wreath as approved at APCM
July 2020	- Agenda Items from Cllrs - Agenda published by 8th July. - Annual Parish Council Meeting 13th July 7.30pm at Clinton Hall.	- All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs	- To be sent to Clerk no later than 3rd July - Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents. - Policies for review: MPC 007 Freedom of Information Policy MPC 008 Equality & Diversity Policy MPC 009 Anti-Fraud & corruption Policy MPC 010 Confidential reporting Policy MPC 011 Press & Media Policy
August 2020	Clerk Annual Leave (2 weeks)	Clerk & All Cllrs	24th August to 6th of September inclusive.

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September 2020	- Agenda Items from Cllrs - Agenda published by 9th Sept. - Parish Council Meeting 14th Sept. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall. - Change Cllr Email Passwords	- All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk	- To be sent to Clerk no later than 4th September - Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents - Policies for review: MPC 014 Data Protection Policy MPC 015 Health & Safety Policy MPC 016 Lone Worker Policy MPC 017 Cllr Emails and Own Device Policy MPC 018 Removable Media Policy - Passwords due to be changed.
October 2020	- Asset annual inspection report - Items for inclusion in the 2021-22 Budget - Agenda Items from Cllrs - Review salt supplies etc. for the winter.	- All Cllrs - All Cllrs - All Cllrs - Cllr Brown & Clerk	- Cllr to inspect assigned assets and email report on condition and any work that may be required by 30th October. - To be submitted to Clerk no later than 26th October. - To be sent to Clerk no later than 30th October - Check Salt supplies and reorder as required.
November 2020	- Draft RFO Budget & Precept recommendation - Agenda published by 4th Nov. - Parish Council Meeting 9th Nov. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall. <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Mick Harrison (Office of Police Crime Commissioner)	- Clerk - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs	1st Draft Budget to be presented at PCM - Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents - Policies for review at meeting: MPC 019 Internal Audit Policy
December 2020	Clerk Annual Leave (3 wks)	Clerk & All Cllrs	14th December to 3rd January inclusive.
January 2021	- Agenda Items from Cllrs - Agenda published by 6th Jan.	- All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs	- To be sent to Clerk no later than 3rd January. - Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents

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January 2021 Continued.	- Parish Council Meeting 11th Jan. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall. - Final draft RFO Budget & Precept recommendation - Book Speaker & Venue for Annual Parish Meeting	- Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk/RFO - Clerk	- To include: Clerks Annual Appraisal, guest speaker(s) (if required) for Parish Meeting and date. Authorisation for Clerk to book ROSPA inspection. - Final Draft Budget & Precept recommendation to be presented at PCM and resolved. - Clerk to confirm date with guest speaker & Clinton Hall. Posters to advertise.
February 2021	Agenda Items from Cllrs	All Cllrs	To be sent to Clerk <u>no later than 26th Feb.</u>
March 2021	- Agenda published by 3rd Mar. - Parish Council Meeting 8th Mar. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall. - Book IA inspection - Publish Parish Meeting Agenda	- Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk/RFO - Clerk	- Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents - To include: I.C.O renewal & Appointment of Internal Auditor to be approved at PCM, To approve next year's Annual Planner Policies for Review at meeting: MPC 020 Disciplinary Procedure MPC 021 Training Policy - Arrange approved IA to carry out inspection so that report can be received prior to Annual PCM - Agenda to be published with 14 clear days' notice for Parish Meeting.
April 2021	- Prepare Year End Accounts - Agenda Items from Cllrs	- Clerk/RFO - All Cllrs	- Prepare Year and accounts and AGAR with associated documents. Circulate to Cllrs for approval at Annual PCM. - To be sent to Clerk <u>no later than 30th April.</u>
May 2021	- Agenda published by 5th May. - Annual Parish Council Meeting 10th May. 7.30pm at Clinton Hall.	- Clerk & All Cllrs - Clerk & All Cllrs	- Cllrs to read agenda and supporting documents - Election of Chair and Vice-Chair to take place at this meeting. Completion and signing of AGAR documents. Along with review of Annual Policies and Insurance Cover. Purchase of Remembrance Wreath to be approved.

Meeting on Monday 9th March 2020, 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall.