

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary meeting held on Monday 26th April 2021, 7:30pm via Zoom.

This meeting was held virtually in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020.

Parish Cllrs Present: Steve Papworth (Chair), Brian Stacey, Laura Twomey & Nigel Lang.

Also in attendance: Alice Turner (Clerk), County Cllr Andrew Saywell & Mr Giles Kops (Co-option candidate). No members of the public were in attendance.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED

1.4.21 Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that the meeting was being recorded by the Clerk to assist in the preparation of the minutes.

2.4.21 Apologies for absence:

Resolution required to approve apologies (with reasons) made to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

The Clerk informed the Council that she had received apologies from District Cllr Wiseman and Cllr Nancekivell (Work). She also reported that Cllr Brown was hoping to attend later in the meeting due to family commitment.

Cllr Twomey proposed that apologies for absence be approved from Cllr Nancekivell (Work), seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/060)

3.4.21 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Cllrs to consider the approval of the Minutes of the following virtual meetings held:

- a) Monday 11th January 2021.
- b) Monday 8th March 2021.

Following discussions *Cllr Papworth proposed that the minutes of the virtual meeting held on Monday 11th January 2021 & Monday 8th March 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record with signing to take place once physical meetings resume, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/061)*

4.4.21 Co-option Vacancy – Cllrs to consider candidate(s).

The Chair invited Mr Giles Kops to address the Council and Cllrs asked questions, *Cllr Lang proposed that Mr Giles Kops be co-opted as a member of Merton Parish Council, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/062)*

The Clerk to arrange for signing of declaration of acceptance of office form with Cllr Kops.
Action: Clerk.

5.4.21 Declarations of Interest: None.

6.4.21 Public Speaking Time: None.

7.4.21 District / County Councillors & Police Reports.

- a) County Cllr Andrew Saywell

Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 26th April the DCC area of Devon now up to 20,180 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.

~Minutes of meeting held 26-04-2021 ~ Initialled as a correct record: _____

- Since the 21st April that is a weekly increase of 95 infections, with most new infections coming from the South of Devon.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were just 5 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon was 15 in the last 7 days, West Devon 5 cases in the last 7 days.
- **Infection rates have risen slightly in Devon, but numbers remain very low and this increase has come after we've seen more sectors of the economy re-open as part of the Government roadmap.**

We are continuing to do well in keeping our infection rates down. While we hope the vaccine rollout will lead us back to normality, for the time being it is vital that we keep up our efforts to follow the guidance of staying at home and if and when we are out and about to follow the 'hands, face, space' guidance.

COVID Vaccinations

The rollout of the vaccine in Devon and in Torrington Rural continues to go well.

I sent a briefing note from the NHS to the Parish Councils earlier this month but the main points for vaccine rollout:

- **671,070 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose between 8th December – 4th April, while more than 210,000 second doses have been given.**
- **Latest estimate is more than 90% of anyone over 50 in Devon has received their first dose. In total 67.2% of the adult population in Devon, those aged 16 +, have received a first dose.**
- People aged 44-49 are being invited to have their first dose.
- **If you have an appointment for a first or second dose these appointments remain in place and its really important that you attend it as planned.**
- Even when you have been vaccinated, you must still continue to follow the COVID-19 safety rules – remember hands, face, space, and fresh air!

This remains a huge logistical exercise, very much dependent upon the speed and rate of vaccine supplies. Please wait for the NHS to contact you when it is your turn. The roll out is getting more localised, those who cannot travel far should be able to get their jab administered locally.

Local Covid Testing

Rapid Lateral Flow community testing is now available in Torrington. This is for anyone without symptoms but aimed specifically at key workers/people who cannot work from home etc.

The DCC Mobile Testing site at Torrington is available on:

- **Tuesday:** 3:30 pm to 7 pm – Sydney House Car Park, EX38 8AA
- **Friday:** 11 am to 2:30 pm – Sydney House Car Park, EX38 8AA

My understanding is no appointment is necessary to get a test at these walk in locations.

Local Highways Matters

The new Neighbourhood Highways Officer for our area is Russell Hookway who is taking over from Darryl Jagger. Russell previously worked for the North Devon area Highways Team and Cllrs there spoke very highly of him. Please give him some time to familiarise himself with the area though I am sure he will get to grips with Torrington Rural and the issues we face here very soon.

Elections and thank you!

As you know, this is my last Parish Council meeting before the May Elections to Devon County. I will be standing again but should I not be returned I would like to place on record my thanks to the Parish Council for their kind support over the years and to thank you for all the work you have done for the Parish during the time I have been on the County Council. It has been a real honour and privilege to represent Merton and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the residents of the Parish for their kindness and support over the last four years.

~Minutes of meeting held 26-04-2021 ~ Initialled as a correct record: _____

Campaigning in the local elections had resumed again following the sad death of Prince Philip. If anyone is unsure or uncertain about voting in the election they can still apply for a Proxy Vote. Emergency Proxies will also be available for anyone who is told to self-isolate. I remain at your service until May and as ever, if there are any issues you'd like me to look into please get in touch.

b) District Cllr Richard Wiseman – No report received.

c) Police report - FPCSO Brown – No report received.

8.4.21 Year end documents. (Clerk)

a) To receive Internal Audit report for financial year 2020-21.

Cllr Twomey proposed that the Internal Audit report for 2020-21 be accepted, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/063)

b) To approve Certificate of Exemption from External Audit for the 2020-2021 year.

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council certify themselves as Exemption from External Audit for the 2020-2021 year, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/064)

c) To complete and approve Annual Governance Statement 2020-21.

Cllrs discussed and completed the Annual governance statement for 2020-21. Cllr Twomey proposed that the Annual governance statement for 2020-21 be approved as completed at the meeting, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/065)

d) To approve Annual Accounting Statement 2020-21 & supporting documents.

Cllr Stacey proposed that the Council Annual Accounting Statement 2020-21 & supporting documents as presented in the Agenda Support document, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/066)

e) To approve dates for Exercise of Public rights. (Wednesday 2nd June to Thursday 15th July 2021 inclusive)

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council approve dates for Exercise of Public rights as Wednesday 2nd June to Thursday 15th July 2021 inclusive with the Clerk to make all necessary arrangements to enable safe access to the accounts if requested, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/067)

9.4.21 Governance Documents & Policies

Cllrs to consider/review the following documents:

a) MPC 022 Reserves Policy V1.0 – New Policy.

Cllr Lang proposed that the Council approve and ratify with immediate effect MPC 022 Reserves Policy V1.0, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/068)

b) MPC 014 Data Protection Policy V1.0 R2

c) MPC 015 Health & Safety V1.0 R2

d) MPC 016 Lone worker Policy V1.0 R2

e) MPC 017 Cllr Emails and Own Device Policy V1.0 R2

f) MPC 018 Removable Media Policy V1.0 R2

Cllrs discussed the documents and as documents MPC 014 to MPC 018 inclusive were for annual review with no amendments required Cllrs reviewed them together.

Cllr Papworth proposed that the following policies be accepted without amendments: MPC 014 Data Protection Policy V1.0 R2, MPC 015 Health & Safety V1.0 R2, MPC 016 Lone worker Policy V1.0 R2, MPC 017 Cllr Emails and Own Device Policy V1.0 R2 and MPC 018 Removable Media Policy V1.0 R2, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/069)

~Minutes of meeting held 26-04-2021 ~ Initialled as a correct record: _____

10.4.21 Current & New Business:

a) Update on Flowerbed in Square including replanting scheme (Cllr Papworth)

Cllr Papworth reported that the cost to replant the flower boarder would be £400-500, following discussion Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council approve a replanting scheme for the flower boarder in the Square of up to £500, which includes the £100 already donated by Mr Mansfield, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/070)

Power to spend: Open Spaces Act 1906 S.10

Funding Source: Earmarked reserve “Assets Fund”

b) Traffic & Highways Concerns (Chair)

No Updates at this time.

c) Drainage Issues with the Square - Update (Chair/Cllr Scantlebury)

Deferred to May due to absence of Cllr Scantlebury.

d) Extension of Double Yellow lines (Chair)

Cllrs discussed the merit of extending the yellow line.

Cllr Papworth suggested that the new Neighbourhood Highways Officer (NHO) be contacted and ask for onsite meeting with NHO, Parish Cllrs & County Cllr sometime in mid may

e) Village Maintenance (Cllr Stacey)

Cllr Stacey agreed to empty the bin in the play area. Cllr Papworth reported that he had been in contact with the District Cllr to ask if it was TDC’s responsibility to empty the bin in the play area.

f) To consider report that Bus shelter requires sweeping out. (Cllr Stacey)

Cllr Lang reported that he had done this, but advised that he felt that a proper bin with section for safe cigarette disposal would be worth investigating. Cllrs asked the Clerk to look into cost of Bin with cigarette section.

g) Consideration of participation in Spring Clean (Chair) (See Agenda Support Document)

Cllrs discussed and asked the Clerk to post on Facebook to see if there was any local interest.

11.4.21 Clerks reports:

a) Annual inspection of the Play equipment – report received. (See Agenda Support Document)

Cllrs to consider authorising Clerk to arrange for remedial works to be carried out.

Cllr Stacey proposed that the Council authorise the Clerk to obtain a price for carrying out the remedial works highlighted in the ROSPA report and in consultation with the Chair arrange for the works to be carried out, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried.

(RR2020/071) *Power to spend: LG(MP)A 1976 s.19*

Funding Source: Assets/Play Equip. & Earmarked reserve “Assets Fund”

b) Consideration of creation of Resilience Plan.

Following discussions Cllrs believed that there is a plan in existence and asked the Clerk to investigate.

12.4.21 Cllr reports and Items for future agendas: None.

13.4.21 Finance: (Clerk).

a) To consider financial schedule of payments as presented at the Meeting. ([Appendix A](#))

Cllr Papworth proposed that the financial schedule of payments as presented at the Meeting be approved, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2020/072)

14.4.21 Confirmation of next meeting date:

The Annual Parish Council Meeting held on **Tuesday the 4th of May 7.30pm via Zoom.**

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

~Minutes of meeting held 26-04-2021 ~ Initialled as a correct record: _____

Appendix A: Financial Schedule.**Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):**

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding Source
(PM2022/001)	£82.20	Playsafety Limited	Annual Inspection of Play equip.	LG(MP)A 1976 s.19	Assets/Play Equip.
PM2022/002	£150.00	Melanie Bickell	Internal Audit (year-end 2020-21)	LGA 1972 S.111	Prof Fees/Audit
PM2022/003	£250.56	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (8.3.21 - 4.4.21)	LGA 1972 S.112	Staff Costs/Clerks Salary
PM2022/004	£20.25	Alice Turner	Clerks Expenses (April 2021)	LGA 1972 S.111	Staff Costs/Office exp.
TOTAL	£420.81				

Receipts since last meeting for information:

Ref.	method	Details	Amount
PR2022/001	Bacs	1 st Half Precept	£4175.00
TOTAL			£4175.00

Monies held as Reserves:

Amount	Details
£1,500	Election cost (Earmarked Reserve)
£8,000	Square Improvements (Earmarked Reserve)
£500	Defibrillator Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£636	TAP Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£300	Defibrillator Supplies (Earmarked Reserve)
£1,350	Assets Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£100	Hall Hire (Earmarked Reserve)
£1,000	Precept Contingency
£500.00	General Reserve
£13,886	TOTAL

Bank Situation

Bank Total 26/04/2021	£19,572.50
Less Payments presented	£420.81
Plus receipts Received (not in Bank Total)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£13,886.00
Available Balance	£5,265.69

Signed as a true record: _____

Printed: Cllr. S. Papworth Date: _____Approved by Resolution: RR2021/004

~Minutes of meeting held 26-04-2021 ~ Initialled as a correct record: _____