

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 4th May 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.

Cllrs Present: Steve Papworth (Chair), Laura Twomey (Vice-Chair), Giles Kops & Rob Nancekivell.

Also in attendance: Alice Turner (Clerk) & District Cllr Richard Wiseman. No members of the public were in attendance.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED

1.5.21 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.

2.5.21: Election of Chair

To include arrangements for signing of declaration of acceptance of office forms.

[Cllr Nancekivell proposed that Cllr Papworth be elected as Chair, seconded Cllr Twomey, Cllr Papworth accepted the nomination, All in Favour – Motion Carried \(RR2021/001\)](#) no other nominations were received.

The Clerk to arrange for Cllr Papworth to sign the declaration of acceptance of office of Chair in line with Covid regulations.

3.5.21 Election of Vice-Chair

To include arrangements for signing of declaration of acceptance of office forms

[Cllr Papworth proposed that Cllr Twomey be elected as Vice Chair, seconded Cllr Nancekivell, Cllr Twomey accepted the nomination, All in Favour – Motion Carried \(RR2021/002\)](#) no other nominations were received.

The Clerk to arrange for Cllr Twomey to sign the declaration of acceptance of office of Vice-Chair in line with Covid regulations.

4.5.21 Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lang, Brown (prior commitments) also apologies from Cllr Scantlebury (Work commitment).

[Cllr Nancekivell proposed that apologies for absence be approved from Cllrs Lang, Brown \(prior commitments\) and Cllr Scantlebury \(Work commitment\), seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/003\)](#)

The Clerk also reported that she had received apologies from County Councillor Andrew Saywell.

5.5.21 Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Cllrs to consider the approval of the Minutes of the Extra-ordinary virtual meeting held Monday 26th April 2021.

[Cllr Twomey proposed that the minutes of the virtual Extra-ordinary meeting held on Monday 26th April 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record with signing to take place once physical meetings resume, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/004\)](#)

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6.5.21 Declarations of Interest: None declared at this point.

7.5.21 Public Speaking Time: None

8.5.21 District / County Councillors & Police Reports.

a) County Cllr Andrew Saywell (Written report received)

Please see my report below, I hope you find this update useful.

Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 4th May the DCC area of Devon now up to 20,306 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.
- Since the 29th April that is a weekly increase of 118 infections, with most new infections coming from the South and East of Devon.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were just 9 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon was 16 in the last 7 days, West Devon 5 cases in the last 7 days.
- Infection numbers are now broadly static over the past couple of week, seeing 10-15 new cases a day on average, but given low numbers we are seeing marginal rises/falls but can play out as large percentage swings.
- We are seeing infection cases predominately in young people and working age adults (picked up through asymptomatic testing) so it is important we all still adhere to the public health measures and restrictions (Hands, Face, Space, Fresh air) both within work and outside work.
- DCC are still encouraging people to get a rapid Lateral Flow test twice a week, even if you have been vaccinated as you can still catch COVID and be infectious. Please visit **[Devon.cc/testing](https://devon.cc/testing)** to find out how you can get tested.

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:

- **683,712 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose between 8th December – 25th April, while more than 270,000 second doses have been given.**
- **Latest estimate is more than 90% of anyone over 50 in Devon has received their first dose. In total 68.4% of the adult population in Devon, those aged 16 +, have received a first dose.**
- Phase 2 over the vaccine programme (under 50's) has commenced. Please wait to be contact and then you can book your 1st and 2nd jab.
- **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. I hope we will also in time be able to bring a mobile testing site to Winkleigh. Home testing kits are also available. More information can be found at devon.cc/testing

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. Thank you to everyone in Merton. I hope to be back after 6th May but if not, thank you Merton and all the very best for the future!

b) District Cllr Richard Wiseman

Visitors centre at Northam Burrows.

This is progressing well, with the pre-fab unit are now on site, the opening times are still unconfirmed.

Kenwith Valley nature reserve:

TDC are jointly with the Bridge Trust investing £60,000 in a tree planting scheme in the Kenwith Valley.

Torridge Swimming Pool.

Torridge Swimming Pool opened in the middle of last month and has been seeing reasonable use.

Dog restrictions at Westward Ho!

From the 1st of May to the 30th of September Torridge District Council will once again be introducing a restriction for Dogs on sections of Westward Ho! beach and the promenade. The restriction helps create designated usage areas on the beach to ensure that different groups engaged in different activities can all safely access and enjoy this popular resort. It also helps the authority to meet the criteria for the annually assessed Blue Flag Award, which is highly prized, and important to bathers and the local tourist industry.

The restricted area will be the same as in previous years and Dogs will be allowed at the north end of the beach between Sandymere Bridge and the Taw/Torridge estuary. Dogs will be prohibited to the south of Sandymere Bridge and will need to be kept on a lead on the promenade. The order allows for fixed penalties of £100 to be issued in cases where owners fail to comply with the restriction, which will be clearly mapped out in signage.

When the tide is in people can head out along the coast path or explore the fantastic network of footpaths between Northam and Bideford. Many of these walks can be found on the South West Coast Path website. Dog walkers should be wary that there are many lambs, baby chicks and rabbits on the burrows at this time of year and even well-trained dogs may need to be kept on a lead when moving away from the beach to avoid harm to the wildlife.

Grants:

Cllr Wiseman reported that TDC has handed out £49.5 million pounds in various Grants in the Torridge area, mostly to businesses.

The latest scheme is the Business re-start scheme which is still ongoing, it applies to any businesses which pay business rates, and certain criteria apply (available on the TDC website).

TDC AGM:

TDC have recently held their Annual General Meeting, Independent group still hold 50% of the seats on the Council, the Leader of the Council is still Ken James and the Chair of Council is now Doug Bushby.

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c) Police report - FPCSO Brown

Crimes Recorded

Offence	Recorded Crimes 24-03-21 to 24-04- 21	Recorded Crimes 24-03-20 to 24-04- 20	Difference in recorded Crimes (%)
Violence without Injury	0	1	-100%
Other Sexual Offences	0	1	-100%
Criminal Damage	0	1	-100%
TOTAL:	0	3	

Incidents Recorded

Incident closing Category	Recorded Incidents 24-03-21 to 24-04- 21	Recorded Incidents 24-03-20 to 24-04- 20	Difference in recorded Incidents (%)
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	1	-100%
Crime Recorded	0	2	-100%
Public Safety	3	0	
Transport	0	1	-100%
TOTAL:	3	4	

9.5.21 Governance Documents & Policies

Cllrs to consider/review the following documents (available from the Clerk):

- a) **MPC 001 Standing Orders V4.0 R1**
- b) **MPC 002 Code of Conduct V2.0 R2**
- c) **MPC 003 Financial Regulations V3.0 – New Version.**
- d) **MPC 004 Scheme of Delegation V2.0 R1**
- e) **MPC 012 Risk Management Policy V3.0 – New Version.**
- f) **MPC 013 Internal Financial Control Policy V2.0 R1**

Cllrs discussed the documents and as documents MPC 001, 002, 004 and 013 were for annual review with no amendments required Cllrs reviewed them together.

Cllr Papworth proposed that the following policies be accepted without amendments: MPC 001 Standing Orders V4.0 R1, MPC 002 Code of Conduct V2.0 R2, MPC 004 Scheme of Delegation V2.0 R1 and MPC 013 Internal Financial Control Policy V2.0 R1, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/005)

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council approve and ratify MPC 012 Risk Management Policy V3.0, with immediate effect, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/006)

Following discussion Cllr Twomey proposed that the Council defer MPC 003 Financial Regulations V3.0, and that the Clerk re-issue the document with all changes highlighted for Cllrs to consider at the next meeting, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/007) **ACTION: Clerk**

10.5.21 Annual Review and approval of:

- a) **Annual Subscription to NALC/DALC £66.62**

Cllr Twomey proposed that the Annual subscription to DALC/NALC for £66.62 be approved, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried (RR2021/008)

Power to spend: LGA 1972 s.143 (1)(b) Funding Source: Prof. Fees / Subs

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b) Approval of Grant payments

Cllr Papworth declared a personal interest in the Merton Churchyard Fund. (DOI/003)

Cllr Nancekivell proposed that £300 be paid to the Merton Churchyard fund for the Maintenance of public graveyard under S.137 as they felt that to not pay would be a greater financial detriment to the Parish, seconded Cllr Twomey. 3 in Favour, 1 abstention – Motion Carried (RR2021/009)

Power to spend: LGA 1972 s.137. (Expenditure in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure.)

Funding Source: Grants & Donations/Standing Grants

Cllr Papworth proposed that the following grants be paid: N.D Records Office £50, ODCTG £50, Plough Arts Centre £100 & Citizens Advice Bureau £50, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried (RR2021/010)

Power to spend: LGA 1972 s.137. (Expenditure in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure.)

Funding Source: Grants & Donations/Other Donations

c) Cllrs roles and membership on external groups

<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Councillor in role</u>
Church Yard committee rep(s)	Cllrs Papworth & Stacey
Playground committee rep(s)	Cllrs Twomey & Stacey
Clinton Hall Committee rep(s)	Cllr Kops
Defibrillator	Cllr Papworth
Liaison with Handyman/Grass Cutting	Cllr Papworth/Clerk
Snow Warden	Cllr Brown
Asset inspection	All Councillors

Cllr Twomey proposed that the Cllrs as discussed be appointed to the roles and memberships, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried (RR2021/011)

d) Asset register (As per Agenda Support Document)

Cllr Nancekivell that the asset register as presented in the Agenda Support Document be approved, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried (RR2021/012)

e) Asset inspection arrangements.

Cllrs agreed to the inspection arrangements as listed below.

Asset	Inspected by	Location
<u>LAND</u>		
The Square	Cllr Scantlebury	Merton Village Square
<u>STRUCTURES</u>		
Stone bus shelter	Cllr Scantlebury	The Square
Granite Stone Monument (The Monk Stone)	Cllr Kops	Corner of road to The Clinton Hall
Jubilee Sundial	Cllr Kops	Beside road to The Clinton Hall
Football Posts	Cllrs Nancekivell	Playing Field
DAAT Light	Cllr Kops	Playing Field
Wooden bus shelter	Cllr Scantlebury	Opposite The Square
Picnic tables	Cllr Twomey	Play area
Bench	Cllr Stacey	A386 opp. Malt Scoop
Bench	Cllr Stacey	Junction of Beaford rd & A386
Bench	Cllr Stacey	Junction of road to Hall & A386

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Bench	Cllr Stacey	Between Garage & Clinton Gardens
EQUIPMENT		
2-way radios	Cllr Papworth	The Clinton Hall
Glass Vase	Cllr Papworth	The Clinton Hall
Defibrillator	Cllr Papworth	Outside Post Office
Laptop & Mouse	Clerk	Clerk's residence
Play Equipment & Surface	N/A (ROSPA)	Play area
Filing Cabinet	Clerk	Clerk's residence
Laptop Bag	Clerk	Clerk's residence
External Hard-drive	Clerk	Clerk's residence
Defibrillator Cabinet	Cllr Papworth	Outside Post Office
Notice Board	Cllr Papworth	Outside Post Office
Encrypted Memory Stick	Clerk	Clerk's residence

f) To Review and Approve the Council's insurance arrangements - Documents to be presented at the meeting.

The Clerk reported that she has not yet received the renewal quote but informed the Council that they are currently in a 3 year LTA with Came & Company.

Action: Clerk to circulate quote to Cllrs for comment once received and following consultation with the Chair to pay the invoice under scheme of delegation and report back to the next meeting.

Power to spend: LGA 1972 S.111 Funding Source: Admin / Insurance

11.5.21 Current & New Business:

a) Update on Flowerbed in Square (Chair)

Cllr Papworth reported that he has contact Mr Hipkin who is ordering the plants. The Chair will liaise with Mr Hipkin as to the arrival of the plants and ask for volunteers via Facebook to help plant them. The bed will be mulched with wood chips afterplanting.

b) Traffic & Highways Concerns (Chair/Clerk) No update.

c) Drainage Issues with the Square (Cllr Scantlebury)

Deferred to next meeting due to absence of Cllr Scantlebury

d) Regular checks of DAAT night landing light (Chair/Clerk)

Cllr Kops will carry out month inspections of the DAAT night landing light.

e) Provision of bin with cigarette section for bus stop (Clerk)

Action: Clerk to create document of possible options and circulate to Cllrs for feedback.

Power to spend: Litter Act 1983 SS.5-6 Funding Source: Assets/Purchases

f) To approve Purchase of Poppy wreath (Clerk)

Cllrs discussed the matter and Cllr Papworth proposed that the Clerk purchase a poppy wreath for Remembrance Sunday at a cost of £17, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried (RR2021/013)

Power to spend: LGA 1972. S.137 (Expenditure in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure.)

Funding Source: Grants & Donations/Poppy Wreath.

12.5.21 Finance: Clerk to present documents for this item at the Meeting.

a) To approve financial schedule of payments as presented by the Clerk. ([Appendix A](#))

Cllr Nancekivell proposed that the financial schedule of payments as presented at the Meeting be approved, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/014)

b) To receive schedule of Clerks Smoothed Salary.

Cllr Kops proposed that the schedule of Clerks Smoothed Salary as presented at the Meeting be approved, seconded Cllr Nancekivell. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/015)

c) To receive Year-End Budget Report. ([Appendix B](#))

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Year-End Budget report and suggested Virements as presented in the Agenda Support Document be approved, seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/016)

13.5.21 Cllr reports and Items for future agendas: None.

14.5.21 Confirmation of next meeting date:

The Next meeting will be on Monday 12th July at 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall (subject to Covid regulations/guidance in force at the time).

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.23pm.

Appendix A: Financial Schedule.

Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding Source
PM2022/005	£66.62	D.A.L.C	Annual Membership to NALC & DALC	LGA 1972 s.143 (1)(b)	Prof. Fees/Subs
TOTAL	£66.62				

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 04/05/2021	£19,151.69
Less Payments presented	£66.62
Plus receipts Received (if after Balance date)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£13,886.00
Available Balance	£5,199.07

Appendix B: Year-End Budget Report 2020-21.

Income:

INCOME	2020/21 Budget	Actual Income 31-12-2020	Difference	Notes
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Precept	8000.00	8000.00	0.00	
Parking Permits	8.00	18.00	10.00	
Other/grants	392.00	1298.66	906.66	Covid-19 grants
TOTAL	8400.00	9316.66	916.66	

Expenditure

	2020/21 Budget	Actual spent to 31-03- 2021	Difference	Over/Under/On Budget	NOTES
STAFF COSTS	£4,100.00	£3,733.57	£366.43	Under	
Clerk Salary & costs	£3,600.00	£3,368.84	£231.16	Under	
Office Expenses	£400.00	£309.73	£90.27	Under	
Training	£100.00	£55.00	£45.00	Under	Virement recommended
ADMIN	£925.00	£738.27	£186.73	Under	
Insurance	£500.00	£490.28	£9.72	Under	
Website	£200.00	£122.50	£77.50	Under	Virement recommended
Hall Hire	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00	On	
Norton Anti-virus	£25.00	£25.49	-£0.49	Under	£4.68 from 2021-22 budget
Contingency	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under	
RUNNING COSTS	£392.00	£350.87	£41.13	Under	
Grass Cutting & Village Maintenance	£392.00	£350.87	£41.13	Under	
PROFESSIONAL FEES	£460.00	£447.00	£13.00	Under	
Audit	£350.00	£350.00	£0.00	On	
I.C.O	£40.00	£35.00	£5.00	Under	
Subs/Memberships	£70.00	£62.00	£8.00	Under	
ASSETS	£1,922.00	£1,922.00	£0.00	On	
Maintenance	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00	On	
Purchases	£950.00	£950.00	£0.00	On	
Defibrillator	£350.00	£350.00	£0.00	On	
Play Equip.	£122.00	£122.00	£0.00	On	
GRANT/DONATION	£598.00	£467.00	£131.00	Under	
Standing Grants	£428.00	£300.00	£128.00	Under	
Poppy Wreath	£20.00	£17.00	£3.00	Under	
Other Grants/Donations	£150.00	£150.00	£0.00	ON	
Reserves	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£0.00	ON	
General	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00	On	
Precept Contingency	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	On	

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Unbudgeted Spending	£0.00	£883.68	-£883.68	Under	
Unbudgeted Spending	1362.08	£883.68	£478.40	Under	COVID-19 Grant
TOTALS	£9,897.00	£9,158.71	£738.29	Under	

Virement Recommended:

<u>From</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>To</u>
Staff Costs/ Training	£45.00	EMR "Training"
Admin/Website	£77.50	EMR "Training"

Signed as a true record: Steve Papworth

Printed: Cllr. S. Papworth Date: 12th July 2021