

Merton Parish Council.

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Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 12th July 2021 at 7:30pm at the Clinton Hall, Merton.

Cllrs Present: Steve Papworth (Chair), Brian Stacey, Paul Scantlebury, Bill Brown, Giles Kops, Nigel Lang & Rob Nancekivell.

Also in attendance: Alice Turner (Clerk) & County Cllr Andrew Saywell. No members of the public were in attendance.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED

1.7.21 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. The recording will be deleted once the draft minutes are published on the Website.

2.7.21 Apologies for absence:

The Clerk reported that she had received apologies from Cllr Twomey (family commitment) Cllr Nancekivell proposed that apologies for absence be approved from Cllr Twomey (family commitment), seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/017)

3.7.21 Minutes of the Last Meeting: [minutes can be found on the website.](#)

Cllrs to consider the approval of the Minutes of the Virtual Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 4th May 2021.

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the minutes of the Virtual Annual Council meeting held on Tuesday 4th May 2021 be signed as a true and accurate record, seconded Cllr Kops. 6 in Favour, 1 abstention – Motion Carried. (RR2021/018)

4.7.21 Declarations of Interest: None

5.7.21 Public Speaking Time: None

6.7.21 District / County Councillors & Police Reports.

a) County Cllr Andrew Saywell

Elections and Thank You!

As this is the first meeting since the election I would like to thank the people of Merton and Torrington Rural for re-electing me as your County Councillor, it is an amazing privilege to represent this area and communities like Merton at County Hall and I would like to thank the electors for their vote of confidence in me, returning me with 55% of the vote and an increased majority of 1,525 votes. I will do all that I can to repay that trust and represent everyone, however they so voted.

Cabinet Position and Priorities for the New Term

The work of the new Council has now begun following the Elections. The Leader of the Council, Cllr John Hart, has asked me to join the County Council Cabinet – a big step up in responsibility for me. My portfolio on the Cabinet will be ‘Organisational Development, Workforce and Digital Transformation’ and covers a wide remit from staffing, ICT, communications, websites and so on.

Despite these new responsibilities, my constituency work remains a priority – I will continue to follow up local matters and if I can, use my new position to advance the priorities of Torrington Rural.

The priority for the new Administration is Recovery and Regeneration as we come out of the pandemic and will be the theme of the Council for the next four years.

Coronavirus

- Stats – As of 12th July the DCC area of Devon now up to 25,212 coronavirus infections since the start of the pandemic.
- Since the 7th July that is a weekly increase of 619 infections, an increase of just under 60% the previous week.
- By way of comparison... in Torridge there were 56 new infections in the last 7 days, North Devon was 140 in the last 7 days, West Devon 65 cases in the last 7 days. The bulk of the Devon wide increase comes from Exeter (357 new weekly cases), Teignbridge (422 new cases) and the South Hams where there were 203 new infections.

The rise in cases across Devon has been driven by unvaccinated young adults or young people still in education, with the 15-19 year olds and 20-24 year olds having the highest infection rates.

As I am sure you are aware, we saw a large outbreak associated with Great Torrington School and this did drive our local infection numbers up. DCC and other agencies have worked closely with the school to manage the outbreak, and it has been successfully contained – it did not spill out into the wider community, and weekly cases in the Torrington Rural area are now falling.. I believe GTS dealt with a difficult situation extremely well given the circumstances.

Despite the rise in cases, thankfully we have not yet seen an increase in hospitalisations or deaths. As of last week's figures, the number of hospitalisations remain relatively low with just 11 people in Devon in acute beds with Covid-19 and only 1 in ICU.

There is also a clear 'vaccine affect' in infections. The infection rate in Torridge for 0-59s is 111.5 per 100,000. For over 60s it is 28.8 (and only in the last two weeks has the rate in the over 60s increased). For Devon, infection rates for 0-59s is 287.6, over 60s is 35.6.

Some over 60s or double vaccinated people will likely test positive – but the chances of them developing serious illness will be greatly diminished by having the vaccine.

'Unlocking' on July 19th

Despite the increase in infections, I do not believe this should be a cause for panic. We should remain careful, up to and beyond the 19th July, I will continue to follow Covid precautions as and when it is appropriate, and will continue to take lateral flow tests. The removal of legal Covid restrictions will be good news for our local businesses, especially those in the hospitality sector. Others I know may feel more uneasy. The people of Torrington Rural have shown great fortitude and common sense throughout this pandemic, I believe they will continue to do so in the coming months and that thanks to their behaviour and a high vaccine uptake, we will keep local Covid infections low.

Above all the key message remains, **get your jab when you are called up!**

Second Dose appointments have been brought forward from 12 weeks to 8 weeks. I have brought my second dose forward to later this month and would urge anyone else in similar circumstances to do the same.

Rapid Lateral Flow Testing

Rapid Lateral Flow tests can be ordered off the Government website or collected from **DCC Mobile Community Testing Vans**. The Mobile Service is currently in Torrington **Tuesdays 1.30pm to 5pm and Thursdays 9am to 12.30pm**, Sydney House Car Park. The Van is also

available in Holsworthy on Wednesdays and Sundays, 9am-5pm, at The Manor Car Park. Or in Okehampton, in Waitrose Car Park, on Tuesdays and Fridays, 9am-5pm.

Full times and availability of mobile testing sites can be found online here

- <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/rapid-testing-devon/rapid-lateral-flow-tests-site-locations-and-opening-times/>

Remember, lateral flow tests are only for people who DON'T have symptoms and are designed to pick up cases which are asymptomatic. If you have any symptoms book a PCR Test through the Government website.

More information can be found online at devon.cc/testing

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 week but the main points for vaccine rollout:

- **All adults aged 18 and over** on 1st July are eligible to book their vaccination.
- **Second doses brought forward from 12 weeks to 8 weeks. Anyone under 40 is being urged to bring forward their second vaccine dose to 8 weeks after their first.**
- **877,374 people in Devon received their first vaccine dose up to 4th July, while 676,812 second doses have been given.**
- **Over two thirds of adults in Devon have received both doses, and 9/10 adults have received their first dose.**
- **Latest estimate is 90% of people aged over 50 in Devon have received both doses. Over 60% of 18-24 year olds in Devon have received a first dose.**

Return to the Office at DCC

Despite the removal of legal Covid restrictions the majority of DCC's workforce will, for the time being, continue to work from home. The enforcement of isolating contacts of people who have tested positive makes office working problematic... e.g. you would not want a whole team of social workers forced into self-isolation if one of them tests positive in the workplace and their colleagues are 'pinged'. However, staff who need to use or work in an Office will continue to be allowed to do so, though Covid measures will for the time being remain in place.

In the long term the Council is looking at flexible or 'agile' working arrangements though work on this is ongoing and is unlikely to be finalised until later in the autumn.

Local Highways Matters

Limers Lane

I am aware there has been a complaint about the condition of this road and with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer I will investigate this.

Potholes

Just a reminder regarding potholes, **it is really important that residents continue to report potholes and other highways defects.** I cannot stress enough this is a numbers game – the more potholes reported the more likely it is we can have permanent repair works like resurfacing take place. Please visit devon.cc/report-it to report potholes and other highways defects online.

DCC Bids for Community Renewal Funding

A programme of bids totalling more than £12.2 million has been submitted by Devon County Council to a new Government funding scheme which aims to support communities and businesses to recover after the Coronavirus pandemic.

Devon's bid is made up 16 projects from across the county which have the potential to generate around 620 jobs, support the creation of 400 new businesses, and help 3,000 people to retrain.

Torridge activity accounts for £3million of the £12million bid, including bids for the biosphere, agriculture, and upskilling young people and self-employed workers. I recently met with Torridge District Council's Economic Regeneration Manager Chris Fuller and stressed to him that if these bids are successful that I would like to see funding drawn down into our area, and not focused exclusively on the larger towns.

b) District Cllr Richard Wiseman – No report received.

c) Police report - FPCSO Brown.

Crimes Recorded – NONE.

Incidents Recorded – as below.

Incident closing Category	Recorded Incidents 13-06-21 to 12-07-21	Recorded Incidents 13-06-20 to 12-07-20	Difference in recorded incidents (%)
Public Safety (concern for welfare)	2	1	100%
Transport (road traffic collision)	1	0	
TOTAL:	3	1	200%

7.7.21 Governance Documents & Policies

To consider approval of the following documents (available on the website):

a) MPC 003 Financial Regulations V3.0 – New Version.

Cllrs reviewed MPC 003 Financial Regulations V3.0 document which showed all amendments and following discussion [Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the Council approve and ratify MPC 003 Financial Regulations V3.0, with immediate effect, seconded Cllr Brown. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/019\)](#)

b) MPC 019 Internal Audit Policy V1.0 R2

c) MPC 020 Disciplinary Procedure V1.0 R2

d) MPC 021 Training Policy V1.0 R2

Cllrs discussed the documents and as documents MPC 019, 020 and 021 were for annual review with no amendments required Cllrs reviewed them together. [Cllr Papworth proposed that the following policies be approved without amendments: MPC 019 Internal Audit Policy V1.0 R2, MPC 020 Disciplinary Procedure V1.0 R2 and MPC 021 Training Policy V1.0 R2, seconded Cllr Nancekivell. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/020\)](#)

8.7.21 Current Business:

a) Update on Flowerbed in Square (Chair)

Cllr Papworth reported that a working group got together in a Covid safe way and carried out planting up of the flowerbed and it has all been done. The bill has been paid.

b) Traffic & Highways Concerns (Chair)

Limers lane will be inspected by NHO and inform the Clerk of their findings and solutions. Cllrs reported that the "Bend" sign above garage is obscured by hedge.

c) Update on street name signs (Chair/Clerk)

No update at this time. The Clerk agreed to keep chasing TDC.

- d) **Consideration of ¼ contribution to Clerk's attendance on the following Virtual SLCC Training webinars: Regional Training seminar £13.50 inc VAT, WordPress website £9 inc. VAT, Code of Conduct £9 inc. VAT & Operation London Bridge - Cost to the Council, £9 inc. VAT – Total cost to the Council £40.50. Also consideration of Clerks undertaking the following E-Learning Courses: Health and safety essentials, Information Security essentials & Freedom of Information, total cost of £42 plus VAT – cost shared with Clerks other Councils (£10.50 plus VAT per Council) (Chair)**

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the Council approve the payment of ¼ of the Cost for the Clerk's attendance on the following Virtual SLCC Training webinars: Regional Training seminar £13.50 inc VAT, WordPress website £9 inc. VAT, Code of Conduct £9 inc. VAT & Operation London Bridge - Cost to the Council, £9 inc. VAT. Giving a total cost to the Council of £40.50, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried.

(RR2021/021) (Power to Spend: LGA 1972 S.111 / Funding Source: Staff Costs/Training)

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the Council approve the Clerk undertaking the following E-Learning Courses: Health and safety essentials, Information Security essentials & Freedom of Information, total cost of £42 plus VAT to be shared with Clerks other Councils Giving a total cost to the Council of £10.50 plus VAT, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/022) (Power to Spend: LGA 1972 S.111 / Funding Source: Staff Costs/Training)

- e) **Play Area Maintenance to include discussion on damaged equipment and request for industrial clean of equipment. (Chair/Clerk)**

The clerk reported that she has contacted Kompan for a quote for their inspection and repairs service and is awaiting a response, she will liaise with the Chair once the quote is received. It was also reported that the weeds in the playground require spraying again.

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the Council approve Cllr Nancekivell to spray the area again up to a cost of £50 for materials, seconded Cllr Stacey. 6 in Favour, 1 abstention. – Motion Carried. (RR2021/023) (Power to Spend: LG(MP)A 1976 s.19/ Funding Source: Assets/Play equipment)

- f) **Drainage Issues with the Square (Cllr Scantlebury)**

Paul reported Colin Newell will be doing the work and he will report back to Clerk with a date for the works to be undertaken.

- g) **Provision of bin with cigarette section for bus stop (Clerk)**

Cllrs reviewed the option and Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the Clerk purchase a "Cigarette Bin Wall Mounted Ashtray Outdoor Ash Bin Ashbin outside Garden, Pub Smoking Butt Waste Disposal Powder Coated Galvanised Metal Steel, Grey/Black 3.4 Litre" from Amazon at a cost of (£18.75 excl. VAT) £22.50 incl. VAT, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/024) (Power to Spend: Litter Act 1983 SS.5-6 / Funding Source: Assets/Purchases)

- e) **Parishioner concerns regarding bar at Clinton Hall. (Chair)**

Cllr Papworth informed the Council on the parishioners concerns. Cllr Kops declared a Personal Interest in the item (DOI/004). Cllrs discussed the matter and felt that this was not something they could take further.

9.7.21 Clerks reports:

- a) **Reminder Clerks Annual Leave 24/7/21 to 8/8/21 inclusive (2 weeks)**
- b) **Reminder: exercise of public rights runs until the 15th of July.**
- c) **1/0459/2021/FUL Demolition of existing agricultural shed and construction of new larger agricultural shed at Yeory Farm, Merton – Granted.**

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10.7.21 Cllr reports and Items for future agendas:

Cllr Stacey raised concern that the Clinton Hall sign has been vandalised.

Cllr Lang raised concerns from parishioners regarding garage alarm, Clerk advised that if there are noise complaints to report them to TDC as this not anything the PC can deal with.

Cllr Scantlebury queried battery on Defibrillator and when it will run out – the Clerk and Chair reported that they are monitoring the situation and believe that the battery will be fine until October.

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

- a) To approve financial schedule of payments including Bank reconciliation as presented by the Clerk. (Appendix A)

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the financial schedule of payments as presented at the Meeting be approved, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/024)

- b) To receive 1st quarter budget report. (Appendix B)

Cllr Scantlebury proposed that the 1st quarter budget report as presented be approved, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/025)

- c) Banking Checks were carried out by Cllrs Brown and Kops and the paperwork was signed by both Cllrs.

12.7.21 Confirmation of next meeting date:

The next meeting of the council will be on Monday 13th September 2021 at 7.30pm at the Clinton Hall, Merton.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Appendix A: Financial Schedule including Bank Reconciliation.

Pre-authorised payments made since last meeting:

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Expenditure approval Minutes Ref & RR
PM2022/006	£271.44	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (April 2021)	LGA 1972 S.112	12.5.21 b) RR2021/015
PM2022/008	£271.44	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (May 2021)	LGA 1972 S.112	12.5.21 b) RR2021/015
PM2022/012	£271.44	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (June 2021)	LGA 1972 S.112	12.5.21 b) RR2021/015
PM2022/013	£300.00	Merton Churchyard Fund	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.5.21 b) RR2021/009
PM2022/014	£50.00	SW Heritage trust (ND Records office)	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.5.21 b) RR2021/010
PM2022/015	£50.00	ODCTG	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.5.21 b) RR2021/010
PM2022/016	£50.00	CAB	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.5.21 b) RR2021/010

PM2022/017	£100.00	Alice Turner	Re-imbursement of Plough Arts Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.5.21 b) RR2021/010
Total	£1,364.32				

Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding Source
(PM2022/007)	£499.11	Came & Company (Arthur J Gallagher)	Annual Insurance Renewal (LTA yr 3/3)	LGA 1972 S.111	Admin/Insurance
(PM2022/009)	£62.22	Steve Jennings	Grass cutting	Highways Act 1980 S.96	Running Costs/ Grass Cutting
(PM2022/010)	£281.33	Paul Hipkin	Replanting of Flowerbed	Open Spaces Act 1906 S.10	EMR "Assets Fund"
(PM2022/011)	£7.20	Clinton Hall	Hall hire for document signing	LGA 1972 S.111	Admin/Hall Hire
PM2022/018	£87.98	Alice Turner	Clerks Expenses (April to July inc)	LGA 1972 S.111 & S.112	Staff Costs/ Clerks Costs & Staff Costs/Office Exp.
TOTAL	£87.98				

Monies held as Reserves (after payments):

Amount	Details
£1,500.00	Election cost (Earmarked Reserve)
£8,000.00	Square Improvements (Earmarked Reserve)
£750.00	Defibrillator Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£636.00	TAP Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£300.00	Defibrillator Supplies (Earmarked Reserve)
£1,068.67	Assets Fund (Earmarked Reserve)
£100.00	Hall Hire (Earmarked Reserve)
£1,500.00	Precept Contingency
£750.00	General Reserve
£14,604.67	TOTAL

Bank Situation

Bank Total 12/07/2021	£16,870.89
Less Payments presented	£87.98
Plus receipts Received (after Balance date)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£14,604.67
Available Balance	£2,178.24

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Bank Reconciliation Date 12th July 2021.

	AMOUNT	TOTAL
Balance per bank statement as at 31st March 2021:	£15,479.70	£15,479.70
Less: total of Payments	£2,783.81	£12,695.89
Plus: total of Receipts	£4,175.00	£16,870.89
Bank Total as at 12th July 2021		£16,870.89

The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows:

CASH BOOK:

Opening Balance 1 April 2021 (box 7 of Accounting statement)	£15,479.70
Add: Receipts in the year to date	£4,175.00
Less: Payments in the year to date	£2,783.81
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] as at 12th July 2021	£16,870.89

Appendix B: 1st Quarter Budget Report.**Income:**

INCOME	2021/22 Budget	Actual Income 30-06-2021	Difference	Notes
Precept	8350.00	4175.00	-4175.00	
Parking Permits	10.00	0.00	-10.00	Due end Aug
Other/grants	300.00	0.00	-300.00	Due at year end.
TOTAL	8660.00	4175.00	-4485.00	

Expenditure:

<u>Heading</u>	2021/22 Budget	Actual expenditure to 30-06-2021	Difference	Over/Under/ On Budget
STAFF COSTS	£4,000.00	£813.69	£3,186.31	Under
Clerk Salary & costs	£3,500.00	£793.44	£2,706.56	Under
Office Expenses	£400.00	£20.25	£379.75	Under
Training	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
ADMINISTRATION	£905.00	£499.11	£405.89	Under
Insurance	£550.00	£499.11	£50.89	Under
IT	£155.00	£0.00	£155.00	Under
Hall Hire	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
Contingency	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
RUNNING COSTS	£400.00	£62.22	£337.78	Under
Grass Cutting & Village Maint.	£400.00	£62.22	£337.78	Under
PROFESSIONAL FEES	£310.00	£209.00	£101.00	Under

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Audit (internal & external)	£200.00	£150.00	£50.00	Under
ICO	£35.00	£0.00	£35.00	Under
Subs/Memberships	£75.00	£59.00	£16.00	Under
ASSETS	£1,225.00	£318.50	£906.50	Under
Maintenance	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	Under
Purchases	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	Under
Defibrillator	£350.00	£250.00	£100.00	Under
Play Equipment	£125.00	£68.50	£56.50	Under
GRANTS/DONATIONS	£570.00	£0.00	£570.00	Under
Standing Grants	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	Under
Poppy Wreath	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00	Under
Other Grants/Donations	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	Under
Reserves	£1,250.00	£750.00	£500.00	Under
General	£250.00	£250.00	£0.00	On
Precept Contingency	£1,000.00	£500.00	£500.00	Under
TOTALS	£8,660.00	£2,652.52	£6,007.48	Under

Prepared by Alice Turner R.F.O

Signed as a true record: Steve Papworth

Printed: Cllr. S. Papworth Date: 13th September 2021

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