

Merton Parish Council

Clerks details: Alice Turner 01837 83484 / clerk.mertonparishcouncildevon@gmail.com

Minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 8th November 2021 at 7:30pm at the Clinton Hall, Merton.

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

Also in attendance: Alice Turner (Clerk) District Cllr Richard Wiseman & County Cllr Andrew Saywell.

No members of the public were in attendance.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED

1.11.21 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.

2.11.21 Apologies for absence:

The Clerk reported that she had received apologies from Cllr Scantlebury (prior commitment).

Cllr Nancekivell proposed that apologies for absence be approved from Cllr Scantlebury (prior commitment), seconded Cllr Twomey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/033)

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

Cllr Papworth proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th September 2021 be signed as a true and accurate record, seconded Cllr Brown. 6 in favour, 1 abstained – Motion Carried. (RR2021/034)

4.11.21 Declarations of Interest: None

5.11.21 Public Speaking Time: None

6.11.21 District / County Councillors & Police Reports.

a) County Cllr Andrew Saywell

Main developments/updates from DCC:

Local Highways Matters

- **Road to Langham/Dolton** – Although in Huish, an extensive programme of patching has taken place on this road which I hope will be of benefit to local residents traveling down to Dolton/Winkleigh area.
- **Condition of the A386** – I am well aware of the issues here on the road in the village, I am continuing to lobby senior Highways Officers for a permanent solution.

Other matters

Devon secures £9.3m for skills, training and jobs

DCC's bid to the Government's Community Renewal Fund has been successful and we've been awarded £9.3m by the Government for investment in innovation and employment projects. There will be 13 pilot projects across Devon, backed by the largest funding allocation to any local authority area in England. Project benefits will include retraining for 3,500 people.

Improving Rail Links

The Okehampton to Exeter line will re-open on the 20th November. In the Budget today an announcement was also made to take forward early stage proposals to re-open the Plymouth-

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Tavistock line. DCC are also looking at improving rural bus links to our rail connections (see below).

Bus Route Funding Bid

DCC has submitted a bid worth £34m to the Government to improve and introduce new rural bus services throughout Devon. Proposed routes include a new strategic service through Torrington, connecting people to the railway line at Umberleigh, possibly also to an express bus service to Tiverton Parkway. Reintroducing Sunday services also being looked at. Precise route details though subject to funding but this gives you an idea as to the direction of travel of this bid.

‘Node’ Enterprise Centre opens

A new enterprise centre at Roundswell has opened. Known as ‘Node’, the coworking and office space will support SMEs, start-ups, freelancers and local workers in North Devon and Torridge (and Torrington Rural!).

The modern building boasts 37 small and medium offices, a coworking space for up to 50 people, a number of meeting rooms and an on-site coffee shop. It aims to facilitate the changing way people work, by providing flexible workspace for individuals.

Covid

Cases nationally have started to fall and this trend is normally mirrored in Devon a week or two later. In Devon they have stabilised and are starting to fall gradually.

Devon had 461.7 cases per 100,000 in the last seven days compared to 386.7 for England. However, Torridge is 376.9, West Devon 557.5, North Devon 495.1. Highest case rates are in people aged 20 and under, and in the 40s age group.

All Devon local authorities are similar and vary week on week, we are hopeful numbers may start to fall but no trend yet.

BUT, Hospital cases remain relatively low, we have not seen a massive increase in hospitalisations as a result of the higher infection rates.

Vaccines

Almost 9/10 16+ adults in Devon are fully vaccinated. More than 100,000 have had booster jabs. The NHS can only invite people for their booster six months after they’ve had their second dose. When you are invited for a booster please book an appointment immediately.

Free school meal vouchers

DCC have sent families of nearly 18,000 children in Devon free supermarket vouchers this October half term, worth £15 per child per week and helping to prevent holiday hunger.

Foster Carers

DCC is still looking for more Foster Carers in Devon, especially for children with more complex needs. A recruitment campaign will be launched shortly... If you know anyone who would be interested, please refer them to this DCC webpage - [Child and Parent fostering - Fostering in Devon](#)

Funding for self-isolating residents

DCC have launched a new fund to help community organisations provide practical, social and emotional support to Devon residents self-isolating due to COVID-19.

- The grants of up to £5,000 for small projects and £20,000 for larger projects can be used to help those self-isolating with any caring responsibilities; accessing food and other supplies; practical tasks such as dog walking; and mental health and wellbeing support to address things like loneliness and boredom.
- More information available online - [The COVID-19 Outbreak Management Grant \(Self-Isolation\) - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

I hope this update is useful, please let me know if there’s anything else you need me to look into.

Cllr Brown asked if the linking of the Tarka Trail to the granite way is still under consideration – County Cllr Saywell will look into this.

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b) District Cllr Richard Wiseman

District Cllr Wiseman reported that TDC had a project in for the levelling up fund, which they were unsuccessful with on this occasion.

TDC is looking to set up a local authority trading company to take over the running of Leisure facilities as of next April.

TDC is looking into housing provision, as one of the DC responsibility is to provide housing for those in need, this might possibility include self-build.

The Parliamentary boundary review looks like the area covered by Sir Geoffrey Cox will be staying mainly the same.

Torrington police will be getting one new beat officer.

c) Police report - FPCSO Brown sent her apologies and the following written report.

Crimes Recorded – as below.

Offence	Recorded Crime 07/10/2021 to 06/11/2021	Recorded Crime 07/10/2020 to 06/11/2020	Recorded Crime % Difference
Violence without Injury	1	0	100%
Total	1	0	100%

1 Non notifiable offence was received 07/10/2021 to 06/11/2021

Incidents Recorded – as below.

Incident closing Category	Recorded Incidents 07/10/2021 to 06/11/2021	Recorded Incidents 11/08/2020 to 10/09/2020	Difference in recorded incidents (%)
Anti-social behaviour	2	1	100%
Public Safety	0	1	-100%
Transport	0	1	-100%
TOTAL:	2	3	-33.3%

7.11.21 Current & New Business:

a) Traffic & Highways Concerns (Chair) - No additional information at this time.

b) Drainage Issues with the Square (Cllr Scantlebury)

Clerk to contact contractor.

c) Relocation of Defibrillator to the wall of the Malt Scoop (Chair)

The Garage site will be installing a fence and as such the Defibrillator will have to relocate. Cllr Papworth spoke to the Malt Scoop landlady and asked if it could be sited outside the pub, she was agreeable, Cllrs discussed and [Cllr Papworth proposed that the relocation of the Defibrillator to outside the Malt Scoop be implemented, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/035\)](#)

d) Discussions on relocation of the Post Box (Chair)

The Post box has been removed by Royal Mail. The Chair has asked Royal Mail for more information and will report to the Council.

e) To discuss verbal offer received for weekly pop-up Post Office instead of the outreach van in the Square (Chair/Clerk)

The Chair updated on the arrangements for the Mobile Van to visit the Square on Thursdays which has had its first session this last week.

[Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council retrospectively approve the Post Office Van using the Square, and revisit the option of a Pop-up Post Office in the future, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. \(RR2021/036\)](#)

Cllr Lang left the meeting for personal reasons

f) Arrangements for Remembrance Services Thursday 11th at 2pm in Merton Square and Sunday 14th at 10.30am at the war memorial, Petrockstowe. (Chair)

Cllr Twomey will read the roll of Honour at the Thursday service, and Cllr Papworth will attend the Sunday service and read the Roll of Honour and lay the poppy wreath on the Sunday.

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g) Reports of Fly-tipping in Back Lane (Cllrs Papworth & Stacey)

Cllrs Papworth and Stacey updated the Council on the situation, and reported that District Cllr Wiseman had arranged for TDC to clear this away, Cllr Papworth reported that this has now happened.

h) Discussions about Bars at the Clinton Hall (Chair)

Cllr Papworth addressed the Council on the previous concerns of bars held at football matches, Cllr Kops reported that the Clinton Hall runs a bar, at the request of the football club, after the match with the proceeds going to the Hall, the football club hire the Kitchen for other refreshments.

Cllr Lang returned to the meeting.

i) Damage to Bench at top of Beaford Road – Cllrs to discuss repairs (Chair)

Cllr Papworth reported that the bench was hit by a vehicle and two of the slats on the bench has been damaged.

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Clerk be authorised to arrange repairs under delegated authority and is authorised to deal with the insurance company of the driver, seconded Cllr Brown. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/037)

j) Gambling Act 2005 – consultation on Statement of Principles 2022

Torridge District Council is seeking views on a draft revised Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005. This statement sets out the principles the Council will apply when carrying out its functions under the Gambling Act 2005 and has to be reviewed and republished every three years. The draft revised statement can be viewed on the Council's website at: <http://www.torridge.gov.uk/Gambling-Act-Consultation>. The proposed changes are shown by the use of red text. There are only minor changes to the statement to provide updated information and further clarity on existing requirements. Deadline 26/11/2021.

The Council has no comment on this matter.

8.11.21 Clerks reports to include:

a) Verbal update on Kompan repairs

The Clerk reported that the repairs to the swing will be carried out this week, and Mr Jennings has killed the weeds in the Play Area.

b) Annual Leave: reminder the Clerk is on Annual leave 15/12/21 to 02/01/22 inclusive.

c) Notification the our current Internal Auditor is unable to continue with the Councils Internal Audits for personal reasons, as such a quote for a new Internal Auditor will be discussed under Part II.

d) Discussion on assets which require works, Council to agree which items the Clerk will get quotes for as presented at the meeting.

Cllrs agreed that the Noticeboard should be taken off the old post office wall and stored until a decision can be made as to its future. Cllr Papworth agreed to do this.

e) Upcoming Road Closures – to address Ash dieback.

Closure 1 (Little Torrington A386): The A386 will be closed for 1.5km from Church Ford to New Bridge, Great Torrington. The Closure will be enforced **08:00 – 17:30 from Mon 08nd – Fri 15th November 2021**. More information can be found at <https://one.network/?tmi=GB21097267>

Closure 2 (Rosemoor A3124): The A3124 will be closed for 2km from RHS Rosemoor Gardens to Woolleigh Bridge, Great Torrington. The Closure will be enforced **08:00 – 17:30 from Mon 22nd – Fri 26th November 2021**. More information can be found at <https://one.network/?tmi=GB21235699>

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

a) To approve financial schedule of payments as presented by the Clerk, including 2nd quarter Budget report

Cllr Brown proposed that the financial schedule of payments as presented by the Clerk, including 2nd quarter Budget report be approved, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/038)

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b) Banking Checks for period 13-09-2021 to 08-11-2021.

The Clerk apologised for an error on the Agenda the dates should read 13-09-2021 to 08-11-2021 rather than 12-07-2021 to 13-09-2021.

The Banking Checks were carried out by Cllrs Brown & Kops and all documents were signed.

c) 1st Draft of the 2022-2023 Budget to be presented following discussions on grant applications received. Cllrs to note that the final budget and precept request will be set at the January Council meeting.

Cllrs discussed the draft budget and the 4 grants which had been requested and Cllr Nancekivell proposed that the following 3 grants be included in the 2022-2023 draft Budget; North Devon Records Office £50, Citizens Advice £50, Plough Arts Centre £100, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/039)

10.11.21 Cllr reports and Items for future agendas:

Cllrs agreed to add the 3 following items to the January Agenda:

1. Discussion on installation of safety rail on footpath by Garage – Cllr Stacey.
2. Painting of some of the rubbish bins – Cllr Lang
3. Receiving of Council documents by email – Cllr Lang

11.11.21 Confirmation of next meeting date:

The next meeting will be on Monday 10th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall.

12.11.21 Confidential matters (PART II) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2)

a) Resolution required to move the Council into Part II.

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council move to Part II due to the confidential nature of the items under discussion, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/040)

The Clerk confirmed that the Audio recording had been stopped.

b) Discussion on ownership and maintenance of the Arch between Church & the Square (Chair) *Contains details covered by GDPR*

c) To consider quote for new internal Auditor (Clerk) *Contains commercially sensitive information*

d) The Chair returned the meeting to public session to hear resolutions

Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council appoint Mrs P Clapham as Internal Auditor for the 2022-2023 financial year including the 2022 Year-End Internal Audit, seconded Cllr Stacey. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2021/041)

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm.

Appendix A: Financial Schedule including 2nd Quarter Budget report.

Pre-authorised payments made since last meeting:

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Minutes Ref & RR
PM2022/026	£271.44	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (Sept 2021)	LGA 1972 S.112	12.5.21 b) RR2021/015
PM2022/027	£271.44	Alice Turner	Clerks Salary (Oct 2021)	LGA 1972 S.112	12.5.21 b) RR2021/015
Total	£542.88				

Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding Source
PM2022/028	£71.48	Steve Jennings	Grass cutting	Highways Act 1980 S.96	Running Costs/ Grass Cutting

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PM2022/029	£28.80	Clinton Hall	Hall hire (2x Meetings)	LGA 1972 S.111	Admin/Hall Hire
PM2022/030	£52.11	Alice Turner	Clerks Expenses (Oct & Nov)	LGA 1972 S.111 & 112	Staff Costs/Office Exp. & Clerks Costs
TOTAL	£152.39				

Receipts since last meeting for information:

Payment ref	Method	Details	Amount
PR2022/007	Bacs	Parking Permit	£1.00
PR2022/008	Bacs	Parking Permits	£2.00
PR2022/009	Bacs	2 nd half Precept	£4,175.00
PR2022/010	Bacs	Parking Permit	£2.00
TOTAL			£4,180.00

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)
£2,000.00	Precept Contingency
£750.00	General Reserve
£15,104.67	TOTAL

Bank Situation

Bank Total 8/11/2021	£19,449.34
Less Payments presented	£152.39
Plus receipts Received (after Balance date)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£15,104.67
Available Balance	£4,192.28

2nd Quarter Budget Report as part of the Financial Schedule.

Income:

	2021/22 Budget	Actual Income 30-09-2021	Difference	Notes
Precept	8350.00	8350.00	0.00	
Parking Permits	10.00	14.00	4.00	
Other/grants	300.00	0.00	-300.00	Grass cutting grant due at year end.
TOTAL	8660.00	8364.00	-296.00	

Expenditure:

<u>Heading</u>	2021/22 Budget	Actual expenditure to 30-09-21	Difference	Over/Under/On Budget
STAFF COSTS	£4,000.00	£1,749.74	£2,250.26	Under
Clerk Salary & costs	£3,500.00	£1,623.74	£1,876.26	Under
Office Expenses	£400.00	£92.25	£307.75	Under

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Training	£100.00	£33.75	£66.25	Under
ADMINISTRATION	£905.00	£520.71	£384.29	Under
Insurance	£550.00	£499.11	£50.89	Under
IT	£155.00	£0.00	£155.00	Under
Hall Hire	£100.00	£21.60	£78.40	Under
Contingency	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
RUNNING COSTS	£400.00	£214.80	£185.20	Under
Grass Cutting/Village Maint.	£400.00	£214.80	£185.20	Under
PROFESSIONAL FEES	£310.00	£209.00	£101.00	Under
Audit	£200.00	£150.00	£50.00	Under
Data Protection Registration	£35.00	£0.00	£35.00	Under
Subscriptions/Memberships	£75.00	£59.00	£16.00	Under
ASSETS	£1,225.00	£337.25	£887.75	Under
Maintenance	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	Under
Purchases	£500.00	£18.75	£481.25	Under
Defibrillator	£350.00	£250.00	£100.00	Under
Play Equipment	£125.00	£68.50	£56.50	Under
GRANTS/DONATIONS	£570.00	£550.00	£20.00	Under
Standing Grants	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00	Under
Poppy Wreath	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00	Under
Other Grants/Donations	£250.00	£250.00	£0.00	On
Reserves	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£0.00	Under
General	£250.00	£250.00	£0.00	On
Precept Contingency	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	On
TOTALS	£8,660.00	£4,831.50	£3,828.50	Under

Prepared by Alice Turner R.F.O

Signed as a true record: Steve Papworth

Printed: Cllr. S. Papworth Date: 10th January 2022

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