

Merton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024 at 7:30pm at the Clinton Hall.

Cllrs Present: Steve Papworth (Chair), Nigel Lang, Giles Kops, Gordon McLaughlan, Rob Nancekivell & Neil Littleales (Vice-Chair).

Also in attendance: District Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin & Adrian Avery (TDC) 6 members of the public also attended. Alice Turner (Clerk) attended virtually.

BUSINESS TRANSACTED

1.1.24 Welcome: Chair to open meeting and inform the meeting if a recording is being taken to assist in the preparation of the minutes.

The Chair opened the meeting and informed the meeting that a recording was being taken to assist in the preparation of the minutes, the recording will be deleted once the Minutes are drafted.

2.1.24 Apologies for absence: No apologies received.

3.1.24 Co-option Vacancies (Clerk)

Cllrs to consider candidates who have completed the required [Co-option form](#) and have been confirmed as eligible to stand prior the Meeting.

It was noted that there are still 2 vacancies on the Council.

4.1.24 Declarations of Interest: No interests were declared at this time.

5.1.24 Public Speaking Time:

Members of the public are invited to speak on issues on this Agenda, or on other matters which the council has some control over. Members of the public may not speak during other items. Any items raised will not be discussed at this meeting but may be added to the next Agenda.

- A member of the public raised issues about drainage in square and the impact it has on their property, they asked the Council to consider covering the cost of works needed in the square, they will speak to Sarah Chappel, conservation area at TDC and will send through the quote. – March Agenda.
- A member of the public asked what was happening regarding the S.106 grant funding for the play area.
- A member of the public asked when the grant for the toilets would be paid, Clerk to Action.

6.1.24 District / County Councillors Reports.

a) **County Cllr Andrew Saywell – No report received.**

b) **District Cllrs: Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin & Cllr Chris Wheatley.**

District Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin was in attendance and gave the following report :

Joint Planning and Policy Committee- we now have a 5-year Housing and Land Supply again.

Both councils have given the go ahead to do a New joint local plan and will start visioning before the formal process starts. The last meeting highlighted the need for more traveller sites which has always been a struggle.

Full Council-

-Barbara Shaw Chief Exec of Westward Housing presented to Full Council in December with their highlights. There were 826 home improvements, 5731 repairs, with £16m invested in repairs and maintenance. Also 54 new homes for rent and shared partnership in Torridge and they received a customer satisfaction award last year.

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-Torridge District Strategic Plan - Plan Consultation is now completed and plan now adopted and will be integrated into the council's business plans. There were a few additions made as a result of the consultation and the plan was adjusted accordingly, including to investigate the appetite for and feasibility of a rail link connecting Bideford and Barnstaple- it should be noted that the vast majority of that line would be within North Devon District, not Torridge!

-There was also unanimous support from district councillors for the mental health link centres that DCC are proposing to close down.

Old Torrington Creamery/Old Milk Factory/Dairy- The demolition of the old Torrington Creamery commenced in November and is expected to last for 8 to 10 months. The project is being carried out by the joint administrators of Waterside Construction Southwest Ltd and Valley Estates Southwest Ltd (in administration) that own the site, with support of Farm Finance Ltd, TDC assistance, Cornwall Police and Devon and Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service. This move has been welcomed by Torridge District Council.

Community Safety Partnership with North Devon Council- there was emphasis on the importance of street marshalls. In North Devon this has been funded through the Safer Streets Fund but wasn't available to Torridge. The police have said they will not fund it, and so the question is where funding will come from if we want it to continue or see more of it. There has also been success regarding a night bus between Barnstaple and Bideford and the councils are requesting they extend the routes to Torrington and Ilfracombe. It helps keep people safe by reducing drink driving, unlicensed taxis, people trying to walk home under the influence of alcohol.

First Meeting was held recently of the North Devon Culture Board - to deliver North Devon culture strategy for wellbeing, talent development, cultural hubs in market towns, youth and training skills. This also includes heritage and museums. There was initial discussion around a cultural directory, mapping, events and youth workshops. The board is looking for more members with specific skills in the cultural sector, including young people.

7.1.24 Current & New Business:

a) Additional Play Space at Clinton School and discussion on Section 106 (Chair)

Mr Avery from TDC was invited to address the Council and following discussion where it was reported that the holdup in applying for S106 came from uncertainty of ownership of land [Cllr Lang proposed that the Clerk be authorised to contact Land registry to ascertain who owns the land the current Play area is on, seconded Cllr Papworth. All in Favour – Motion Carried. RESOLVED.](#)

The Council felt that the money was given to support the existing play area so the Parish Council would not be looking to support the school application at this time.

b) Consideration of [letter received from Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Cox KC](#) – Member of Parliament for Torridge and West Devon. (Chair/Clerk)

Including consideration on [Levelling up Partnership priorities](#) and [petition for additional funding from central government towards the maintenance of the road network](#).

Cllrs discussed and agreed not to respond they did note that the petition would have had better result if it had been an online petition rather than a paper one.

c) Cllrs to Consider formation of H.R. Committee, including membership & associated Terms of Reference ([MPC 023 H.R. Committee – Terms of Reference](#)) (Chair/Clerk)

Cllrs discussed and [Cllr Nancekivell proposed that the Council approve and ratify the HR committee terms of reference \(MPC 023\) with immediate effect and that all Cllrs are members of the HR committee with Cllr Papworth appointed as lead member, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. RESOLVED.](#)

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

- a) **To approve financial schedule as presented by the Clerk (See [Appendix A](#)).**
Cllr Lang proposed that the Council approve the financial schedule as presented, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. *RESOLVED*.
- b) **Banking Checks for period 10-07-2023 to 08-01-2024.**
Cllr Kops & Cllr Lang agreed to carry out the Banking Checks for this period via email.
- c) **To receive 3rd Quarter budget report and any virements.**
Noted as seen in [Appendix B](#).
- d) **To receive and discuss the final Draft 2024-2025 Budget ([Appendix C](#)).**
Cllrs discussed the final Draft 2024-2025 Budget and Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council approve a Budget for 2024-2025 £12651.00 and a precept request of £12220.00, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. *RESOLVED*.

9.1.24 Reports and future agenda items (not an opportunity for debate/decision making):

a) **Clerk: Police report:**

The report is for 10/12/23 to 31/12/23 and is as follows:

There have been 4 calls to us where incidents have been generated;

- 1 Intelligence report
- 1 Burglary to dwelling
- 2 abandoned calls

2 crimes;

- 1 Violence S47 & less serious
- 1 Burglary residential (shed broken into)

b) **Clerk: Resilience forum Friday 22nd March 2024 10am - 4pm at Kenn centre, near Exeter**

c) **Cllr Kops noted: issues with quality of road repairs and condition of hedges**

d) **Planning application received – Cllrs did not want an Extra meeting.**

10.1.24 Confirmation of next meeting: Monday 11th March 2024 at 7.30pm.

Please note that any changes to the meeting date will be updated on the [Website](#).

11.1.24: Confidential item (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 item to be discussed, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. *RESOLVED*.

The Clerk stopped the recording.

b) **Cllrs to discuss the Clerks return to work. *Confidential Employment Matter*. (Chair)**

c) **The Chair returned the meeting to public session to hear resolutions.**

No Resolutions were made.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9pm

Appendix A: Financial Schedule.

Pre-authorised payments made since last meeting:

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Mins Ref & RR
PM24/015	£300.00	Merton Churchyard Committee	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.6.23 c) RR2023/015
PM24/016	£50.00	SW Heritage Trust	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.6.23 c) RR2023/017

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PM24/017	£100.00	Alice Turner	Re- imbursement Plough Arts Centre Grant.	LGA 1972 S.137	10.6.23 c) RR2023/016
PM24/018	£50.00	Torridge, Mid and West Devon Citizens advice	Grant	LGA 1972 S.137	10.6.23 c) RR2023/018
PM24/021	£234.80	Alice Turner	Salary July 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
PM24/022	£234.80	Alice Turner	Salary August 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
PM24/023	£186.48	Alice Turner	Salary September 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
PM24/025	£232.60	Alice Turner	Salary October 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
PM24/028	£335.23	Alice Turner	Salary November 2023 & Back Pay 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
PM24/030	£208.68	Alice Turner	Salary December 2023	LGA 1972 S.112	8.3.23 c) RR2022/059
Total	£1,932.59				

Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):

Payment Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding Source
(PM24/019)	£92.42	Steve Jennings	Grass Cutting	Highways Act 1980 S.96	R.C/ Grass cutting
(PM24/020)	£290.00	Kompan Ltd	Annual Inspection	LG(MP)A 1976 s.19	Assets/Play Equipt.
(PM24/024)	£112.00	Steve Jennings	Grass Cutting	Highways Act 1980 S.96	R.C/ Grass cutting
PM24/026	£159.00	Kompan Ltd	Quarterly Inspection of Playground	LG(MP)A 1976 s.19	Assets/Play Equipt.
PM24/027	£100.00	Colin Jones	Annual Hosting Fee	LGA 1972 S.111	Admin/IT
PM24/029	£328.28	Alice Turner	Clerks Expenses June 2023 to January 2024	LGA 1972 S.111 & S.112 + Public Health Act 1936 s.234	S.C/Salary, S.C/Office Exp & Assets/Defib
PM24/031	TBC	Royal British Legion	Donation to Poppy Appeal	LGA 1972 S.137	Grants/Poppy Wreath
PM24/032	£28.80	Clinton Hall	Hall Hire (10.07.23 & 17.07.23)	LGA 1972 S.111	Admin /Hall Hire
TOTAL	£1,110.50				

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Receipts for Information:

Payment ref	Payment method	Details	Amount
PR24/002	Bacs	2 x Parking Permits	£4.00
PR24/003	Bacs	2nd Half Precept	£6,110.00
TOTAL			£6,110.00

Monies held as Reserves (after payments): EMR = Earmarked Reserve

Amount	Details
£1,500.00	Election cost (EMR)
£8,000.00	Square Improvements (EMR)
£2,305.62	Defibrillator Fund (EMR)
£636.00	TAP Fund (EMR)
£344.97	Defibrillator Supplies (EMR)
£1,167.88	Assets Fund (EMR)
£100.00	Hall Hire (EMR)
£2,500.00	Precept Contingency (EMR)
£1,250.00	General Reserve
£4,716.67	Play Equipment Fund (EMR)
£988.22	Staff Costs & Training (EMR)
£279.68	Admin (EMR)
£23,789.04	TOTAL

Bank Situation

Bank Total 08/01/2024	£31,985.99
Less Payments pending	£1,231.19
Plus receipts Received (after Bank date)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£23,789.04
Available Balance	£6,965.76

Appendix B: 3rd Quarter Budget Report as presented.**Income:**

	2023/24 Budget	Actual Income 31/12/2023	Difference	Budget Position
Precept	£12,220.00	£12,220.00	£0.00	On
Parking Permits	£16.00	£4.00	-£12.00	Under
Other/grants	£400.00	£0.00	-£400.00	Under
TOTAL	£12,636.00	£12,224.00	-£412.00	Under

Expenditure:

	2023/24 Budget	Actual expenditure to 31/12/2023	Difference	Budget Position
STAFF COSTS	£3,900.00	£1,972.19	£1,927.81	Under
Salary (& costs)	£3,500.00	£1,895.21	£1,604.79	Under
Office Expenses	£400.00	£76.98	£323.02	Under
ADMIN.	£1,205.00	£689.67	£515.33	Under

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Insurance	£750.00	£624.87	£125.13	Under
Training	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
IT	£130.00	£0.00	£130.00	Under
Hall Hire	£125.00	£64.80	£60.20	Under
Contingency	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
RUNNING COSTS	£400.00	£269.52	£130.48	Under
Grass Cutting (& Maint.)	£400.00	£269.52	£130.48	Under
PROF. FEES	£206.00	£146.99	£59.01	Under
Audit	£90.00	£68.99	£21.01	Under
Subs	£116.00	£78.00	£38.00	Under
ASSETS	£1,700.00	£374.17	£1,325.83	Under
Maintenance	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Under
Purchases	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Under
Defibrillator	£600.00	£0.00	£600.00	Under
Play Equipment	£1,000.00	£374.17	£625.83	Under
GRANTS	£525.00	£500.00	£25.00	Under
Standing Grants	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00	On
Poppy Wreath	£25.00	£0.00	£25.00	Under
Other Donations	£200.00	£200.00	£0.00	On
Reserves	£4,700.00	£500.00	£4,200.00	Under
General	£500.00	£250.00	£250.00	Under
EMR Play Equipment Fund	£3,700.00	£0.00	£3,700.00	Under
Precept Contingency	£500.00	£250.00	£250.00	Under
From Reserves	N/A	£93.33	N/A	N/A
TOTALS	£12,636.00	£4,545.87	£8,183.46	Under

R.F.O Comment: No concerns at this time.

Appendix C: Final Draft Budget 2024-2025 as Approved.

Income:

	2023/24 Budget	Predicted total Year End	DRAFT 2024/25 Budget
Precept	£12,220.00	£12,220.00	£12,220.00
Parking Permits	£16.00	£16.00	£16.00
Other/grants	£400.00	£400.00	£415.00
TOTAL	£12,636.00	£12,636.00	£12,651.00

Expenditure:

	2023/24 Budget	Predicted total Yr End	Difference	DRAFT 2024/25 Budget
STAFF COSTS	£3,900.00	£3,900.00	£0.00	£4,200.00
Salary & costs	£3,500.00	£3,500.00	£0.00	£3,750.00
Office Expenses	£400.00	£400.00	£0.00	£450.00
ADMINISTRATION	£1,205.00	£959.87	-£245.13	£3,235.00
Insurance	£750.00	£624.87	-£125.13	£750.00

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Training	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00
IT	£130.00	£110.00	-£20.00	£135.00
Hall Hire	£125.00	£125.00	£0.00	£100.00
Legal & Contingency	£100.00		-£100.00	£2,150.00
RUNNING COSTS	£400.00	£0.00	-£400.00	£415.00
Grass Cutting & Village Maint.	£400.00		-£400.00	£415.00
PROF. FEES	£206.00	£0.00	£0.00	£216.00
Audit	£90.00		£0.00	£90.00
Subs	£116.00		£0.00	£126.00
ASSETS	£1,700.00	£0.00	-£1,700.00	£1,950.00
Maintenance	£100.00		-£100.00	£200.00
Purchases	£0.00		£0.00	£100.00
Defibrillator	£600.00		-£600.00	£650.00
Play Equipment	£1,000.00		-£1,000.00	£1,000.00
GRANTS&DONATIONS	£525.00	£500.00	£25.00	£885.00
Standing Grants	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00
Poppy Wreath	£25.00		£25.00	£20.00
Other Grants/Donations	£200.00	£200.00	£0.00	£565.00
Reserves	£4,700.00	£4,700.00	£5,300.00	£1,750.00
General	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00
EMR Play Equipment Fund	£3,700.00	£3,700.00	£4,300.00	£1,000.00
Precept Contingency	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00	£250.00
TOTALS	£12,636.00	£10,059.87	£2,979.87	£12,651.00

Signed: Neil Littleales Date: 10th June 2024

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