

# **Merton Parish Council**

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## **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7:30pm at the Clinton Hall.**

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

**Also in attendance:** Alice Turner (Clerk) and, 3 members of the public.

### **BUSINESS TRANSACTED**

#### **1.9.24 Welcome:**

The Chair opened 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.

#### **2.9.24 Apologies for absence: No apologies as all Cllrs present.**

Apologies from County Cllr Saywell, District Cllr Cottle-Hunkin & District Cllr Wheatley where noted.

#### **3.9.24 Minutes of the last meeting – as available on [website](#) (Chair):**

Cllrs to consider the Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

[Cllr Littleales proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be signed as a true and accurate record, seconded Cllr Papworth. 5 in Favour, 1 Abstention – Motion Carried. \(RR2024/033\)](#)

#### **4.4.24 Co-option Vacancies (Chair) No applicants at this time.**

Reminder that there are currently 2 co-option vacancies and to consider candidates who have completed the required [Co-option form](#) and have been confirmed as eligible prior the Meeting.

#### **5.9.24 Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr Papworth declared a personal interest in item 9.9.24 a) as he is treasurer of the Churchyard Committee and one of the Parish Councils appointed representatives.

No other interests were declared at this time.

#### **6.9.24 Public Speaking Time:**

A member of the public asked if the Council would consider supporting a Christmas Tree festival? The following information was provided:

- Possibly 12 4foot trees in the Church to be adopted by members of the public and decorated.
- The festival could tie in with the school carol service and end with the village carol service with a “winner” announced at that time.
- Costs would include approx. £10 per tree, battery operated lights for the trees (approx. £10) along with some method for securing the trees across 2 pews.

Cllrs agreed to add to the November Agenda for discussion on support and financing. **Action: November Agenda.**

No other items were raised at this time.

#### **7.9.24 Police/District / County Councillors Reports.**

a) To receive Police report – No report received.

b) County Cllr Andrew Saywell.

[County Cllr Saywell sent his apologies, and his written report can be read via this link.](#)

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

[The District Cllrs sent their apologies, and a written report can be read via this link.](#)

Minutes of meeting held 09-09-2024 ~ Initialled as a correct record: N.L

## **8.9.24 Current & New Business**

- a) **To consider approval and ratification of MPC 024 Grant Policy V1.0 – Draft (Chair)**  
Cllrs discussed the policy and Cllr McLaughlan proposed that the Council approve and ratify MPC 024 Grant Policy V1.0 with immediate effect, seconded Cllr Nancekivell. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/034)

- b) **To consider approval and ratification of MPC 025 Staff Appraisal Policy V1.0 – Draft (Chair)**  
Cllrs discussed the policy and Cllr Littleales proposed that the Council approve and ratify MPC 025 Staff Appraisal Policy V1.0 with immediate effect, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/035)

- c) **To consider request for additional donation towards the maintenance of the public toilets at the hall.**

This was raised that the July Meeting during public speaking time and members of the hall committee agreed to arrange costings to be sent to the Council for consideration.

Cllrs discussed in depth and expressed concern that the toilets were not well advertised.

Cllr Littleales proposed that the Council award a grant for £365 towards the running cost of the toilets, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/036)

*Power to spend: LGA 1972 S.137 Budget: Grants/other donations*

- d) **To discuss request for funding towards replacement of the boundary fence around the football pitch at the Hall (Chair)**

Cllrs discussed and the Chair asked for clarification from the Village Hall representative in attendance that it was only the fence along the foot path which was to be replaced. The representative confirmed that it the case and the quote from Torridge gates was for £3747.24 the Committee is hoping for a grant of 1/3 of this amount from the Parish Council (£1249.08). Cllrs discussed and felt that due to the large sum being requested that the Committee should complete a grant application form.

- e) **Consideration of weed maintenance and tiding of Play Area (Chair)**

Cllr Littleales gave an overview and Cllrs agreed that it should be discussed with the Part II item (12.9.24 d)).

- f) **To consider parishioner request that the Parish Council consider buying a bench in memory of Lord Clinton - maybe situated within the grounds of The Clinton Hall or other venue to be discussed. (Cllr Papworth)**

Cllr Papworth gave an overview of the request he had received from a parishioner and Cllrs discussed at length. Cllr Nancekivell proposed that the Council contact the Clinton Hall Committee to suggest dedicating the meeting room in memory of Lord Clinton with Cllrs to look into the associated costs of a plaque for the room and a framed picture of Lord Clinton, for consideration and approval once a response has been received from the Clinton Hall committee, seconded Cllr Littleales. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/037) **Action: November Agenda.**

- g) **To consider request for the purchase of Community Speed watch signs and where they can be located (Chair)**

Cllrs reviewed the requested signage and Cllr Littleales proposed that the Council would not support the request due to the style of the proposed sign, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/038)

- h) **Devon Community Resilience Forum - Thursday 26th September**

Devon Community Resilience Forum on Thursday 26th September 9.30am – 4pm at Crediton Rugby Club, Exhibition Road, Crediton, EX17 1EP.

The event is free, and a light lunch is provided. Presentations and topics of discussion will include:

- The emergency response to the Plymouth UXO - British Red Cross
- Learning from the past: flooding in Devon - historic, current and future risks - Environment Agency

*Minutes of meeting held 09-09-2024 ~ Initialled as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_ N.L*

- Getting involved: recruiting volunteers and engaging the community - Lympstone Flood Group
  - Community emergency contact hubs: the development of societal resilience in Dorset - Dorset Council
  - Farewell to the landline: digital switchover and emergency response – EE
- There will also be an open forum discussion where you can raise issues and ask questions. Booking is via: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/devon-community-resilience-forum-autumn-2024-tickets-970322780557>

Noted by Cllrs.

**i) DALC AGM 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024. (Chair/Clerk)**

Cllrs to discuss voting for the AGM and delegating a proxy vote to the Chair of the AGM. [The Agenda Pack is available via this link.](#)

We will have a live stream of the AGM proceedings should you wish to watch remotely. However, you will not be able to speak and vote through this option. Cllrs can register to watch remotely:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkceytpzsiGdKoI6onWlm2CQFHdvsNbhLq>

If you are unable to attend the AGM and wish to record your councils apologies, or if you have any other queries regarding the event, please email [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).

Cllr McLaughlan proposed that the Council delegate a proxy vote to the Chair of the AGM, with the Clerk authorised to submit the relevant form, seconded Cllr Kops. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/039)

**9.9.24 Financial Matters (Clerk).**

**a) Cllrs to consider the Financial Schedule as presented.**

Cllrs reviewed and discussed the [Financial Schedule as found in Appendix A](#) and Cllr McLaughlan proposed that the Financial Schedule be approved as presented, seconded Cllr Nancekivell. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/040)

**b) Banking Checks for period 10-06-2024 to 08-07-2024.**

Cllr Littleales and Cllr McLaughlan carried out the banking checks for this period and signed the documentation.

**c) Banking Checks for period 08-07-2024 to 09-09-2024.**

Cllr Nancekivell and Cllr McLaughlan carried out the banking checks for this period and signed the documentation.

**10.9.24 Reports and future agenda items (not for debate/decision making):**

**a) Advance Notice of [ROAD CLOSURE: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October between 09:30 and 15:30 - ROAD FROM PEAR TREE COTTAGE TO MOWHAY, MERTON, CARRIAGEWAY, VERGE, O/S CONKERS OFF BOUNSELLS LANE.](#)**

Cllr Littleales to add to the village Facebook page.

**b) Advance Notice of Road Closure: [Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October between 08:30 and 15:30 - ROAD FROM CHAPEL CROSS TO LAKES CROSS, MERTON, ROAD FROM CHAPEL CROSS TO LIMERS LANE, ROAD FROM BRANDIS CORNER TO CHAPEL CROSS, ROAD FROM CHAPEL CROSS TO RYALLS CORNER & ROAD FROM RYALLS CORNER TO LAKES CROSS.](#)**

Cllr Littleales to add to the village Facebook page.

**c) Stagecoach are making changes to many of their services from 1st September 2024. Full details of the changes and the new timetables will be available on their website shortly: [www.Stagecoachbus.com](http://www.Stagecoachbus.com).**

Cllr Littleales to add to the village Facebook page.

**11.9.24 Confirmation of next meeting date: Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm. - Any change will be on the [Website](#).**

Minutes of meeting held 09-09-2024 ~ Initialled as a correct record: N.L

## **12.9.24 Confidential matters (PART II) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2)**

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

Cllr Kops proposed that the Council move to Part II due to the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, seconded Cllr McLaughlan. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/041)

The Clerk confirmed that the audio recording had been stopped. Cllr Littleales thanked the public for attending.

The Clerk was asked to leave the room during discussion on item b).

### **b) To discuss matters relating to the recruitment of a replacement Clerk and matters relating to the existing Clerks departure – (*Confidential employment matters*).**

### **c) To report on pre-planning meeting with TDC and any advice received relating to Drainage matters in the (*Legally sensitive information*).**

### **d) To discuss Solicitors advice relating to the Play area including ownership of the land and maintenance of the playground – (*Legally sensitive information*).**

### **e) The Chair to return the meeting to public session to hear resolutions.**

**Item b)** No resolutions recorded.

**Item c)** Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council will pay for the installation of a silt trap by K. Ashwell builders at a cost of £3450 but will have no part in ongoing maintenance, seconded Cllr Lang. All in Favour – Motion Carried. (RR2024/042)

**Item d)** Cllr Papworth proposed that the Council write to the Clinton Hall Committee stating that on the advice of the Solicitor the Parish Council is proposing to transfer the Play area assets and an Earmarked Reserve to the Clinton Hall Committee, as well as consider an annual grant towards maintenance, thus allowing the Clinton Hall Committee to apply for the S.106 funding from TDC, seconded Cllr Kops. 5 in Favour, 1 Against – Motion Carried. (RR2024/043)

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 10pm.

## **Appendix A: Financial Schedule.**

### **Pre-authorised payments made since last meeting:**

| <b>Ref.</b>  | <b>Amount</b>  | <b>Payee</b>                | <b>Details</b> | <b>Power</b>   | <b>Funding Source</b>    |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| PM25/016     | £50.00         | ND Records Office           | Grant          | LGA 1972 S.137 | Grants / Other Donations |
| PM25/017     | £300.00        | Merton Churchyard Committee | Grant          | LGA 1972 S.137 | Grants / Standing Grants |
| PM25/018     | £50.00         | Citizens Advice             | Grant          | LGA 1972 S.137 | Grants / Other Donations |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>£400.00</b> |                             |                |                |                          |

### **Payments for authorisation (retrospective approval):**

| <b>Ref.</b> | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Payee</b>   | <b>Details</b>        | <b>Power</b>           | <b>Funding Source</b>       |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (PM25/019)  | 106.55        | Steve Jennings | Grass Cutting         | Highways Act 1980 S.96 | Running Cost/ Grass Cutting |
| PM25/020    | £14.40        | Clinton Hall   | Hall Hire (July 2024) | LGA 1972 S.111         | Admin / Hall Hire           |
| PM25/021    | £337.83       | Alice Turner   | Salary (July 2024)    | LGA 1972 S.112         | Staff Costs/ Salary         |
| PM25/022    | £259.55       | Alice Turner   | Salary (August 2024)  | LGA 1972 S.112         | Staff Costs/ Salary         |

Minutes of meeting held 09-09-2024 ~ Initialled as a correct record: N.L

|              |                  |              |                                                         |                                    |                                                      |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| PM25/023     | £195.75          | Alice Turner | Re-<br>imbursements<br>(Defib Pads)                     | Public Health<br>Act 1936<br>s.234 | Assets / Defib.                                      |
| PM25/024     | £164.17          | Alice Turner | Expenses & re-<br>imbursements<br>(June & July<br>2024) | LGA 1972<br>S.111 & S.112          | Staff Costs/ Salary<br>& Staff Cost /<br>Office Exp. |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>£1,078.25</b> |              |                                                         |                                    |                                                      |

**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)              |
| £3,250.00         | Precept Contingency (EMR)    |
| £2,397.57         | General Reserve              |
| £9,410.00         | Play Equipment Fund (EMR)    |
| £1,972.55         | Staff Costs & Training (EMR) |
| £651.81           | Admin (EMR)                  |
| <b>£31,736.40</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                 |

**Bank Situation**

|                                                 |                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Bank Total 09/09/2024</b>                    | <b>£33,288.99</b> |
| <b>Less Payments pending</b>                    | <b>£971.70</b>    |
| <b>Plus receipts Received (after Bank date)</b> | <b>£0.00</b>      |
| <b>Less Money held as reserves</b>              | <b>£31,736.40</b> |
| <b>Available Balance</b>                        | <b>£580.89</b>    |

**Signed:** Cllr N. Littleales **Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

*Minutes of meeting held 09-09-2024 ~ Initialled as a correct record:* N.L