

Merton Parish Council

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Draft: Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 11th November 2024 at 7.30pm at the Clinton Hall.

Cllrs present: Neil Littleales (Chair) Gordon McLaughlan (Vice-Chair) Rob Nancekivel, Nigel Lang, Steve Papworth, Giles Kops,

Also present: Kerry Littleales (Clerk) and Cllr. Chris Wheatley.

Business Transacted

1.11.24 Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and informed the meeting that a recording was taking place to assist in the preparation of the minutes which would be deleted once the minutes had been drafted.

2.11.24 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies received from Councillor Cheryl Cottle – Hunkin, Councillor Andrew Saywell, PCSO Sandra Brown.

3.11.24 Minutes of the last minute – available on the website (Chair)

Cllr Littleales proposed that the minutes of the last meeting dated 9th September 2024 be signed as a true and accurate record. Cllr Papworth raised that though the minutes reflected the meeting, some of the letters and numbering do not match with the Agenda. Cllr Papworth Proposed. Cllr McLaughlan Seconded. 5 in favour 1 abstention. Motion carried. (RR2024/60)

4.11.24 Declaration of interest.

Councillor Littleales declared a personal interest in relation to 11.11.24 in Part 2 confidential matters in relation to Clerks contract.

5.11.24 Public speaking time.

No members of the public attended.

6.11.24 District/County councillors and Police Report.

a) County Cllr Andrew Saywell sent his apologies, and provided a written report. Link to Cllr. Saywells report. [DCC Report for Merton Parish Council November 2024.pdf](#)

b) District Cllrs. Chris Wheatley and Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin. Cllr Wheatley went through his report with Cllrs. Link to Cllr. Wheatleys Report. [Report chris wheatley 11.11.2024.pdf](#)

c) No police report provided. Cllrs. noted that the Police website states officers will no longer attend parish meetings. Cllr Kops suggested that we remove the requirement for this report unless a specific matter arises.

7.11.24 Council Documents and Policies

Cllr Papworth highlighted that previous policies, though reviewed at meetings, had not been correctly updated in relation to the Policy Version number. Reviews have taken place, and minutes need to be checked, and the Version number reflect this. Clerk to deal with this.

To consider /review/revise the following policies as found on the policy page.

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MPC/013 – Internal Financial Control Policy – Cllr Littleales Prop Document to continue in present format. Cllr Papworth seconded. All in favour, motion carried (RR2024/061)

MPC/020 – Disciplinary Procedure -Legislation is still correct, amendment from the wording oral to verbal. Prop Cllrs Kops. Seconded Cllr Lang - All in favour, motion carried. (RR2024/062)

MPC/021 - Training Policy – Reviewed and Prop Cllr Lang. Seconded Cllr Nancekivell - All in favour, motion carried. (RR2024/063)

MPC/022 - Reserve's Policy – Cllr Littleales highlighted that the budget table is out of date and would need updating each year – the presence of the actual budget table seems superfluous. Proposal that the Budget Tables are removed and a statement of “Earmarked reserves held by Merton Parish Council can be reviewed on the Budget Statement” replaces them. Prop Cllr Kops, Seconded Cllr Lang - all in favour, motion carried (RR2024/064)

8.11.24 Current and New Business

a) Drainage issues in the square.

Drainage/silt cleaning now sorted out. Community Payback Scheme are ready to come in and do this work. Discussion around removing some obstacles prior to the work and how to notify residents re their parking. Action – Cllr Littleales to liaise with Community Payback.

b) Overnight Parking Permits within the Square.

Agreement to ask residents to re-register their vehicles with no restriction on the number of cars per household. Also, agreement to advise those re registering that parking should not occur on the Medieval path or over the gullies. Action – Cllr Littleales to write a short policy for this.

c) Response from Clinton Hall committee in relation to the Playground.

Letter read out from Clinton Hall. Discussion around this subject and agreement that a lease of 99 years for £1 a year, with years notice period on both sides.

Prop Cllr Kops, Seconded Cllr Littleales. 5 in favour, 1 abstaining. (RR2024/65)

Cllr Papworth proposed a caveat to this resolution (RR2024/49) that a condition of the lease is that the Playground Committee is disbanded and its funds are transferred to the Parish Council who will apply for the 106 monies to improve the Playground. Prop Cllr Papworth Seconded Cllr kops – All in favour motion carried. (RR2024/66)

d) Christmas Tree festival

Outline of progress so far with the festival set between 9th and 13th December ending with a Carol Service. The Church Committee will continue to run the Carol Service and funds for the refreshments stay with the church. Estimate of the costs for trees, lights and buckets, gravel etc at £246

Discussion that Clinton Estate provide a large tree for the church but decided Parish do not require a second large tree. Agreement that all donations made for either decorating the trees or viewing the festival should go towards the Church funds. Proposed £300 for funding Cllr. Papworth, seconded Cllr. Nancekivell. All in favour – motion carried. (RR2024/067)

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e) Oak Tree in the Square.

Cllr Littleales relayed verbal request by parishioner to trim and lift the Oak Tree within the Village Square. Proposal by Cllr Littleales that having the tree maintained is agreed. Seconded by Cllr Kops. A quote has been received which was moved to Part II for sensitive financial matters. All in Favour – motion carried. (RR2024/68)

f) Clinton Hall Grant Application

Moved to Part 2 as discussing financial matters.

g) Back Lane access.

Cllr. Littleales reported a Parishioner had expressed concerns over vehicle access to Back Lane because of overgrowing hedges.

Discussion over whether the area in question is public land and whether the Parish Council are responsible for its maintenance. Action - Clerk to ascertain ownership/responsibility for Back Lane with Devon County council.

9.11.24 Clerk Reports

a) Notified Cllrs that Devon and Somerset Fire Services precept survey had been circulated on our Face Book page.

b) Attendance at Area Advisory Group meeting highlighted to Cllrs.**10.11.24 Finance**

a) To approve the financial schedule as presented by the Clerk. Finance schedule at Appendix A

b) Banking cheques for period 09.09.24 – 29.10.24 signed by Cllrs.Littleales and McLaughlan

12.11.24 Confirmation of next meeting date : Monday 13th January 2025 at 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall.

13.11.24 Confidential matters (Part 11) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2)

a) Resolution required to move the Council into Part II. Cllr Papworth proposed seconded by Cllr Nancekivell. All in favour – motion carried (RR2024/069)

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

b) To review and sign contract of employment for Parish Clerk. (Confidential employment matters.)

c) To review financial systems currently used by the Council

Additional matters included from the agenda that should have been placed into Part II.

From Current and New Business -

i) Legal Advice regarding Drainage situation in The Square

ii) Clinton Hall Fence – Grant application

iii) Maintenance of Oak tree in The Square.

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d)The Chair to return the meeting to public session to hear resolutions.

Item b) – not discussed or presented.

Item c) – No resolutions

Item i) Advice given and noted.

Item ii) Resolution to return application to the Clinton Hall Committee to complete it and attached the required documents.

Prop Cllr Papworth , seconded Cllr Lang - all in favour – motion carried (RR2024/070)

iii) Council agreed the Quote of £300 sent in by Andy Winsbury with the council paying £25 for the permission certificate. Proposed Cllr. Kops Seconded Cllr Papworth. (RR2024/071)

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

Appendix A: Financial Schedule

Pre-authorised payments made since the last meeting:

Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding source
PM25/025	365.00	Clinton Hall	Grant	LGA 1972 s.137	Grants/other donations
TOTAL	365.00				

Payments for authorisation(Retrospective approval)

Ref	Amount	Payee	Details	Power	Funding source
PM25/26	719.05	Alice Turner	Salary	LGA 1972 s.112	Staff salary costs
PM25/027	200.28	Alice Turner	Salary	LGA 1972 s.112	Staff salary costs
PM25/028	36.00	DALC	Training	LGA 1972 s.111	Admin
PM25/029	36.00	DALC	Training	LGA 1972 s.111	Admin
PM25/030	546.05	Littleales	Laptop printer and paper		
TOTAL	1537.38				

Receipts for information

Payment Ref	Method	Details	Amount
PR25/005	Bacs	DCC – grass cutting	441.00
PR25/006	BGC	HMRC VAT return	523.04
		Total	964.04

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

Monies held as Reserves	
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)
£31,736.40	TOTAL

Bank Situation

Bank Total 29/10/2024	£37,488.95
Less Payments pending	£0.00
Plus receipts Received (after Bank date)	£0.00
Less Money held as reserves	£31,736.40
Available Balance	£5,752.55

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