

# MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Merton Parish Council was held on:

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30pm in the Clinton Hall

Present: Cllr Papworth (Acting Chair), Cllr Brown, Cllr Collins, Cllr Malcolm, Cllr Nancekivell, CC Andy Boyd, Sarah Bonner (Clerk)

Absent: Cllr Scantlebury

**71. Apologies:** Cllr Horner, Cllr Laughton, PCSO Sandra Brown.

Cllr Papworth explained that Cllr Horner had requested a six month sabbatical as Chair but wishes to remain on the Council. This had been checked as OK with TDC.

Proposed to accept Cllr Horner's sabbatical and Cllr Papworth to be acting Chair until the AGM.

Prop: Cllr Collins, Sec: Cllr Malcolm all in favour.

**72. Declaration of interest**

Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interest, declare any personal or prejudicial interests and their nature in items on the agenda. TDC to be notified of changes: **Action Clerk**

**73. Public speaking time:** No public present.

**74. Local Police Report:** PCSO Brown had forwarded report – filed with minutes. No crime for period 16.12.15-16.01.16. Diesel spillage and fallen tree reported.

**75. Minutes from the last meeting** held on Tuesday 3rd November 2015

The above minutes were agreed and signed as a true record. Hard copy filed in Minutes folder.

**76. Matters arising from the minutes:**

a) Speed sign and community speed check equipment update –Cllr Scantlebury not present. Deferred to next meeting.

b) Footpath Pack – Deferred to next meeting. (Cllr Scantlebury)

c) Beech trees – Cllr Collins reported all in hand. Work to be done during school holidays.

d) Salt supplies & Winter Village Emergency plan –Cllr Brown reported there had been no major issues of ice recently. Councillors felt Merton Mill was at risk of being dangerous if the weather was bad. Cllr Brown said salt would be delivered to vulnerable areas of the parish. CC Boyd offered to establish if bags were being distributed which would be easier to handle than the current salt in bins. Advise Clerk who will order bags if possible. **Action CC Boyd and Clerk**

e) Grass cutting – Cllr Papworth reported Steve Jennings had agreed to cut the grass verges but would need equipment. DCC contract states grass should be cut at least 4 times between April and September where visibility for traffic is an issue. (£400 funding). Some Cllrs felt the Parish Council shouldn't buy equipment, noted the church had a lawnmower.

Concluded to ask the existing contractor to cut the verges at last four times yearly between April and September using a strimmer as per the DCC contract. He will need to do Chapter 8 training and have public liability insurance. Prop: Cllr Collins, Sec: Cllr Brown. All in favour.

Chairman's discretion to be used to instruct contractor as necessary. Specific areas to be clarified and working party formed: **Action Cllr Papworth**

f) Old documents - Cllr Malcolm reported this was in hand.

**77. District Councillor Speaking time:** CC Boyd apologised for not being at recent meeting due to ill health.

He reminded the Cllrs that he has to maintain the Cllrs budget and has money available for parish projects.

He reported that there had been significant budget cuts to the District Council but they were proud of what they had achieved given the losses by being more efficient and managing services successfully.

Noted that school crossing patrol support will be stopping but budgets will be given to schools to manage.

Discussion about the project at Deepmoor.

Cllr Collins asked Cllr Boyd to report back on email to Clerk when local A road – Higher Lodge to entrance of Huish will be resurfaced as its in very bad repair. **Action CC Boyd**

78. **Planning** – late item: 1/1099/2015/FUL Revised plans for Twit Too. No objections. **Action Clerk**

79. **Clerk** – Current clerk has given her notice due to personal circumstance. Agreed to re-advertise vacancy and deal with accordingly.

80. **Finance**

a) Cheques for signature: cheques below were signed. To be distributed: **action Clerk.**

0261	DALC Short clerks course	£30.00
0262	TDC PC elections May 2015	£280.04
0263	Merton & Huish Wildlife Group	£200.00

b) Budget and Precept 2016- Budget was presented and it was agreed to raise the Parish Precept from £4750 to £4800 including £252.01 Council Tax Support grant. To be returned by 31<sup>st</sup> Jan to TDC. **Action Clerk.** Prop: Cllr Papworth. Sec: Cllr Brown. All agreed.

c) Small items: to propose the Chair is given authority to spend up to £150 between meetings for small items (e.g. dog bin). The Councillors declined this proposal. Prop: Cllr Collins. Sec: Cllr Nancekivell. All in favour. Agreed to circulate email for approval of spend if necessary.

81. **Organisation reports:**

a) Play equipment: Cllr Malcolm reported this is making progress.

b) Youth club: Nothing to report. Remove from agenda.

82. **North Devon Records Office:** Funding had been requested from NDDC for Councils to make donations to support the office. Concerns discussed of whether it would be an annual or one off donation. Noted Clinton records are kept in Exeter and some Merton records at Barnstaple. CC Boyd confirmed that if it closed, the records would move to Exeter. All agreed not to make a donation.

83. **Queen's Birthday Beacon** (21st April): Cllr Papworth explained the suggestions of nationwide Beacons for the celebration. Proposed to have a Beacon in the village for the occasion. Prop: Cllr Brown, Sec: Cllr Nancekivell. All in favour. **Action Cllr Brown**

84. **Patrons lunch** (12th June): TDC had forwarded info on the planned lunch on the mall and possibility of parishes organising their own celebrations. Agreed to see what interest could be generated in the village. **Action Cllr Malcolm**

85. **Correspondence:** Bounsells Lane: Cllr Papworth reported there were drain issues in Bounsells Lane when heavy rain. Agreed to write to Highways expressing concern of water running off A386 to Bounsells Lane to Shepherds Court causing a danger of stones on the road. Prop: Cllr Collins, Sec: Cllr Malcolm, all in favour **Action Clerk**

86. **Items for next agenda:** Village survey, Square Parking, Sign cleaning, Playground, Speed sign and community speed check equip, Footpath pack.

87. **Next meeting date:** Monday 29<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 10pm,