

# MERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
Held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7:30pm in The Clinton Hall

**Councillors Present:** Tim Horner (Chair), Steve Papworth (Vice Chair), Jill Malcolm, Philip Collins, Chris Laughton, Robert Nancekevill and Paul Scantlebury

**Parish Clerk:** Zena Tett

**Also in attendance:** No members of the public were present

## Business to be Transacted

78. **Apologies for Absence:** District Councillor Richard Wiseman, County Councillor Andy Boyd, PCSO Sandra Brown and Cllr Bill Brown

79. **Welcome:** Councillor Horner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

80. **Minutes of the last meeting:** held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Papworth and all agreed.

81. **Declarations of Interest:**

- a. Cllr Horner – Item 83a. Chairman of Play Equipment Committee
- b. Cllr Laughton – Item 86a. Taw & Torridge Coaches and member of Churchyard Committee
- c. Cllr Papworth – Item 83c. member of Churchyard Committee
- d. Cllr Malcolm – Item 83a. member of Play Equipment Committee
- e. Cllr Collins – Item 83c. member of Churchyard Committee

82. **Public Speaking Time**

- a. PCSO Sandra Brown was not present, however, prior to the meeting she reported that during the period 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017, Merton and Huish have had one crime: criminal damage to property. During the same period the Police have received 3 calls where a log has been generated.

83. **Matters Arising**

- a. Play Equipment

A public meeting was held recently where plans were displayed for public viewing. Funding is now available for the first phase of the new playground and works should commence at the beginning of May. The Parish Council has been awarded £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund in addition to a grant of £18,000 and further fundraising events will be planned in the future.

Torrige District Council have sent a letter requesting the Parish Council consider surrendering the lease of the play park adjacent to the Village Hall. Cllr Horner will reply asking TDC to allow the Parish Council up to 12 months before surrendering the lease. Proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Papworth, all in favour. **Action Cllr Horner**

b. Highway Matters

- i. The clerk continues to chase Highways regarding the build-up of detritus which has been a concern – ENQ 17964694 and a Highways Officer will be visiting Merton to assess. It had been noted Limers Lane and Merton Mill up to Balls Corner and up to the Village are in need of attention. **Action Clerk**
- ii. The Clerk reported that the sign opposite Towell Lane, Beaford has been looked into and Highways have closed this enquiry as they have reported the sign is not a safety defect.
- iii. The request for an “Unsuitable for HGV’s” sign has been rejected by Highways on the grounds that further signs would add to general sign clutter which the County Council now seeks to avoid where possible. Highways informed the Parish Council that the majority of delivery drivers would be aware of the local road network and would choose their routes accordingly.
- iv. The Chairman requested Councillors to take photographs of any faulty signs and upload to the Highways Website and notify the Clerk if a report to Highways is required. **Action Councillors**
- v. Some residents have complained about the number of pot holes along the road through Meadow Vale. Cllr Horner has discovered Westward Housing is responsible for the maintenance of this road not Highways. Clerk to contact residents informing them Cllr Horner will contact Westward Housing on their behalf. **Action Cllr Horner and Clerk**

c. Churchyard Mower

Cllr Collins has applied for a Community New Homes grant to replace the Churchyard Mower. He has been advised by D.Cllr Wiseman that the application for the grant has met the requisite point scoring and is now with the Head of Paid Services for a decision. Clerk to put on the next Agenda. **Action Clerk**

**84. New Items**

a. Devon Air Ambulance Landing Site

Cllr Malcolm met with Toby Russell from Devon Air Ambulance recently to review the proposed landing site. Mr Russell explained that planning permission would be needed for the mast and recommended the Parish Council hold a meeting to explain the process and the requirements of the DAA to residents. Mr Russell agreed he would attend the Annual Parish meeting for this purpose. Proposed costs would be in the region of £5,434, however a grant of £2.639 would be available from DAA so the Parish Council would need to raise funds to the sum of £2.795. Cllr Collins agreed to help Cllr Malcolm with this project and suggested the Parish Council write to the Village Hall explaining the ideas. **Action Cllr Collins**

b. TTVS & DALC Membership

Councillors voted to continue its membership with both TTVS & DALC. Proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Horner, all in favour. **Action Clerk**

c. Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

Councillors reviewed the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations. Clerk to make the suggested amendments before forwarding to Cllr Papworth for review. Final copy to be brought to the next meeting for signature. Proposed by Cllr Horner, seconded by Cllr Collins, all in favour. **Action Clerk**

d. River Mere Water Quality

Cllr Collins was concerned about the deposits made on the river and the change of colour when it rains. He suggested the Parish Council write to the Environment Agency with a copy to Tom Hynes at North Devon Biosphere. **Action Cllr Collins**

e. Annual Parish Meeting and AGM Dates

Cllr Horner proposed a joint meeting of the Annual Parish Meeting starting at 7:00pm with a short presentation by Devon Air Ambulance followed by the AGM at 7:45pm and finally the Parish Council Meeting at 8:00pm on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017, seconded by Cllr Papworth, all in favour. Clerk to ask organisations to attend and verbally report. **Action Clerk**

f. Defibrillator

Cllr Papworth has checked the Defibrillator and appears to be operating correctly. Cllr Collins suggested it would be beneficial to purchase a second Defibrillator to be placed at the Village Hall. Cllr Papworth moved that we concentrate on raising money for the landing site and defer defibrillator until a later date, seconded by Cllr Malcolm, all in favour.

g. Transparency Code

Cllr Papworth explained the importance of Transparency Code compliance. The seminar outlined all the items that must be published on the Parish Council website before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

- i. Items of expenditure over £100
- ii. End of year accounts
- iii. Annual Governance Statement
- iv. Internal Audit Report
- v. List of Councillors
- vi. Details of public and building assets
- vii. Agenda within 3 clear days of a meeting
- viii. Minutes within one month of a meeting

The Clerk was asked to forward the following items to Cllr Papworth for uploading onto the website:

- i. Items of expenditure over £100 for the years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17
- ii. Annual Governance Statement for the year 2014/15
- iii. Internal Audit Report for the year 2014/15
- iv. End of year accounts for the year 2014/15

**Action Clerk**

**85. Member Reports:** nothing to report.

**86. Planning**

a. Taw & Torridge Building

Cllr Scantlebury was approached by a parishioner regarding the lack of planting surrounding the Taw and Torridge Building. Cllr Horner had contacted the Planning Office and it was confirmed that the owners still had time for planting under the planning

application. Cllr Scantlebury to pass this information on to the relevant parishioner.

**Action Cllr Scantlebury**

**87. Clerks Report**

a. Correspondence

There have been several items of correspondence forwarded by email since the last Clerk's report, most of which were routine newsletters. The Clerk highlighted several items of correspondence:

- i. Email from TDC regarding Waste & Recycling Service Proposals
- ii. Email from DCC regarding Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) outbreak in the UK
- iii. Letter received from Lloyds Bank in response to Clerks letter with reference to closure of the Torrington branch
- iv. Letter inviting the Chairman to the Coldstream Prize Giving Ceremony
- v. Letter from Geoffrey Cox MP, thanking the Clerk for letter sent on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017
- vi. Quotation from DCC regarding grass cutting to the value of £389.00 – clerk to send invoice. **Action Clerk**
- vii. Letter from Local Government Boundary Commission for England regarding Electoral Review of Torridge: Final Recommendations
- viii. Email from Devon Communities Together regarding Information & Advice Surgeries

b. Training

The Clerk informed Councillors that she would be attending a training course on Preparing for Audit on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The course costs will be £25 +VAT to be shared with 3 other Parish Councils. **Action Clerk**

c. Parish Paperwork/Filing

The Clerk notified the meeting she had received 2 files from storage which contained past Minutes. She recommended purchasing a filing cabinet to store Parish Council paperwork. The costs would be in the region of £100 – £150 shared between four Parish Councils'. Proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Papworth, all in favour.

**88. Finance**

a. Bank Balance

The balance for the Treasurers Account as of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 statement was £3,088.71. During this period 2 cheques were cleared totalling £90.84, no payments were received. There are 4 new cheques which total £499.49 giving the Parish an actual balance of £2,589.22 when these cheques have cleared. The Bank Balance for the Business Bank Account as of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 was £16,415.44. During this period there were no transactions, however, an amount of £7.07 interest had been added.

b. Payments

- i. £400.00 – Merton Churchyard Committee: grant
- ii. £50.00 – Colin Jones: website and email hosting for 1 year from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017
- iii. £29.49 – Clerks Expenses

iv. 20.00 – Clerks Expenses

c. Receipts

- None

Cllr Horner will visit a branch of Lloyds Bank to obtain a list of signatories and ensure Cllr Malcolm is on the list. Cllr Malcolm to complete the necessary forms. **Cllrs Horner and Malcolm**

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:15 pm**

**SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD: ..... (Chair)**

**NAME: .....DATE: .....**

<p><b>The next meeting will be a joint meeting starting with the Annual Parish Meeting at 7:00pm, followed by the AGM at 7:45pm and finally the Parish Council Meeting at 8:00pm to be held in The Clinton Hall, Merton on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017</b></p>
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