



Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held via Zoom

Wednesday 1st April 2020

Present Sue Isherwood, Chair
Ros Wyke, Councillor
Jo Tucker, Councillor
Sue Reece, Councillor
Peter Bright, Councillor
Guy Timson, Councillor

In attendance Chris Harris, Clerk

Before the meeting proper commenced and with reference to Item 13, Mr. Mark Smith, Website Manager, gave a detailed report on developments to date and several further suggestions including checking the accessibility enhancements made by Tickbox, a Change Control Policy and Procedure, a Privacy Policy and investigation of SSL certification. Councillors warmly thanked Mr Smith for his prodigious efforts and invaluable input during this most unprecedented time and going forward.

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Graham Noel, Somerset County Councillor; Jo Tucker, Councillor.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

2a Declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda

Cllr Wyke, as a Member involved in the consideration and determination of planning applications by Mendip District Council, declares that the views expressed by her at Parish Council meetings on any particular proposal are based on the evidence available to her at the time, and is provisional only. Cllr Wyke will not be bound by any recommendation made by the Parish Council on any proposal, and will consider any matter afresh in connection with any application which comes before her in her capacity as a Member of Mendip District Council, taking all further evidence into account.

No other declarations or written requests were received.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020 were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.

4. Co-option for Parish Council Vacancy

4a Mr John Millbank made a short and very informative presentation to the council outlining his background and the skills he brings to the Council. Members thanked him for his presentation.

4b It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Mr Millbank as a new Member of the Council and he signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which has since been received and countersigned by the Clerk. He will be provided with copies of MDC's Register of Interests, to be completed within 28 days of acceptance of office. **Update:** Register of Interests received, will be forwarded to MDC.

Action: Clerk

5. Impact of Coronavirus pandemic on Parish Council business

Members discussed in detail a range of issues relating to this rapidly evolving situation.

5a. **Robert Glanville Playing Field Trust:** Cllr Timson confirmed that the field had been closed until further notice in line with government mandated requirements. He explained that approximately 60% of RGPTF income derives from stewarding at the Glastonbury Festival; as this had been cancelled there would be a considerable shortfall this year. Some ongoing maintenance will be needed including keeping the grass cut, and it was not known at this stage whether the RoSPA safety inspection would take place. Members agreed that some emergency funding may

be available from Parish funds (see 5.v below); Cllr Wyke also suggested contacting the Somerset Community Foundation for additional funding. **Update:** Sport England have set up a community emergency fund for playing fields – Cllr Timson to investigate and register interest.

Action: Cllr Timson

5b. Village Hall: Cllr Bright noted that while utilities such as heating and lighting would be substantially reduced, there is now no income and some maintenance work (electrics and external decorations) still need to be done. Again, members agreed that some emergency funding may be available from Parish funds and that a case could also be made for contacting the Somerset Community Foundation for additional funding. **Update:** Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) are currently in discussions with the government regarding emergency funding for village halls – Cllr Bright to investigate and register interest.

Action: Cllr Bright

5c. Community Shop: Cllr Reece reported that, after a period of adjustment, the shop is now running a delivery service to those in need with orders being taken by phone and online. Customers are no longer allowed in the shop but orders and payment are taken at the door. Supplies are generally good, with the occasional but not insurmountable shortfall. The shop is currently investigating newspaper deliveries as the local delivery service was stopped then transferred to another company, although this may prove more difficult to manage on a voluntary basis over time. Councillors thanked Cllr Reece for her report and gave their appreciation to Simon Reece and all the staff and volunteers of the shop for their heroic efforts in very difficult and rapidly changing circumstances.

5d. Online conferencing: the Clerk has subscribed to Zoom on a monthly rolling contract which will be invoiced back to the Council. It was agreed to make the facility available to other groups in the community but needs to be carefully monitored to ensure the appropriate use. The government have confirmed the legislative details of convening virtual meetings and NALC have provided further instructions to ensure compliance and transparency.

5e. Funding: as all projects would be in abeyance this year due to the current crisis and in line with Clause (f) of the Business Continuity Motion (see 6a below), it was unanimously agreed that project monies (£5,000) would be ringfenced to use as an emergency fund as and when the need arises. Application criteria need to be transparent and consistent and should be made to the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk to write an Application Protocol for approval at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

6. Business Continuity Motion

6a. Members discussed this Motion as recommended by NALC. It provides clear guidance on delegation of duties should any Members or the Clerk be unable to undertake their duties and allows for the use of project monies to be utilised for emergency funding as and when needed.

6b. Members unanimously resolved to approve the Business Continuity Motion 2020.

7. Emergency Planning Group Activity

Cllr Reece gave a comprehensive overview of the numerous activities the Emergency Planning Group has already put in place, including the following:

- Establishment of a network of local co-ordinators to disseminate information to their 'patch' plus a comprehensive telephone tree in case of internet outages.
- A reference group working to keep messages consistent across all platforms and media.
- Greater use of the village website with a dedicated coronavirus page plus encouraging as many people as possible to register for updates. Information is also posted on the parish noticeboards.
- Over 100 volunteers have offered their services, many agreeing to do home deliveries from the shop.
- Volunteer teams offering a listening service, back-up medical advice should 111 be overwhelmed, basic support with IT and mobile phones and a telephone friendship service.
- Other groups are circulating information useful to parents and children who are homeschooling and making safe arrangements for safe book/DVD exchange.
- Urging people to support local businesses wherever possible given the looming economic crisis.
- Considering ways to support individuals in financial difficulty, signposting to sources of official help in the first instance.
- Provision of a handy list of helplines circulated through all communication channels.

Members thanked Cllr Reece for her detailed report and congratulated both her and Mick Fletcher for their prodigious efforts over the last few weeks in putting together such an effective and proactive package of support for the community. Members also extended their thanks to all staff and volunteers without whom much of this vital work would not be possible.

8. Reports from the Somerset County Councillor and Mendip District Councillor

There was no report from the Somerset County Councillor.

The Mendip District Councillor gave a brief summary of actions to date:

- Planning will continue as normal, although the logistics and protocols have yet to be finalised. Applications have, understandably, fallen in recent weeks.
- Based on current trends, Somerset appears to be around 15 days behind London in terms of infection and mortality rates. Local residents are urged to follow government advice on social distancing and self-isolating, and stay at home wherever possible.
- If mortality rates do rise in line with trends, the need for social and emotional support is likely to become very challenging particularly given the unique circumstances of funerals at this time. MDC Council is endeavouring to ensure as much support as possible is available.
- MDC is very aware of the short and long term significance of the economic crisis the current situation is creating and plans to support local businesses with grants of up to £3000.00 on a needs basis, plus easement of business rates for the coming year.
- Everyone is encouraged to read the emergency support information available on the dedicated coronavirus page on the MDC website.
- Millfield School generously donated £40,000 worth of food to local food banks, but they are all struggling, both with an increase in demand and a fall in donations. Please donate whatever spare food you can.

Members thanked the District Councillor for her report.

9. Clerk's Report

No report was presented except to say that there had been a late enquiry for the Clerk's position (see Item 12 below).

10. Planning

10a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Update

The Chair confirmed that the speaker had had to withdraw and that the group would be held in abeyance until such time as it was safe and appropriate to reconvene.

10b Planning Applications to be considered:

2020/0592/OTA	Tree works, Westbury House
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It was noted that, while the recommendation for these works was made in December 2019, a subsequent TPO had been applied in February 2020 (ref: 2020/0001/TCA). The Clerk had contacted MDC Planning twice for clarification but had yet to receive a reply. In view of this, it was decided that no decision could be made until the situation had been properly clarified by MDC Planning.

Action: Clerk.

10c Mendip District Council Decisions

Members noted the following decisions:

2019/3030/HSE	Erection of Garage, Oak View, Roughmoor Lane	Withdrawn
2020/0011/HSE	Erection of Garage, Old Horse and Groom, The Square	Approved with conditions
2020/2009/TCA	Tree works, The Palace, The Square	No objection

10d For general consideration/monitoring:

i) Land at Lynchcombe Lane, unauthorised occupancy

Members had received complaints of noise from members of the community emanating from a trackbike being ridden at the site, and it was noted that a for sale sign had appeared. The situation will be monitored but no further action will be taken at this point.

ii) Units 17 & 18 Lodge Hill Industrial Estate

Cllr Millbank reported on the detail of the Case Officer's explanation of the enforcement notice, and also reported that all signage had been returned and the site appears to have been vacated; apparently the company has found an alternative and more appropriate site in Glastonbury.

iii) Shamrock Stables

Members had received concerns – which have been raised previously - from members of the community regarding lost visitors to Shamrock knocking on doors. Given the current situation, it was felt that this was an additional unwarranted and unnecessary risk to those who might be vulnerable and/or self-isolating. It was agreed to contact the owners again to emphasise the importance of directing all their visitors appropriately. **Update:** Cllr Bright contacted Michael Garner, a representative of Shamrock Stables, on this matter: Mr Garner said that as the dogs were currently not being walked the numbers of visitors had declined and that it was much less of an issue than it had been in the past. The Council and the community at large to continue to monitor the situation.

Ms Peacock and Mr Garner separately had raised concerns regarding members of the public walking along the public footpath at the south end of Ms Peacock's field, the implication being that it was a risk to people at the stables. Given that the path is some considerable distance from the residential properties on site, and that numerous properties in the village were far closer to paths and roads thus at greater potential risk, it was felt that reiterating the Countryside Code to public footpath users would be sufficient – this has already been done though the regular community updates.

11. Finance

11a Payments to Note

Members noted that the Bullguard subscription was £67.49 plus £15.00 bank transfer fee (£82.49 total), for 3 years' subscription, not £89.99 for one year as previously stated.

11b Payments to Approve

The following payments were approved:

- Village hall rental fee £48.00
- Tickbox additional website works £108.00
- SALC Chair's training £30.00
- Online conferencing facilities subscription IRO £120 per annum
- Parish Clerk's pay from 12/08/19 – 29/03/20 £2011.68 (33 weeks @ £60.96 per week) - see Item 12 below.

11c Came & Company Parish Council Insurance Renewal

The Clerk raised a query concerning the new grit bin but it was decided that, as it had appeared without notice from an unknown source (probably SCC Highways but no confirmation had been received), it was outside the Council's insurance remit. The Clerk to complete the necessary documentation for renewal.

Action: Clerk

11d Annual Audit 2019/20

Members discussed the advice received from NALC regarding delayed submission of the 2019/20 annual audit. The Clerk confirmed that all attempts will be made to complete the necessary documentation in the usual timescale.

The Chair has asked Mrs Alison Cole if she would kindly act as Internal Auditor again. Confirmation is awaited.

11e The following bank balances were noted:

- Treasurer’s Account £550.00
- Business Bank Account £18978.03

12. Parish Clerk Position

In light of current events and the need to maintain consistency in an unprecedented situation, plus a lack of applicants, the Clerk had agreed to stay on until the situation has settled. One late enquiry had been made and will be kept on file.

As the Clerk had not been paid for work completed from August 2019 to March 2020 mainly due to problems with HMRC, as advised by SALC, members agreed to pay a lump sum for the amount outstanding on the understanding that the Clerk would declare it to HMRC (see Item 11b above). Going forward, the Clerk to set up a new HMRC Gateway account to ensure proper payment.

Action: Clerk

13. Website Matters

Mark Smith, Website Manager, had given a comprehensive review of the current situation before the meeting proper had commenced.

Members unanimously agreed to fund Mr Smith’s additional hours from the ringfenced emergency fund.

14. 2020-21 Project Proposals

As noted in Item 5e above, given that all projects for this financial year had been put into abeyance, monies that had been set aside for said projects are to be ringfenced as an emergency fund for any coronavirus related expenditure.

15. Notices

No notices were received.

16. Any Other Business/ Items for Next Agenda

No additional items or other business were raised for the next agenda.

17. Date of next meeting – given the rapidly changing events of the current situation, the next meeting has been scheduled for **Thursday 16th April 2020 @ 7.30 p.m. as a virtual meeting via online conferencing facilities.**

Signed.....Chair of the Parish Council

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