

MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL

(Parishes of Milton Abbot, Chillaton, Dunterton and Bradstone)

To all Members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council to be held at **7.30pm on Wednesday 2nd September 2015 at Marystow Church Hall** for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

H.J. Asbridge, Acting Clerk to the Council

Wednesday 26th August 2015

A G E N D A

Part 1

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2015**
- 4. Open Session – Members of the Public may speak regarding parish matters**
- 5. Urgent action**

In accordance with the Parish Council's urgency procedure, the Acting Clerk took the following action, with the concurrence of the Chair and Vice-Chair:

Approval of the terms of reference of the Personnel Committee

Submission of additional representations regarding the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the Ramsdown turbine.

The Acting Clerk also sought the concurrence of the Chair and Vice-Chair to spending £100.80 [£80 plus VAT] on advertising the vacancy for a Parish Clerk, in the Tavy Times. The concurrence of the Chair was obtained, but that of the Vice-Chair was not received in time. Nevertheless, the Acting Clerk placed the advertisement, given the deadline for doing so.

As this action did not comply with Standing Orders, **the Parish Council is requested** to consider whether to approve this expenditure and re-imburse the Acting Clerk accordingly.

6. Grants towards the maintenance of burial grounds

At its meeting on 14th May, the Parish Council received a detailed report from the Acting Clerk analysing the payments made since 2005 to various Parochial Church Councils [PCCs], in respect of grants towards the maintenance of burial grounds. The report had been submitted because it appeared that no payments may have been made in respect of such grants approved for the financial year 2014/15.

The position was unclear because the financial years of the Parish Council and the PCCs did not always coincide. So, for example, was a payment made in January 2012 [i.e. in the 2011/12 financial year] viewed by PCCs as a retrospective payment for calendar year 2011, or a payment in advance for calendar year 2012?

The problem was compounded by the failure of some previous parish clerks to make any note on the counterfoil of which year was being paid for and the use of a calendar year e.g. '2012' instead of a financial year, by those that did make a record. Those particular issues have now been resolved by clear notation on cheque counterfoils and reference to the Parish Council's relevant financial year in the covering letter sent with grant cheques.

However, it was decided at the May meeting to defer a decision on whether or not grants for 2014/15 were outstanding, until information had been received from Marystow PCC that might clarify payments made several years ago, for which the Parish Council records were incomplete.

Taking into account the analyses contained in the previous report and amalgamating them with the additional data now obtained from Marystow PCC, the overall position regarding grant payments to PCCs since 2005/06 is as follows:

PCC	2005/06	Paid	2006/07	Paid	2007/08	Paid	2008/09	Paid
Marystowe	280	10/08/05	300	31/12/06	315	02/03/08	315	14/04/09
Milton Abbot	280	17/08/05	300	12/03/07	315	Jan 08	315	14/05/09
Dunterton	145	09/08/05	300	30/01/07	175	Jan 08	175	02/04/09
Kelly								
PCC	2009/10	Paid	2010/11	Paid	2011/12	Paid	2012/13	Paid
Marystowe	315	16/12/09	315	16/05/11	315	12/01/12	315	13/02/13
Milton Abbot	315	14/12/09	315	12/05/11	315	12/01/12	315	09/01/13
Dunterton	175	14/12/09	175	12/05/11	175	12/01/12	175	09/01/13
Kelly							100	10/05/12
PCC	2013/14	Paid	2014/15	Paid	2015/16	Paid		
Marystowe	315	23/03/14	315		315	06/07/15		
Milton Abbot	315	??/03/14	315		315	06/07/15		
Dunterton	175	25/03/14	175		175	06/07/15		
Kelly	100	09/05/13	100		100	06/07/15		

The information from Marystow PCC has enabled the Acting Clerk to identify a previously missing payment to Milton Abbot PCC in 2005 and further analysis of the Parish Council's minutes shows that grants were approved for all three PCCs [Kelly PCC was not part of the Council's area at the time] in January 2008 and one was received by Marystow in March. The Parish Council's bank statements for this period are missing, but it seems reasonable to assume that these payments were made to the other PCCs also. If that is the case, then the payment of £300 to Dunterton in 2007 [instead of £145] is unexplained, as the relevant Parish Council minutes are missing.

However, the Marystow records have helped to create a more complete picture of payments made in respect of each financial year to all three PCCs since 2005, which shows that no grants were paid in respect of 2014/15.

The Acting Clerk and Cllr Brewer [who was asked to assist in this analysis] are now satisfied that payments of £315 should be made to Marystow and Milton Abbot PCCs, £175 to Dunterton PCC and £100 to Kelly PCC, in respect of grants for 2014/15 and **the Parish Council is requested** to authorise these payments, to be met from reserves.

7. Grants to Kelly Village Hall

With effect from May 2011, Bradstone Parish was merged with the area of the Parish Council and both the precepts previously levied by Bradstone Parish and its financial responsibilities were transferred to the Parish Council.

At its meeting on 18th June 2011, Bradstone Parish Meeting agreed *'to donate £100 to.....Kelly Village Hall in this current financial year [2011/12].'* That payment was subsequently made.

On 12 January 2012, the Parish Council agreed to *'honour the £50 annual donation to the Parish Hall in Meadwell, historically given by Bradstone PC.'* The Acting Clerk understands that the grant of £100 made by Bradstone Parish Meeting in June 2011 was standard practice and therefore, if the Parish Council intended to continue payments *historically given by Bradstone PC*, they should have awarded a grant of £100.

If the Parish Council wishes to correct this error, then they should pay an additional grant of £50 in respect of Kelly Village Hall for the years 2012/13 – 2015/16, making a total now due of £200.

It should be noted that, under the terms of management of the hall, payment of a grant of £100 would entitle the Parish Council to use the hall free of charge.

8. Training for new councillors

With their agreement, the Acting Clerk has booked places for Cllrs Beighton and Cox on a training course for new councillors at a cost of £30 each. The bookings were made because the course is being held at Bridestowe Hall and is one of very few locally run courses.

It is the case that the TAP fund should be financing training like this, but there is some confusion over the status of the scheme concerned and the Acting Clerk felt that this opportunity should not be missed. However, the bookings can be cancelled without penalty, if the Parish Council does not wish to fund them. There is no budget provision for this expenditure and the cost would have to be met from reserves. **The Parish Council's instructions are requested.**

9. Meeting of the Personnel Committee – 21st July 2015

The minutes of this meeting of the Personnel Committee are attached [**Appendix A**] and **the Parish Council is requested** to note the actions taken.

The Committee considered a projected outturn for 2015/16, an updated assessment of the Council's financial reserves and an analysis of the likely effect on future revenue budgets of recruitment at various points on the NJC salary scale for part-time local clerks. It was noted that recruitment at any point above SCP19 would produce a revenue deficit in future years. At the maximum point on the NJC scale, a deficit of about £700 would occur.

Nevertheless, the Committee agreed that the vacancy be offered on the basis that an appointment would be made at the point on the scale appropriate to the experience of the successful candidate. The Parish Council would be asked to confirm such appointment and take action to ensure any consequent on-going deficit was contained.

The Appointment Panel established by the Parish Council at its last meeting will be interviewing candidates on the day this agenda is dispatched. The Acting Clerk will report on the outcome of the Panel's consideration of the candidates and **the Parish Council will be recommended** to confirm any offer of appointment made and approve any necessary action to accommodate any increase in the salary budget.

10. Revised 2015/16 Budget

The financial analyses presented to the Personnel Committee have now been revised to take account of the expenditure proposed in various items set out above and a revised budget for this year together with a projected budget for next, is set out below:

Expenditure	2015/2016 Budget	2016/17 Budget
Grass Cutting	£608.00	£608.00
Insurance	£190.13	£190.13
Graveyard Upkeep		
Bradstone/Kelly	£100.00	£100.00
Dunterton	£175.00	£175.00
Marystowe	£315.00	£315.00
Milton Abbot	£315.00	£315.00
Village Hall Hire		
Milton Abbot	£200.00	£50.00
Marystowe Church Hall	£100.00	£60.00
Clerk's Salary **	£1,095.52	£1,792.96
Clerk's Expenses & Overtime	£100.00	£50.00
Payroll	£80.00	£80.00
Other Expenditure		
Kelly Village Hall	£50.00	£100.00
Bank Charges	£0.00	£0.00
Tavistock Times	£100.80	£0.00
DALC	£162.71	£162.71
MACKPlan	£0.00	£0.00
Arrears of grants to PCCs	£905.00	£0.00
Arrears of grant to Kelly Village Hall	£200.00	£0.00
New Cllrs training	£60.00	£0.00
Total	£4757.16	£3,998.80
Income	2015/2016 Budget £	2015/2016 Budget £
Precept	£4,085.00	£4,085.00
Burial Grant	n/a	n/a
Bank Interest	£1.00	£1.00
Total Income	£4,086.00	£4,086.00
Net Income	-£671.16	£87.20

** SCP 15

The overspend in 2015/16 is caused by the need to pay £1,105 arrears of grant aid, plus arrears of hall hire charges and the cost of training for new Cllrs. This can be met from reserves, as is demonstrated in **Appendix B**.

The draft budget for 2016/17 has not been adjusted for inflation, or for an increment on the salary scale for the Parish Clerk, but will be revised to take account of these and any other relevant issues when the Parish Council considers its level of precept for 2016/17, in November.

Payments due

Appendix B is a schedule of payments made to date in the current financial year, plus previously approved payments that have not yet been made and future liabilities.

There are two authorised payments that have not yet been made. One is to Cllr Asbridge in his capacity as Chair of the MACKPlan team. Delays in the approval of the grant may mean that this expenditure of £92.00 will not be grant funded as previously advised, and a further report will be made to the next meeting. The other item is for Milton Abbot Village Hall where the submission of a subsequent invoice, which includes some of the bookings already covered by the proposed payment, needs resolving.

Future liabilities include the expenditure referred to in previous items on this agenda, on the assumption that approval will be given for the sums involved.

Appendix C is a reconciliation of the Parish Council's expenditure to its bank accounts and a projection to outturn. The reconciliation is partial, because bank statements have not yet been received showing activity since 6th July. That issue will be resolved when the new Parish Clerk is given on-line access to view the accounts.

At its meeting on 21st July, the Personnel Committee was given an updated projection to year end of a balance of £9,856. Appendix C now shows a balance at outturn of £8,392; a reduction of £1,464. The main elements of that reduction are as follows:

Arrears of grant aid	Kelly Village Hall	£200
Arrears of grant aid	PCCs	£905
Underpayment of TAP funding due to Lifton PC		£153
Advert for Parish Clerk		£100
Additional hall hire charges		<u>£91</u>
		£1,449

The Parish Council is recommended to note these analyses, having made any adjustments to accommodate the salary of the new Parish clerk.

11. Audit Report

To note that the Parish Council's external auditors have reported that the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2015 is in accordance with proper practices and no matters came to their attention that gave cause for concern that the relevant regulatory requirements had not been met.

12. Attendance at Link meetings

For some time now, the voting system at Link meetings has been simplified, so that each Parish only has one vote, regardless of how many representatives it sends. The majority of parish councils have now decided to send only one representative, but two are still permissible.

The Parish Council has two representatives; Cllrs Asbridge and Brewer. Both feel that the Parish Council should be represented at these meetings, but that sending two members is unnecessary. Unless there are any other Cllrs who would like to represent the Parish Council, it is suggested that

the current two representatives continue to be members of the Link Committee, with the expectation that Cllr Asbridge will only attend when there are matters to be discussed that he is directly involved in. That arrangement would enable Cllr Asbridge to continue to be a member of a Link working party looking at improving working arrangements with Highways and allow him more time to focus on chairing the MACKPlan team.

The Parish Council's views are requested.

13. Parish Council's use of IT

It has previously been recognised that the Parish Council needs to review its use of IT and ensure that it has systems in place that are appropriate and robust.

Cllrs Asbridge and Beighton have given initial consideration to this issue and this draft specification has been produced:

Aim

To create an IT environment that is corporate in the sense that Parish Council data does not reside in systems and equipment owned by individuals, although it is accessed using them.

Objectives

Email

Cllrs and Clerk to be able to send and receive email using Cllr.Smith@MAGPC.gov.uk [or similar] addresses.

Email addresses to be creatable 'centrally', i.e. it is not necessary for a new Cllr to be able to set up their own.

Email correspondence to be incapable of deletion/amendment once published.

Email correspondence not filed on 'accessible to all Cllrs basis', but capable of different levels of security. Emails to be stored 'centrally'.

Workgroups

Ability to send out draft reports and for all concerned to see amendments as they are made [and by whom].

Website

To create a Parish Council website where corporate information, agendas, minutes and other records required to be available on-line, can be accessed easily by Cllrs and members of the public.

The Parish Council should consider whether it endorses the above aims and objectives and how it wishes to achieve them.

14. Retaining wall, Milton Abbot Churchyard

At its meeting on 10th November 2011, the Parish Council noted that a section of the retaining wall had recently collapsed in heavy rainfall. The relevant Minute records that *'Following this Cllrs Anderson and Spurr have looked at the sections of the wall for which the PC is responsible and on one length propose to put in a plumb line to monitor any movements.'*

There is some concern that one section of the wall is in need of attention, but the Acting Clerk has no documents in the Parish Council's files that establish its responsibilities, if any, in this matter.

What further action does the Parish Council wish to take?

15. Resignation of Acting Clerk

Cllr Asbridge has acted as Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer since the resignation of the last post-holder and, subject to the Parish Council confirming the appointment referred to above, will resign on the date that the new post-holder takes up their duties.

Cllr Asbridge will be acting as mentor to the post-holder for the first six months of their appointment and will be carrying out six-weekly performance reviews, during that time.

While acting as Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, Cllr Asbridge has carried out a review of the Parish Council's financial processes and other matters such as Standing Orders. However, there are several issues that have previously been identified as needing implementation or review that have not yet been completed, including:

- Health and Safety Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Procedure for contact with the press
- Freedom of Information Act procedure
- Review of banking arrangements

It is entirely a matter for the Parish Council to decide, but if it wished Cllr Asbridge to carry out the work needed to complete the overhaul of its admin and financial procedures, in conjunction with the new parish clerk, he would be willing to do so.

16. Councillors' reports and items for future agenda

Each Councillor is requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

17. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 4th November 2015 Milton Abbot Village Hall

Wednesday 6th January 2016 Marystowe Church Hall

Wednesday 2nd March 2016 Milton Abbot Village Hall

Wednesday 4th May 2016 Parish Meeting for Chillaton Marystowe Church Hall

Thursday 5th May 2016 Parish Meeting for Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone at Milton Abbot Village Hall followed by the AGM and an ordinary Council Meeting.