

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 11TH MAY 2020, 7.00PM USING ZOOM VIRTUAL ONLINE**
(also available at www.magpc.co.uk)

PRESENT: Cllr's M Ambrose (MA), R Brewer (C), M Pahlsson (B) (Chairman), R Tucker (MA),
A Westcott (C), G Vanstone (MA)

Ms S Honey (Clerk), Cllr C Edmonds (WDBC)

The meeting was opened by the outgoing Chairman, Cllr M Pahlsson, at 7.00pm

001:20/21 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2020/21

Nominations for the post of Chair were invited. Cllr M Ambrose was proposed by Cllr R Tucker. Cllr A Westcott seconded the proposal.

This was unanimously **agreed**, and Cllr M Ambrose was duly elected as Chairman.

Cllr M Pahlsson said he had been pleased to be a councillor representing Bradstone for the last ten years and offered Cllr M Ambrose his best wishes for the future. The Council in turn thanked Cllr M Pahlsson for his time as Chairman and as a councillor.

Cllr M Pahlsson then left the meeting.

002:20/21 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2020/21

Nominations were invited for the post of Vice-Chair. Cllr R Tucker was proposed by Cllr A Westcott. Cllr R Brewer seconded the proposal.

This was unanimously **agreed** and Cllr R Tucker was duly elected as Vice Chairman.

003:20/21 REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

It was **agreed** that the Council would continue to be represented on the following external bodies;

Southern Area Link Meetings: Cllr Brewer would continue in this role, and it was proposed that Cllr A Westcott or another councillor in rotation, would accompany Cllr Brewer to the meetings.

004:20/21 ANNUAL REVIEW OF REGISTER OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made and no amendments were advised.

The Chairman informed the council that he would be leaving the Edgcumbe Arms public house and would give the Clerk his new address in Milton Abbot.

As one of the council's defibrillators is sited at the pub the Chairman said he would discuss with the new owner regarding the continuation of it on site.

005:20/21 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH MAY 2019

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 9th May 2019 were **agreed** as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

006:20/21 TO APPROVE CONTINUANCE OF THE FOLLOWING POLICIES

- Equality
- Complaints
- Publication Scheme
- Information Security
- Data Protection

The Council **approved** the continuation of the policies listed. No major changes had been identified.

007:20/21 ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

Exempt authorities and External Auditor

Various changes to legislation took effect from 2017/18, most notably the potential for authorities where the higher of income or expenditure for the year was £25,000 or less, to declare themselves as 'exempt' from a limited assurance review by an external auditor if they meet certain qualifying criteria. As the Council receives an income below £25,000 it can dispose of the need for an external audit.

However, all authorities, even if they declare themselves 'exempt', will still need to fully complete and publish an annual return and must still have a named appointed auditor to deal with questions or objections from interested persons about the accounts. The Council's appointed external auditor for this purpose is PKF Littlejohn.

The Council **reviewed** the effectiveness of its systems of internal financial control, which must be in accordance with proper practices.

Management and control: Reviews of the Council's finances, including the reconciliation of its income and expenditure with its bank accounts, are provided by the Clerk at each ordinary meeting of the Council. Payments to the Council's creditors have to be authorised at a Council meeting, and may be paid by cheque or BACS, unless otherwise approved under the Council's urgency procedure, in which case such action is reported to the Council at its next meeting.

When cheques are signed the cheque stub is also initialled. In order to ensure proper management and control over all BACS payments, a Councillor initiates the payment, which is then authorised by a second Councillor.

In the case of the Clerk's salary, for which payroll services are undertaken by a local Accountant, payment will be made by BACS. Such payments will be reported to the Council at its next meeting.

Cllr A Westcott requested Cllr R Tucker as another signature on the bank mandate; Cllr M Pahlsson having left the council. The council **agreed** that Cllr R Tucker could become another bank signatory.

Financial Processes: All expenditure is authorised under the procedure referred to above. The Clerk, who as Responsible Financial Officer [RFO] issues cheques and has 'view only' on-line access, has no authority to give instructions to the Council's bankers on any matter. There is therefore no opportunity for any single councillor, or the RFO to incur expenditure on the Council's behalf or otherwise divert the Council's financial assets.

The Parish Council **agreed** that the arrangements for management and control and the associated financial processes are effective.

008:20/21 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ASSET REGISTER

The Council's inventory was reviewed and **agreed** as being:

Parcel of land adjoining the Church and Churchyard in Milton Abbot leased from Bedford Estate in 1963 for a term of 999 years subsequently sub-let to the Village Hall Management Committee and the Community for a play area	£ 0
Noticeboard - Chillaton (purchased April 2017)	£ 220.00
Noticeboard – Milton Abbot	£ 0
Two vehicle activated signs in Chillaton	£ 4820.00
One Lenovo Tablet for VAS signs (Samsung tablet replaced 2017)	£ 100.00
Two Defibrillators	£ 1458.33
TOTAL	£ 6598.33

The figures being exclusive of VAT and were the purchase cost of the assets.

009:20/21 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The DALC issued new model standing orders and financial regulations during 2018. Having updated these documents previously the Clerk reviewed the need for changes to the Council's existing Standing Orders (SO's) to accommodate **Online Virtual** meetings (now authorised by the Government and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and presented an Appendix (to be read in conjunction with SO's) to the Council for agreement.

It was **agreed** to adopt the Appendix and the continuation of delegation of executive powers for urgent action by the Clerk as below;

At the beginning of each year, the Council may decide that executive powers be delegated to the Clerk of the Parish Council where urgent action is required between scheduled meetings, and where it is not possible or convenient to call a special or extraordinary meeting.

The Clerk may, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council deal with urgent business. Any action involving expenditure will not be in conflict with agreed Parish Council policy. All actions taken under executive powers must be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Cllr G Vanstone asked for clarification regarding co-option procedures. The Clerk offered to report back with an update.

010:20/21 RISK ASSESSMENT – ANNUAL REVIEW

The risk assessment, which details the likelihood of harm, damage or loss occurring due to Council activities, was reviewed and **agreed** by the Council.

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION - none

011:20/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs J Holland (D), S Seamons (MA)

012:20/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

013:20/21 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on Monday 30th December 2019 and Monday 3rd February 2020 were **agreed as a true record** and will be signed by the Chair at a later date.

014:20/21 CLERK'S REPORT

- I. The Clerk explained that due to the Coronavirus restrictions and online meetings having not been approved at the time, the April payments list was agreed via email. The payments were made under the Delegated Powers noted and agreed under 009:20/21 above.
- II. The Clerk explained that the Annual Report of the Internal Auditor and submission of accounts was in progress. The dates for submission had been reviewed due to the Coronavirus hindering completion of inspections. However, the accounts were already prepared and the Clerk awaited the confirmation of the Internal Auditor that she could go ahead and submit them to the Council for agreement before posting them as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015 and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities.

015:20/21 PLANNING

0969/20/OPA (Planning Committee decision Monday 27 April – online)

Outline application for the erection of two dwellings; Old School House Milton Abbot

The Planning Committee unanimously decided that the PC is **not against** this outline planning application but **wish to study the details of the full application in due course before a final decision is taken**. Cllr G Vanstone Objected to the application.

We are asking the planners to consider that proposed properties can be counted as part of the full property allocation for Milton Abbot in a reasonable way. It appears the main part of the application is outside the existing village boundary but may extend this boundary when/if completed.

3763/19/HHO Householder application for small entrance canopy extension and rear verandah, Beford House, Weeke, Brentor

The council **resolved to Support** the application as long as it stays within keeping of the existing developments and complies with the conditions that have already been imposed on the overall site.

016:20/21 PROGRESS REPORTS – MACKPlan

The following report was made by Cllr G Vanstone;

While social distancing measures have undoubtedly had an impact on the ability to progress our Neighbourhood Plan as expected, progress has continued to be made since our last report to the PC:

- The Call for Sites was issued in mid-March and 8 sites have been submitted for consideration. These will be scored using the JLP scoring matrix to which will be added any additional information from other applicable sources such as the Resident's Survey, any previous planning judgements and ultimately but clearly at a later date, the feedback from the public meetings that we will need to hold once social distancing restrictions allow.
Once all but the final step has been completed, we will need West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) to physically scrutinise each site in order to filter out any that will not win planning permission regardless of what is recommended in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The draft Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced and is currently being checked for consistency, accuracy, planning regulation alignment and supporting evidence for each proposed policy by the MACKPlan Committee. Once this is complete the draft will be sent to Mr D Smith of WDBC for his comments. Mr Smith oversees and guides Neighbourhood Planning for WDBC.
- Once the WDBC feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan document and the potential development sites is complete and the changes made, the draft NP will be released to the Parish Council for discussion.
- We have also applied to Locality for what we hope to be the final grant of this long running neighbourhood initiative.

End of report

017:20/21 ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS

The Chairman explained that the Annual Parishioners meeting had been cancelled for the year 2020 due to the Coronavirus outbreak. It is hoped they will be held again in 2021.

018:20/21 TO AGREE TO CHANGE THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DAY BACK TO A WEDNESDAY

The council **agreed to return** to the original meeting day of the first Wednesday in the month, bi-monthly.

019:20/21 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- I. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Monitor
The bank reconciliations and budget monitors, dated 31 March 2020 (year-end) and 30 April 2020, were reviewed and **approved**.
- II. Payments

The following payments were **approved**.

- WDBC election extra cost - £70.87
- Ms S Honey postage - £1.63
- Ms S Honey SLCC training seminar - £90.00
- DALC membership - £179.72

To note: Clerk's pay on 29 February, 31 March and 30 April 2020, paid by BACS.

III. Annual review of the Council's Insurance Cover and renewal - £218.00

It was **agreed** that the renewal quote of £218.00 received from Came & Co would be **accepted**. Two other quotes had been provided.

The MACKPlan locality grant and the MAGPC budget was discussed. It was stated that no money can be paid out until the actual grant money has been received as MAGPC does not have funds to support MACKPlan.

The grant itself has strict terms in that money can only be paid out between specific dates as per the agreement. Any money spent before or after the dates set is excluded from the grant.

020:20/21 COUNCILLORS REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

None

021:20/21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next bi-monthly meeting was agreed as Wednesday 1st July 2020 but should any urgent business require agreement or discussion, especially the completion of the annual Audit documentation, then another meeting would be called.

Cllr R Brewer reminded the Clerk that the Annual meetings for May 2021 should be held at Marystowe.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.08pm

Signed:

Cllr Mark Ambrose, Chairman

Date: