

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 6th January 2016 at Marystowe Church Hall** for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

E James

Emma James, Clerk to the Council

Wednesday 30th December 2015

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2015**
- 4. Open Session – Members of the Public may speak regarding parish matters**
- 5. Locality Engagement Officer**

Briefing by Dilys Lord on the work of the Locality Teams

6. Planning

Application 01127/2015: Eastcott Barton, Dunterton:

The Dunterton Planning Appraisal Panel has considered this application and recommended support as this is in line with current recommendations for redundant agricultural buildings. The Clerk has forwarded the comments to WDBC, using the delegated powers as set out on the agenda of 1st July 2015 and approved at that meeting.

Appeal: Proposed Turbine at Ridgecombe Farm, Lifton

An appeal in respect of the Proposed Turbine at Ridgecombe Farm, Lifton has been made, to which comments were required to be made by 21st December 2015. MAGPC's comment made to the original planning application has been resubmitted by the Clerk with the addition of the following wording;

"In addition it would also point out that with over 450 objections made to the original planning application, the proposed turbine does not have the support and backing of the local community. This is directly in conflict with the Ministerial Statement issued by Amber Rudd, who strongly emphasised that for such applications there has to be the support of the local community."

Appeal: Stables, Edgecumbe Road, Milton Abbot

The date of the Appeal hearing has been set for 19th January 2016.

7. Progress Reports

To review and consider updates since the last meeting;

Felldownhead Road

Reports from Cllr Pahlsson are set out in Appendix A (i) and (ii) for consideration by the Parish Council.

Parish Council's use of IT

The new MAGPC Website is now nearing the point where it can be made live, with most of the work having been completed, including;

- Front page with photo and title
- Councillor's page with an individual profile page for each Councillor, including their register of interests
- Photos of some of the Councillors, and pen pictures of others
- Contact form linked to the Clerk's email address
- Page for agendas and minutes, with a list of current planned meetings and minutes from the November 2015 meeting
- Notice page, with the notice for the transparency code
- Finance page
- Useful Links page with links to local sites of interest
- Planning page, currently unpopulated, but would contain links to planning activities on WDBC's website as they arise.

Councillors who have yet to send a pen picture and photo for inclusion are asked to do so as soon as possible. A page describing the parish areas which could have sub-pages for each area, if required, is yet to be completed.

A DropBox account has been created to allow the central sharing, collaborative working and reduced amount of emailing of documents. The link will be sent to Councillors once the new email accounts have been set up. Cllr Beighton has offered to assist Councillors, on their request, to set up their new email addresses and DropBox link so that the new systems can be up and running in early 2016. Cllr Beighton will also be training the Clerk to update the Website.

Retaining wall, Milton Abbot

The Clerk has sent letters to both the Duke of Bedford and Highways Department regarding the Parish Council's concerns about the stability of the wall. No responses have been received to date.

Snow Warden Scheme

At the last meeting Cllr Brewer confirmed that he was happy to continue in his role as Snow Warden and that bags of salt were distributed around parts of the parish for use as necessary in public areas. It was not known at that time how the distribution of salt was carried out in Milton Abbot, or who by and Cllr Anderson was requested to provide further information.

Chichester Arms, Chillaton

As approved in the minutes of 4th March 2015, a nomination of Asset of Community Value form has been completed and submitted to WDBC for consideration of the registration of the Chichester Arms. WDBC has 8 weeks in which to make a decision, in this case until 9th February 2016.

Grass Cutting Quotations

Quotes from 2 of the 4 contractors contacted have been received for the cutting of the grass in Milton Abbot between April and October 2016 on a fortnightly basis, with weed killer applications applied twice during that timeframe. The quotes being £600 and £800. The cheapest quotation is from JS Murrain, the current contractor, with no increase in cost from this current financial year. **It is recommended that the Parish Council** accepts the quotation from JS Murrain.

8. Financial Matters

Payments

The Parish Council is requested to authorise the below listed items for payment:

- a) JS Murrain & Sons Ltd £268 for grass cutting and spraying (8 cuts and 1 weed spray) July to October 2015.

- b) Payment of £66.98 to Mrs James, Clerk; comprising of £35 as reimbursement for registration with the Information Commissioner, as agreed at the Parish Council meeting held on 4th November 2015 Minute 78: 15/16, and £31.98 (Inc £3 VAT) for Clerks expenses (stamps, storages boxes, phone top up and paper).
- c) MACKPlan Expenditure - A claim is about to be submitted for the reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of MACKPlan during the past six months. They include a monthly subscription to SurveyMonkey incurred by Cllr Asbridge and a claim by Stuart Todd Associates for consultancy work. Further details will be provided at the meeting. **It is recommended** that payment of £1061.40 including VAT be made to Stuart Todd Associates and Cllr Asbridge be reimbursed for the expenses he has incurred. All costs will be met by the MACKPlan grant and the VAT payment with regard the Stuart Todd Associates invoice will be reclaimed.

To note Clerk's pay:

- 30th November 2015: Payment from start date of 17th September to 30th November 2015, £303.24 and HMRC payment of £75.60, Chq No's 486 and 487 respectively.
- 31st December 2015: £119.21 and HMRC payment of £30.00, Chq No's 488 and 489 respectively.

Donation Request from Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

A request for financial assistance by way of a donation has been received from the CAB for Bradstone, Dunterton and Milton Abbot areas. Their records suggest that 36 individuals from Milton Ford Ward contacted them in 2014/15 for information and advice, with Benefits and Tax Credit queries topping the list at 40% of the enquires made. **The Parish Council is requested** to consider the application from the CAB.

Bank Reconciliation

Financial Regulations require the Parish Council to approve a bank reconciliation at least quarterly. MAGPC meets six times a year which doesn't fit well with this quarterly requirement and so a bank reconciliation will be provided for each meeting.

Attached at Appendix B is the bank reconciliation of 30th November 2015 which is based on the latest available bank statements. A VAT claim amounting to £1,086.79 has been approved and paid by HMRC. **The Parish Council is requested** to consider and approve the reconciliation.

Grants to PCC's and Other Organisations

The organisations to which the Parish Council has been awarding grants on an annual basis have been contacted as agreed at the last meeting, Minute 77: 15/16; the purpose being to review the Parish Council's support, for which it has been established by the Clerk that there is no legal obligation on the Parish Council to do so.

2014/15 Account Statements

Organisation	Income £	Expenditure £	MAGPC Grant £	Graveyard Maint. £
Bradstone/Kelly PCC	3242	4243	100	Unclear
Dunterton PCC	4172	2964	175	385
Kelly Village Hall	2026	1113	100	n/a
Marystowe PCC	7828	7109	315	656
Milton Abbot PCC	10370	7493	315	435

Below is some additional information that Councillors might find useful;

- Bradstone/Kelly – MAGPC's donation is put into a sub-fund for Bradstone Graveyard Maintenance and also contributes to the cost of services in Bradstone Church.
- Dunterton PCC spend MAGPC's donation on the maintenance of the churchyard.
- Kelly Hall are anticipating a loss this year of slightly more than £1100 due to essential repair works to the septic tank and soakaway.

- Marystowe PCC anticipate a shortfall of over £700 for churchyard maintenance costs. Churchyard costs are itemised and kept separately in a Graveyard Fund, in which MAGPC's donation is shown. In the 2014/15 financial year receipts in the Graveyard Fund totalled £616 and payments £656.
- Milton Abbot PCC spends MAGPC's donation on churchyard maintenance. Grass cutting has been undertaken by volunteers which significantly decreases the cost of this service, although not all of the churchyard grass cutting has been maintained.

The Parish Council is requested to consider the options as set out below and agree the way forward:

- i) To continue to make donations at the same rate
- ii) To reduce the donations made
- iii) To cease making donations

Draft Budget and Precept 2016/17

A draft budget for 2016/17, revised since the last meeting, is contained in Appendix C. **The Parish Council is requested** to determine whether or not this meets their requirements for the coming financial year. The amount of Council Tax Support grant the Parish Council will be allocated has been reduced by 11.2%, from £184 to £163, it is likely that it will be completely withdrawn by 2020. It has been confirmed that capping limits imposed on district councils will not be extended to town and parish councils.

The insurance company has indicated a likely increase of 6% and DALC have advised that they will be increasing their fees by 1% this coming financial year. Taking these figures, along with several other additional items of proposed expenditure into account, the current level of precept would be insufficient next year to balance expenditure.

The Parish Council is therefore requested to consider whether it wishes to meet the anticipated shortfall of £346 from reserves or if it wishes to increase the level of precept and, if so, by how much?

An increase of 9% will generate an additional income of £351 on the 2015/16 precept which will be sufficient to balance anticipated expenditure with income, and a surplus of £5. The tax base on which the figures are calculated has increased. This means that an overall increase of 9% on the precept will result in a 7.15% increase on a Band D property, which equates to an additional £0.81 p/year or £0.07 p/month.

9. Audit Arrangements

Appointment of Internal Auditor

Mr Jamie Rutherford has agreed to undertake the 2015/16 internal audit for MAGPC again and **it is recommended that the Parish Council** approve this appointment.

Arrangements from 2017/18

From 2017/18, under the Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Parish Council will still be required to complete and publish an annual return, but won't have to submit it for external audit. There is going to be more emphasis on the internal audit instead.

A tender process for internal auditors to be appointed for a 5 year period, is currently underway, due to be completed in autumn 2016. Councils can opt in or out of this scheme, for which it is indicated by DALC that there is likely to be a 'small' charge made to those who opt in. This figure will not be known until completion of the tender, but is anticipated by DALC to be less than £100 for the 5 year period. DALC are expecting that the majority of Councils will opt in. No further information about the proposals are available at this time.

Although there is going to be more emphasis on the internal audit, the requirements as to who the internal auditor can be have not changed:

- Must be independent, not related to a councillor or the clerk, and can be from another council as long as the arrangement is not reciprocal

- Doesn't have to be qualified, but must be able to ask challenging questions and have skills appropriate to the size of council
- Could be an accountant or suitable volunteer

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Internal audits are conducted in different ways by local Parish Councils. Some appoint a local person whilst there are those who appoint Accountants. As an example; Bridgerule Parish Council use an accountant in Holsworthy for this service, the cost of which for 2014/15 was £79.

There are two options, for the five year period commencing in 2017/18, for which a decision must be made by 31st January 2016. **The Parish Council is therefore requested** to decide which of the two options available most suits its requirements;

- 'Opt in' and allow the Sector Led Body (SLB) to appoint an internal auditor to the Parish Council, for a 5 year period
- 'Opt out' and appoint its own internal auditor, the decision must be notified to the SLB by 31st January 2016, who will monitor all arrangements. The details of the auditor are required to be reported to the SLB by 31st December 2016.

10. Policies/Documents:

There are a number of policies that MAGPC should adopt in addition to those it has already approved, some of which are statutory, and include;

- Publication Scheme
- Data Protection
- Information Security
- Complaints
- Internal Control
- Health and Safety
- Employment Policies
- Equality and Diversity
- Recording of Meetings
- Freedom of Information

It is recommended that the Parish Council adopts the documents and policies listed below, the remaining documents will be brought to the Parish Council over the next few meetings for consideration.

Publication Scheme

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, councils have a statutory obligation to adopt a Publication Scheme which sets out the information which must be made available to the public, how it can be obtained and the cost. A model scheme for councils is provided by the Information Commissioner and has been adopted to be appropriate to MAGPC [Appendix D].

Data Protection Policy

The Parish Council is considered, by the Data Protection Act 1998, to be a data controller as it holds and uses information about individuals in the course of its business. All councils should have a policy which sets out their duty to process personal data fairly, lawfully and in accordance with the data protection principles. [Appendix E]

Information Security Policy

The purpose of the policy is to set out that MAGPC understands its responsibility to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information is maintained by implementing best practice and minimising risk [Appendix F]. This policy is linked to the Publication Scheme and Data Protection Policy.

Complaints Policy and Procedure

It is strongly recommended by DALC that councils adopt a Complaints Policy and Procedure to protect themselves in the event that a complaint is made against the council. A policy which sets out the way in which the council handles complaints in a fair and unbiased way can assist in resolving any issues in a timely fashion with both parties clear on the process [Appendix G].

11. TAP Fund – Amendments

This current financial year there are still significant funds available in the TAP Fund and it has been proposed to make some alterations to the criteria to fund drainage and ditching work. The amended proposals are;

- i. Applications for ditching and drainage work will be exempt from some of the normal guidelines, as listed below;
 - Funds should not be used to support projects that are the direct responsibility of another agency
 - Repeat funding should not be awarded unless there is a compelling business case proving transition to sustainability.
 - The TAP Fund manager/decision-makers must be satisfied that the project will benefit more than one Town or Parish.
- ii. Proposed work will need to increase frequency or be of a higher standard than that currently offered by DCC
- iii. Work will need to be carried out subject to guidance available from DCC Highways

An application to the TAP fund to assist with drainage and ditching work will not preclude the parish from scheduled visits from the Lengthsmen who are currently funded by DCC to visit each parish twice a year.

The Parish Council is requested to consider whether it has a need for additional drainage or ditching works at this time that could be funded in this way.

12. Footpath, Milton Abbot

Initial correspondence with a member of the public regarding a footpath in Milton Abbot, which runs between the B3326 opposite the Church where it passes along a lane between buildings to meet another footpath by a field gate, was circulated to Cllrs by the Clerk; seeking any information they might have on its status as a public footpath or otherwise. Cllrs should note that the matter has now been left with the Highway Authority, as the relevant agency to deal with the queries raised.

13. Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) – Community Helipads

DAAT is looking to extend their flying times into the hours of darkness, they have a target to increase their flying time by 8 hours until midnight by autumn 2016, and eventually to provide a 24 hour service.

In order to do this DAAT are looking to develop a network of Community Helipads and are looking for suitable sites; a green, sports pitch or field, school playground, open ground by a village hall or local field – grass, tarmac or concrete surfaces are suitable. Any proposed sites will be surveyed for suitability and a remotely operated lighting solution will be provided if necessary. **The Parish Council is requested** to consider the request and advise of any suitable locations.

14. 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.

15. Dates of future meetings

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.