

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 Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council on **Wednesday 3rd January 2018, 7.30pm, at Milton Abbot Church Hall** for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.

Members of the public are welcome to attend.

S Honey

Shane Honey, Clerk to the Council
Wednesday 27 December 2017

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2017**
- 4. Open Session - Members of the Public may speak regarding parish matters**
- 5. Planning**

Applications to note:

3363/17/FUL
Homeleigh Chillaton
Construction of new dwelling in grounds of existing house

4152/17/HHO
Cardwell Farm Milton Abbot
Demolition of existing lean-to structure and replacement with new two storey extension

4256/17/FUL
Land At Sherrill Cross Dunterton
Agricultural building

6. Progress Reports

Milton Abbot Retaining Wall

Mr Wannacott of AC Worth Builders informed the Clerk that they await permission for the road closure; which they hope will be confirmed in January 2018.

Community Defibrillators

At the last meeting, it was agreed that Cllrs Asbridge and Barkwill should look in more detail at the financial and practical implications of the provision of community defibrillators and report back. Their report is contained in Appendix A.

7. Grass Cutting Contract

Quotes from two of the three contractors contacted have been received for cutting the grass in Milton Abbot between April and October 2018 on a fortnightly basis, with weed killer applications applied during that timeframe. The quotes being £628 and £850.

The cheapest quotation is from JS Murrain, the current contractor; a decrease of £14 from this current financial year. **It is recommended** that the Council accepts the quotation from JS Murrain.

8. Parish Council Grants

Initial consideration was given to this issue at the October meeting when a decision was deferred pending the outcome of applications for grants towards the cost of repairs to the churchyard wall at Milton Abbot. Further consideration was deferred at the November meeting in the expectation that the works to the wall would be completed by the time of the January meeting and therefore the final cost of the works would be known.

Although no formal decision was taken at the October meeting, the Council was of the opinion that extra funds would not be available to meet requests from several organisations for additional financial support in 2018/19.

The original, detailed, report on the financial impact of making grants to parochial church councils and to Kelly Village Hall Committee is set out in Appendix B, for reference.

In 2017/18, the grants concerned were to:

	£
Bradstone/Kelly PCC	100
Dunterton PCC	175
Marystowe PCC	315
Milton Abbot PCC	315
Kelly Village Hall	<u>100</u>
Total	1,005

The impact of this expenditure on each person in a two-person band D house in 2017/18 was 11p per month and that of a single person [after a 25% discount] was 17p. The figures for the occupiers of properties in the lowest band were 8p and 12p per month, respectively.

Because of the delay in the start of the work to the wall, caused by the need to obtain a temporary traffic order closing the road, it is not possible to consider whether or not to make these grants in 2018/19, in the context of an actual outturn figure for the wall repair.

It may therefore be helpful to look at the current position regarding the Council's capital reserves.

At 7th December, the Council's total cash assets were:

Current account	315.44
Reserve account	<u>10213.93</u>
Total	10529.37

However, this is simply the total amount of cash the Council has. To establish how much is actually uncommitted, deductions have to be made for any remaining 2017/18 expenditure that has been approved but not yet been incurred and deduct any portion of the MACKPlan grant that has not been spent and will be returned. Added to the cash figure will be any unclaimed VAT.

Thus, the cash that is not already committed is as follows:

Total cash @ 7 th December	10529.37
<u>Less</u>	
2017/18 expenditure not yet made	1377.52
Unspent MACKPlan grant	240.10
<u>Plus</u>	
VAT not yet claimed	<u>67.03</u>
Revised total	8,978.78

From that figure has to be deducted any committed items of expenditure or previously earmarked funds, as follows:

Net cash assets	8,978.78
<u>Less:</u>	
Net cost of repairs to wall	750.00
Chillaton issues	441.54
Contingency for elections	1,500.00
General contingency [1/3 of 2018/19 income]	1,591.00
Chillaton Community Enterprises Ltd	<u>15.00</u>
Total unallocated reserve	4,681.24

Therefore, the total amount available to the Council to meet any unforeseen capital or in-year revenue costs is the unallocated reserve plus the contingency sum: £6,272.24.

The net cost of the repairs to the wall is the £750 shortfall between the contract price of £5,386 and the grants obtained. There is no contingency sum included in the contract price and it is possible that the wall will have deteriorated further by the time works commence. So, it is impossible to predict whether there will be any need for additional funds for this work, but if, say, there was a cost overrun of 20%, that would require an extra £1,077.

Although it is clear that the Council has sufficient reserves to meet any increase in cost that could be reasonably anticipated, it has to be accepted that the actual cost remains to be determined. But, whilst that is the case, it should also be borne in mind that the cost of the works has been calculated by the contractor concerned and there should not be an expectation of any very significant variation at outturn.

If the Council did decide to reduce or remove provision for grant aid from its 2018/19 budget, it would not create any additional contribution to its capital reserves by doing so, unless it continued to charge the same level of precept. To do that would mean charging residents for a contribution to a capital fund that already has more than the total estimated cost of the wall repairs in its contingency fund and unallocated reserves.

The Council is **requested** to determine:

- i) Whether the requests for additional grant aid made by Milton Abbot and Dunterton PCC and by Kelly Village Hall Committee, as set out in Appendix B, should be approved.
- ii) Whether there should be any variation in the level of grant aid to the following organisations:

	£
Bradstone/Kelly PCC	100
Dunterton PCC	175
Marystowe PCC	315
Milton Abbot PCC	315
Kelly Village Hall	<u>100</u>
Total	1,005

- iii) That the Clerk be authorised to pay the grants already approved for the current financial year, 2017/18.

9. Meeting Dates 2017/18

Currently the Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month. It is recommended that the Council continue this schedule through 2018/19, alternating between meeting in Milton Abbot Village Hall and Marystowe Church Hall.

Should the Council accept this recommendation it is further **recommended** that the Annual Meetings take place as below;

Wednesday 1st May 2019 Milton Abbot Village Hall
Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone Parish Meeting

Thursday 2nd May 2019 Marystowe Church Hall
Chillaton Parish Meeting followed by the Council Annual and Ordinary Meetings

10. Donation to Citizens Advice in 2018/19

Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon Citizens Advice offers a free service to members of the public across the West Devon area, providing advice and information for the benefit of the individual and the community.

They continually update and support their volunteers with training on complex enquiry areas. Training is a large expense for the organisation; they receive no financial help from their National Body, and operate as an independent charity; but last year in West Devon they helped clients to receive over £1.1 million of income gain to which they did not know they

were entitled. This financial support was then brought back into the local economy. For every £1 of Local Authority funding they receive, they generate £2.67 in fiscal benefit.

They would be extremely grateful if Milton Abbot Parish Council would consider making a donation to this valuable service and enable the residents of the Parish to have continued access to free, independent, confidential and impartial advice.

11. Financial Matters

Bank Reconciliation and Budget Monitor

Attached at Appendix C is the bank reconciliation and Appendix D is the budget monitor for 2017/18, both dated 07 December 2017, for the consideration of the Council.

Payments

Consideration of approval of the following payments:

Ms S Honey Envelopes - £1.50
Ms S Honey New Clerks Course, Exeter - £30.00
Ms S Honey Black printer ink - £22.97

Groundwork UK have requested the transfer of the balance of the unused portion of the Community grant awarded

Groundwork UK Community grant - £240.10

To note Clerk's pay on 31st December 2017, paid by BACS:

Ms S Honey - £141.97

Authorised signatories

The Council's bank has decided that it will no longer allow the Clerk to view statements on-line, access being limited to those authorised to initiate expenditure. To avoid a situation where the Clerk could approve the payment of her own salary, etc., it is **recommended** that the Clerk is instructed not to authorise any transactions on behalf of the Council, such action being carried out only by two authorised parish councillors.

2018/19 Draft Budget and Precept

A draft budget for 2018/19 is contained in Appendix E. The **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 Council will be allocated has been reduced by 8.6%.

The Council's 2017/18 budget has been re-priced to take account of inflation forecasts and revised to reflect variations in expenditure expected in 2018/19. Inflation has been set at 3%, as the Government's Office for Budget Responsibility has forecast an increase in the Retail Price Index of 3.3% and of 2.4% in the Consumer Price Index. However, the Local Government Employers Association has already offered a 2% rise for employees earning over £19,800 and expects to offer significantly more for those earning less. Therefore, the Clerk's salary has been inflated by 5%, although that is offset to some degree by the whole

year effect of an appointment at a lower point on the salary scale than the previous post holder.

Before considering whether or not to approve the draft budget, it will be necessary to take into account the decision the Council will make at this meeting on the level of grant aid, if any, it wishes to make in 2018/19. If that decision involves a reduction in expenditure, it will also have to decide whether or not to reduce its precept accordingly.

If the Council does not vary the draft budget set out in Appendix E, then there would be a shortfall of £127 if the precept was not increased by approximately 2.9%. That shortfall could be met from reserves and the Clerk has been advised that it is the Government's expectation that, where parish councils have uncommitted funds, this should be done. The Council may wish to follow that advice or, given the current uncertainty over a major item of capital expenditure, it may wish to continue to address the shortfall as it has done in previous years, by raising the precept accordingly.

The tax base on which the figures are calculated has increased by 6.26 properties. This means that if the Council did wish to adjust the precept to meet the shortfall, an overall increase of 2.9% on the precept would result in a 1.06% increase on a Band D property, which equates to an additional £0.13 p/year or £0.01 p/month.

The Council is requested to approve a budget for 2018/19 and determine the level of its precept.

12. 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.

13. Dates of future meetings

2018

7th February Marystowe Church Hall

7th March Milton Abbot Village Hall

4th April Marystowe Church Hall

Annual Meetings

2nd May Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone - Milton Abbot Village Hall

3rd May Chillaton - Marystowe Church Hall followed by the Parish Council Annual
and Ordinary meetings

Note: All meetings are on Wednesdays at 7.30pm unless otherwise specified