

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 the Annual Meeting of the Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council to be held at **7.45pm on Wednesday 18th May 2016 at Milton Abbot Village 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
Thursday 12th May 2016

ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 14th May 2015 [previously circulated]**
- 3. Chairman's Report**

Once the Chair has reported, the Chair will stand down.

4. Election of Chair for 2016/17

The Clerk to invite nominations for the office of Chair.

5. Election of Vice Chair for 2016/17

The Clerk to invite nominations for office of Vice Chair.

6. Declarations of Interest and Annual Review of Register of Interests

Councillors are requested to review their Register of Interests and advise the Clerk of any amendments.

7. Parish Council Vacancies

There is 1 vacancy on the Parish Council for Dunterton. Although there is no time limit, if the Parish Council does not fill the vacancy by co-option, in theory, West Devon Borough Council may do so.

The Council may wish to consider placing advertisements on parish notice boards and on the Parish Council's website, with a time limit that allows for the consideration of any candidates at its next meeting.

8. Annual review of delegation arrangements

The Council has previously delegated some of its functions, including the determination of its views on planning applications. This has recently changed with planning applications now being discussed at full meetings of the Council on a trial basis, to be reviewed in September 2016.

In accordance with Standing order 5j (v), the Council must review its delegation arrangements at its Annual Meeting together with the terms of reference of any Committees it has established. There does not appear to be any need for further delegation and **the Council is therefore requested to consider:**

1. The continuation of the Planning Advisory Panels covering Milton Abbot, Chillaton and Bradstone/Dunterton until the end of the trial period. The membership of each Planning Advisory Panel to be the Councillors for the villages concerned, except in the case of Bradstone/Dunterton where the Planning Committee consists of the Councillors for each of those parishes and the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.
2. All Planning Advisory Panels to have the following terms of reference:
 - a. To determine the views of the Parish Council on applications for planning permission for development within the area, having regard to local circumstances, existing policies and/or previous relevant decisions, and advise the Clerk accordingly, within an agreed timescale.
 - b. All Planning Advisory Panel decisions are to be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council, so that they are placed on record.
 - c. If any planning application is so significant or contentious, or would be a departure from existing policies, or constitute development outside agreed settlement boundaries, or the public are likely to want to be present at its consideration, the Clerk must be informed and will then call an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council, with whatever notice is appropriate, to determine the Council's views.
3. That no further powers or duties be delegated to committees or sub-committees, at the present time.

9. Representation on external bodies

The Council is represented on these external bodies:

Southern Area Link meeting: Councillor Brewer and one Vacancy

MACKPlan Team: Councillors Asbridge [Chair], Hough, Pahlsson and Beighton

Other external bodies: The Clerk is not aware of any, but **seeks the advice of the Council.**

The Council is requested to determine which Councillors should represent it on external bodies in 2016/17.

10. Annual Governance Statement

In accordance with Financial Regulation 1.5, before approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its systems of internal financial control, which must be in accordance with proper practices.

The proper management and control of the Council's money relies on the effective scrutiny of its income and expenditure and on robust processes to avoid fraud or other irregularities when paying bills and receiving payments.

Management and control: In the last financial year, the Council instituted quarterly reviews of its finances, including the reconciliation of its income and expenditure with its bank accounts, the new Clerk is now providing these on a bi-monthly basis at each ordinary meeting of the Council. Payments to the Council's creditors have to be authorised at a Council meeting when cheques are signed and the cheque stub initialled, unless otherwise approved under the Council's urgency procedure, in which case such action is reported to the Council at its next meeting.

The Council is looking towards making payments on-line by way of BACS. In order to ensure proper management and control all such payments will be authorised at a meeting of the Council unless otherwise approved under the Council's urgency procedure, in which case such action is reported to the Council at its next meeting.

In the case of the Clerk's salary, for which payroll services are undertaken by a local Accountant's, payment will be authorised as appropriate at the end of each month either by cheque or BACS by 2 authorised signatories. Such payments will be reported to the Council at its next meeting.

Financial Processes: All expenditure is authorised under the procedure referred to above. All payments are currently made by cheque, however the Council is looking towards making some payment by BACS. Cheques have to be signed by 2 authorised signatories, currently Councillors Brewer, Westcott, Beighton and Pahlsson. In the case of on-line banking 2 of the authorised signatories, namely Councillors Westcott and Beighton, will be required to log in and authorise the payment. The Clerk, who as Responsible Finance 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.

Annual Governance Statement: With the approval of the Council's internal auditor, the Clerk has produced an Annual Governance Statement by setting down the reasons why it is possible to give a satisfactory response to the standard questions asked in the annual return to the Council's external auditors. This is set out in **Appendix A** and, if approved, will be placed on the Council's website.

The Parish Council is requested to:

1. consider whether the arrangements for management and control and the associated financial processes are effective
2. determine which councillors shall be authorised signatories for 2016/17 and sign up to on-line banking
3. approve the Annual Governance Statement for submission to the Council's external auditors and for publication on-line.

11. Audit of 2015/16 Accounts – Annual Return to External Auditors

Notice that the Council's accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016 are available for inspection by members of the public have been advertised on the public notice boards in Chillaton and Milton Abbot. The inspection period begins on 13th June and ends on 22nd July, to date no request has been made to inspect the accounts. The Clerk will report on any requests made to the Council in due course.

The accounts for the year ended 31st March are set out in Appendix B (i). This is an update of the quarterly report made at the last meeting of the Council and has been approved by the Council's internal auditor.

Appendix B (ii) & (iii) contain the analysis spreadsheets for both the Council's Current and Reserve Bank Accounts. Appendix B(iv) contains relevant extracts from accounting statements to be submitted to the external auditors.

Subject to the approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement, as set out in **Appendix A** and dealt with in Item 10 above and the statements in **Appendix B**, **it is recommended** that the annual return be approved for submission to the external auditors.

12. Annual review of the Council's asset inventory

Unless there are some historical assets that the Clerk is not aware of, the Council's inventory is limited to:

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
Two noticeboards, one in Chillaton and one in Milton Abbot	£ 0
Two vehicle activated signs in Chillaton	£ 4820
One Samsung Galaxy Tablet	£ 100
TOTAL	£ 4920

These figures are net of VAT.

It is recommended that the annual asset inventory be noted.

13. Annual review of the Council's insurance cover

As the excess on the policy is £100, there is no point in specifically insuring the Samsung tablet.

An invitation to renew the policy has been received from the current insurers, Community First, who obtain cover from Zurich Municipal. The cost would be £199.23, including Insurance Premium Tax and admin fee. Last year's cover with the same Company was £190.13. The increase in premium is largely due to the cost increased cost of the Insurance Premium Tax.

There is no cover for material damage, but the Council does not appear to have any assets to damage, except for the VAS, the Samsung tablet and the noticeboards.

An alternative quotation from Came & Co, who obtain cover from Hiscox, has been sourced for comparison purposes. The cost of insurance through this company would be £164.25, including Insurance Premium Tax and any fees.

The difference in cost between the two companies being £34.98. The main items of cover proposed are:

	Community First (Zurich)	Came & Co (Hiscox)
Public Liability	10,000,000	10,000,000
Hirer's Liability	2,000,000	5,000,000
Employers Liability	10,000,000	10,000,000

Libel & Slander	250,000	500,000
Legal Protection	100,000	100,000
Office Equipment	2,500	5,000
Personal Accident	Any one person 500,000 Any one incident 200,000	Capital benefits 100,000 Temp. Disablement 500p/w
VAS	4,916	4,916
Loss of data	500	
Excess	100	250
TOTAL COST	£199.23	£164.25

The Parish Council is requested to consider both quotation, ascertain which best meets its needs.

14. Annual report of internal auditor

The Council's internal auditor reports that he is satisfied with the arrangements for financial management and control and with the financial processes used and has no matter that he wishes to draw to the attention of the Council.

15. Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2016/17

Mr Rutherford has acted as the Council's internal auditor for the last few financial years and has kindly agreed to do so for 2016/17 and **it is recommended** that the Council accepts his offer.

16. Annual Review of Policy and Procedure

This year the Council has adopted several new policies and procedures; a Publication Scheme, Data Protection, Information Security, Freedom of Information and Complaints Policies and a procedure for the Recording of Meetings. As these have only recently been adopted **it is recommended** that they are next reviewed at Annual Meeting in 2017.

17. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

In accordance with Standing Order 5j(ix), at the Annual Meeting the Council should review and adopt appropriate standing orders and financial regulations. Both of these were completely revised in 2014 and no advice has been received from DALC on the need for any subsequent revision.

In November 2014 it was agreed that the following be included in the Council's Standing orders:

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.

It is suggested that the Council adopts the current version of its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for 2016/17 and confirms the delegation of executive powers for urgent action to the Clerk for a further year, as set out above.

18. Risk Assessment – Annual Review

To consider the report of the Clerk attached at **Appendix C**. The Council is required to carry out an annual review of the likelihood of harm, damage or loss occurring because of its activities.

The Clerk has highlighted issues where further action is needed in order to reduce risks where possible. Action by the Council is needed in some cases and **it is recommended** that the Clerk be authorised to:

1. Make enquiries of all the operators of premises used by the Parish Council, to ensure that they comply with relevant health and safety legislation.
2. Ensure an annual inspection of all premises and equipment owned by the Parish Council is undertaken.
3. Carry out a review of the Council's record keeping and produce proposals for the safe and efficient use of computer systems for internal communication and archives, particularly in respect to electronic records.

19. Annual Parish Meetings

The Annual Parish meeting for Chillaton was held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4th May. Despite advertising the meeting with posters being placed on noticeboards and on the Parish Council website no members of the public attended and therefore closed at 7.45pm.

Milton Abbot's Annual Parish meeting is directly before the Annual Parish Council meeting, on Wednesday 18th May, and a report will be verbally provided by the Chairman.