

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2014 AT MARYSTOWE CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM.

(also available at www.chillaton.net)

PRESENT: Cllrs J. Anderson (MA) H. Asbridge (C), R Brewer (C), P. Hough (MA), M. Pahlsson (B) (Part), R. Tucker and Mrs A Westcott (C) (Chair)

Cllr Bob Baldwin (WDBC)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr J. Spurr (MA).

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3rd and 30th September 2014 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. PROPOSED WIND TURBINE - CARDWELL FARM

Members of MABRAKE and the Longcross Action Group attended the meeting and spoke about their concerns over various aspects of the pre-application consultation exercise carried out by Planex, consultants for the eventual applicants for planning permission for this proposed wind turbine.

The Parish Council had received an analysis of the representations made to Planex by those who had been consulted by post and who had expressed a view. This also contained details of the responses proposed by Planex, to the concerns they had received.

The Parish Clerk reported on his discussions with Planex over recent months, during which he had attempted to encourage Planex and the applicants to agree to attend a public meeting to discuss the proposal, before an application was submitted. When this had been unsuccessful, the Clerk had proposed that Planex agree to hold a public meeting once the application had been lodged, and that it be held on a date that would give residents two week's notice and the Parish Council a further two weeks in which to respond to the outcome.

As with similar meetings held to consider proposals for other wind turbines, this would be organised by the Parish Council, as it had been found that an event held by a neutral third party gave a better opportunity for all those wishing to do so, to express their views.

Planex had agreed to that proposal. It was the Clerk's view that obtaining such an agreement was a practical benefit, particularly so given the lack of any notice of the submission of applications for some other wind turbines.

However, the Clerk had made it clear to Planex that as such a meeting was not part of the pre-application consultation, both WDBC and the Parish Council might not be satisfied as to the adequacy of that process, overall.

Having listened to the concerns of those present regarding the pre-application consultation process, the Parish Council agreed that WDBC be informed that:

- i. In determining the validity of the relevant application for planning permission, regard should be paid to the following deficiencies in the pre-application process, as reported to or experienced by the Parish Council:
 - a. The lack of a public meeting or exhibition at which residents could express their views and obtain an initial response from the consultants and/or the applicants.
 - b. The apparent failure to contact by post, a property or properties within the area identified by Planex as being appropriate for postal consultation.

- c. The area identified as being appropriate for postal consultation is apparently substantially smaller than that identified by Planex as being likely to be affected by the proposed turbine.
 - d. The increase in the height of the proposed turbine since the consultation exercise was carried out.
- ii. The cumulative effect of i) above is that, at the present time, Planex are unable to demonstrate satisfactorily that all residents who might wish to, have been able to express their views at a stage in the process that would enable appropriate modifications to be made to the proposed development, to accommodate or ameliorate any concerns that might have been expressed.
 - iii. That, having regard to i) and ii) above, it would be premature for the Parish Council to express a view on the proposed development, at this stage.

4. PROPOSED WIND TURBINE - BECKWELL FARM

It was noted that no decision had yet been made regarding the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for this turbine.

5. TRAFFIC ISSUES – FELLDOWNHEAD ROAD

Cllr Pahlsson undertook to email the Parish Clerk regarding the current position re traffic on this road.

6. PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION PROCESS – CORRESPONDENCE WITH WDBC

The Parish Clerk reported on the outcome of correspondence he had had with WDBC Development Control regarding the Parish Council's concern over the way in which guidance on the pre-application consultation process for wind turbine developments was being followed.

Although there was no commitment to any specific action, the Parish Clerk was of the view that there was an acceptance by WDBC that there was room for improvement in their communications with parish councils and that, hopefully, various aspects of this particular process would become more transparent in future.

7. SPEED WARNING SIGNS – CHILLATON

A supplier had been selected and it was hoped to place an order for these signs very soon.

8. MACKPlan

It was noted that a successful public meeting had been held in October and this was being followed by two training/briefing sessions with the consultant appointed to support the establishment of the MACKPlan team.

9. HALF-YEARLY EXPENDITURE REVIEW AND DRAFT ESTIMATES FOR 2015/16

The Parish Clerk submitted an analysis of income and outgoings for the current financial year, together with a review of any variations between the original estimates and actual expenditure to date. Proposed variations between current budgets and draft estimates for 2015/16, and the reasons therefor, were also reported.

It was noted that although there were considerable savings in expenditure on the Parish Clerk's salary in 2014/15, due to Cllr Asbridge taking on this role voluntarily, it was likely that a significant increase would be required in 2015/16, in order to fund more hours and a more appropriate rate of pay.

Despite this, proposed expenditure for 2015/16 could be contained within forecast income. The Parish Council therefore decided to make no change in the level of precept required for 2015/16.

10. LOCALISM ACT 2011 – IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY ASSETS

Following initial consideration of this issue at its last meeting, the Parish Council decided to request WDBC to register the pubs in Chillaton and Milton Abbot and Milton Abbot village hall, as 'community assets' under the Localism Act 2011.

11. 'OUR PLAN' – HOUSING TARGETS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Parish Clerk had expressed concern to WDBC over an invitation to a meeting to discuss the provision of new homes outside the main towns in the Borough. It had suggested that the target for this parish had been revised from a maximum of 30 new homes to a maximum of 50.

Some reassurance had since been received that was not likely to be the case. The Parish Clerk would attend the meeting, on 5th December, and report back.

12. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2013/14 – REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMISSION

The Parish Clerk reported that the Audit Commission had now approved the accounts for 2013/14, but, as had been expected, had qualified them because they were submitted late and because various governance issues had not been dealt with.

The Parish Clerk had begun the process that would lead to the Parish Council being able to comply fully with the Audit Commission's requirements and had submitted reports to the Parish Council, at this meeting, on various aspects of its procedures.

13. REVISED STANDING ORDERS

The Parish Clerk submitted a revised set of Standing Orders, based on the model supplied by DALC. The Parish Council agreed to adopt the Standing Orders, as set out in Appendix C to the agenda and amended to correct a typographical error. Arising therefrom, the following actions were also approved:

The overall time limit for the public to speak at Parish Council meetings be increased to twenty minutes, with a maximum of five minutes for any one speaker.

Planning applications will normally be dealt with by Standing Committees, not Sub-Committees, of the Parish Council based on the same areas of the parish as before and with the same membership.

All annual general meetings of the Parish Council would begin at 7.30pm, until further notice.

The agenda for the annual general meeting of the Parish Council will be revised to take account of S.O. 5i.

14. CIRCULATION OF LISTS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

It was agreed that the current practice of only sending those lists of planning applications, received from WDBC, that contained applications relating to the area of Parish Council, be continued.

15. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Parish Clerk submitted a set of Financial Regulations, based on the model supplied by DALC. The adoption of these Regulations and their requirements for regular cycles of financial reporting, etc. would form a key part of achieving compliance with the Audit Commission's standards for governance.

It was agreed that the Financial Regulations set out in Appendix D to the agenda be approved and the schedule of activities set out overleaf be implemented as soon as possible:

Reg.	At every meeting	Current status	Action
5.2	Record every payment due and sign cheques	Payments reported. Cheques usually signed elsewhere.	Sign cheques at meetings.
	Quarterly	Current status	Action
2.2	Verify bank reconciliations	Not done	Report quarterly
4.7	Statement of receipts and payments to date	Not done	Report quarterly
	Annually	Current status	Action
1.5	Consider Annual Governance Statement	Not done	Report in May
5.1	Review bank arrangements for Council a/cs	Not done	Report in May
2.3	Statement of accounts/report/draft return	Done	Report in May
2.3	Approval of annual return to Audit commission	Done	Report in June
2.5	Appoint internal auditor	Done	Report in May
2.6	Receive annual report from internal auditor	Not done	Report in May
3.1	Consider detailed estimates for next year	Done	Report in Oct
3.2	Fix precept	Done	Report by Jan
3.3	Review 3 year forecast of revenue and capital	Not done	Report in Oct
4.4	Review salary budgets	Not done	Report in Oct
8.1	Consider investment policy	Not done	Initial review
13.2	Annually review insurance cover	Not done	Report in Oct
14.1	Review risk assessment policy	Not done	Report in May
	On-going	Current status	Action
6.8	Keep back up copies of financial records off-site	Not done	Implement
6.9	Ensure high level computer security in place	Not done	Implement
6.10	Appoint RFO as Service Administrator	Not done	Implement
1.10	Record assets and liabilities of the Council	Not done	Implement
7.1	Tax/N.I. requirements for staff salaries	Not checked	Comply
7.4	Keep confidential record of salary expenditure	Not done	Implement
8.4	Banks statements to Chair as well as to RFO	Not done	Implement
9.6	Complete VAT return	Not done	If required
12.1	Secure lodgement of title deeds, etc	Not done	If required
12.3	Keep register of assets	Not done	Implement
14.2	Make risk assessment on any new activity	Not done	Implement

16. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Parish Clerk reported that the Parish Council should carry out an annual review of its risk assessment policy and assess the risks inherent in any new activity it was considering. This was to ensure that the Council did not overreach itself financially, nor find itself legally committed in ways it had not envisaged or became engaged in activities that were beyond its powers and competence.

Having considered this issue, the Parish Council agreed that its annual assessment should cover the following areas:

Continuity of operations: how would the Council function if it lost the services of the Clerk, his office, his computer or if sufficient Councillors resigned or were unable to attend, rendering the Council inquorate?

Security of operations: how would the Council ensure that its personnel, financial and other records [on paper or computerised] are safe from loss or damage?

Safety of operations: are the buildings used for meetings safe and suitable for the public to attend? Do we have adequate insurance cover? How do we minimise the potential for legal action to be taken against the Council?

Funding our operations: Is our precept adequate? What future demands on our finances are likely?

The Parish Clerk would report to a future meeting on what further action should be taken to achieve compliance.

17. COUNCILLORS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Parish Council had previously adopted the Code of Conduct used by WDBC. This had now been amended and the Parish Council agreed to adopt the revised version, as set out in appendix E to the agenda.

18. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

00944/2014: Livestock/feed shed – Narracott Farm Milton Abbot: The Chillaton Planning Committee has considered this prior notification of the erection of an agricultural building and decided to express a neutral view thereon.

Applications 01002/2014 and 01003/2014: Roof light at The Stables, Week: The Chillaton Planning Sub-Committee has considered these applications and decided to express neutral views thereon.

19. PAYMENTS DUE TO CREDITORS

Approval was given for the following payments to be made on behalf of the Parish Council:

J.S. Murrin & Sons Ltd	Grass cutting	£256.00
Grant Thornton	Audit fee	£30.00
H. Asbridge [Reimbursement of MACKPlan expenses]	Printing, etc	£226.35

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.10pm.

NOTE. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 7th January 2015 Marystowe Church Hall

Wednesday 4th March 2015 Milton Abbot Village Hall

Wednesday 13th May 2015 Parish Meeting for Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone at Milton Abbot Village Hall.

Thursday 14th May 2015 Parish Meeting for Chillaton followed by the AGM and an ordinary Council Meeting.