

**MILTON ABBOT GROUPEd PARISH COUNCIL**  
(Parishes of Milton Abbot, Chillaton, Dunterton and Bradstone)

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**To all Members of the Council**

You are hereby summoned to attend a Special Meeting of the Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council to be held **at 7.30pm on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at Milton Abbot Village Hall, Milton Abbot** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

**Howard Asbridge, Acting Clerk to the Council**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014

**A G E N D A**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES** - Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014

**4. DEVELOPING A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

To consider the report of the Parish Clerk [Appendix A]

**5. WDBC – CONSIDERING SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

At the last meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair were authorised to approve a report to be produced by the Parish Clerk, combining the views of the Parish Council on potential development sites in Chillaton, with the views of Milton Abbot councillors on similar sites in that village.

As the deadline for the receipt of the views of parish councils on potential development sites is the 15<sup>th</sup> August, it is now possible for the Parish Council to consider this matter at this meeting and the report concerned is attached [Appendix B]

The Parish Council is requested to consider the comments regarding potential sites in Milton Abbot and approve the whole report for submission to WDBC.

**6. PROPOSED WIND TURBINE - CARDWELL FARM, LONG CROSS**

A screening application has been made to WDBC to determine whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment is needed before a planning application can be submitted for a 54.7m [180ft] high wind turbine at Cardwell Farm. At the time of preparing this agenda, there is some uncertainty as to the status of this application. The Parish Clerk will report further at the meeting.

**7. ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS**

As was reported at the last meeting, the annual audit of accounts was not completed by the statutory deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June. The Parish Clerk has since been able to prepare the accounts for 2013/14 and complete the necessary return for the Parish Council's external auditors. However, before the return is submitted and the delayed process of public consultation on those accounts can begin, it is necessary for the Parish Council to formally approve the accounts and the return. Accordingly, an analysis of income and expenditure and a Bank reconciliation is attached. [Appendix C Annexe 1]

Also attached are relevant extracts from the accounting statements to be submitted to the Parish Council's external auditors. [Appendix C Annexe 2]

Members will note that on the second page 'No' has been entered in response to several questions. This is because although we have taken practical steps to ensure that we have safeguarded the funds in our care and not spent inappropriately, we have not got in place some of the standing arrangements we should have, to check our accounts during the year and we have failed to make the accounts available for public inspection by the due date.

Because of these negative entries, it is necessary to provide a statement to the external auditors explaining why this has occurred. Set out below is a draft statement prepared by the Parish Clerk:

*The Parish Council has properly accounted for every item of expenditure and income during 2013/14 and has reconciled that account with its bank balances at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. Although this demonstrates that the day to day financial practices of the Parish Council are sound, it does not yet have in place a sufficiently robust system of in-year reviews of risk management or of internal audit. It has also failed to complete the annual account process in sufficient time to meet the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June.*

*These deficiencies are due to a combination of factors. Firstly, the Parish Council has had three different people employed as Parish Clerk during the last 15 months; the last two being in post for a very short period of time before resigning. That rapid turnover of staff created a deficient handover process and as a result, the deadline for publicising the accounts was not achieved.*

*Those difficulties have been compounded by a lack of external information and advice on the general operation and audit of the Parish Council's finances, as a result of it not being affiliated to any local or national body supporting Parish Councils.*

*The following measures have been taken to resolve these issues:*

*The Parish Council has now joined the Devon Association of Local Councils, through which it can also access the resources of the National Association of Local Councils. With advice and information from these agencies, a thorough review of the Parish Council's financial processes will now be carried out.*

*No action is being taken to fill the post of Parish Clerk until such time as the Parish Council has been able to review the hours of work and level of remuneration, so as to be sure that a candidate with the right experience and ability can be appointed and that there are sufficient paid hours available in which to carry out the duties concerned. In the meantime, a parish councillor with extensive local government experience at a senior level is acting as a temporary Parish Clerk.*

The Parish Council is recommended to agree that the above statement should accompany the annual return to the external auditors. As required by the Regulations, the Parish Clerk is arranging for an internal audit of the accounts to be carried before the meeting. Should that reveal further concerns, the above statement will be amended as necessary at the meeting.

## **INSURANCE**

No insurance cover has been arranged for the Parish Council, since the previous policy expired in May. The Parish Clerk is obtaining quotes from Companies specialising in the cover needed and will report further at the meeting.

## **8. PAYMENT OF INVOICES**

In accordance with Standing Order 28., it is necessary for the Parish Council to approve all orders for payment. Several annual grants for churchyard maintenance were not paid in January and other payments such as the subscription to DALC are now due. The Parish Clerk will bring a full list to the meeting, for authorisation.