

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3RD AUGUST 2016, 7.30PM AT MARYSTOWE CHURCH HALL

(also available at www.magpc.co.uk)

PRESENT: Cllrs R Tucker (MA) (A/Chair), H Asbridge (C), M Pahlsson (C), R Brewer (C), A Cox (MA), Beighton (C), Cllr J Anderson (MA)

Cllr C Edmonds (WDBC), Mrs E James (Clerk) and 2 members of the public

44:16/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Hough (MA) and A Westcott (C). Cllr B Baldwin (WDBC) had also tendered apologies.

45:16/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Tucker declared personal interest in Item 6, Devon Air Ambulance Trust night flying initiative.

46:16/17 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th July 2016 were **agreed** as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

47:16/17 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Members of the public asked about the potential development sites in the Site Information Pack, which is part of the Joint Local Plan consultation documentation, and in particular the site identified near Springfield Cottages in Chillaton. Cllr Asbridge updated the members of the public of the current situation with regards the proposed Joint Local Plan and advised that the site queried was not thought by West Devon's Planning Department to have development potential at this time, although they had stated that this was an issue that could be considered by the Neighbourhood Planning Team. As Chair of the Team, Cllr Asbridge stated that as the narrowness of the access road had been a factor in WDBC reaching the views they had and the width of the road was unlikely to change, it was hard to see how a different conclusion could be reached.

48:16/17 PLANNING

1579/16/VAR Lamber Hey, Milton Abbot

Tom French, Planning Officer, had declined an invitation to attend an open meeting in July to discuss the application. The reasons for the decision being that he felt that the information fed back to him would be a duplication of the comments already submitted by various interested parties. Mark Evans, the applicant's agent, had been in touch with the Clerk declaring an interest in attending a meeting of the Council in order to answer any questions regarding the application.

Clerk to invite both Tom French and Mark Evans to the next meeting of the Council, 7th September, meeting to be rearranged to be held at Milton Abbot rather than Marystowe if possible.

Action: Clerk

Decisions

Cllrs noted the conditional approval granted to application 1565/16/LBC Dukes Cottage, 2 The Village, Milton Abbot.

49:16/17 PROGRESS REPORTS

Felldownhead Road

Cllr Pahlsson reported that local residents had undertaken an unofficial traffic count, by use of a CCTV camera which may not have picked up all vehicle movement, between 17th and 21st July, the results of which were:

Date	Number of "alerts"	Start time	End time
17 th July	425	0744	2219
18 th July	398	0741	2144
19 th July	508	0616	2219
20 th July	500	0715	2205
21 st July	416	0745	2142

At the last meeting it was agreed that the Council needed to review the situation and decide upon the outcome it was seeking. Now that traffic count figures had shown that vehicles using Felldownhead Road regularly exceeded 500 vehicles in a 24 hour period, the results above being from shorter periods of time, it was **agreed** the aim should be for 'access only' signs and relevant traffic order to be placed on this road. Clerk to request that Highways carry out an official traffic count which was thought to be the next step in the process for obtaining this outcome.

Action: Clerk

Retaining Wall, Milton Abbot

The wall, according to English Heritage, was not listed in its own right or mentioned in the listing details of the Church. Therefore it had been reasonably concluded that the wall was not listed, although it was within a conservation area. Graham Hughes, Planning Officer, had not disputed this assessment during recent correspondence with the Clerk.

Devon Building Control had been contacted regarding the stability of the retaining wall and had undertaken a brief inspection, their conclusion being that the wall '*did not appear to be in immediate danger of collapse*'. They advised that the wall be cleared of vegetation and monitored for movement.

Following up the advice of Building Control the Clerk had had a site meeting with Peter Judd, a Building Surveyor, with the aim of obtaining a quotation for monitoring the movement of the wall, and had also requested a quotation from Mr Murrain, who currently undertakes grass cutting for the Council, for a quotation for removal of the vegetation. Peter Judd had submitted quotation along with recommendations that the wall was monitored for at least 15 months on a three monthly basis, the cost being £300 for the initial visit and £100 for each visit thereafter, a total of £700. A quotation from Mr Murrain is awaited.

Councillors noted the advice of Building Control and of Graham Lawrence who had visited the site and stated that '*there is potential for structural failure in places*'. Taking into account all of the information, it was **agreed** that;

- The quotation from Peter Judd for the monitoring of the wall be accepted
- Quotation from Mr Murrain to be followed up, vegetation to be removed from the wall by killing it off rather than pulling it out, and accepted by the Clerk. Work to be undertaken as soon as possible so that the monitoring could be undertaken
- Quotation for the re-bedding of the coping stones to be sought, using a lime mortar
- The possibility of grant funding for the possible future rebuilding of the wall to be investigated
- Consideration to be given to the provision of funds in the budget for the rebuilding of the wall, if required in the future
- Savills, Bedford Estates agent, to be updated with progress as per their recent request

Action: Clerk

(Members of the public left the meeting)

Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) – Night Flying Initiative

A site in Chillaton been identified and the land owners had given their permission to Cllr Asbridge for the land to be submitted for considered by DAAT. Two potential sites in Milton Abbot had been identified, land belonging to Cllr Tucker and the school field, the school field being the preferred site. Clerk to write to the school asking for their permission to submit the site to DAAT for consideration.

Action: Clerk

Plymouth and Southwest Devon Joint Local Plan

Cllr Asbridge, as Chair of MACKPlan, reported further on the proposed Joint Local Plan [JLP] covering the areas of WDBC, South Hams DC and Plymouth City Council, in the light of meetings hosted by WDBC that he had attended in July.

They had been held as part of a consultation exercise that included the publication of the document '*Thriving Towns and Villages*', upon which the PC had been requested to consider submitting its views to WDBC. In March 2015, the PC had submitted its response to the formal consultation by WDBC on *Our Plan*, now overtaken by the JLP process. As the JLP had not yet reached the same stage as had *Our Plan*, there would be a subsequent opportunity to make formal representations to the current draft plan.

Whilst having regard to the formal representations previously made re *Our Plan*, the PC gave specific consideration to both '*Thriving Towns and Villages*' and a revised list of potential development sites in the area of the parish council that had been generated by various 'calls for land' made by WDBC.

'Thriving Towns and villages'

Comment: The more flexible approach to housing growth in villages, envisaged in the draft JLP, creates the opportunity to allocate new homes targets based on criteria that are more sensitive to local circumstances than the standard targets included in *Our Plan*. They should include different values being accorded to various types of local assets, so that their contribution to sustainability is more realistically acknowledged.

For example, greater value could be placed on the availability of public transport or a village shop, than on a village hall, given the far greater frequency with which the first two facilities provide the means of avoiding private car journeys. Whether or not a local school is over-subscribed is also relevant in terms of whether it can provide a realistic option for the children of new village residents. A points-based system as proposed above could then be linked to specific minimum targets for those villages with assets that reach an agreed threshold which provides a level of local support for the sustainable development of the number of homes concerned. That would give greater certainty to both the work of NP teams and the requirement that the JLP demonstrates how overall targets are to be reached.

That more sensitive target-setting exercise would assist NP teams in demonstrating to an external examiner that their draft NPs do in fact provide for sustainable development. It would also provide a more practical approach than the 'grouping' of villages proposed in '*Thriving Towns and Villages*', which does not seem to deliver a solution to the problem being addressed – the lack of certainty over the achievement of targets.

Whilst the need for a long-stop like the proposed Village Site Allocation Plans in case of any failure to deliver agreed targets in NPs is understood, it is more likely that meeting local housing needs would be better served by the NP process. Therefore, the approach currently being considered by WDBC; to monitor the achievement of the overall target of 300 homes in villages over time and respond accordingly, is welcomed.

Potential development sites identified in 'Calls for land'.

The Parish Council considered a brief summary of the status of each site and responded as follows:

Comment:

WD_42_07_08/13 Land west of 1 Springfield Cottages, Chillaton The site was not considered by WDBC as suitable for development in 2014, but it now states that 'there will be further opportunity through the NP or an allocations process to explore the potential for development on this site'. Given that the reason WDBC considered the site was unsuitable was the narrowness of the access road, it is difficult to see how the NP or an allocations process would create 'further opportunities to develop the site'. That statement is inconsistent with WDBC's previous assessment of the site and should be removed from the current document.

WD_42_08_13 Land east of Marlow Crescent Chillaton The site was not considered by WDBC as suitable for development in 2014, 'due to significant constraints relating to the character of the village'. The statement that 'there will be further opportunity through the NP or an allocations process to explore the potential for development on this site' has again been added and as the character of the village is not likely to change, that statement is inconsistent with WDBC's previous assessment of the site and should be removed from the current document.

WD_42_09_13 Land between Sunwaye and Marlow Crescent, Chillaton This site was considered by WDBC to have some potential for development. The Parish Council previously stated that a development of 10 houses along the road frontage was excessive, represented a significant extension of the village boundary and that the topography and drainage of the site created substantial practical constraints. Other than a sales and service garage, Chillaton has no local facilities and it is therefore difficult to reconcile the idea of development on this scale with the statement in '*Thriving Towns and Villages*' that development in smaller villages 'would only be allowed in sustainable locations which have reasonable access to services and...avoid reliance on the private car.'

Sites in Milton Abbot Village fall into two groups, those where both WDBC and the Parish Council have agreed that there is no potential for development at this time [WD_42_03_08/13 Land adjoining Milton abbot primary school and WD_42_10_13 Land at Endsleigh House] and no further comments are made.

The other group is as follows: WD_42_01_08/13 Land adjoining Fore Street WD_42_05_08/13 Allotment Gardens Fore Street WD-42_06_08/13 Land adjacent to Vicarage Gardens. The Parish Council has previously expressed reservations about the scale of development on each of these sites and of the cumulative effect of the development of all of them. Those issues, combined with a more realistic assessment of the respective contributions to sustainability provided by different village facilities, as referred to above, make it essential that there is a review of the likely new homes target of 20-30 for this village. That target was objected to in the Regulation 19 consultation on Our Plan and if sustained, is likely to be the subject of a formal objection to the JLP when that stage is again reached.

Environment and Landscape

Comment: The only protection offered by the draft JLP is to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley and South Devon AONBs, which already have statutory protection. There is no mention of any measures to acknowledge the value of the wider landscape outside those areas. The Parish Council did object to the draft landscape policies in Our Plan on the basis of the inadequate level of protection that they offered to non-statutorily protected landscapes and the omission of Landscape Sensitivity Assessments. Given the previous concern and the current initiative by a local residents' group to seek better protection for the landscape, a dialogue with WDBC over the best way forward on this issue would be welcomed.

Future of MACKPlan

The PC considered whether or not to continue with the development of its Neighbourhood Plan [MACKPlan] in view of the delay that had occurred in meeting its anticipated rate of progress. It noted that this delay had been matched by slippage in the delivery of an approved local plan for West Devon, but with the commissioning of the JLP process, there would now be an expectation the

MACKPlan would either make substantial progress or eventually be replaced by a Village Site Allocation Plan determined by WDBC.

Cllr Asbridge also indicated that he would be unable to carry on both as Chair of the MACKPlan team and as its chief contributor of the material needed both for the plan content and surveys, etc.

The PC noted that it was the Government's intention to strengthen the role of Neighbourhood Plans and it would be introducing new legislation to do so. It was also the case that, if a successful plan could be produced, there would be far greater control over the type of development to be provided and its sustainability.

Having reviewed the response from current team members to restarting the MACKPlan process and noted the lack of representatives from Milton Abbot village, it was agreed that:

- i) Cllr Asbridge would provide Cllr Cox with information on MACKPlan to be passed to interested local residents in Milton Abbot, in the hope that the team base would then expand.
- ii) Once the membership of the revised team was settled, an initial meeting be held to allocate ongoing responsibilities and identify the next key steps, which were likely to involve the production and delivery of a questionnaire to all households in the MACKPlan area.

Risk Assessment

Following the annual review of the Council's Risk Assessment in May, actions were agreed and have been undertaken as below;

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.*

The Secretary for both locations used by the Council for meetings, Milton Abbot Village Hall and Marystowe Church Hall, had been contacted for a second time requesting health and safety information. Cllr Asbridge reported that a Quinquennial Survey of Marystowe Church Hall had recently been undertaken, actions were in progress to remedy issues raised and a response would be forthcoming.

2. *Ensure an annual inspection of all premises and equipment owned by the Parish Council is undertaken.*

The above action had been added to the annual cycle of business activities held by the Clerk and should be undertaken in the autumn by Cllrs before budget and precept setting for the forthcoming year.

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.*

Three elements were identified;

- i) *Electronic data held by the Clerk to be stored/backed up on a regular basis to a cloud storage facility.*

Dropbox is now being used for this purpose.

- ii) *Main passwords to systems such as the Clerk's email, to be held by the Chairman in case of emergency.*

A list of passwords had been drawn up by the Clerk, including email and Dropbox. To be amended to include website passwords then to be sealed in an envelope for holding by the Chairman. This information would be reviewed annually, in May, by the Clerk and had been added to the annual business cycle.

iii) Archive hardcopies of papers to be reviewed annually by the Clerk in the autumn and statutory documentation, once no longer required to be readily available, to be sent to the Records Office for safe keeping.

The above action had been added to the annual cycle of business activities held by the Clerk.

Action: Clerk

50:16/17 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Bank Reconciliation and Budget

Both the bank reconciliation and budget were reviewed and **agreed**.

Some time ago a sum totalling £3000 was ring-fenced specifically for use in the Chillaton area of the parish. It had been established that a balance of £441.54 remained unspent, the rest had been used to partly fund the purchase of the two VAS speed signs sited in the village. The Council **approved** the amendment to the Earmarked Funds figures as below;

Contingency – Elections	£ 1,500.00
General Contingency (1/3 rd of 2016/17 income)	£ 1,470.00
Chillaton Issues	£ 441.54
Unallocated Reserves	£ 5,043.28
TOTAL	£ 8,454.82

Payments

The Parish Council **approved** the following payment which would be paid by BACS;

- Payment of £8.84 to Mrs James for postage, stationary and phone top-up

Action: Cllrs Beighton & Westcott

The Clerks pay for July, paid by BACS, was noted

- Mrs E James - £132.01
- HMRC – £17.20

On-Line Banking

Relevant forms for on-line banking and new signatory to be completed by Cllrs Hough and Phalsson.

Action: Cllrs Phalsson & Hough

51:16/17 HIGHWAYS CONFERENCE

A consultation had been received from the Highways Department who would be holding workshop style events later in the year and were asking councils for their views and the subjects they would like discussed. The Council considered the list of subjects and **agreed** the Clerk respond highlighting the below and adding Grass Cutting to the list:

- Winter maintenance/service
- Road works – coordination and approval process
- DCC and Parish/Town Council communication

Action: Clerk

52:16/17 PAYROLL SERVICE

Following a request by Cllr Westcott that the current cost of the payroll service could be reduced by sourcing an alternative supplier the Clerk had made enquiries with two persons. Whilst one of these would be slightly more competitive, it was **agreed** not to change supplier as this person did not hold relevant accounting qualifications.

53:16/17 COUNCILLORS REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

None

54:16/17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates as below with a potential change of location to the meetings due to be held on 7th September and 5th October.

7 th September 2016	Milton Abbot Village Hall
5 th October 2016*	Marystowe Church Hall
2 nd November 2016	Milton Abbot Village Hall
7 th December 2016*	Marystowe Church Hall
4 th January 2017	Marystowe Church Hall
1 st February 2017*	Milton Abbot Village Hall
1 st March 2017	Milton Abbot Village Hall
5 th April 2017*	Marystowe Church Hall
3 rd May 2017	Annual Parish Meeting for Chillaton - Marystowe Church Hall
4 th May 2017 (Thursday)	Annual Parish Meeting for Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone in Milton Abbot Village Hall followed by the Parish Council Annual and Ordinary meetings

*Note: Meetings dates followed by * are additional meetings which may be cancelled if not required. All meetings are on Wednesdays at 7.30pm unless otherwise specified*

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed:
Cllr Hough, Chairman

Date: