

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER 2015 AT MARYSTOW CHURCH HALL AT 7.30PM.

(also available at www.chillaton.net)

PRESENT: Cllrs J. Anderson (MA), H. Asbridge (C) (Acting Clerk), C. Beighton (C), R Brewer (C), A. Cox (MA), P. Hough (MA) (Chair),

Cllr Chris Edmonds (WDBC)

56:15/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs M. Pahlsson (C), R. Tucker (MA) A. Westcott (C)

57:15/16 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2015 **were agreed** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

58: 15/16 URGENT ACTION

It was noted that the Acting Clerk had taken the following action, with the concurrence of the Chair and Vice-Chair:

Approval of the terms of reference of the Personnel Committee

Submission of additional representations regarding the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the Ramsdown turbine.

It was agreed that the placement of an advertisement in the Tavy Times, regarding the vacancy for a Parish Clerk be confirmed and approval given for the reimbursement of the cost [£80 plus VAT] incurred by the Acting Clerk.

59: 15/16 GRANTS TOWARDS THE MAINTENANCE OF BURIAL GROUNDS

The Acting Clerk submitted a further report on the grants paid to Parochial Church Councils [PCCs], having regard to additional information supplied by Marystow PCC.

Both the Acting Clerk and Cllr Brewer [who had assisted with the analysis of grants paid since 2005/6] were now satisfied that no grants were paid in respect of the financial year 2014/15. Accordingly, **it was agreed that** payments of £315 be made to Marystowe and to Milton Abbot PCCs, £175 to Dunterton PCC and £100 to Kelly PCC, in respect of grants for 2014/15.

60: 15/16 GRANTS TO KELLY VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Brewer declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

With effect from May 2011, Bradstone Parish had merged with the area of the Parish Council and both the precepts previously levied by Bradstone Parish and its financial responsibilities had been transferred to the Parish Council.

At its meeting on 18th June 2011, Bradstone Parish Meeting had agreed *'to donate £100 to.....Kelly Village Hall in this current financial year [2011/12].'*

On 12 January 2012, the Parish Council agreed to *'honour the £50 annual donation to the Parish Hall in Meadwell, historically given by Bradstone PC.'* However, it had now been realised that the

grant of £100 made by Bradstone Parish Meeting in June 2011 was standard practice and therefore, if the Parish Council had intended to continue payments *historically given by Bradstone PC*, they should have awarded a grant of £100 in 2012 and annually thereafter.

The Parish Council agreed that an additional grant of £50 be paid to the Kelly Village Hall Management Committee for the years 2012/13 – 2015/16; a total of £200.

Under the terms of management of the hall, payment of an annual grant of £100 would entitle the Parish Council to use the hall free of charge and **it was agreed** to bear this in mind, should this be an appropriate venue in future.

61: 15/16 TRAINING FOR NEW COUNCILLORS

The Acting Clerk had provisionally booked places for Cllrs Beighton and Cox on a training course for new councillors at a cost of £30 each. However, **it was noted that** it would now be possible for them to attend another suitable course at no cost, because that would be financed by the TAP Fund.

62: 15/16 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING 21ST JULY 2015

The minutes of this meeting of the Personnel Committee, attached as Appendix A to the agenda, were received and **the actions taken noted**.

63: 15/16 RECRUITMENT OF PARISH CLERK

The Appointment Panel, established by the Parish Council at its last meeting, had interviewed four candidates on 26th August and made an offer of employment subject to satisfactory references, which had now been received.

The Acting Clerk reported that the cost of the Clerk's post in 2015/16 could be met from existing budget provision and **the Parish Council therefore confirmed** the offer of appointment, which was nevertheless dependent on another employer of the successful candidate agreeing to her accepting this post.

64: 15/16 REVISED BUDGET 2015/16

The Parish Council considered a revised budget for this year, together with a projected budget for 2016/17, which took account of the expenditure agreed in various minutes as set out above.

It was noted that the projected overspend of £611 in 2015/16 was caused by the need to pay £1,105 arrears of grant aid, plus arrears of hall hire charges. This could be met from reserves, as was demonstrated in Appendix B to the agenda.

The draft budget for 2016/17 had not been adjusted for inflation, or for an increment on the salary scale for the Parish Clerk, but would be revised to take account of these and any other relevant issues, when the Parish Council considered its level of precept for 2016/17.

The reconciliation of the Parish Council's expenditure to its bank accounts and a projection to outturn, as set out in Appendix C to the agenda **was noted**.

It was agreed that payment of £268 be made to J.S. Murrain & Sons Ltd for grass cutting.

65: 15/16 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

It was noted that the Parish Council's external auditors had reported that the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2015 was in accordance with proper practices and no matters

had come to their attention that gave cause for concern that the relevant regulatory requirements had not been met.

66: 15/16 ATTENDANCE AT LINK MEETINGS

The voting system at Link meetings had been simplified, so that each Parish Council only had one vote, regardless of how many representatives it sent. The majority of parish councils had now decided to send only one representative, but two were still permissible.

The Parish Council had two representatives; Cllrs Asbridge and Brewer. Both felt that the Parish Council should be represented at these meetings, but that sending two members to every meeting was unnecessary. **It was agreed that** the current representatives continue to be members of the Link Committee, with the expectation that Cllr Asbridge would only attend when there were matters to be discussed that he was directly involved in. That would enable Cllr Asbridge to continue to be a member of a Link working party looking at improving working arrangements with Highways and allow him more time to focus on chairing the MACKPlan team.

67: 15/16. USE OF IT

It had previously been recognised that the Parish Council needed to review its use of IT and ensure that it had appropriate and robust systems in place.

Cllrs Asbridge and Beighton had given initial consideration to this issue and a draft IT specification was discussed.

It was agreed that:

(i) there was a need to introduce IT systems that were not dependent on support from individual Cllrs or based on privately owned equipment.

(ii) (i) above did not preclude the development of IT systems by individual Cllrs [if requested to do so by the Parish Council] provided what was produced was based on proprietary systems/platforms that could be easily taken on by an IT support Company, if the need to do so arose.

(iii) Cllr Beighton would look at the range of services provided by the IT support company used by Lifton Parish Council.

(iv) Cllrs Asbridge and Beighton would develop a Parish Council email system, using proprietary components, with the aim of having this operational before the new Parish Clerk was in post.

(v) Cllrs Asbridge and Beighton would report further on scope for developing appropriate, secure, systems for document storage and retrieval, a Parish Council website and other relevant IT issues, including the potential to make use of the Transparency Grant, together with an estimate of likely costs, as soon as possible.

68: 15/16 RETAINING WALL, MILTON ABBOT CHURCHYARD

The Acting Clerk reported that a Cllr had raised concerns about the condition of part of this retaining wall. Although the Parish Council had previously monitored the wall, no documents had yet been discovered that indicated any responsibility for its condition.

It was agreed that:

1. the Acting Clerk would carry out a further search for any relevant documents

2. the Chair would make enquiries of the Playgroup
3. if necessary, a search would be made at the Land Registry
4. if necessary, the Bedford Estate would be asked to provide copies of any leases, etc., relating to the land in question.

69: 15/16 RESIGNATION OF ACTING CLERK

Cllr Asbridge had acted as Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer since the resignation of the last post-holder and would resign on the date that the new post-holder took up their duties.

While acting as Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer, Cllr Asbridge had carried out a review of the Parish Council's financial processes and other matters such as Standing Orders. However, there were several issues that have previously been identified as needing implementation or review that had not yet been completed, including:

- Health and Safety Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Procedure for contact with the press
- Freedom of Information Act procedure
- Review of banking arrangements

Cllr Asbridge was willing to carry out the work needed to complete the overhaul of various admin and financial procedures, in conjunction with the new Parish Clerk, and **it was agreed that** he should do so.

70: 15/16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 4th November 2015 Milton Abbot Village Hall

Wednesday 6th January 2016 Marystowe Church Hall

Wednesday 2nd March 2016 Milton Abbot Village Hall

Wednesday 4th May 2016 Parish Meeting for Chillaton Marystowe Church Hall

Thursday 5th May 2016 Parish Meeting for Milton Abbot, Dunterton and Bradstone at Milton Abbot Village Hall followed by the AGM and an ordinary Council Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9pm.