

# Milborne Port Parish Council

## Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 at 7.00pm in the Town Hall.

The Chairman announced that because of the absence of the Clerk he was going to record the meeting to facilitate his drafting of the minutes.

**NB: Subsequently, publication of these minutes has been delayed by the emergency hospitalisation of the Chairman, his convalescence and subsequent extended absence abroad on business.**

### Public Question and Comment Time:

Before the start of the meeting the Public are given the opportunity to ask questions of the Council or pass comment. As it doesn't form part of the formal meeting there is no requirement to keep full minutes of public question time, merely briefly summarise the gist of the points raised.

A lady raised a number of procedural points, covering public question time, and adherence to standing orders, expressing concern that the duration of the public's slot had been cut from 30 minutes to 15 minutes and that meeting minutes were less informative than previously. The Chairman explained that although 15 minutes was scheduled for the public he had the discretion to extend the slot to the full 30 minutes and had done so at the September meeting. With respect to the minutes, currently they are being drafted in accordance with best practice although Standing Orders have not yet been revised to reflect this.

In office availability of the Clerk was also queried. The Chairman explained that the revised opening times (both morning and afternoon and the occasional Saturday was intended to facilitate access to a wider cross-section of the community and that the office was also manned on other days, although these were not advertised.

A lady raised a question about neighbourhood plans. Cllr Carty briefed progress.

A gentleman commented on the paucity of public transport.

Several people expressed dissatisfaction with the current status of parking in the village and speeding. Cllr Carty explained that the Parish Council was lobbying the relevant authorities.

A gentleman briefed that the mobile library had been established in East Street Car Park.

Cllr Watts raised the issue of the Bus Shelter and his unhappiness with the state of affairs. The Chairman explained the restrictions constraining the Parish Council's actions

Cllr Barsby reported that two local ladies had taken on the maintenance of the flowers on top of the wall at the bottom of Gainsborough.

**Present:** Mr R Douglas (Chairman) Ms D Barsby, Mr T Campbell, Mr T Carty, Mr A Fletcher, Mr P Lock, Ms L MacArthur, Mr R Tizzard, Mr T Watts

**In attendance:** Cllr Wallace and Cllr Dyke

**Apologies for Absence:**

Cllrs Laughton, Gough and Stewart submitted their apologies, which were accepted.

**Declarations of Interests:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Adoption of Minutes:**

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 were accepted and signed by the Chairman.

**Reports from County Councillor William Wallace & District Councillor Sarah Dyke:**

**Cllr Wallace** Matters with respect to 30mph limits should be referred to the Highways engineer, Garry Warren. He was pleased to report that he had secured £426 towards a Scrambler Climber to be located in the Gainsborough Play Area. Cllr Wallace then explained the purpose of the County's Civil Contingency team and finished by reporting that plans for a crossing near the Garage were continuing.

**Cllr Dyke** began by explaining the challenges associated with taking action over inconsiderate parking and the need to gather evidence to justify enforcement action. She then described the District Council's Emergency Planning arrangements and the information concerning Brexit contingencies on the Council's website. She then highlighted the dynamic nature of the District Council's Environmental Strategy and advertised an Area East meeting open to Parish Councillors on the 10<sup>th</sup> October where the Somerset Waste Partnership will brief how they will achieve even greater levels of recycling.

**Motion to Full Council - Climate Emergency:**

Cllr Fletcher explained the background and proposed the following motion:

***This council recognises that we are in a climate emergency that requires urgent action at all levels of government, including Parish Councils.***

***The council commits to tackling climate change and promoting climate repair across all of its activities, including procurement, utilisation of grant funding, planning, and management of buildings and open spaces. It commits to using its powers to promote sustainable and net-carbon neutral developments, to preserving and increasing biodiversity, to reducing car use, and encouraging walking, cycling and public transport. It commits to ensuring that the land it manages is maintained in a way that maximises carbon capture and biodiversity, and prevents species extinction.***

***The council commits to community engagement, and to supporting efforts to convene a climate emergency group, which with wide representation, including councillors, residents, young citizens and other stakeholders, will assist in helping the council reach its goals for carbon neutrality across the full range of its activities.***

Following a brief discussion the motion was seconded by Cllr MacArthur and put to a vote. The motion was carried (there being 6 votes for and 3 votes against).

### **Scribe Accounting Software:**

The RFO had recommended that the Parish Council subscribes to Scribe Accounting Software at a cost of £416.40 per annum and that all of this year's accounts are immediately moved over onto this platform. The Chairman explained that the current RBS software was relatively inflexible, being optimised for accounting purposes which made it difficult to use. The Web-based Scribe software was considered to more closely match the needs of the Council and also eliminate the current financial single point of failure. The Council authorised acquisition of the Scribe software by a vote of 8 for and 1 against acquisition.

### **Parish Council Payments:**

Members approved the following payments:

- SSDC – Hanging Baskets - £1440.60
- SSDC - Dog Bins September - £254.40
- SSDC – Ranger Labour - £754.80
- Mr S Pritchard - Locum Clerk Services September - £956.25
- Mr S Pritchard – Expenses September - £29.75
- SLCC – Membership for Clerk - £68.00
- Midwest Stationers – Office Sundries - £400.76
- Midwest Stationers – Office Sunday - £5.88
- Milborne Port Computers – Live Drive Backup (Annual) - £48.00
- Spectrum Electrical Group – Connection of mobile library - £331.80
- HMRC – PAYE - £122.00
- PKF Littlejohn - External Audit 2018/19 - £480.00

### **Standing Orders & Direct Debits:**

Members noted the following payments:

- BT - Mobile August 19 - £13.03 (REFUND)
- Toilet Cleaner: September - £130.00
- Town Hall Cleaner: September - £100.00

### **Council Grants – Play-Days:**

The Chairman explained that a “Play-Day” event had been held at the Playing Field in August but that the financial information required to support a grant application had not been provided. It had therefore been necessary to establish the bonafides of the organiser. The District Council confirmed that he was organising events on their behalf. The event had been well-attended, and everyone enjoyed themselves. Therefore, members agreed to match contributions from other councils and make a grant of £250 to Play-Days towards the cost of the event.

### **Committees Restructuring:**

The Chairman introduced the item, explaining that a Workshop attended by many of the Councillors had examined the draft proposals and considered them sensible. Therefore, the proposal was being formally tabled to implement the proposed changes to committee structure

and responsibilities. The reason for moving quickly was so that Scribe implementation could be configured to support the new committee structure.

One change had already been proposed which was to change the name of the proposed Environment Committee to Planning and Environment Committee which was felt to more accurately represent the committee's new remit.

Cllr Watts expresses his concerns over delegating spending authority to the Committees. The Chairman explained that setting budgets would be a Full Council responsibility as would monitoring the spend of the committees. Cllr Tizzard felt that there were some shortcomings and insufficient detail for him to support immediately implementing the document. Cllr Campbell felt that the proposal should be treated as a working document that should be refined before adoption.

Cllr Tizzard suggested that the proposal should be taken forward and fleshed out by the committees for subsequent ratification by the Full Council. After a lively debate, which identified some of the practical issues to be resolved (such as determining the degree of financial oversight and establishing the arrangements necessary for Committees to operate as spending entities) Councillors supported the changes "in principle" but wished to develop the detail before ratifying the proposal. In the short term, it was agreed that the existing meetings schedule should be maintained.

#### **Emergency Plan Working Group:**

The Chairman explained that considerations of Brexit contingencies had highlighted that the Emergency Plan for the Parish needs to be revisited and updated. The previous Clerk had been tasked to update the plan some 9 months previously but made slow progress due to the need to obtain the permission of all parties mentioned in the plan for the release of their data (in accordance with GDPR). The Chairman proposed to establish a small working group to take the work forward. One member of the public had already volunteered to join the group and the Chairman would recreate the risk assessment he wrote for the previous plan. Cllr's Campbell and Watts volunteered to join the group.

#### **New Play Equipment:**

Members were to determine whether to spend £1,792 on a Scramble Climber for the Gainsborough Play Area or to wait until a bigger project is pulled together. The Council was in favour of acquiring the equipment. However, having established that there was no urgency taking up the available County Council funding the Parish Council decided to investigate whether the purchase could be undertaken using S106 rather than Precept funding.

#### **External Audit Result 2018/19:**

The Chairman reported that the external auditors had completed their examination of the Council's 2018-19 AGAR submission and issued the appropriate completion certificate. There was one observation – the Auditors noted that an SSDC grant had erroneously been recorded on the form in the same box as the Precept received when it should have been recorded in the next box. The error occurred because both sums were included in a single payment described as precept. This error will not be repeated as the grant has been discontinued. The appropriate notice will be posted, and the certificate placed on the Council's website.

#### **Planning Applications:**

Although not yet formally notified the Council is aware that the Reserved Matters Application by Redcliffe Homes had been submitted. As there is time for full consideration the application will be

reviewed by the Planning Committee for them to draft the Council's response and present it for ratification at the next Full Council meeting.

**Notes for Information**

Cllr Carty reported that he and the Chairman had attended a meeting of the Market Towns Investment Group at Chard the previous week. Of interest, there is funding available to support approved Market Town Initiatives. Minutes will be produced and circulated in due course.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Springfield Road Car Park resurfacing had started but had to be split into two phases (a week apart) because of the need to allow weed killer to take effect. Some extra work had also been undertaken to remove some rubble.

A new requirement is being raised to undertake white lining of the Car Park and Yellow Boxes close to the Village Hall to facilitate emergency vehicle access.

The meeting closed at 2106.

.....

DRAFT