

MILTON ABBAS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL held on 10th May 2023 in the Reading Room, Milton Abbas at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Mr S. Driver	Mr P. Ford
Mr S. Gould	Mr N. Hodder (Chairman)
Mr T. Ives	Mr T. Khandwala (Vice-Chairman)
Mr S. Martin	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E. Sellen (Clerk) and 10 members of the general public.

1. APOLOGIES None

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by SG, seconded by TK and unanimously agreed that NH should be elected Chairman. NH took the chair.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by NH, seconded by SG and unanimously agreed that TK should be elected vice chairman.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

The Clerk regrettably confirmed the resignation of Mr G. Bridle and Mrs J. Cooper from the Play Park Committee. Both GB and JC had been instrumental in the formation of the current Play Park Committee in 2016 and had raised significant grant income and donations for the installation of the existing play park. NH thanked them both for their valued commitment.

Transport Adviser	Nigel Hodder
DAPTC Rep	Nigel Hodder
Rights of Way Officer	Steve Gould
Tree Warden	Steve Bewers
MATCH /Jane's Wood Rep	TBC
Flood Wardens	Steve Gould
Emergency Officer/Contact	Steve Gould
Homewatch	Ellie Payne
Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator	Nigel Hodder & Freddy Robinson
Playpark Committee	Louise Perry-Warens (Chair), Tom Ives, Steve Gould, Susan Woodhouse, Steve Gorson, Emma Campbell, Abby Bartlett
Neighbourhood Plan Working Party	To be reconvened when appropriate
Welcome Pack	Tayab Khandwala
Milton Abbas Health & Disability Fund	Tom Ives
Tregonwell Almshouses	Rodger Pressland
Website Liaison	Simon Martin

Emily Faulkner Trustee	Leo Hughes
Communications Officer	Nigel Hodder
Defibrillator Management	Tayab Khandwala, Tom Ives, Gavin Bridle, Tina Sparks
Fingerposts	Stuart Driver, Tom Ives
Parish Mobile Comms Lead	Leo Hughes
Parish Broadband Lead	David Cocking
BT Kiosk	Stuart Driver, Phil Ford & Working Party
Electric Vehicle Charge Points	Tayab Khandwala
Village Flower Boxes	Flower Power
Lloyds Bank Signatories	Nigel Hodder, Tom Ives, Tayab Khandwala & Simon Martin

5. REVIEW OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Councillors had reviewed the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, Risk Assessment Document, Privacy Policy, Welcome Pack and other policies. NH had noted that some action was required to comply with the risk register (SM & TK to be actioned as signatories to the Lloyds account, second bank facility required, one register of interest entry missing, need to remove old records to archivist). It was proposed by SD, seconded by TK and unanimously agreed that the governing documents are still adequate.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Darkin Miller Ltd has served 2 years of a 3 year long term agreement and provided an estimate of £188.66 + VAT for 2023/2024. It was proposed by NH, seconded by TI and unanimously agreed to continue with Darkin Miller Ltd.

7. MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Council meeting of 11th May 2022 had been approved at the Parish Council meeting on 13th July 2022. There were no matters arising.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

NH presented the Chairman's Report. (See ADDENDA)

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented the financial report. (See ADDENDA)

9. UNITARY COUNCILLORS REPORT None

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed:
(Presiding Chairman)

Date:

ADDENDA:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

Let me start with the good news that the Parish Council provided £3,600 towards village Jubilee celebrations in June 2022 via a National Lottery grant of £3,050 and associated reclaiming of VAT for payments made using those grant funds. A similar offer was made in support of the recent Coronation celebration, but nobody came forward prepared to organise such an event until after the deadline for a grant application.

The Parish Council meets every other month supplemented by emergency planning meetings where necessary. In fact, when you include emergency meetings we met 9 times in the last 12 months – one less than the number of ordinary meetings that would have been held under the previous format. I do not believe the service to the community has declined following the reduction in planned PC meetings but am always interested to hear from Parishioners if they believe that not to be the case.

Sadly, we have witnessed the demise of The Bulletin removing a significant communication channel. That has made the use of Elli-grams and various social media pages an even more critical requirement. It is hoped that an electronic version of The Bulletin, together with a limited supply of additional hard copies in public places (the phone box, for example?) will be the way forward and one of our Councillors is working towards that solution.

The subject of a mobile signal has been resurrected with the interest shown by Vodafone and O2 for the provision of a mast in the BT compound opposite the Sports Field. While it has been agreed by Dorset Council that this can take place as a permitted development, operational progress is sadly slow and there will not be a suitable 4G/ 5G signal in place for the Street Fair this July.

On the IT front, our Zoom account is now available to any bona fide organisation within the village. This offer has been taken up by the History Group who hold monthly hybrid meetings but, as yet no other takers. Also, the PC now contributes £300 p.a. towards the costs associated with broadband provision in the Reading Room - a community facility that can be enjoyed by all users of the Reading Room.

Furthermore, the Clerk and I recently met with Wessex Internet to confirm we have no objection in principle to them fitting a fibre broadband infrastructure beneath PC owned land as part of the programme to lay a fibre infrastructure across most of the Parish. This work is likely to start in the summer and will bring a much-needed faster broadband speed to many properties. I would like to thank David Cocking who liaised with Wessex Internet in the early days, encouraging sufficient residents to "sign up". This resulted in the government grant being secured to enable the provision of "fibre to the door" for this village.

Discussions have commenced regarding the potential sale of PC owned land opposite the surgery with a view to building houses on it - 65% of which would be likely to be Social Housing in line with the Neighbourhood Plan recommendations. This is likely to be a slow burn, but at this stage I should thank Rob Gollidge for kickstarting the process!

I have no doubt that Parishioners will be delighted to hear that we have finally spent some money in bringing some of our assets out of a state of disrepair. Notice boards have been repaired as has the post and fencing leading to the above-mentioned field. I am conscious there are other areas of disrepair such as Lovely Steps, but these are the responsibility of Dorset Council for repair purposes, and we have been in discussion with the local Ranger for many months – progress always tends to be slow with our unitary authority particularly when the cost of a suitable repair is likely to be in the order of £20K!

Now to a matter a little less savoury. The Council will watch with interest developments at The Ruins campsite owned and operated by a Hilton family and located in a field within our Parish near Milton Abbey School following neighbour complaints about the unacceptable levels of noise and light late into the night during last summer. Under permitted development, the campsite can only legally operate for 28 days but the harm that can be done in that short space of time is significant. It is extremely unlikely that the PC would support any application for a more permanent facility.

Finally, I must say a big thank you to our Parish Clerk. Liz Sellen, for her ongoing guidance to both me and my fellow Councillors - where would we be without her?

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023

Receipts

Our precept for 2022/2023 was £15,700 for the fourth year. Other receipts included the now infamous Chilli Fest and Halloween play park fundraising proceeds of £640.30, and £858 insurance proceeds from Liverpool Victoria, which was used to reinstate the damaged signage at Lower Lodge following a second car accident.

Expenditure

Expenditure of £14,398.79 is slightly understated due to invoices for maintenance and expenses received after year end but shows that the decision to maintain the level of precept was justified.

Overview

Since adjusted funds on hand £61,178 continue to reflect a significant level of reserves, the precept for 2023/2024 has been maintained at £15,700.