



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL ON TUESDAY 4TH MAY 2021 HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

473/21 PRESENT

Cllrs Adam, Barker, Boswell, Jones, Mannington (in the Chair), Newton, Robertson, Stevens, Tippet and Turner were present. The Clerk and six members of the public were also in attendance.

474/21 APOLOGIES

Cllr Brown had given her apologies. PCSO Nicola Morris and Theresa Gibson (new Cllr) also gave their apologies.

475/21 PARISH COUNCILLOR DETAILS

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Changes to Register of Interests

There were no changes to Cllrs Register of Interests.

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation of any item on this agenda.

476/21 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2021 were agreed as a true record. They would be signed at the next face to face meeting.

477/21 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Two members of the public wished to speak on item 479/21 (Allotments).

The meeting was adjourned for the following items:

PUBLIC FORUM

No items were raised under Public Forum.

EXTERNAL VERBAL REPORTS

County and Borough Councillors

No County or Borough Cllr were in attendance.

Police

PCSO Nicola Morris was not in attendance. A crime report would be sent when PCSO Morris was next on duty.

Community Warden

Not in attendance

The meeting was reconvened for the remainder of the meeting.

478/21 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk had circulated her report prior to the meeting. The Clerk reported on staff annual leave booked for the next couple of months. A response had been received from Golding Homes regarding CCTV and the Clerk was waiting for confirmation from the contractor as to whether the suggestion would be suitable. Due to the Parish Council elections being uncontested an advert for co-optation would be placed on notice boards and social media with a closing date of 28th May 2021 – Cllrs would co-opt, if applications were received, at the Full

Council meeting on 8th June. Meetings to be arranged (1) Highways/Howland Road post election; (2) PCSO in early June. The Clerk briefed the meeting on the Clerk and Deputy Clerk's return to office working – both would be in the office alternate Thursdays to ensure all safe to return from 21st June (tbc). To begin with the front door would be locked and any member of the public wishing to speak with the Clerks would do so via the front window unless confidential. The Clerk would undertake a risk assessment before return.

479/21 PARISH MATTERS

Reports from MBC and KCC

No reports received from MBC or KCC.

Police Update/Report from Police Forum

Crime Figures

No crime figures received.

Other Police Issues

No other Police issues raised.

Communication

No communication items raised.

Marden Assets of Community Value

The Clerk had submitted the ACV for The Unicorn PH via email. Cllr Turner had spoken again to West End Tavern. It was agreed that for the time being MPC would not pursue the ACV on this but would review in six months' time. Cllr Barker reported that no information regarding ownership of The Stilebridge had been received. Cllr Boswell proposed that a further meeting is arranged in a month's time – agreed and the Clerk would send out dates.

Marden Flooding

The report had been submitted to Max Tant at KCC. No response had been received. The Clerk would chase

MPC Meetings – April/May and after 7th May 2021

Agreed/Proposed meetings:

The judgement outcome had been received last week with the ruling that virtual meetings would cease on 6th May. The Clerk had circulated proposals for either face to face meetings or delegated powers. Cllrs discussed the options and agreed for the Clerk to undertake a risk assessment of the John Banks Hall to resume face to face meetings for 11th May 2021. This would be undertaken on 6th May and would be circulated to Cllrs immediately afterwards. Hybrid meetings were also discussed but it was unsure whether this could be done. The Clerk would investigate.

Delegated Powers/Scheme of Delegation

Following the above decision there would be no additional delegated powers given to the Clerk. The adopted Scheme of Delegation would continue.

MPC Policies and Risk Assessments

The Clerk had circulated the remaining policies and risk assessments for GDPR and Covid-19 and explained that only small amendments had been made. The policies and risk assessments relating to volunteers and vulnerable persons would be reviewed if it was required to review back to this in future. Cllrs agreed the amendments and adopted the policies and risk assessments.

Highwood Green Allotments

The draft allotment agreement had been sent to members of the Allotment Association who had sent a response. Two members of the Association were in attendance to speak and the Chairman opened the floor for them to address the meeting.

Parish Council was thanked for helping and supporting with the allotments. Questions raised included: will the allotments be freehold? Yes : will there be running water? Yes : What is the next stage as concern was raised that members' own money was being ploughed into the Association but unsure of the project continuing. Cllr Tippen explained that the Parish Council was waiting to hear from Redrow regarding MPC not wanting to take over the car parking spaces. The Clerk was asked to chase Redrow and a separate meeting would be held

with Cllrs and Allotment Association to discuss further. The Clerk would circulate dates to all interested parties.

8.04pm – Four members of the public left the meeting

Co-Option Forms

As the Parish Council elections were uncontested (9 nominations received) there were two vacancies for which the Parish Council could co-opt. The Clerk had drafted a new form which would be sent to interested parties with the closing date of 28th May. Cllrs agreed to adopt the new form. Cllr Adam asked the Clerk if there was a difference between a Cllr and a co-opted Cllr – the Clerk didn't think there was but would look into it and let Cllrs know.

Parish Assets

The Clerk had circulated the updated Parish Assets spreadsheet and explained that the values were at the cost purchased, with land being £1 or nil value. This was for auditing purposes but could not explain why. The Clerk would try to find out the reasoning. MPC's vehicle would be added once purchased.

480/21 PLANNING

Planning Applications Received

21/501694/LBC – Wanshurst, Battle Lane, Marden

Listed Building Consent for recovering the roof and replacement of the roofing felt insulation and any broken Kent peg tiles.

Cllrs had no objection provided the Conservation Officer was in agreement.

21/501823/FULL – Holly Cottage, Maidstone Road, Marden

Erection of a detached timber garden room to house a home office and storage space

Cllrs raised no objection.

481/21 COMMITTEE REPORTS

8.10pm – One member of the public arrived at the meeting

Amenities Committee

Draft Minutes of the Amenities meeting held on 27th April had been previously circulated and were available on the Parish Council website. The Chairman of Amenities Committee reported that the outdoor gym had been installed. Cllr Newton asked on usage but the Clerk was unsure as to how much it had been used since it was installed only last week. Cllr Barker asked if it would be used at users risk – signage is due to be erected and it would be at personal risk. However, the Council did have public liability. Cllr Boswell reported that Marden Primary Academy had agreed for MPC to hold this year's summer play scheme at the school.

Planning Committee

Draft Minutes of Planning Meeting held on 16th March had been previously circulated and were available on the Parish Council website.

Finance Committee

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 27th April would be circulated to Cllrs. Cllr Adam updated the meeting of what was discussed including reviewing and agreeing end of year accounts; 4-year financial plan which needed to be discussed at a further meeting to agree distribution of capital funds across future years; end of year internal auditor report which raised two recommendations (i) for the Clerk to show earmarked reserves on the reporting from the financial software and (ii) MPC to adopt an Investment Policy/Strategy, which it had done earlier this year. Due to income/expenditure now being over £200k for three years MPC were required to convert from Receipts and Payments to Income and Expenditure; transfer of funds from Unity to Nat West to limit to £85,000 and from Unity to Santander for capital expenditure.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars attended (all meetings virtual unless otherwise stated)

9th & 10th April – Amenities Site Meetings

14th April – AGAR training

29th April – Borough Councillor meeting – Cllr Tippen updated the meeting held with Cllt Burton on what was discussed which included timescale for works to commence on renovations at Stilebridge site; update on MBC's Local Plan which was still on track with Regulation 19 due in September; and the potential hostile planning application for land North of Marden. Cllr Burton informed the meeting that MBC had employed the services of a KCC Officer to undertake the traffic modelling on Regulation 18.

Conferences/Meetings/Webinars forthcoming

6th May – Elections – Parish Council uncontested.

482/21 CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence received.

483/21 FINANCE

Bank Statements:

Revenue Accounts

Nat West (as at 1st April 2021) £22,276.86

Unity (as at 4th May 2021) £195,266.08

Capital Account

Santander (as at 18th January 2021) £47,088.33

Transfer of Funds

Revenue: Unity Bank to Nat West

As agreed at Finance Committee funds would be transferred from Unity Bank to Nat West following the receipt of the Nat West April bank statements. The Clerk would then report as to how much was required to be transferred to bring this to £85,000.

Capital: Unity Bank to Santander

As reported to Finance Committee Covid-19 grants and grant from KCC totalling £23,943.00 and ringfenced funds for fingerposts and Christmas lighting (£9,000) was to be transferred to capital. Expenditure on capital from the revenue account (£8,451.78) needed to be transferred from capital account. This left a balance of £24,491.22 to be moved from Unity (revenue) to Santander (Capital). Cllrs agreed for this transfer to be made.

Internal Audit Report

The Internal Audit report for the end of financial year 2020/2021 had been circulated to Cllrs and discussed at the Finance Committee on 27th April. Two recommendations had been raised (see Finance Committee item 481/21) and discussed. Cllrs agreed to receive and adopt the report undertaking any actions that were required.

Signing of the End of Year Balance Sheet 2020/2021

The balance sheet had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting and a hard copy had been delivered to the Chairman. Cllrs agreed the content and the Chairman signed the document via video link.

External Audit/Annual Return (AGAR)

Section 1 – Annual Government Statement 2020/21

The Clerk had circulated the AGAR and shared the document on the screen for all to view.

The Clerk read out the nine statements of which Cllrs answered Yes to statements 1 to 8.

Statement 9 referred to Trust funds which was not applicable to MPC.

The Clerk had provided a hard copy to the Chairman prior to the meeting.

The Chairman signed and dated Section 1 via video link and Cllrs agreed for the Clerk to sign once in receipt of the hard copy.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21

The Clerk shared the document on the screen for all to view the figures for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. The Clerk had signed this section prior to the meeting and following agreement by Cllrs the Chairman signed the hard copy via video link.

Other Papers for External Auditor

The Clerk explained that several other documents were required to be sent to the External Auditor along with the AGAR which included bank reconciliations, statement of variance, Intermediate Council additional information (confirmation that MPC is registered with HMRC and actions/minutes resulting from “other matters” in 2019/2020, of which there were none); and contact details which would need completing following election of new Chairman. The notification of Exercise of Public Rights had been completed and would be placed on notice boards and the website.

Signing of the Statement of Internal Control 2020/21

This document had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The contents were agreed by Cllrs. The Clerk would provide a hard copy to be signed by the Chairman.

2021/2022 Financial Year

As discussed previously MPC were now required to convert from Receipts and Payments to Income and Expenditure. A quote had been received from RBS (software provider) of a cost of £350 for restating 2020/2021 accounts and preparing for the new financial year. Cllrs agreed this and the Clerk would contact RBS to undertake the work.

Payments for Approval

Electronic Payments

Marden Memorial Hall – Office Rent - £295.00

Pitney Bowes – Franking Machine Rental - £15.54

SLCC – Deputy Clerk’s subscription - £166.00

Kerry Underdown – Office cleaning - £40.00

Ian Jones – Southons Field and Public convenience locking/unlocking – £200.00

Employees – May Salaries - £5,189.63

HMRC – May PAYE/NIC - £1,343.97

Paul Waring – rolling of playing field and Southons Field - £215.10

Graham Carey – grounds maintenance - £492.00

Transfer from Unity to Santander - £24,491.22

TOTAL: £32,448.46

Cllrs agreed all payments. Cllrs Mannington and Stevens would authorise payments on Unity.

472/21 HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Highways

Highways Improvement Plan

Several Cllrs had met with Jennie Watson of Kent Highways to discuss the HIP. Items discussed included Cllrs requesting desktop surveys and preliminary designs/estimates for pedestrian islands at the junctions of Pattenden Lane/Church Green and Albion Road/High Street; Howland Road concerns of HGVs etc. It was agreed that a meeting would be held post-election regarding this. Cllr Tippen’s report on dropped kerbs was also discussed. Cllrs were asked to review this report and provide the Clerk with other areas of concern. Cllr Tippen had also suggested several other items to be added to the HIP. It was proposed that a further meeting be held to discuss the HIP and Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP) documents.

Fingerpost Signs

Cllr Turner had received information back from East Peckham Parish Council and had drafted a report for Cllrs to view. This was shared on screen and it was agreed for Cllr Turner to finalise and circulate to Cllrs. Cllrs would then meet to discuss the way forward; what needs doing to each; should they all be uniform etc. Cllr Turner had also contacted a work colleague for further information on KCC criteria.

Other Highways Issues

Network Rail to be contacted regarding the bent “Station Approach” sign along with information in respect of the height barrier. Cllr Adam had cleared vegetation from the entrance to allow easier access for pedestrians.

Salt Bin Assessment Form

The Clerk had obtained an assessment form and had completed to the best of her knowledge. Cllrs requested that Kent Highways be contacted regarding what space is required if sited on footways. Locations discussed were outside the primary school/Memorial Hall; end of Plantation Lane and near Highwood Green/The Parsonage. On receipt of a response from Kent Highways Cllrs would discuss again.

Gateway – Thorn Road

The Clerk had received information of the location for a Gateway in Thorn Road which had been circulated to Cllrs and shared on screen. Cllrs agreed location and the Clerk would contact Kent Highways to proceed.

Public Transport

Cllr Adam reported that South Eastern had updated its website during the meeting for the new timetable to take effect from 16th May. However, he was unsure as to whether the full timetable had been reinstated.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.17pm

As this was Cllr Mannington's last meeting Cllr Tippen thanked her for chairing the meetings over the past two years.

Date:

Signed:

Chairman

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