



MINUTES AGREED AT MEETING HELD ON 9TH JUNE 2020 BUT NOT SIGNED

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL
ON 26TH MAY 2020 COMMENCING AT 7.30PM**

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak all Parish Council meetings will be held remotely via Zoom virtual conferencing until further notice.

200/20 PRESENT

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

201/20 APOLOGIES

Cllrs Brown and Robertson had given their apologies

202/20 APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th May 2020 were agreed but would be signed at the next available meeting when the Full Council convenes in person.

203/20 COUNCILLORS INFORMATION

Register of Interest

There were no changes to Cllrs Registers of Interest

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Boswell declared an interest in 206/20 as resident of neighbouring property to Southons Field. Cllr Jones declared an interest in 206/20 as resident of neighbouring property to the playing field. Cllrs Mannington, Newton and Tippen declared an interest in item 209/20 as Trustees of Marden Community CIO.

Granting of Dispensation

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

204/20 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members of the public wished to speak on item 207/20.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for the following item

PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public did not raise any questions within the public forum.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting for the remainder of the agenda

205/20 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk had circulated her report on the last two weeks which included an update on the Marden Assistance Group, response from the External Auditor regarding Marden Parish Council being classed as an intermediate council for auditing purposes and items relating to staffing. Cllrs noted the content and no questions were raised.

206/20 AMENITIES

Update on any open space issues (Southons Field, Playing Field or Cemetery)

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk had met to walk around Southons Field and Playing Field. The caretakers to do list had been reviewed and updated – this would be circulated to Cllrs on the Amenities Committee and forwarded to both the village and cemetery caretakers. Majority of Rookery Path had been strimmed back 1m and looks better now.

Lucks Way / Community Garden / Allotments

Three members of the public wished to raise some questions and the Chairman asked them to present these before Cllrs would comment (see Appendix A).

Following the questions and answers Cllr Adam summarised three aspects:

Redrow may place covenants and/or conditions on the site;

The land may need a change of use under planning to split allotments and community garden.

MBC is being approached as to whether this is required;

Legal position: occupier of a plot must grow produce (fruit/veg) for at least 50% for own use.

Cannot be used for commercial purposes.

Items to consider:

What basis would the community garden occupy – (a) on land outside of a statutory allotment site; or (b) seeking to use an allotment plot as a community garden.

Disused allotments can be used for other purposes (ie community garden) however this would have to be vacated if someone wanted an allotment

Actions to be taken:

Allotment Group to produce a management plan and to provide details of other sites which have split the allotments

MPC: to contact other areas who have managed to split a site (ie how set up? Any issues?);

contact Redrow on any update

Cllr Adam also recommended reading the document “Growing In the Community” for further advice.

A further meeting would be arranged as soon as possible when people could meet in person.

Play Scheme

Schools were making plans to return and were able to take advice from Government and Kent County Council. However, it was a concern as to how social distancing could be achieved during play scheme if children were unable to be outside. With this in mind, and after a difficult decision, it was agreed that the 2020 Summer Play Scheme would not go ahead.

Development Open Spaces and Development Management Companies

Following the discussion at the last meeting the Clerk had contacted HML Group (management company of The Parsonage). However, the contact at HML had left so took a few days to find the correct person. On receipt of a response it transpires that not all the site had been transferred over from Redrow and therefore an email had been sent to Redrow. A response had not yet been received. The Clerk still to contact Trinity Estates (Windsor Meadow).

Public Conveniences

MBC has advised that their public conveniences remain closed. Therefore, Cllrs agreed to keep the toilets closed under advice received from Government/MBC.

Fingerposts

An update had been circulated by the Deputy Clerk which was noted. However, it was agreed to look at what is required individually on all the fingerposts, both cast iron and wooden ones, and to specify what is needed for each post in the Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr Turner agreed to visit all the sites and photograph the posts and view other junctions which might benefit from more traditional signage. Cllr Turner would also contact East Peckham Parish Council who had replaced several of their signs with wooden ones.

Other Amenities Issues to report

No other issues reported

207/20 PLANNING**Decisions**

20/500346/FULL – Mountain Farmhouse, Marden Road: installation of open-air swimming pool – Granted

20/500945/MOD106 – Great Thorn Farm, Marden Thorn: modification of planning obligation under reference MA/04/1728 – planning obligation discharged

20/501037/FULL – Pond Oast, Tanner Farm, Goudhurst Road: changes to previously proposed and agreed garage – Granted

20/501531/PNEXT – Khernfields Farmhouse, Tilden Lane: prior notification for a proposed single storey rear extension – planning permission is required

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) / Infrastructure Spend Plan (ISP)

The Clerk reported that two planning applications which had been approved were CIL Liable and Cllrs proposed, and agreed, that all CIL money obtained by Maidstone Borough Council on these, and future, applications, would be received by Marden Parish Council and banked into the capital account held. Cllrs discussed the proposals by Cllr Adam regarding information provided in the ISP (currently in draft format). Any CIL money received would be used, or go towards, projects outlined in this document.

Other Planning Issues to report

There were no other planning issues to report

208/20 FINANCE**Invoices for payment**

Previously circulated to Cllrs prior to meeting

Electronic Payments

Rams Hill – Mower repair/trimmer cord £54.00

Pitney Bowes – Franking Machine Rental £15.54

Viking – Caretaker masks/sanitiser £61.97

Marden Business Forum – annual membership £26.00

Total: £157.51

Invoices were agreed and Cllrs Newton and Stevens would authorise.

Purchase of a new mower

The Cemetery caretaker has a backup mower which is several years old. At the last service it was recommended that it would not be cost effective to keep repairing it. Cllrs therefore agreed to purchase an Atco mower at a cost of £459 from Rams Hill Mowers. The Clerk would contact Rams Hill to ask if the old mower could be part-exchanged for spares.

The Chairman was asked to be visible by video link for the following three items to enable Cllrs to witness the signing of the documents.

Signing of the End of Year Balance Sheet

This had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The document was agreed and signed by the Chairman. It would be signed by the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, on return.

External Audit

Annual Return circulated to Cllrs and once agreed would be advertised on website and notice boards. Hard copy of the documents had been delivered to the Chairman in readiness of signing.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

The following questions to be asked of Cllrs for a response of Yes/No:

We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements

We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a

significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statement.

Cllrs answered yes to all the above statements. The Chairman duly signed, and this was witnessed by all in attendance. The Clerk would sign on its return.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20

Signed by the Clerk prior to the meeting and previously circulated.

Cllrs agreed the content and the Chairman duly signed and witnessed by Cllrs.

Signing of the Statement of Internal Control

The document had been circulated to Cllrs and agreed at meeting held on 12th May. The Chairman duly signed and witnessed by Cllrs.

209/20 OTHER URGENT PARISH MATTERS:

For Decision

Parish Council Insurance renewal

Came & Company had provided three quotes but no other quotes had been able to be obtained. It was therefore proposed, and agreed, that Marden PC would accept the quote from Hiscox Insurance for a three-year term.

Marden Community Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Cllr Tippen updated the meeting following the amalgamation of The Allens & Maplesden and Victory Fund Charities. The CIO group of Trustees asked Marden PC if a page could be dedicated to them on the Parish Council website. Following discussion this was agreed as this was a charity that Marden PC had a role in to provide trustees as a requirement of the charity's constitution.

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr Adam had circulated additional information of some of the items listed in the HIP and these were agreed. Cllr Tippen had put forward proposals as to how to take the document forward and requested that all Cllrs contribute to the wording to make it clearer as to what is required for each item, how to define the prioritisation and that the additional information be used as an Appendix. Cllr Boswell asked that the bell bollards at the junction of Maidstone Road and High Street be added to the HIP.

Cllrs Adam, Boswell, Tippen and Turner, together with the Clerk, agreed to meet, virtually, on 2nd June to discuss the priority criteria.

Newsletter

Cllrs agreed for a hard copy edition of the Summer newsletter. If the resident who usually delivers the newsletter is unable to do so then Cllrs would assist.

Other Issues

The Government had made suggestions as to how to facilitate social distancing and Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and provided details of signage. As the primary school was due to return next week concern was raised that some of the pavements were not wide enough for social distancing. Cllrs agreed that pedestrian signage, to the cost of £200, be purchased for use outside the Memorial Hall/Primary School and library. The Clerk would contact the primary school to ask if the Parish Council could help in any other way.

For Information

Cllr Adam had provided a short paragraph on the current situation on public transport which had been put onto the Parish Council Facebook page and would also be placed in the newsletter. He agreed to provide an update as and when the situation changed.

The Clerk had reported to Kent Highways the high number of yellow developer signs around the parish. It was found that some had been erected without Kent Highways knowledge and therefore the Parish Council had been given permission to remove those that did not have a reference on the back. The caretaker would be asked if he could remove these but if unsafe to do so Kent Highways would be informed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.28pm

Date:

Signed:

Cllr Lesley Mannington

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The next meeting of the Full Council will be held on 9th June 2020

Council Meeting
26th May 2020
Appendix A

Item 206/20 - Allotments

Questions raised by members of the public:

Will the allotments proposed for Highwood Green deemed to be statutory or temporary as per the Allotments Act 1925?

MPC Response: It is the presumption that they will be statutory allotments.

What is being done to prevent Redrow from reclaiming the allotment site if deemed temporary?

MPC Response: Marden PC would be seeking to acquire the land as freehold.

Section 22 of the Small Holding and Allotment Act 1908 states that allotments should be wholly, or mainly, cultivated by the occupier for production of vegetable and fruit crops for consumption by himself or family. This precludes trading the produce, but it does not preclude other activities. Therefore, what is the reason for not allowing incorporation of the community garden on the same site?

MPC Response: The decision to not include the community garden in this site is not agreed yet. MPC were looking at options available.

Living Memories Café and Working to Make Marden a Dementia Friendly Community, as interested parties, are very concerned that it will be impossible to fund a community garden at Lucks Way without financial input from Redrow which is separate from the developer's site. How does the Parish Council propose the village to fund a separate space?

MPC Response: There is concern that there is uncertainty on the funding being made available from Redrow regarding the allotment site especially in the current climate so would possibly need to seek other funding.

We are very keen to promote inclusion of people living with dementia and their carers who live in Marden in this allotment project, is there any way in which you would reconsider please?

MPC Response: Agreed. Felt that Lucks Way would also be an ideal location as more central to the village and easily accessible.

Why was the Allotment Group not consulted when discussing this move of the Community Garden? A lot of work had already gone into the community garden area of the Highwood Green site and had discussed with Maidstone Borough Council Open Spaces Officer that this could be achieved.

MPC Response: Asked for proposals of how the allotments and community garden were to be managed together with providing details of other areas where the sites had been split.