Milton-under-Wychwood Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 7.30pm

Minutes

Present:
Councillor Rod Blackman (RB)
District Councillor Jeff Haine (JH)
Councillor John Pratt (JP)
Councillor Peter Rawlins (PR)
Chairman Graham Smith (GS)
Councillor Chris Trotman (CT)
Councillor Pat Ward (PW)

County Councillor Liz Leffman (LL)

Minutes taken by: Mrs L. Jacques (LJ)
8 MOP

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Vice-Chairman Glynn Allcock (GA)

2. **Declaration of Interests**
   JH - Village Hall & Planning
   GS & JP Wild Garden

3. **Proposal to approve the minutes of the June meeting**
   Proposed by PR, seconded JP, all in favour

4. **Matters arising from the June meeting**

4.1. Tennis net purchase update – PR confirmed the tennis net has arrived. The PC will now need to research the best options for wheels.
4.2. Caloo update re spraying the path to reduce weed growth – This has not been completed as yet. GA to chase Caloo.
LJ to confirm if the weed spraying has been completed by CWC.
4.3. Updated Terms of Reference for Planning Sub-Group. PW to update TOR and send to GS for circulation.
4.4. Bus Shelter Improvements – MUW volunteers have been passed the task and will be scheduling it shortly. CT dealing.
4.5. Neighbourhood Plan referendum result and subsequent actions – See agenda item 11.1.
4.6. Parish Clerk/RFO recruitment – No applications received for Clerk role. See Agenda item 6 for RFO role.
4.7. MARC assets to be removed from PC – CT confirmed these have been removed.
4.8. Risk register update – GS has spoken with GA. GA to update.
4.9. Installation of memorial benches – The benches are now in place and being used. GS will be applying a further coat of teak oil once there has been a long enough break in the rain.

4.10. Update on ice cream sales on the Village Green – PR confirmed the trader has Public Liability but has not yet attended.

4.11. Update on Church wall – CT has an upcoming meeting with the architect and will update the PC with the outcome.

5. **Public session for all items related to this Agenda**
None

6. **Proposal for appointment of Chris Trotman as Responsible Finance Officer, RFO (CT/GS)**
CT left the room for this item. Following the document circulated prior to PC, PW proposed appointing CT as RFO.
JH seconded.
All in favour**.**

7. **To receive the following reports:**

7.1. **Chairman's report (GS**) – LJ has now handed over the Clerk role to GS.
GS stated the road sign that was knocked over is being repaired. The offending vehicle driver has offered to repair and replace. OCC are in agreement of this. This will be repaired weekend of 22nd July.

7.2. District Councillor's report (JH)
JH congratulated the NPSG for succeeding in securing the NHP. This will be proved in future planning applications for Milton-under-Wychwood.

7.3. County Councillor's report (LL)

- LL confirmed she had been able to give John Witts a donation for the food bank appeal from her Councillor Priority Fund. LL confirmed she is happy to consider requests for donations where appropriate.
- OCC supported the 'cost of living' event that was held in the Wychwoods recently.
- £2.5million has been made available from the Council for those who are struggling with the cost of living and Council Tax payments.
- The price cap for Stagecoach buses will be continuing until October. This includes the X9 bus.
- OCC recently sought permission from the Government for the lane rental scheme. Utility companies will now have to confirm their requirements, pay a fee for digging up any highways, ensure they stick to the timetable and pay a hefty fee for over-running on projects.
- OCC are currently trialling using recycled material (old tyres and plastic) for filling in potholes.
- Regarding the recent road works and repairs near Kingham station, this caused many problems for those trying to access the station. It has now been agreed that any future work carried out in the area will be done at night time so the road does not remain closed during the day.
- Fees for disposing of DIY waste are to be abolished. Recycling centres will now open late on a Thursday evening.
- OCC has recently had an OFSTED inspection of its special needs programme – a report will be published shortly
- LL confirmed that the Shipton Road through MUW is scheduled for repair in 2023/24.

CT requested additional 20mph road signs near to Frog Lane/Green Lane due to the high footfall of school children and the danger of crossing that area of road. LL will look in to this.

8. **S106 Update (GA)**

8.1. – GS advised that GA is completing an application form for the arts project funding for the S 106 linked to the St Judes development

9. **Village Green (PR/JH)**

9.1. Update on play area/toddler swing improvements
GA and PR met with 'Sovereign' and received a quote for rubber mulch/ wet pour under the toddler equipment at a cost of £21K and £30K respectively. JH noted that given the likely life of the equipment it would make more sense to have a temporary repair now and a full repair when the equipment is replaced. PR advised that GA will provide a briefing note for the September meeting. PR suggested in the meantime the PC meet at the toddler play area to talk through options.

9.2. Update on tennis net wheels solution – in progress – no further update.

9.3. JH stated the Hartwells fair had a difficult time with the rainy weather. GS raised two points on behalf of GA, namely what fee does the PC receive from the fair, and do they have public liability insurance. JH confirmed they have provided a donation of £50 to the PC for the village green use. In his view that is enough and it shouldn't be changed, CT agreed. JH confirmed that the fair has requisite insurance.

10. **Allotment rent increase (PR) – *This item is for PC information only and any decisions on rent will be handled via the separate charities.*** PR is proposing an increase of £2.00 a year (from £12.00 to £14.00) to the Welfare Trust allotments as a result of the increase in water prices and other costs. Tenants need 12 months' notice and as such this proposal is being raised now so that it is timely and can be coordinated with MARC. CT stated that MARC tenants should be consulted before a decision is made.
PR will update the September PC meeting.

11. **Planning (PW/PR/JP)**
Neighbourhood Plan (NP): The public Referendum was conducted by WODC on 22nd June 2023. Of the electorate of 1490, 273 voted of whom 251 voted to adopt the NP and 22 against, i.e. a majority of 92% of votes in favour. The NP was 'made' by WODC on 26th June 2023. Planning applications must now be decided by WODC with reference to the Policies of the made NP. Hard copies of the made NP will be made available to the members of the Planning sub-committee and to the Wychwood library (on loan). The NP took six years to develop. It was budgeted at £19,000. A total of £9,900 was provided by grants from central Government. The PC had budgeted £9,000 from its own funds but needed to use only £7,500, i.e. some £1,500 less than the initial budgeted amount.
JP proposed that four hard copies of the made NP and two hard copies of the appendices are printed.
CT seconded
All in favour

11.1.23/01584/FUL Groves workshop roof
The colour of the roof is now white and used to be dark blue. PW states it is the roof side that faces the houses that should be returned back to their original colour. PW stated he recommend the PC object the application and recommend the roof is painted in the original colour.
PR seconded
All in favour (JH non-voting)

11.2.23/01543/S73 High Fields, Church Road

PW recommended the PC object to the change of layout. The amendment would improve access to the field behind and leaves the option open for further planning applications in the field. This also invades privacy of current houses.
Referring to the NHP the planning application breaches the current guidelines.
PW recommended objecting to the current application.
PR seconded
All in favour (JH non-voting)

11.3.23/01545/HHD The Old Bakery 47 High Street
PW could not see a problem regarding the application and recommended no objection with a cautionary note that rooflights should not be considered.
PR seconded
All in favour (JH non-voting)
23/01546/LBC The Old Bakery 47 High Street – as above.

11.4.23/01677/FUL Dashwood House
Two retail units have been removed and the property made in to one residential house. Referring to the NHP and concern regarding the reduction of business units in the village, the PC should not support this change of use as it goes against the recently adopted NHP.
Neighbours have also objected to the recent extension.
PR stated he contacted WODC in February bringing this recent development to their attention and the development going ahead regardless of planning approval should not be supported.
PW recommended objection.
PR seconded
All in favour (JH non-voting)

12. **Discretionary Donations (S137) (JP)**
12.1.S137 Regular payments history- regular annual donations are approximately £6,000 including £4,600 paid to the Wychwood library.

12.2.Friends of Wychwood Library donation application – Following the circulated application CT proposed agreeing a donation of £250 as the usual income stream has been not possible due to no village fete the last two years.
PR seconded but stated that he would like to ensure that both Shipton and Ascott follow suit.
All in favour
CT will update the Charity.

12.3.Wychwood Baptist Church Life Larder – following the request for funding at the June PC meeting, and an update on the Church finances at this meeting, JP proposed a grant of £3,000, to be provided in nine equal monthly amounts of £333.33 up to 31/03/2024, subject to receiving quarterly statements commencing 30/09/2023 showing total donations received for the Life Larder and spend to date.
PW seconded
All in favour
JP requested a statement of Life Larder spend every three months.

13. **Accounts (CT)**
13.1.Proposal to approve the June Receipts, Payments and End of Month bank reconciliation PR proposed
RB seconded

All in favour

13.2. Proposal to approve Q1 Statement
Following recommendations by the internal auditor it was recommended that RB (non Fin-Com) had volunteered to review the accounts and bank statements to ensure they correlate and sign accordingly.
JH proposed approving the Q1 statement.
PR seconded
All in favour

14. Review of changes to Financial Regulations (CT)

14.1. Proposal:- To accept changes to Financial Regulations to approve the use of a debit card and amended online banking arrangements, following the internal review and CT recommendations.
JP proposed
PR seconded
All in favour

15. Cashbook updates (CT)

Following the internal Auditor's recommendations CT can confirm on behalf of the PC that:

15.1.1. Approved documents have adoption details on front sheet
15.1.2. All orders are approved or ordered by RFO
15.1.3. Official PC authorisation stamp has been obtained.
15.1.4. RB has reviewed the Cashbook.
15.1.5. All 'brought forward' and 'carried forward' are now clearly shown on Cashbook.
15.1.6. Trust Assets to be removed.
15.1.7. Documents on PC website
15.1.8. Also need to draw up a list of regular payments and ensure that the precept amount is recorded in the PC minutes.

CT will be speaking with the current web site provider to ensure current glitches are remedied.

A discussion was had with regards to to the current MSA ownership and assets. This will carry on and the outcome will be brought to the September PC meeting.

16. Aide Memoire for using our Cashbook (CT)

16.1. CT circulated the draft document to the PC prior to the PC meeting and this will be confirmed when CT has produced a final draft.

17. **Banking Update (CT)**

17.1. The initial debit card application was unsuccessful. A second application will be required due to the time expiration. CT will deal.
17.2. The Clerk's access to HSBC banking has been removed.
17.3. CT and JP only have access to bank accounts. CT proposed adding GS to the HSBC Councillor access.
PW seconded
All in favour

18. **Emergency Plan Update (GA/GS) –** Amendments have been made, GA to print revised version.

19. **Village Green Memorial Bench Installation, Replacement and Policy (GS)**

19.1. Following the document circulated by GS stating there are currently 11 benches on the Village Green (excluding picnic benches), a discussion was had regarding ongoing maintenance and a right to remove any benches which fall beyond repair.
JH stated that the PC is lawfully responsible for the benches. GS suggested a list of seats would be required and maintenance of the benches should be undertaken by the PC for H&S and aesthetic reasons.
CT reminded the PC of further benches in the burial ground and woodland walk.
Regarding proposal point 8, JP requested the use of memorial plaques be removed.
Documentation to be further amended and circulated by GS.

20. **Village Green Ownership (GS) –** GS advised that he has consulted a lawyer specialising in charity law so that the respective roles and responsibilities of the Parish Council and the charitable trust can be established. So far it has been confirmed that the recreation ground is not listed in the land registry currently. A request has been made to the Charity Commissioners for more information about the charitable trust. This work is ongoing.

21. **Correspondence (GS)**

21.1. Elm Grove – following an email from a MOP querying ownership of the trees and shrubs at the entrance to Elm Grove, CT confirmed this is owned by the PC. PR will contact Kevin Grant regarding maintenance of the shrubs.

21.2. Church Meadow – Following a further complaint regarding lack of maintenance to the area, JH stated he will contact Laserarch properties to reach a solution.
PR will speak to Kevin Grant for a quote on maintenance to the area.

22. Public session for non-agenda items

MOP queried the current Parish Council Standing Orders Point 13 regarding Code of Conduct. CT will review.

23. AOB

- JP stated the first draft of the letter to Thames Water has been completed and is currently being reviewed by Shipton and Ascott UWPC.
- JP received a circulatory from WODC regarding Springwatch.
- JP stated that CFO had asked him to write a short testimonial regarding their service contract for MUW.
- PW stated Richard Reed has donated 18 Oak Trees for the eco area along with 2 Horse Chestnut Trees for Autumn planting and GS will send a letter of thanks.

- RB has received complaints regarding the state of the Cemetery. CT confirmed this was due to a request from the Church who were creating a 'Wilding Effect'. Kevin Grant was asked not to cut the grass. A second complaint concerned the state of the new cemetery, that last year was excellent and this year a disgrace. CT to investigate with the contractor.

- Regarding a grave which has not yet sunk, RB will ask KGS to look in to this. CT will request KGS deal with any work required.

- GS noted that MR, lengthsperson, has cleared up several bottles of nitrous oxide near the table tennis table.

- CT advised that DvdP has requested replacement batteries for x3 defibrillators.

- CT, RFO, has not yet received payment from Amelia Harling reference the tree work carried out.

Meeting closed 21.15hrs