

09/23-24

Much Marcle Parish Council Meeting
Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on
Wednesday 10th May 2023
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllr E. Thomas (in the Chair) and Cllrs M Barber-Starkey; T Weston; S. Cotton; J. Baldwin; A. Hope; F. Powell; D. Griffiths

In attendance: 2 members of the public; Clerk Rachel Freestone;

1. Election of Chairman 2023/24:

Cllr Elliott Thomas opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Griffiths. He confirmed that he would step down as chairman. He was thanked for his time as Acting Chair and for all his work over the last year in particular the jubilee celebrations.

The Clerk requested nominations for the position of Chair. Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey was proposed and seconded, and duly elected. Cllr Barber-Starkey signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman 2023/24:

Cllr Barber-Starkey requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Cllr Alison Hope was proposed and seconded, and duly elected. Cllr Hope signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies had been received from Mr Barry Durkin and Mr Jim Edwards.

1 member of the public left.

4. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation:

There were none.

5. Councillor Forms:

5.1 Councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office and returned them to the Clerk.

5.2 Councillors were reminded to return their completed Register of Interest forms within 28 days and to provide a copy for the Clerk to retain. They were also reminded to return their Election costs form within 28 days.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meetings:

Members considered the minutes of the Parish Meeting on 7th March 2023 and the Extra meetings held on the 6th April and 12th April 2023.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record of the meetings. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

10/23-24

7. Public Participation:

There was none.

8. Reports:

Report from Ward Councillor Barry Durkin: In his absence there was no report.

9. To note the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2022-23:

Noted.

10. To (re)adopt Standing Orders noting amendments to section 18 as per the April 2022 update and to policy numbers 3s and 8a ‘that voting may take place by paper ballot, for appropriate actions such as co-option of a councillor.’ **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt the amendments as per the April 2022 update and to amend and adopt policy numbers 3s and 8a.

11. Parish Council Vacancy:

The clerk advised that one expression of interest had been received. Co-option of Mr Edward Jefferson was proposed and seconded and agreed by all. Mr Jefferson was welcomed by all and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and returned to the Clerk. He was reminded to return his Register of Interest Form within 28 days.

12. To Review the Following Policies for Much Marcle Parish Council:

12.1 Code of Conduct. **It was RESOLVED:** to re-adopt the policy for 2023-24

12.2 Financial Regulations. **It was RESOLVED:** to re-adopt the policy for 2023-24

12.3 Risk Register, Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting pending review by the Finance Working Group.

12.4 Risk Management Policy: **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting pending review by the Finance Working Group.

12.5 Planning Policy: **It was RESOLVED:** to approve with an amendment to point 4 that planning application notifications be placed on the website rather than the noticeboard.

12.6 Reserves Policy: **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting pending review by the Finance Working Group.

12.7 Asset Register: Members noted the amendment to the nominal value of assets to £1 rather than £0 as per the internal auditor report. Members considered a plan to assess Assets twice yearly and to report on any action required. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Asset Register for 2023-24 with the Planning Working Group responsible for Asset checks to be completed and reported at Parish Council Meetings annually in January and July.

12.8 **It was RESOLVED:** to continue to comply with the transparency code.

12.9 The Clerk reminded members of the self-disqualification law.

13. Finance:

13.1 Members received a financial report noting the combined 2022/2023 year end balance of £19266.57. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the report.

13.2 The Clerk reported that the latest bank statement from Lloyds Bank was to the 21st April 2023 and the finance report had been completed with these figures. Members received a

11/23-24

financial report to the 21st April 2023 noting the combined balance of £24192.35. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the report.

- 13.3 Internal Auditor's Report: Members considered the final internal audit report, noting 5 areas of non-compliance with the requirements of governance and accountability. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Internal Auditor's Report.
- 13.4 Annual Governance Statement: Members considered each of the assertions within the Governance Statement and were satisfied that 5 could be agreed but that 3 could not. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Governance Statement for 2022/2023.
- 13.5 Annual Return Accounting Statements: Members considered the Accounting Statement. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Accounting Statement for 2022/23.
- 13.6 External Audit Exemption: Members considered the exemption. **It was RESOLVED:** to confirm eligibility to exemption, the Chair signed the Certificate of Exemption. The Clerk to return the form to PKF Littlejohn.
- 13.7 To appoint an internal auditor for 2023/2024: **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint HALC as Internal Auditor for 2023/2024.
- 13.8 Members considered the payments and receipts method of accounting. **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt this method for 2023/2024.
- 13.9 Members considered Regular Payments. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the annual direct debit to ICO.
- 13.10 Members considered Bank Signatories. **It was RESOLVED:** for the Clerk to have access to the account and submit payments. Members agreed to have 4 signatories on the account to include the Cllrs on the Finance Working Group and one other. Item deferred to 14.1.
- 13.11 Members considered the storage of the Deeds. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to a later meeting once Unity Bank account in place and Lloyds Bank account closed.
- 13.12 Members considered the Clerk's delegated authority to make payments between meetings as per Financial Regulations section 4. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve delegated authority to the Clerk.
- 13.13 Members considered the Clerks claim for an additional 2 hours work in March. Members noted the additional working hours completed in April and May. The clerk reported that the summer hours should be quieter and the hours worked pro-rata. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the claim and to review the Clerks paid hours during the meeting in September.
- 13.14 **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the following invoices for payment:
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|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Clerk's salary April | |
| Clerk's Expenses April/May | £94.48 |
| PATA UK, Payroll Support Annual Fee | £103.20 |
- The Clerk reported that two further invoices had been received following the Agenda and due to the next meeting being in July requested that they be considered. Members considered:
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|---|---------|
| HALC Annual Internal Audit Fee | £264.00 |
| Much Marcle Memorial Hall, Hall Hire 12.04.23 | £25.00 |
- It was RESOLVED:** to approve payment of the additional two invoices.
- 13.15 The Clerk reported that no payments had been made between meetings.

12/23-24

- 13.16 The Clerk reported that the first receipt of the Precept for 2023/2024 had been received. Income of £4960.00 was noted.

14. To appoint Members to serve on Working Groups:

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Councillors as follows:

1. Finance Group: Cllrs Mike Barber-Starkey, Alison Hope, Edward Jefferson with Rachel Freestone (RFO). **It was RESOLVED:** that the Finance Group and Cllr Julian Baldwin to be bank signatories.
2. Planning Group: Cllrs Edward Jefferson, Julian Baldwin, Elliott Thomas, Tim Weston and David Griffiths.
3. Highways Group: Cllrs Frank Powell and David Griffiths. Cllr Powell was thanked for all his work during the last term.
4. Footpaths Group: Cllrs Julian Baldwin, David Griffiths and Simon Cotton. The Footpath Officer, yet to be confirmed and deferred to the next meeting, to report to the Footpaths Group.
5. Environment and Community Group: Cllrs Simon Cotton, Tim Weston, Elliott Thomas and Mike Barker-Starkey.

15. To Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies:

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Julian Baldwin as the Parish Council Representative to Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

16. Planning:

- 16.1 Members considered the Clerk's delegated authority to respond to planning queries between meetings. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Clerk's delegated authority to respond.
- 16.2 The Clerk reported that no planning decisions had been made since the last meeting. The Clerk reported that two planning applications had been received and shared. **It was RESOLVED:** for the Planning Working Group to convene to review the two applications.

17. To receive a Report from Much Marcle Memorial Hall:

Members received a brief report that the recent party to celebrate the Coronation had been a success with almost 100 people in attendance.

18. To receive Reports from Highways and Footpath Groups:

- 18.1 Highways, there was none.
- 18.2 Footpaths, there was none.

19. To Consider Meetings for 2023/2024:

Members considered dates for the meetings to be held in 2023/2024: **It was RESOLVED:** to arrange meetings in 2023 on the 19th July, 13th September, 8th November and in 2024 on the 10th January and 13th March.

13/23-.24

20. Correspondence:

Members considered the email received from the Locality Liaison Coordinator regarding verge cutting. **It was RESOLVED:** to request 2 cuts to the verges due to road safety. The Clerk to respond to Balfour Beatty prior to the 12th May.

The Clerk reported that a questionnaire had been received from the Insurers to assess whether our insurance cover meets needs. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to complete and return the form and defer a review of insurance to the next meeting.

21. To Consider Agenda Items for the meeting to be held on the 19th July:

Assets check.

Risk Register, Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls

Risk Management Policy

Reserves Policy

Insurance review

22. Next Meeting: It was NOTED that the next meeting of Much Marcle Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19th July 2023 in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Meeting Closed at 9pm

Signed... *M Barber-Starkey*

Dated: 19.07.2023

Chairman