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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held
Wednesday, 8th January
7.30pm in Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs Mike Barber-Starkey (In the Chair); A Hope; J Baldwin; E Jefferson; T Weston; E Thomas; F Powell; S Cotton; D Griffiths

In attendance: Rachel Freestone - Clerk
David Beckett – Footpath Officer
Jim Edwards – Footpath Officer

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1. To receive and accept apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Ward Member Barry Durkin.

2. To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items:

There were none.

3. Open Session:

a. To receive a report from the Ward Councillor:

In his absence there was none. The recent Ward Report will be added to the website.

b. To receive representations from the public:

A member of the public referred to the January agenda and flooding issues within the parish. Members were asked whether a local flooding report had been submitted to Ward Member Durkin? Cllr Barber-Starkey confirmed that it had and that members wish to put a working group together to address the issues. The member of the public added that areas vulnerable to flooding have changed over the years. There is a ditch full of debris and feels a danger to traffic. Cllr Powell confirmed that this ditch had been reported but the response from Highways had been that no action was required.

4. Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 13th November 2024. It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true record. They were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Much Marcle Memorial Hall:

a. To receive a report from the parish council representative:

Cllr Baldwin reported that the replacement windows are now in situ. A hole in the roof had been found which needs addressing. The MMMH accounts are sound but more bookings would be appreciated. There will be Burns Night Event on 24th January at the Hall.

6. Highways:

a. Cllr Barber-Starkey reported on the progress of the Community Speedwatch Group following the install of the data boxes. An update had been received from PCSO Kysow that the second data recording box would be installed in the coming week. *A member of the public informed members that a speed data box had been installed that day pointing towards Ross-on-Wye.* Cllr Barber-Starkey informed that the boxes are recording data to support a potential Community Speedwatch Group. Volunteers have signed up already to help and their details have been sent to PCSO Kysow. Now waiting for the data results to be collated.

b. To receive an update on SIDS. Cllr Powell informed members that he had obtained a quote from Westcotec and is waiting for a further one. A basic mobile unit would cost approx. £2980 and the ones that change colour around £3480. Looking at battery operated as are supplied with two batteries which last approx. 2 months each. Would need to install poles in various places. Cllr Barber-Starkey added that Highways need to be involved. *A member asked if they are a suitable deterrent?* It was felt they are. Solar powered units are

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more expensive. Funding may become available to support the purchase in April. **It was RESOLVED:** Clerk to contact Highways and Ward Member Durkin and further quotes to be obtained. Aim to be in a position to act if and when funding becomes available.

- c. To consider any other matters arising from the Highways Working Group:
Cllr Powell continues to report pot holes and had noticed a lot on the ridgeline. Pot holes are increasing following the recent cold weather. There have been several resident reports on 'Fix my Street.'

7. Footpaths:

- a. Footpath Officer Jim Edwards provided a report on the Footpath Regeneration Project, copy attached. Jim Edwards followed his report with a formal notice of resignation from the post for which he has given 8 years of service. Cllr Barber – Starkey thanked him on behalf of all members and the community for an amazing job which has had an enormous impact, he would be missed. **Action:** Clerk to inform HCC of his resignation.
Footpath Officer David Beckett added that the situation continues to be frustrating not helped by absences due to annual leave. There had been a query regarding invoicing for the abutments with the funds coming from the Lottery. The terms and conditions have been checked and it is ok to pay for these from the Lottery funds. Been informed that the bridges are in order phase but need the abutments in place prior to their receipt and need a date from HCC.
- b. Cllr Barber-Starkey informed members that a meeting was arranged for Friday 10th January with Forest of Dean District Cllr Gill Kilmurray to discuss the expansion of the Daffodil Walks and the proposed Buses4us shuttle bus route over the Daffodil Weekends.

8. Planning:

- a. Members commented on the following Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
- 242372 Holmleigh, Much Marcle. Proposed alteration and part conversion of existing outbuildings.
Cllr Barber-Starkey informed members that he had spoken with the planning officer. Planning agree that the drawings are not correct and they have asked for changes. If approved there will likely be a number of conditions. **It was RESOLVED:** no further comment required from MMPC.
- b. Members NOTED that there was no Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers.
- c. Members NOTED the following planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
- 242163 Hill Cottage, construction timber frame barn. APPROVED with conditions.
 - 242508 The Hawthorns Birch Tree – CAN PROCEED
- d. Members NOTED the new National Planning Policy Framework. Cllr Barber-Starkey commented that HCC had been proactive sending the framework (which came out and became law on the 12th December 2024) to parish councils. There will be a large increase of housing required over and above the current HCC planning policy. He added that any NDP over 5 years old is irrelevant. Planning Policy is in the control of the planning officer. There are no longer settlement boundaries. MMPC may see an increase in interest in Much Marcle as have a pub, school, café, potential shop, jobs etc and that is where housing is required. *A member asked if HCC will need to let us know housing requirements?* HCC having to rework their own policy and requirements. A member added that biodiversity implications still apply.

9. Assets:

- a. Cllr Baldwin confirmed that the latest defibrillator checks reported to The Circuit were in order.

10. Environment and Community:

- a. Cllr Baldwin informed members that the damage to the steps and sign had been repaired satisfactorily by the Hills Ford Stages Rally.
- b. Members considered a Community Litter Pick. **It was RESOLVED:** the litter pick to take place on Saturday, March 29th. More bags and bag holders are needed with collection of the refuse to be from Walwyn Court near the Dymock bus stop. **Action:** Clerk to contact Balfour Beatty.
Members also commented on the Parish Wish list. The key items are SIDS and the possibility of play equipment or a small paddle court if space allows on the Bartons.

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11. Finance

- a. Members NOTED the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for November and December 2024. Cllr Baldwin as a non bank signatory duly checked and signed the bank statements, invoices and bank reconciliation as a true record.
- b. Members considered the Budget versus Actuals to December 31st 2024 with no areas of concern. It was NOTED that there are still available funds for future projects.
- c. Members considered the Budget for 2025/26 following the period of public consultation. The Clerk confirmed that no questions or comments had been received. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the budget for 2025/26.
- d. Members considered the Precept for 2025/26. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the precept at £11,350, the Clerk to inform HCC.
- e. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the following invoice for payment:
- Clerk's Expenses Microsoft Licence and printer ink £43.09net/£51.71gr
- f. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following regular payments made between meetings:
- Clerk Salary November As per contract
 - Unity Bank Service Charges 30.09.24; 31.10.24, 30.11.24 and 31.12.24
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payments made between meetings:
- First Aid Courses Footpath Officers x 2 £190
 - PATA addl payroll cost £15
 - Website Annual Service Charge £411.37
 - HALC addl sum to underpayment of 24/25 annual charge £26.43net/£31.72gross
- h. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payments made from the Awards for All Footpath Grant:
- Clerk Expenses Screwfix fixings for signs £16.34net/£19.60gross
 - Signworx – plaques for gates £144net/£172.80gross
- i. Members NOTED the income received:
- Credit Interest 30.06.24 £293.17
 - Credit Interest 31.12.24 £258.37
- j. Members NOTED the virement made between Unity Accounts:
- Instant access to current total £2500

12. Training:

- a. Cllr Baldwin informed members that the First Aid Training with Forestry that he had attended alongside Footpath Officer David Beckett had been excellent. Thanks were given to Cllr Hope for her help finding a suitable course.

13. Correspondence:

- Local Nature Recovery Mapping Webinar on the 22/1/25, 12.45-1.45pm. Cllrs Barber-Starkey and Baldwin along with the Clerk have signed up. Recommend that anyone on the Environment Working Group attend if possible.
- NOTED: Ellie Chowns MP contact information received with local surgeries and visits on Fridays and Saturdays.
- NOTED: Unity Bank Interest rate reduction from 18.02.25 from 2.6 to 2.5%

14. To consider items for the next meeting – no discussion:

To include SIDS, Footpaths project, diary dates for 25/26, School French system, Flooding Working Group, Bartons agreement with school.

15. **Next Meeting:** It was NOTED that the next meeting of Much Marcle Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 12th March in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Signed:..... Date:.....

Chair

Meeting closed at 20.30

Attachment 1 – Footpath Officer Report 08.01.2025

On Friday 20th December a circular walk was arranged by Dave with the local walking group starting and finishing at Westons. This took in the new stile free route with individual gates numbered also with acknowledgement of the Lottery funding. Thanks to Dave for designing and fixing the information plates to the gates.

Progress news from HCC regarding the installation of the two Lottery Funded Bridges seems to be zero.

Resignation:

From today I would like to tender my resignation of duty as Footpaths Officer. I started early 2016 with no information or guidelines and managed to obtain a map and way marker signs by visiting Balfour Beatty in Hereford. Repairing stiles initially, then installing them from scratch.

A while later I was assisted by Alan Brace and then more recently by Julian Baldwin and David Beckett.

I give my thanks to all who helped me on this interesting journey and am disappointed that the fulfilment of the Lottery funded bridges has not yet happened.

DRAFT