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MUCH MARCLE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes of the Parish Council Annual Meeting held on
Wednesday, 8th May 2024
7.30pm In Much Marcle Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs M Barber-Starkey; A Hope; E Thomas, J Baldwin; T Weston; E Jefferson;

In attendance: Rachel Freestone – Clerk
Jim Edwards – Footpaths Officer
Barry Durkin – Ward Member

Public: 4

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for 2024/25:

Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey opened the meeting and requested nominations for the position of Chair for the forthcoming year. Cllr Mike Barber-Starkey was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Cllr Barber-Starkey duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Thomas thanked Mike for all his work over the last year and thanked him for continuing into 2024/25.

2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies had been received and accepted from Cllrs Frank Powell, David Griffiths and Simon Cotton.

3. To Receive any Declarations of Interest or Written Applications for Dispensation:

There was none.

4. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2024/25:

Cllr Alison Hope was proposed, seconded and duly elected. Cllr Hope signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

5. To adopt the General Power of Competence:

Members considered and agreed that the Parish Council met the criteria for eligibility. **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt the General Power of Competence.

6. Minutes: Members considered the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 13th March 2024. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting. They were duly signed by the Chairman.

It was agreed to move Agenda Item 18 D-Day Celebrations Forward to allow members of the public to comment.

18. To receive an update on the D Day Celebrations on the 6th June.

Darren Maynard, the Poppy Appeal Manager for Herefordshire and Ellen Jones who looks after the Much Marcle area commented. They are hoping to increase their visibility and asked if they could attend the Much Marcle D Day Beacon lighting on the 6th June. Cllr Weston confirmed that the Beacon will be lit in Walwyn Court field opposite the Walwyn Arms. Intend to light the Beacon at 9.15pm. The British Legion have produced new D Day 80 badges and Darren Maynard will be asking for donations for these badges on the night. The Poppy Appeal Manager asked members if they know someone who may want to light it? He informed members that there are more veterans in Herefordshire than any other county. **It was RESOLVED:** Cllrs Weston and Barber-Starkey to contact Darren Maynard to discuss the lighting of the Beacon and any other arrangements.

The Walwyn Arms will serve Fish and Chips on the night.

Ellen Jones will be hosting a quiz night at the Royal Oak on Thursday 30th May and they are looking for more local volunteers to help with the Poppy Appeal.

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7. Public Participation:

There was no further comment.

7.50pm – 2 members of the public left the meeting.

8. Reports:

a. Ward Cllrs report:

Ward member Barry Durkin reported that HCC are starting the termination from Balfour Beatty which will take 2 years to go through with a new contract (still unknown) starting on 1st June 2026. Annual spend on roads has increased greatly to £38.4 million on roads. £10.8million a year of this is received from the cessation of HS2. The aim is to work alongside parish councils to tackle the main problem of drainage. The Local Transport Plan Consultation ends on the 21st May 2024, there is a link to this on his April Ward Report and HCC website.

He informed members that John Campion has been elected as Police Commissioner for a third term.

He updated members on planning applications. The Shepherds Hut application has been resubmitted with a reduction in the number of shepherds huts to 2 from 4, he has asked for it to go planning committee but not likely to be heard in June or July.

With regards to the Community Shop planning application, he is hoping that Sir Bill Wiggin will come to the village to promote it between now and the 24th May.

There is a Home Energy Savers Scheme which can help if have plans to update homes, details on the Ward report.

Herefordshire Council have signed a long term lease to 2070 for Hereford Football to remain at the Edgar Street ground. There are plans for the north end to be renovated.

Cllr Barber-Starkey questioned whether there are any updates on the speed limit changes? Ward Member Durkin confirmed that he is chasing but it is still not finalised, it is signed and agreed and will happen but not sure when.

It was agreed to move forward Agenda Item 17.

17. Highways/Footpaths:

- a. To appoint Footpath Officers for 2024-25: The Footpath Officers were thanked for all their work over the last year. Both have confirmed that they wish to continue in post. **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint Mr James Edwards and Mr David Beckett as Footpath Officers for 2024/25.
- b. Mr Jim Edwards updated members on the Footpath Regeneration project. The progress with the bridge replacements and metal gate installations are progressing, currently waiting for answers and permissions on design and technical procedures from HCC. A clipboard was circulated at the AGM to ask for Volunteers to help with the project. The Clerk confirmed that she had this.
- c. To consider any other matters raised by the Footpath Group and agree actions: members heard that footpath MM8B near Awnells Farm has a stile in need of repair with the installation of footplates required to rectify the problem. This has been deferred until the waterlogged fields dry. The footpath at MM3, New Normandy, had debris blocking it which was cleared by Cllr Barber-Starkey and David Beckett. They were thanked for all their work.
- d. To receive an update on the speed limit scheme: addressed in Agenda item 8a.
- e. Members considered the dog poo bin. **It was RESOLVED:** the current bin is adequate and to remove this item from the agenda.
- f. To consider any other matters raised by the Highways Working Group: There were none.

8.15pm Ward Member Barry Durkin and Footpath Officer Jim Edwards left the meeting.

9. Members noted the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2023-24.

10. To review the following policies for Much Marcle Parish Council:

- a. Code of Conduct. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting for all members to read.
- b. Financial Regulations. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting to allow consideration by the Finance Working Group.
- c. Risk Register. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting to allow consideration by the Finance Working Group.

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- d. Risk Management Policy. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting to allow consideration by the Finance Working Group.
- e. Reserves Policy. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting to allow consideration by the Finance Working Group.
- f. Standing Orders. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Standing Orders for 2024-25.
- g. **It was RESOLVED:** Members agreed to comply with the transparency code.
- h. The Clerk reminded members of the self-disqualification law.

11. To appoint Members to serve on Working Groups:

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Councillors as follows:

- a. Finance - Cllrs Ed Jefferson, Alison Hope and Mike Barber-Starkey with Rachel Freestone (RFO).
- b. Planning – Cllrs Tim Weston, Julian Baldwin, Ed Jefferson and Elliott Thomas. Cllr Tim Weston to lead and report decisions and actions to the Clerk.
- c. Highways – Cllrs Frank Powell and Simon Cotton.
- d. Footpaths – Cllr Julian Baldwin.
- e. Environment and Community – Cllrs Simon Cotton and Elliott Thomas. Cllr Thomas to lead the group.

12. To Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies:

- a. **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint Cllr Julian Baldwin as the Parish Council Representative to Much Marcle Memorial Hall. Cllr Baldwin was thanked for all his work in this role.

13. Assets:

- a. Members considered the Asset Register for 2024. **It was RESOLVED:** no amendments required.
- b. Members considered the Health and Safety Inspection of assets for 2024/25. Cllr Baldwin reported that a couple of tiles are missing from the bus shelter in Much Marcle allowing creepers to grow through. **It was RESOLVED:** defer to the next meeting for Councillor Thomas to assess. Members reported that all assets are in adequate order. Cllr Barber-Starkey thanked Adrian Hope Tree Services for clearing the trees and tidying the Bartons Field, it looks much improved. A member reported that the play equipment flooring is still in situ in the Bartons and needs removing. **It was RESOLVED:** defer the removal to the next meeting to action in the summer holidays.
- c. To receive an update on the Bartons Gate Project.
In Cllr Cottons absence there was none.

14. Finance

- a. Members noted the End of Year budget versus actuals, bank reconciliation and bank balances. **It was RESOLVED:** for the Chairman to sign the bank reconciliation as a true record of the end of year position.
- b. Members noted the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances for March and April 2024. **It was RESOLVED:** for the Chairman to sign the bank reconciliations as true records.
- c. Internal Audit Report 2023-24: Members noted the report and the compliance in all areas. Items raised to action include the bank account and councillor access rights and for the Clerk to tighten internal controls. It was NOTED that the Internal Audit Report recommends the parish council consider Cyber Security Cover. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Internal Audit Report for 2023-24. The Clerk to amend the banking rights for Cllr Hope to view and approve and to request a quote for the insurance cover.
- d. Annual Governance Statement: **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24.
- e. Annual Return Accounting Statements: **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements for 2023-24.
- f. External audit exemption and sign the certificate: The Clerk informed members that owing to the Grants received in 2023-24, Much Marcle Parish Council are not exempt for 2023-24. **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to prepare the documentation as required for the External Audit.
- g. Members consider the end of year explanation of variances. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the explanations given.
- h. Members noted the dates for the Notice of Public Rights as 3rd June to 12th July.
- i. List of payments made over £100 for 2023-24: **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the list as a true record.

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- j. Schedule of regular payments for 2024-25. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the schedule of regular payments.
- k. Members considered the VAT claim for 2023-24 to be submitted to HMRC via a 126 form: **It was RESOLVED:** members approved the claim with the Clerk to submit to HMRC.
- l. To appoint a competent internal auditor external to the council for 2024-25: **It was RESOLVED:** to appoint HALC as Internal Auditor for 2024-25.
- m. Members considered the “payments and receipts” accounting method. **It was RESOLVED:** to adopt this method for 2024-25.
- n. Members considered the Unity Bank signatories: **It was RESOLVED:** Cllrs Mike Barber-Starkey, Alison Hope and Frank Powell to view and approve. The Clerk/RFO to view and submit payments. All other Cllrs to be removed.
- o. Members NOTED that the insurance provision for 2024-25 is due for renewal in August. **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting. The Clerk to obtain quotes for Cyber Cover.
- p. Members considered the performance of PATA over the last year. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the appointment of PATA payroll services for 2024-25.
- q. Members considered the clerk’s delegated authority to make payments between meetings as necessary. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve delegated authority to the Clerk.
- r. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve following invoices for payment:
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| • Clerk’s Expenses printer cartridge and Microsoft Licence April 2024 | £40.25 |
| • PATA payroll Annual Service fee | £124.20 |
| • HALC Internal Audit | £250 Net/£300 Gross |
- The Clerk requested that two invoices received following the Agenda be considered:
It was RESOLVED: to approve the 2 invoices MMMH Hall Hire £30.00
- s. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payments made between meetings:
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| • PAYE January 2024 Salary | £3.40 |
| • Clerk Salary March/April | As per contract |
| • Unity Bank Fee | £18.00 |
| • ICO Direct Debit | £35.00 |
- t. Members noted income received:
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| • Twinning Association | £7.06 |
| • Twinning Association | £3250.00 |
| • Precept | £5425.00 |
- u. Members noted the virements made between Unity Accounts:
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| • Instant Access to Current | 14.03.24 | £1300 |
| • Current to Instant Access | 26.03.24 | £3257.06 |
| • Current to Instant Access | 30.04.24 | £4000.00 |
- v. To consider the grant application received from Much Marcle Parochial Church: **It was RESOLVED:** to defer to the next meeting pending consideration from the Finance Working Group.
- w. Grant application from Wye Play: The Clerk informed members that owing to the

15. Planning

- a. 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.
- b. To comment on Planning Applications for Determination by Herefordshire Council:
- 240913 Land at Foxhalls Farm, Sollars Hope. Proposed Erection of an agricultural workers dwelling, including garage. **It was RESOLVED:** This property is not in Much Marcle Parish.
- c. Members noted the Planning Responses Submitted between Meetings under Devolved Powers:
- 240942 Rhonville, tree work. No Comment made.
 - 223195 The Bounds, reconsultation. No further comments made.
 - 233688 Land at Upper House, reconsultation. No further comments made.
 - 233010 Community Shop, reconsultation. No further comments made.
- d. Members noted planning decisions made by Herefordshire Council:
- 240292 Hill House Single storey extension – Approved with Conditions
 - 240350 The Upper Courtyard, Gamage Farm – Approved with Conditions.

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16. Much Marcle Memorial Hall

- a. Cllr Baldwin informed members that the MMMH committee are working on a budget to replace certain windows.

18. Events:

- To receive an update on the D-Day 80th Anniversary Event on the 6th June:
Please see earlier comments. Additionally **It was RESOLVED:** the Clerk to advertise the event in the Mercury.
- To receive a report on the Masterclass Event held on the 4th April: Cllr Barber-Starkey commented that the evening had been informative and a useful event.
- To receive a report on the Litter Pick Event held on the 6th April: A member commented that the event needs to be held earlier in the year, preferably the first week in March. There were also a number of parishioners who collected litter at different times. The parish council would like to thank all the volunteers who helped to tidy the parish.

19. To resolve on the schedule of meeting dates for 2024/25:

Members considered the schedule of meetings for 2024/25. **It was RESOLVED:** to hold full meetings on the 17th July, 11th September, 13th November, 8th January and 12th March, the Clerk to book the Memorial Hall.

20. To consider the Clerks request for Annual leave 8th – 12th July and 2nd- 6th September:

Members considered the request. **It was RESOLVED:** to approve the Clerks holiday request.

21. Correspondence:

Members NOTED the correspondence received.

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

Finance Regulations, Finance Policies, Insurance. The residents wishlist circulated at the APM.

23. Next meeting: It was NOTED that the next meeting of Much Marcle Parish Council will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 17th July in Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Member of the public were thanked for attending and asked to leave the meeting ahead of a Confidential Item being considered:

24. To receive an update on the Clerks Appraisal, the CiLCA award and consider a salary uplift:

Confidential Matter Considered.

Signature.....*M Barber-Starkey*..... Date:.....*17.07.24*..

Chair

The meeting closed at 8.55pm