

## MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Marden held on  
Tuesday 28 May 2019 at 19.00 at Marden Community Centre

**Present:** Cllr David Bennett (Chair).

**In Attendance:** Ward Cllr Kema Guthrie; Parish Clerk Alison Sutton; 22 members of the public.

**1. Apologies for absence** – Robin Brook, Emma Garlick, Jean Price.

**2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting** – 30 April 2018 – ADOPTED and signed.

**3. Report from the Chairman** –

NOTED points as follows:

All in all an interesting year with many challenges giving rise to significant successes but with, regrettably, some failures.

First a few words on the Council itself:

- Two councillors resigned, led to democratic elections with two new councillors elected.
- Eight councillors were elected earlier this month, now actively looking to co-opt three additional councillors in near future should volunteers put themselves forward.
- All councillors to be offered awareness training as soon as it can be arranged.

Parish Council's Current Financial Position (based on unaudited accounts):

- Surplus for year 2018/19 of £23,179. Much of surplus related to Community Facility loan repayment not initiated (£13,500), additional income raised by the Community Facilities Fundraising Group (£2,023) and unused contingency (£6,891).
- Reserves at end of financial year 2018/19 stand at £63k. Includes ring-fenced items - £27k for loan repayment and work associated with community facilities, £5k Donations/funds raised for community facilities and £7k working capital to cover VAT etc. Balance of £25k uncommitted reserves will be used to cover Herefordshire Council costs associated with Judicial Review relating to planning application for Ashgrove Croft.
- Precept for 2019/20 set at £51,500. Increase over previous year of £5,500 largely attributable to an advised increase should an election be required and no P3 (footpath) grant which means all footpath work is funded by parish now, as well as Lengthsman work.

Another busy year holding a significant number meetings, all open to the public other than specific council discussions relating to cost settlement associated with Judicial Review:

- 17 full Parish Council meetings (3 extra planning meetings, 2 for Judicial Review case and 12 ordinary meetings).
- 15 Community Facilities Working Group meetings (3 for the main group, 12 for the Fundraising Sub Group) plus 8 Youth Club nights
- 1 Policies & Procedures Working Group meeting and 1 Traffic Management Group meeting.

How we have spent your money this year:

- Maintaining parish roads and verges as well as footpaths and bridleways through Lengthsman and P3 Schemes. Potholes on minor roads are filled by Lengthsman once identified by Balfour Beatty Locality Steward. Winter weather was kinder to road network, never-the-less 79 potholes were filled by Lengthsman and many more by Balfour Beatty. Much work done on footpath network and thanks go to Phil Ryan our current Footpath Officer.
- Ongoing major activity throughout the year to review and comment on planning applications ensuring adherence to our NDP. In total, reviewed and commented on 30 planning applications of which Herefordshire Council approved 21, refused 2 with remaining 7 yet to be decided.
- Made a number of small grants this year to various parish groups, Guides and Brownies £200, Recreation Ground Trust £600 and the newly formed Youth Group £600.
- Also responded to wide variety of issues raised by parishioners and councillors.

Specific Projects:

- Community Facilities Group (CFG) - councillors and volunteer parishioners continued work on potential new facilities as result of New House Farm development. During 2018, focus remained on promoting current parish assets, Community Centre, Church and Chapel as a developer for New House Farm remained elusive. Work of promoting existing assets will continue even though, at start of 2019, finally heard that developer (Signature New Homes) found and sale finalised. While reserved matters continue to be discussed at Herefordshire, CFG

started to look again at possibilities of new build on land to be donated to Parish, hopefully by end of the year. In summary, looking to build on agreed position approved in 2016. A new build of 262m<sup>2</sup> providing large room that can be split into two rooms, toilets, storage, kitchen and entrance lobby along with associated parking at target total cost of £400K. Much work over coming months but will keep parish informed and plan to hold a community consultation event later in the year.

In addition there are three working subgroups, all of which would welcome new volunteers:

- Fundraising, consists almost entirely of parish volunteers, continued to put in a tremendous amount of effort in identifying, planning and executing a number of events over the past year and are planning many more. All events well received and enjoyed by community while also making a significant sum of money, a little over £2k. Total raised or donated just over £5k. Group in final stages of preparation for combined Church and Community Fete on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and hoped that event will be enjoyed by parish as a whole.
- Youth, continued to hold Youth Club meeting on monthly basis. So successful that, in February, group became independent of Parish Council. Most sessions 20-25 children attend, largely from Marden but also Sutton St Nicholas, Moreton on Lugg and a few from wider afield.
- Elderly and isolated, group not been very active to date, several Parish Councillors represented Marden on two Herefordshire Council Summits (Working Together For Our Communities) which looked to bring together Parish Councils to share experiences and initiatives. Hope to implement some of these in future but need volunteer helpers.
- NDP Steering Group not met during year but changes to legislation mean will be a review of Herefordshire's Core Strategy starting towards end of year. Current plan should be unaffected but start review of NDP in 2020.
- Transport Management Group worked on four specific areas, largely addressing traffic related concerns raised by parishioners:
  - Speedwatch not a Parish Council group, consists of parish volunteers with administrative support from Parish Council. Needs more volunteers to continue being effective by being out with radar gun more regularly.
  - Review of what could be done to make roads in parish safer. A number of options considered from village entry gates to road marking but all too expensive to date. With development of NHF site will be significant sum of money made available for traffic improvement measures via S106 contribution, group will revisit and develop appropriate options in conjunction with Herefordshire Council.
  - Provision of working SID for shared use with Sutton St Nicholas. Rocky ride but working piece of equipment that will be rotated on a two monthly basis between parishes.
  - Review into ways to protect heritage bridges from vehicle strikes. Initially worked with Moreton on Lugg Parish Council and agreed to install appropriate signage. Agreement on style and siting taken time but now installed either side of Laystone bridge. Also looked at other options, concluded that to have appropriate weight behind any potential solution, need detailed study from recognised traffic survey. Cost £3,800, no guarantee of affordable solution. Seeking the views of Parish before proceeding further.

As a Council have undertaken several other activities of significance over the last twelve months:

- Fully implemented new legislation General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in effect in May 2018. Significant task, Councillor training, new policies, new web domain, dedicated emails offered to councillors but all now implemented successfully.
- Early 2018, following approval of planning application at Ashgrove Croft, Vauld Action requested support in asking for judicial review of decision made by Herefordshire Council. Parish Council undertook request in good faith with detailed reviews of legal position and likely cost to parishioners at number of key decision points in process. Unfortunately, in spite of strong weight of argument and hard work by number of people, ultimately lost the case. While accepting decision, in discussion with Herefordshire Council with regard to their final costs.
- Policies and procedures not reviewed in detail for many years, many out of date and new additions required. All now updated or added and available on Parish website.
- Last Parish plan in 2004 and very out of date. Just completed a Parish Business Plan, being printed and will be delivered to all parishioners. Hope will be informative but comments appreciated so can improve future editions.
- More recently looking to improve communication with parishioners and larger businesses within parish. Improvements to website anticipated with potential Facebook page. Format changes made to Parish Council entries in N&Vs. Excellent meetings with Berrington Water and Drummonds (taken over Co-op farm in Burmarsh) as well as ongoing dialogue with S&A with appointment of two councillors to Liaison Committee meetings. Hope all three companies at the Church and Community Fete.

In summary, very busy and productive year, like to thank all parishioners, volunteers, fellow councillors, our hard working and dedicated clerk, as well as our supportive Ward Councillor Kema Guthrie. Finally, as a council, representing all parishioners, welcome ideas that you believe would improve life in parish. Thank you.

#### 4. Report from Marden Village Trust

NOTED: Main event this year has been awarding of grant of £30,000 by the Garfield Weston Foundation to the Community Centre.

So far:

- new chairs have been bought.
- the kitchen refurbishment is almost ready to start
- the new, more soundproof partition between the community lounge and the hall has been installed
- the replacement sealed units for the windows in the community lounge that are misty have been ordered
- a permanent, retractable screen for presentations has been ordered and will be fitted in front of the new partition in the community lounge
- new curtains for the community lounge and blinds for the kitchen will be ordered
- the corridor from the front entrance to the community lounge will be redecorated.

Unfortunately, Community Centre does not, despite what some people seem to think, run itself. So, in addition to all the time and work involved in doing the above, day to day running of the community centre, arranging the hiring, collecting in the rental, paying bills, organising the general maintenance has to go on. All done on volunteer basis and strangely, mostly by individuals who do not use the facility that much.

Community Centre run by Village Trust, which is registered charity overseen by Charity Commission. Trust should have up to twelve trustees, currently six, including Chair. Charity Commission concerned about low number of trustees. In order to convince Charity Commission otherwise, need more people, preferably who regularly use community centre, to take an interest in helping to run facility. So please give up just a small amount of your time, become a trustee and help run Community Centre for Marden. Trustees meet no more than once a month, sometime less, on Wednesday evening for no longer than two hours.

Thanks go to all existing trustees for giving their time and expertise born out of experience and in particular, to our Bookings Clerk who gives a massive amount of time and without whom, Community Centre would certainly not be able to function.

Robin Brook: Chair, Marden Village Trust

#### 5. Report from Marden Recreation Ground Trust

The five new trustees have settled into their new roles well and are actively involved in the running of the recreation ground. The increase in the number of trustees from 2 to 6 has made a huge difference to the charity in terms of spreading the workload and increasing the skills and knowledge available to the charity.

Special mention must go to Mike Darley who has spent countless hours working on the football pitch resulting in nearly £1500 in revenue for very little outlay during the last financial year.

This has made the charity solvent and is extremely important with the reduced support from other sources. This goes some way to justifying the £20,000 spent on the changing rooms 10 years ago which was quite controversial at the time. This investment has a pay back and will realise a profit and will always be the charities main source of income. This would not have been possible without the improvements made to the changing rooms and this money would have to be found from elsewhere.

We have decided to spend the telecommunications money on converting one of the tennis courts into a MUGA. The PC has transferred the money and we have paid the deposit. We await a start date from the contractor. This will benefit the wider community and provide opportunities for people to participate in a wide range of sports and leisure activities.

The invoice of £720 from the solicitor is still unresolved and negotiations are ongoing.

The annual play equipment inspection was conducted in August and only found a few minor defects. We have been advised to carry out periodic inspections of our own to highlight deficiencies between inspections.

The insurance was renewed in January and we have managed to keep our premium down by entering into a 3-year policy. We will have to inform them about the MUGA which I am sure will result in some increase.

We still maintain the paper bank with Parry and Evans but due to the current price of paper we will probably only receive around £75:00 this year.

Electric and water bills are now consistently at a manageable level after our fluctuating issues last year.

The main tasks for the upcoming year are the installation of the MUGA and the ongoing general maintenance around the ground. Although solvent the charity only just keeps its head above water and increasing income will always be a priority to keep this valuable community facility open. Charges will need to be reviewed and ensuring prompt payment from users will, I am sure, remain a challenge.

Finally I would like to thank all the trustees for their hard work over the last 12 months.

Steve Miles: Secretary, Marden Recreational Ground Trust

**6. Report from Marden Consolidated Charities**

NOTED: Marden Consolidated Charities is a very old charity established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to provide grants and one-off help to parishioners in sudden or specific real financial need. We made no grants during the period up to 30 November 2017. The accounts for that period are attached. These have not yet been independently examined but will be shortly and Mrs Keating will send the Clerk the audited accounts as soon as possible.

We held our AGM on 11 May 2017. Our chair the Rev Heather Short has since retired so we are awaiting the arrival of our new vicar Rev Paul Roberts to join the trustees. The vicar of the benefice always serves as Chair of the trustees. We will hold a meeting with Rev Roberts once he is installed in July.

The present trustees are Mr John Ashcroft, Mrs Cath Gunby, Mrs Jean Price, Mrs Janet Hewlett and Mrs Jane Keating.

Jane Keating: Secretary, Marden Consolidated Charities.

**MARDEN CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES  
ACCOUNTS AS AT 30.11.2017**

	Income £		Expenditure £
<u>Brought forward</u>	1.679.21		
<u>Charishare Dividend</u>		28.95	
<u>Charinco Dividend</u>		14.68	
<u>Charity of Blanch Lingen</u>	3.16		
<u>Charity of Joan Lingen</u>		10.56	
<u>COIF (OCC) Dividend</u>		42.73	
<u>Bank Interest</u>		0.19	
		<u>Balance at Bank</u>	£1,779.48
	<u>£1,779.48</u>		<u>£1,779.48</u>

Prepared by Mrs Jane Keating

**7. Public Forum**

NOTED: Haywood Lane potholes – will be discussed on parish drive-round with Locality Steward; risk assessment on mast, parishioner monitoring and expert found high levels – need to contact Marden Recreation Ground Trust, Clerk INSTRUCTED to contact Trust, Ward Cllr also seek advice.

**8. Parish Organisations Display tables and refreshments.**

This meeting was closed at 20.20.

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

Chair