

# Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.30pm at the Marden Community Centre.

Present:

Cllr David Bennett (Chair), Cllr Kate Ryan, Cllr Paula Barrett, Cllr Chris Morgan, Cllr Richard Paske & Cllr Rod Lees.

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk) Sally Postlethwaite (Footpaths Officer) and 1 members of the Public.

1. **To receive Apologies.** – Cllr Mike Blake & Cllr Lesley Hayward.
2. **To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.**

**Noted** – *There were no declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations.*

3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 23.**

**Resolution** – *The minutes of the meeting held on 18.07.23 were adopted as a true record and then signed by the Chair.*

4. **Open Session.**  
Ward Member – Cllr Peter Hamblin.

**Noted** – *It was noted that Cllr Peter Hamblin (Ward Member) was not present, nor any written report had been sent to the Parish Council. The Clerk to contact the Ward Member and ask that if he is unable to attend future meetings that a written report be sent to the clerk prior to the meeting.*

## **Public Session.**

A member of the public said that the speeding through Litmarsh was still a major concern, and this was evident by the amount of rubber on the road from tyres breaking at speed. There was a single car accident, due to speed when they had to take to the ditch when they met an HGV traveling the other way and were unable to stop.

**Noted** – This was noted, and the Parish Council will continue to pressure the Police with regard to speeding throughout the parish.

5. **Finance Matters.**
  - 5.1 - Financial Report
  - 5.2 - Accounts
  - 5.3 - Draft Budget
  - 5.4 - AGAR – Section 3
  - 5.5 - Banking Update

(5.1) & (5.2) – The Finance report and Accounts were presented to the council with a small amendment, the Lengthsman actual figure should be £1615.00 and the PROW £1912.77. however, these figures did not change the final total figure on the accounts. Marden Links HUB had cash in hand by way of

a donation of £438.00 as well as £406.99 in reserves.

- (5.3) – the Draft precept of £51,500.00 for financial year 2024/25 was noted and the chair said that this would need to change if the Community Project went ahead.
- (5.4) – The External Auditors report by PFK Littlejohn had been received, their comment was noted but in fact it did not have any bearing on last year's figures. It noted an error in the 2021/22 asset register, which had since been corrected in last year's accounts.
- (5.5) – The Clerk reported that the new Unity Bank had been set up, with a Main Account and a Saver Reserve Account to earn interest.

**Resolution** – (5.1) & (5.2) The Financial Report and Accounts were approved. (5.3) the draft budget was noted as was the potential for it to change if the Community Project goes ahead. (5.4) the AGAR report was noted and will be posted on the website under the accounts page. (5.5) it was proposed and agreed that the reserves as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 should be transferred to the Saver reserve account with the remaining balance to the Main Account.

## 6. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
6.1	DC Gardening Services – Drainage Grant Works	531.50	106.30	637.80
6.2	S Lewis - Hub Electric August	19.28	0.00	19.28
6.3	PIP Printing	280.31	0.00	280.31
6.4	Broxap – Bus Stop Bench	350.00	70.00	420.00
6.5	DC Gardening Services – July	530.00	106.00	636.00
6.6	DC Gardening Services – August	1537.50	307.50	1845.00
6.7	Microshade - Internal Auditor	125.00	25.00	150.00
6.8	Clerks Expenses – July / August 23	77.76	12.68	90.44
6.9	PKF Littlejohn – External Audit	315.00	63.00	378.00
6.10	Clerks Salary – August 23	As per Contract		
6.11	HMRC – Tax August 23	132.60	0.00	132.60
6.12	Mrs C A Skyrme – water for Hub – six months	25.40	0.00	25.40

The clerk reported that his expenses include payment of 2 x BT phone/broadband bills via his debit card. BT continue to be a problem and every bill to date has had issues, the latest bill being overstated by £250 and the clerk having to contact BT to have it amended.

**Resolution** – All the Payments were approved.

## 7. Payments made under emergency policy and regular payments.

	Payment	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – July 23	As per Contract		
7.2	HMRC - Tax	132.60	0.00	132.60
7.3	Booker – Marden Fete	88.29	7.31	95.60
7.4	S Lewis - Hub Electric July 23	26.57	0.00	26.57
S/O	HUB Rent - August & September 23	900.00	0.00	900.00
S/O	Community Garden – Rent – August & September 23	30.00	0.00	30.00

D/D	O2 Mobile Phone - July / August 23	25.80	5.16	30.96
	Income Received			
	Repair Café Grant – 2 <sup>nd</sup> and Final			1134.18
	Interest			
	Donations – To be banked, Hub £255 & Repair Café £183			438.00

**Resolution** – The payments made under emergency policy were Approved and the Direct Debit and Standing Order payments were noted.

## 8. Planning

**Noted** – There were no planning application to be discussed.

### 8.3 Planning Enforcement

- Pikestye Farm. – *Heritage Report issued*
- Small Ashes. – *Environmental follow-up results awaited*
- Oak Tree Cottage. – *Permitted Development rights, become lawful and active once the resident has moved into the property. Item closed.*
- Ashgrove Croft – *Timeline to be defined for outstanding planning conditions, planning application 172552.*

**Resolution** – *The outstanding planning enforcement matters are to be chased up by the clerk along with another possible infringement of planning laws.*

## 9. Reports.

### 9.1 – Community Facilities Working Group

9.1.1 Events subgroup upcoming activities

9.1.2 Community Facilities project update

### 9.2 – Marden Links

9.2.1 – Hub activity update

9.2.2 – Repair Café Update

9.2.3 – Community Garden Update

9.2.4 – Environmental & Sustainability update

9.2.5 – Volunteer event plan

### 9.3 – Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group

### 9.4 – Financial Advisory Working Group

### 9.5 – S106 Update

(9.1.1) – The events subgroup had met and there were several community events going to be organised which included a Quiz Night on the 14.10.23 – Race Night on the 18.11.23 – Christmas Cracker Event on the 22.12.23.

(9.1.2) – It was hoped that the planning permission would be approved by the end of September which would then allow the Community Facilities project to be progressed.

(9.2.1) – A HUB activity report was given. The number of volunteers and attendees remain static, the PCSO popped in for tea and cake and a chat with the residents as did the area Dementia UK representative. The remaining grant funded items (£406.99 held in reserves) had finally been approved by Herfordshire Council.

(9.2.2) – The Repair Café remains at maximum capacity with the volunteers it has. If anyone from the

Parish, or even neighbouring parishes, wanted to volunteer, they would be made more than welcome. The repair café had received personal donations from satisfied clients, which was gratefully received and will be faithfully applied in support the repair café.

- (9.2.3) – The Marden Links Working Group’s Community Garden open day was well attended, and many ideas were expressed along with potential designs. All ideas put forward will be looked at in greater detail. BBLP through our Locality Steward had been very supportive in this project, supplying 4 loads of topsoil, a garden bench, and wildflower seeds. The Clerk had previously sent out 2 letters to local business looking for support with the community garden, be that by sponsoring a piece of equipment or even a raised bed. The lack of support to date was disappointing.
- (9.2.4) – Environmental & Sustainability working group has now been incorporated into the Marden Links working group.
- (9.2.5) – The Parish Council wishes to say a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers in the Parish, as without their tireless devotion and support many things would not be done. If the Parish Council had to purchase these services, it could cost thousands.
- (9.3) – Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group have not met, as the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy Review seems to have stalled following recent elections and no future dates have been given for the restarting of the review with the Parish Council.
- (9.4) – Financial Advisory Working Group had met to discuss the draft budget which was present to this meeting earlier.
- (9.5) – S106 document for the community land has now been signed.

**Resolution** – (9.1.1) Was noted and council thanked all those involved. (9.1.2) was noted. (9.2.1) & (9.2.2) were noted and it was agreed to purchase items funded by the grant approval. Monies need to be moved from reserves to cover the cost. (9.2.3) The clerk was asked to follow up the letters with telephone calls. (9.2.4) was noted. (9.2.5) that a community volunteer event should be held as a THANK YOU to the volunteers in the parish. Ideas and dates were mentioned but needed firming up. (9.3) was noted. (9.4) the draft budget was noted. (9.5) S106 was noted.

## 10. Community.

- 10.1 – Lengthsman - current requirements and application for match grant funding were discussed.
- 10.2 – Parish Footpath Officers Report
- 10.3 – Locality Steward
- 10.4 – West Mercia Police – Parish Contact Contract – Update required.

- (10.1) – The clerk reported that the council had previously received Lengthsman grant funding for drainage works and would apply for any additional grants as and when they arose.
- (10.2) – The parish footpaths officers gave a very detailed report on the condition of the parishes PROW and that they had now installed the new gates. There was a request for a dog poo bin to be sited at Monmarsh (MR8 to Litmarsh). There was also a request for steps on PROW MR25 which presently is a steep slope down to a roadway and considered dangerous, especially in the bad weather.
- (10.3) – The chair reported that he had arranged for a Parish drive a round with the Locality steward on the 09.10.23.
- (10.4) – West Mercia Police have asked what the policing priorities were for the parish for the next 3 months, but this could not include speeding. The council were totally dismayed as speeding is a constant concern of the majority of the residents in the parish.

**Resolution** – (10.1) It was approved that the clerk should apply for whatever funding is available and that the council could put to use. (10.2) The footpaths report was noted and that a quotation should be obtained for the installation of the steps on MR25. While accepting there is a significant issue in the Parish, they did not feel that a dog poo bin at Monmarsh would stop dog owners not picking up the dog mess. It is a shame that there are so many irresponsible dog owners in the parish. (10.3) – the chair was thanked for arranging a drive round with the locality steward. (10.4) – Council agreed that the Clerk should submit the same response as last time, Speeding Speeding, Speeding. The clerk was asked to move this item up the agenda in future.

## 11. Clerk Report.

- 11.1 – Christmas Tree Update
- 11.2 – Bench (Bus Stop) Update
- 11.3 – Correspondence
- 11.4 – Update of replacement horse sign

- (11.1) – The clerk reported that he had received an email from the local Christmas tree supplier and that a Christmas tree over 5' did not replant very well and would most probably die. They suggest council purchased a smaller tree in a pot and replanted that and allowed that to grow over the years.
- (11.2) – The clerk reported that the bench had been delivered to the clerk's home address and was arranging for it to be taken to the Lengthsman who would then install it.
- (11.3) – The clerk reported that he receives a number of Freedom of Information requests from just 1 or 2 local residents. The clerk understands that every resident has the right to do this, but it does take up a huge amount of his time and feels council should be made aware of this especially as some of the requests are very trivial. The clerk also received 2 emails about the agenda for this meeting and previous meeting draft minutes. These were not on the council website at an appropriate time. The clerk replied stating that the clerk was having issues when logging on to the website and presently had to rely on others.
- (11.4) – the clerk reported that the size of the missing horse sign had now been establish and he would ask BBLP for a quotation to replace and refit.

**Resolution** – (11.1) The council agreed to purchase a potted tree and plant it in an agreed location providing approval was given by the Marden Recreation Ground Trust. In addition, the clerk should contact the company who, in the past, have donated a tree to the parish and see if they are willing to do this again this year. (11.2) the bench update was noted. (11.3) the council noted this report and thought it was a shame individuals wanted to waste the clerks time and resources on these requests. (11.4) It was agreed that the clerk should purchase a replacement sign up to the value of £100.

## 12. Review Council Policies

- 12.1 – Lone Working Policy
- 12.2 – Personal Data Management Policy
- 12.3 – Staff Appraisal Policy

**Resolution** – All the above policies were approved and adopted.

## 13. Herefordshire Green Network

**Resolution** – It was agreed to renew the Parish Council subscription.

#### 14. Sutton Walls meeting and possible TV coverage – 19<sup>th</sup> October Marden Village Hall

**Resolution** – *It was agreed to refer any enquiries to the clerk and the clerk would reply that the Parish Council answer has not changed. “The Parish Council has nothing to say on this matter as the site is not within this Parish Councils boundaries.*

#### 15. Date of future Meetings.

The clerk asked if the date of the next meeting could be changed as his son was getting married on the 16.10.23 in Scotland and the clerk would not be back to make the normal council meeting date.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed to move the meeting to the Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023.*

**To exclude the members Public and Press from this part of the meeting to discuss items of a confidential nature.**

#### 16. Marden Community Centre

A brief outline of the present position of the proposed project was outlined and the stages it needed to go through if it was to be progressed. The issue of a new contract was discussed, and a number of questions were raised, and the clerk was to try and obtain answers to the next Parish Council meeting. Discussion took place regarding some work undertaken over the last year by the Architect in order to ensure the planning application progressed to a decision. It was agreed to offer £2000 as a once off good will gesture. While a contract for the next stage and the one-off payment were agreed in principle, neither should be progressed until planning approval has been granted.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed that the clerk requests answers to the questions raised and subject to satisfactory replies and the approval of planning permission being granted, Council would move to the next stage with all it relevant costs previously agreed.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Signed:  
Chair of the Council



Date: 9<sup>th</sup> October2023