

# Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm at the Marden Community Centre.

Present:

Cllr David Bennett (Chair), Cllr Kate Ryan, Cllr Chris Morgan, Cllr Richard Paske, Cllr Mike Blake, Cllr Rod Lees & Cllr Lesley Hayward.

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk) and 4 members of the Public.

1. **To receive Apologies.** – Cllr Paula Barrett.
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 9<sup>th</sup> October 23.**

*Resolution – The minutes of the meeting held on 9.10.23 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. There were several important topics the Parish Council wanted to discuss with the ward member.*

## **Public Session.**

A member of the public asked the following questions.

Q1. - Will the Budget / Precept be raised if the Community Project goes ahead.

A1. - Potentially, yes, but it depends on the progression of the Community Facilities Project particularly with the current high inflation and interest rates.

Q2. – Marden Village Trust (MVT) monies how is it going to be spent.

A2. – Would have to ask the MVT as this is their money.

Q3. – Who is W Architecture

A3. – It is the new name of CBW.

Q4. – What is the timescale of the project.

A4. – The target completion date is September 2025. The land will be handed over in April 2024.

Q5. – Will the precept be increased this year.

A5. – This is being discussed later in the meeting.

Q6. – Are the cost for the project the final price.

A6. – No as there has been increases in materials since the last quotation.

5. **Footpaths Officer Report & to consider actions.**

The footpaths officer was not present but had submitted the following report.

- Marden's Footpaths and Bridleways are much better than this time last year. Thanks to the Landowners trimming the hedgerows. Some ploughed fields still need people to follow the way markers and trample a visible route across the mud.

- MR44, MR46 and MR45 (from Laystone Bridge to Church) Flooded as always but the water drains away quickly every year. MR47 Bridleway now cleared and passable by horses.
- MR17A No progress. Locality Steward involved.
- MR 25 Moreton-on-Lugg and MR 25 Sutton St Nicholas both awaiting work on banks from stiles to road. Locality Steward has meeting planned with Landowner to discuss possible solutions.
- MR8 to MR12 Landowners need advice about best way to replace a wooden kissing gate. Will they be able to have help?
- Complaints about wooden stile MR21 by Chapel. Several requests for a kissing gate as the stile is very difficult to climb over and is not dog friendly. I shall continue to look for the Landowner.
- MR19 Potholes - Nearby homeowner has resolved the problem.
- Complaint about the trees and power lines on MR19. Locality Steward is now involved - no solution yet.

**Resolution** – The clerk is to inform the Herefordshire Council PROW inspector about the trees on MR19 to get this matter resolved.

## 6. Finance Matters.

- 6.1 - Financial Report
- 6.2 - Accounts
- 6.3 - Draft Budget
- 6.4 - Banking Update

(6.1) – The Financial report was discussed.

(6.2) – The Accounts were presented to the council and brief discussion took place.

(6.3) – The draft budget was discussed in detail, and after much deliberation it was agreed to raise the precept for 2024/25 by £4000.00. the precept had not been raised for some 5-years and the Council had used reserves to plug shortfalls. The current precept consists of two elements. The base precept excluding the community facilities element of £38000 and the community facilities element of £13500. The increase will be applied to the base £38,000 giving a total precept for 2024/25 of £55500.

(6.4) – All the new Unity Bank Accounts had been opened and a full switch would now take place including all the D/D and S/O. There was also an issue over the payment authorisation.

**Resolution** – (6.1) & (6.2) – The Finance report and Accounts were approved (6.3) – The draft budget was agreed, and “Budget Newsletter” would be sent out to all households within the Parish in early December. (6.4) – The clerk would sort out all the bank paperwork to be signed at a future meeting.

## 7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – October 23	As per Contract		
7.2	HMRC – Tax October 23	132.60	0.00	132.60
7.3	S Lewis – Electric October 23	49.87	0.00	49.87
7.4	PIP Printing - 75911	280.31	0.00	280.31
7.5	DC Gardening Services – October 23	695.00	139.00	834.00
7.6	Adzor Ltd – Christmas Trees	312.00	0.00	312.00
7.7	Woodcock Web Services	90.00	0.00	90.00
7.8	A Sasso – Race Night – Quiz Night	71.99	0.00	71.99
7.9	Cllr C Ryan – HUB Equipment	165.50	0.00	165.50

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

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

	Payment	Net	Vat	Total
D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone Oct – Unity Bank	29.51	5.90	35.41
D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – Nov - Unity Bank	30.77	6.15	36.92
S/O	HUB Rent - October 23	450.00	0.00	450.00
S/O	Community Garden – Rent – October 23	15.00	0.00	15.00
D/D	O2 Mobile Phone - October 23	12.90	2.58	15.48
BACS	A W Architecture - Consultation	3000.00	600.00	3600.00
BACS	A W Architecture – Drainage Scheme	3200.00	640.00	3840.00

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

## 9. Planning

No Planning application requiring comment.

### 9.1 Planning Enforcement

- a) Pikestye Farm. – *Heritage Report issued*
- b) Small Ashes. – *Environmental follow-up results awaited*
- c) Ashgrove Croft – *timescale for completion of planning conditions*
- d) Berrington Bower

### Resolution

- a) *Contact planning enforcement for an update on the Heritage report.*
- b) *Contact planning enforcement for an update on the Environmental*
- c) *Contact planning enforcement for an update on the completion of the planning conditions.*
- d) *Contact planning enforcement for an update on the roof light and balcony.*

## 10. Reports.

10.1 – Community Facilities Working Group.

**Noted** – The Community Facilities Working Group had not met.

10.1.1 Events subgroup upcoming activities

**Noted** – The Quiz Night raised £191.00 & the Race Night raised £625.08, both were very well supported. There will also be the Christmas Cracker Event on the 22.12.23.

10.1.2 Community Facilities project update

The chair said the project was moving a speed, the housing developer had agreed to allow the projects drainage to be connected into their scheme. The developer was also willing to allow the Project to use the Site Inspection and Topographic surveys, saving the project thousands. The next stage would be to tender the “design and build”, this would provide a firm project cost to complete. The project has agreed as a good will gesture to allow the developer to use the top part (the area that will become the village green) of the community site as a site yard.

**Resolution** – It was Agreed to sign the contract for Stage 4 works a total of £41,335.20k only payable if the Marden Village Trust received a positive outcome to their public meeting, in disposing of the Community Hall. Council was to note that of the £41,330.20, £6,200.00 has already been paid. The balance will be paid in three monthly instalments.

10.2 – Marden Links

10.2.1 – Hub activity update.

The HUB café remains well supported and the winter warmer lunch time opening offering soup and bread maybe extended. The HUB as now purchased the microwave along with soup bowls and spoons.

It does require 2 x electric heaters which are energy efficient at a cost of £385.00 each, a door ramp for wheelchair users at a cost of £240.00 and a handrail at a cost of £60.00.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed to purchase the 2 x energy efficient heaters, the door ramp and handrail.*

#### 10.2.2 – Repair Café Update.

The repair café continues to attract large number of customers to have their items repaired. To date 111 items have been repaired and only 15 items were unable to be repaired. Most of the items which could not be repaired were electrical, so it would be nice if there was an electrician who would be willing to spare a few hours to volunteer. The repair café continues to attract customer and volunteers from neighbouring parishes. The tool sharpening service is very busy sharpening everything from knives to shears. There is some concern that the sharpening service takes place outside, and with the bad weather approaching it would be nice to purchase a 3m x 3m gazebo at a cost of £120.00.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed to purchase a 3m x 3m gazebo at £120.00.*

#### 10.2.3 – Community Garden Update

- A. Fencing and raised bed quotes.
- B. Skip Hire

The community garden is moving forward, a working party had been arranged to clear the site, where a skip will be required. The timber quotes for the raised beds were looked at by the HUB working group and there was a favoured supplier. The clerk was asked to get a price for the fencing from the same supplier. There were concerns about the securing of the tools and gardening equipment, sheds and shipping containers were discussed, it was felt that a metal shipping container would be more secure.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed the clerk should arrange for a skip to be delivered to the HUB and to obtain quotes for the community garden fencing/raised beds. To get a quotes to purchase or hire a 20' shipping container to be used as secure storage.*

#### 10.2.4 – Environmental & Sustainability update

**Noted** – *The Environmental & Sustainability working group had not met.*

#### 10.2.5 – Volunteer event plan

The parish Council were going to holding a volunteer event to say “thank you” to the 32 current volunteers and partners who do so much within the parish and to hopefully attract new volunteers. There would be a cost to holding this event.

**Resolution** – *It was agreed to set a budget of up to £200.00.*

#### 10.3 – Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group

**Noted** – *Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group have not met, as the Herefordshire Local Plan 2021-2041 is currently at a ‘pause and review’ stage. The Neighbour Hood Development working group where informed of the delay and while it was agreed that limited progress could be made some working group members suggested developing missing policies. Councillors agreed that it would not be appropriate to continue further without input from Herefordshire Council given the uncertainty surround planning both at Government and Local Authority levels.*

#### 10.3.1 – Brownfield and an employment land availability Assessment.

The Herefordshire Council were looking for possible brownfield sites for development within the parish.

**Noted** – *That there were few brownfield sites within the parish.*

#### 10.4 – Financial Advisory Working Group

**Noted** – *The Financial Advisory Working Group had met and went through the accounts and presented the draft*

*budget to the Parish Council. It also said the Parish Council should publish the detailed accounts on a quarterly bases on the Parish Council website beginning in 2024 but would also publish the November accounts following this meeting.*

## **11. Community.**

### **11.1 – Drainage Improvements**

During the recent bad weather parts of the parish were closed off due to flooding and residents have complained about not being able to leave Marden. The main flooded areas were at Litmarsh which flooded right across the road. At Small Ashes, by the Old School House.

### **11.2 – Locality Steward**

The Locality steward general report had been sent to the clerk.

### **11.3 – Sutton Walls meeting 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

A short reported was given following the public meeting about Sutton Walls and the possible contamination issues. It was suggested that testing of the ground water and other areas on the site should be carried out by the surrounding parishes if this was to be moved forward.

### **11.4 – Request for a bench at the Volunteer bus stop.**

A letter had been received by a local resident about the possibility of siting a bench at the bus stop, next to the old Volunteer Pub. Following discussion by councillors it was noted that there were other benches across the road which could be used, plus the site mentioned was in private ownership and not in the ownership of the highway's authority.

**Resolution – (11.1) – It was agreed that the locality steward would be informed of the areas that flood to see whether anything could be done.**

**(11.2) – It was agreed that the clerk would send the Locality Stewards report to all the councillors on an ongoing basis.**

**(11.3) – It was agreed that the Parish Council would monitor the situation at Sutton Walls.**

**(11.4) - It was agreed that the clerk should write and explain the situation to the resident about why a bench could not be located at the site.**

## **12. Clerk Report.**

### **12.1 – Correspondence – Flooding Litmarsh**

This item had been discussed at item 11.1.

### **12.2 – Horse Sign - Update**

The clerk had dropped the sign off with the lengthsman for installation.

**Noted – The clerk's report was noted.**

## **13. Date of future Meetings**

The date of the next meeting will be 19.12.23.

## **14. Future Agenda Items or Clerk action under delegated authority.**

Nothing additional was mentioned.

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

## **15. Clerk's Annual Pay Award.**

NALC had sent thought the clerk's new national pay awards table, which had been agreed with NALC and the Clerk's union and that the new rate would be back dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> April or to when the clerk was employed if after this date.

## **16. Clerk's Six-Month employment review summary.**

The clerk had undertaken his six-month review with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Lynda Wilcox from HALC.

- Resolution –**
- *It was Approved that the Clerk's annual Pay Award be adopted.*
  - *It was Approved that the Clerk's pay scale would be increased from scale point 22 to scale point 26 upon receipt of his CiLCA qualification.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.30pm.



Signed:  
Chair of the Council

Date: 6 January 2024.