

Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 7.30pm at the Marden Community Centre.

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Clerk to the Council: Mr Richard James
Footpath Officer: Mrs Sally Postlethwaite
Members of the Public: 4

1. To receive Apologies.

To Note – Cllr Richard Paske apologies.

2. To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

To Note – There was no declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th March 24.

A question was asked to the Clerk from the Chair, if a Councillor left a meeting early did it have to be recorded in the minutes. The Clerk reported there was no legal requirement to do this.

Resolution – The minutes of the meeting held on 19.03.24 were adopted as a true record and then signed by the Chair.

4. Open Session.

Ward Member – *Cllr Peter Hamblin*
Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Hamblin.

Public Session.

Q1. – A resident said that the flooding within the Parish was worse than ever, and something urgently was needed. The BBC had interviewed some residents about these never-ending flooding problems.

A1. – The Chair reported that the Parish Council is committed in doing everything they can to get the flooding issues within the Parish address and sorted.

Q2. – A resident was concerned that the large vehicles going through the village and were breaking away the verges thus throwing mud over the road.

A2. – This has been mentioned to the Locality Steward and reported via the Clerk to the Head of Highways.

Q3. – A resident asked about a possible new location for a seat near the Volunteer PH.

A3. – this location was looked at by the Locality Steward and is deemed unsuitable and not safe.

Q4. – A resident asked when the Parish Council was taking over ownership of the Land for the New Parish Hall.

A4. – the hand over date had been moved due to the very bad weather as the agreement was when development was started on the site the land would be transferred.

Q5. – A resident ask what the project cost are for stages 5, 6, and 7 of the build of the new parish hall.

A5. – This was unknown as the tender had not been received but would be around 20% more

than the 2021 estimate.

Q6. – *When will the New Hall project be paid for and how.*

A6. – *It will be paid in stages, as set out in the tender document.*

Q7. – *A resident asked, what happens if the money from the sale of the old hall does not come through in time.*

A7. – *The Parish Council would have to look at commercial loans.*

Q8. – *When are the accounts going to be published on the website.*

A8. – *The end of year account will be on the website once the internal auditor has signed them off.*

5. Footpaths Officer Report & to consider actions.

The footpaths officer reported that the ideal budget for the works on the PROW network would be around £2500 + vat.

The footpaths officer then presented her report to the parish Council.

List of improvements to Footpaths for 2024

MR 8 - Ideally - 3 regular metal kissing gates - Improve wobbly kissing gate by a new wooden post, gate, and fence stake.

MR 25 - Balfour Beatty to improve steep bank the Sutton - St -Nicholas Road for safety reasons. (Need to check if funded by Highway budget)

MR 25 - Balfour Beatty to improve steep bank the Moreton - on - Lugg Road for safety reasons.

MR 20 - Landowner has been requested to stabilise the wobbly drain cover. They have offered to fill in the gully and plant grass seed once the weather improves.

MR 22 - Landowner will replace orange tape with stock fencing.

MR 22A - Landowners need to agree whether they need kissing gates to make a field stock proof, paperwork needs to be completed before proceeding.

Plank bridge has been totally submerged during the winter.

MR24 - Dead willow tree, next to a metal kissing gate, has a dangerous branch which needs removing by Landowner.

MR45 - 3 wooden stiles near Church are rotting. Landowners will repair as necessary.

To Note – *The report and draft amount were noted.*

6. Finance Matters.

6.1 - Financial Report

6.1a – Marden Accounts

6.1b – End of Year Accounts

6.1c – Marden Links Accounts

6.2 – Bank Accounts – 31.03.24

6.2a - Unity Main - £22,243.62

6.2b - Unity Marden Links - £589.96

6.2c - Unity Reserve - £51,515.02

6.3 - Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement – 2023/24

6.4 - Section 2 – Accounting Statement – 2023/24

6.5 – AGAR – Explanation of Variances

6.6 - Fixed Asset Register

6.6a – Fixed Asset Adjustment

Resolution –

(6.1a, b, c) – The accounts were Approved.

(6.2a, b, c) – The Bank account balances were noted.

(6.3) - Annual Governance Statement – 2023/24 was approved.

(6.4) - Accounting Statement – 2023/24 was adopted and approved.

(6.5) - AGAR – Explanation of Variances was adopted and approved.

(6.6) - Fixed Asset Register was adopted and approved.

The actual expenditure for the year v budget and the fixed asset register would be posted on the website along with the draft minutes.

7. Payments.

	Payments	Net	Vat	Total
7.1	Clerks Salary – March 24	As per Contract		
7.2	S Lewis – Electric – March 24	190.05	0.00	190.05
7.3	DC Gardening Services – SI-1821	245.00	49.00	294.00
7.4	PIP Printing – 76648 – News & Views	303.31	0.00	303.31
7.5	Marden Village Trust – Room Hire	45.00	0.00	45.00

Resolution – All the Payments were approved for payment.

8. Payments made under emergency policy and regular payments.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – April 24- Unity Bank	29.34	5.87	35.21
8.2	S/O	HUB Rent – April 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
8.3	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – April 24	15.00	0.00	15.00
8.4	D/D	O2 Mobile Phone – April 24	12.90	2.58	15.48
8.5	BACS	Marden Village Trust – Room Hire	60.00	0.00	60.00

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

9. Planning Enforcement – Update

- a) Pikestye Farm.
- b) Ashgrove Croft.

Resolution – Council agreed for the Clerk to speak with the ward member with regards to these issues.

10. Marden Parish Hall Working Group

The lead of the working group reported that the group had not met, and the tender would be going out soon.

To Note – The report was noted.

11. Working Group Reports.

11.1 - Marden Links

a) Hub activity update

The working group are looking into new grant funding, along with some smaller grants from Talk Community.

- The HUB Working Group is now going to meet every other month with the next meeting being on the 07.05.24.
- The Events Group have met and have scheduled several events throughout the year starting with the Race Night on the 27.04.24 and the Parish Fete on the 06.07.24.
- A huge thank you must go to Cllr Lesley Hayward for her running of the Sewing Workshop which was well attended and there are calls for more to take place.
- Internet access training and social awareness courses are going to be run at the HUB.
- A new web page is going to be added to the Marden Links website for the New Parish Hall project at a cost of £18.

- BIG HELP OUT is on 3rd – 9th June which would be a good time to kick start the community garden project.

Resolution – Council agreed to approve payment for the new web page and the report was noted.

b) Repair Café Update

The repair café continues to be well supported and remains in high demand, with new volunteers turning up from time to time. The cycle repair workshop was well attended and in the coming months will add additional services.

To Note – The report was noted.

c) Community Garden

The community garden has been in limbo of late due to boundary issue, which now seem to be worked out. It is now hoped the project will recommence in the forthcoming month.

To Note – The report was noted.

11.2 – Financial Advisory Working Group

The working group had met and went through the end of year accounts. The clerk informed the group he had not yet managed to complete all the training with regards to Scribe accounts software. The group decided to propose to Council, that Scribe be put on hold for 12 months.

Resolution – Council agreed to put scribe on hold for 12 months.

11.3 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Review Working Group

3 Councillors attended a presentation on the New Local Plan, in which they were informed that Marden was not having any new housing allocated in the New Local Plan. The smaller settlements around Marden are no longer settlements and will be classed as “Open Countryside”.

The full New Local Plan can be found on the Herefordshire Council website along with a questionnaire so residents can make comments. The Parish Council urges every resident to look at the new Plan and make comments. Consultation is open until the 20th May 2024.

Marden will have to review its plan to update the current NDP in the coming months. Depending on the current consultation outcome the working assumption is that the Marden NDP update will be planned for next year, i.e. in line with the Local Plan

To Note – The report was noted.

12. Community.

- 12.1 – Lengthsman Grant
- 12.2 – Drainage Grant
- 12.3 – Mud on Roads
- 12.4 – Blocked Drains & Flooding

The Clerk reported that all the paperwork for the Lengthsman Grant had now been sent to Herefordshire Council. The Clerk will apply for the Drainage Grant once the paperwork has been received. Due to all the recent bad weather, there has been loads of complaints about the mud on the roads which in turn block the drains. With nowhere for the rainwater to go, this is causing worse flooding in the areas which normally flood and new areas which have never flooded. The Clerk said would it not be better to talk directly to the local business and try and form a working relationship with the intention of opening better channels of communication.

Resolution – Council noted the reports and agreed for the Clerk to contact the Highways Authority, the

Ward Member and a local business which is contributing to the mud on the roads. It was also for the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the local business along with the ward member.

13. Community Communications.

The Parish Council have been looking at ways to communicate with the residents and local business with regards to things like, the New Parish Hall, the mud on the road, community events and Marden Links events. The Parish Council will look at the provision on a monthly Newsletter made available at the hub and local shops.

Resolution – Council agreed for *this to be an ongoing objective.*

14. Annual Parish Meeting

Discussion took place about the date and time of the Annual Parish Meeting.

Resolution – *Council agreed for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held at 6.30pm prior to the Annual Parish Council meeting on the 21st May at 7.30pm in the Community Centre. The Clerk was to ask for a representative of the West Mercia Police to address the Parish meeting.*

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm

Signed
Chair of the Parish Council