

Marden Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 21st May 2024 at 7.30pm
at the Marden Community Centre.

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Richard James (Clerk)
Sally Postlethwaite (Footpath Officer)
1 x Member of the Public.

1. To elect a Chair and for them to sign the Acceptance of Office.

The Clerk asked if there were any nominations for Chair.

Cllr Kate Ryan proposed Cllr David Bennett
Cllr Lesley Hayward seconded the proposal.

The Clerk asked if there were and other nominations,

The clerk asked if Council wanted a secret paper ballot or via a show of hands, Council agreed by a show of hands.

Resolution – The proposition was put to the vote and Cllr David Bennett was duly elected as the Chair and they signed the Acceptance of Office.

2. To elect a Vice Chair and for them to sign the Acceptance of Office.

The Chair asked if there were any nominations for Vice-Chair.

Cllr Chris Morgan proposed Cllr Kate Ryan
Cllr Richard Paske seconded the proposal.

The Chair asked if there were and other nominations.

The chair asked if Council wanted a secret paper ballot or via a show of hands, Council agreed by a show of hands.

Resolution – The proposition was put to the vote and Cllr Kate Ryan was duly elected as the Vice-Chair and signed the Acceptance of Office.

3. To receive apologies for absence.

To Note – *Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Blake, Cllr Paula Barrett*

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

To Note – *There were no declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.*

5. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th April 2024.

Resolution – *The Minutes were adopted by the Council and duly signed by the Chair as a true record.*

6. Open Session.

Ward Member - Cllr Peter Hamblin

To Note – *Cllr Peter Hamblin the Ward Member was not present on this occasion.*

Public Session.

Q1 – Asked what the insulation value within the new Parsi Hall will be.

A1 – The Chair reported that it will meet the new standards and if funding was available then additional insulation would be added.

Q2 – Would like to know what is going to be discussed under the Private and Confidential section on the agenda.

A2 – The Chair said it was of a confidential matter relating to the tender process.

Q3 – A member of the public noticed a couple of mistakes on the Asset register, namely a road numbering on two assets.

A3 – Chair thanked the parishioner; for pointing out the errors and the asset register will be amended.

7. Finance Matters.

7.1 - Unity Trust Bank Accounts as at 30th April 2024

- a) Main - £55,200.02
- b) Marden Links - £894.96
- c) Reserves - £51,515.02

7.2 - Bank Rec – April 24

7.3 - Budget Monitoring – April 24

7.4 - Transfer from Main Account to Reserve Account - £11,269.59

7.5 – Parish Council Insurance Renewal - £637.04

7.6 - HUB/Repair Café Insurance - £242.70

Resolution – *(7.1a, b, c) - The bank account statements were presented to the council and noted. (7.2) (7.3) – Were approved and signed by the Chair.*

(7.4) It was agreed to transfer £11,269.59 into the reserve account.

(7.5) (7.6) – It was agreed to pay the insurances, but the Clerk should first investigate on whether the Repair Café is covered under our present insurance. If this was not the case to see what it would cost to go ahead with the two required policies provided they did not together exceed the value of £1000.00.

8. Payments.

	Payment	Net	Vat	Total
8.1	Sara Lewis – HUB Electric - April	66.89	0.00	66.89
8.2	Clerks Expenses – April 23	134.19	5.20	139.39
8.3	Clerks Salary – May 23	As per Contract		
8.4	PIP – Printing	303.31	0.00	303.31
8.5	D C Gardening – SI-1852	380.00	76.00	456.00
8.6	Gallagher Insurance – 24-25	637.04	0.00	637.04

Resolution – Council agreed to pay (8.1) to (8.5). (8.6) it was agreed for the clerk to try and combine all the Councils policies into one policy up to the cost of £1000. If this could not be achieved, then to pay the normal renewal invoice.

Payments made under Emergency Policy.

		Payment	Net	Vat	Total
9.1	D/D	BT – Broadband & Phone – May 24	32.41	6.48	38.89
9.2	S/O	HUB Rent – May 24	450.00	0.00	450.00
9.3	S/O	Community Garden – Rent – May 24	15.00	0.00	15.00
9.4	D/D	O2 Mobile Phone – May 24	12.90	2.58	16.84
9.5	BACS	Bromyard Timber & Fencing – Community Garden	1099.10	219.82	1312.92
9.6	BACS	Worcester Containers – Community Garden	2495.00	499.00	2994.00

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

9. To Approve Policies.

- 10.1 - Standing Orders.
- 10.2 - Code of Conduct.
- 10.3 - New NALC Financial Regulations.

Resolution – (10.1) (10.2) were approved and adopted.
(10.3) It was agreed that the clerk would amend the new Financial Regulations inline with the Council present regulations and bring back to a future meeting.

10. Footpaths Officer Report

- 11.2 - To receive the footpaths officer report

Most of the footpaths are passable at present but the nettles will soon be covering the stiles, and the oilseed rape will be encroaching the paths so regular clipping and footfall will help. The most common comment is the lack of proper disposal dog mess. Research of pictorial stickers to put on public waste bins is in progress. Hopefully some examples will be available for comment.

1. Landowner on MR24 has removed the dead branch which was hanging over the kissing gate.
2. Confirmed that the Herefordshire Council Highway team will be involved in making the two steep slopes that lead to the road safer.
3. Results of the walk around S & A with the farm manager, drain cover on MR20 to be replaced and a couple of footplates to be strengthened.
4. Fallen branches on MR18A removed by landowner.
5. Plank bridge on MR22A is now fixed to the ground.
6. Meeting with the locality Steward, landowner and footpath officer. Footpath checked; vegetation removed from old rotten stile. Two new wooden stiles will be delivered to landowner and adaptations to unsafe stile have been agreed.

To Note – Council Noted the Footpath officer's report and thanked her for all the hard work which goes into keep the Parish PROW in tip top condition. There was no Tree Warden report on this occasion.

11. Planning.

12.1 – Enforcement

To Note – Council noted that enforcement was still looking into several breaches of planning.

12.2 - Planning determinations made by Herefordshire Council Planning Authority.

Planning application P240613/U had been Approved.

Planning application P240427/FH had been Approved with Conditions

To Note – Council noted the planning determination made by Herefordshire Council Planning Authority.

12. Working Group Reports.

13.1 - Marden Links

- a) HUB
- b) Repair Café
- c) Community Garden

Marden Links Parish Hub began in October 2022 offering a free, volunteer led community café for parishioners to meet and socialise. We received a start-up grant from Herefordshire Council with the primary aim of developing a supported internet access point for those without it at home, to ensure that no parishioner was digitally excluded, (the driver being the reduced level of information and support parishioners without home internet could access during Covid).

We use the Marden Links Parish Hub unit to meet in person. The rental being paid by the Parish Council, the utility bills are now paid from the generous donations made by the attendees. The hub continues to operate on 2 afternoons per week with an aspiration to offer more sessions as our volunteer base expands. The computer internet component remains an important function, but our experience is that the social aspect of the café is its most valued service.

A further service offered by other volunteers in our group, on an ad-hoc basis is, collecting prescription and shopping, taking to Hereford for appointments, assistance with home admin, D.I.Y. and gardening work etc. This is well utilised and an often-invisible service for which we, and the parishioners who benefit are immensely grateful.

The volunteer list is administered by an active and supportive WhatsApp group. New volunteers are very welcome.

The Repair Café was again started with a grant received from Herefordshire Council and is one of 6 running currently within Herefordshire (South Herefordshire (Dinedor), Marden, Leominster, Ledbury, Golden Valley & Archenfield (Llangrove)). We are part of the international repair café organisation and have adopted their ethos, management processes and structure. The aim is to prevent as much broken or damaged items from ending up in landfill, using local knowledge and skill to repair, and most importantly passing on repair skills to others. We are currently hampered by a lack of space for the Repair Café and have big plans to grow, develop and streamline as we are able. The first opportunity will be the delivery of a storage unit to be sited in the community garden. This unit will allow the safe, secure storage of tools and equipment for both repairs and loan to parishioners

Community Garden – This is slowly progressing and while little has been done in the last year other than clear the site of brambles and general rubbish parishioners will see some significant changes in the coming weeks and months as this project progresses.

To Note – Council noted that the reports were the same as presented earlier in the evening at the Parish Meeting.

13.2 - Financial Advisory Group

13.3 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Group.

To Note – (13.2) – Council noted that the Financial Advisory Group had meet and it was decided the accounts would now solely be the responsibility of the Clerk which would be in a new format. It also agreed to suspend the subscription to Scribe Accountancy Software for the time being.

To Note – (13.3) – Council noted that the NDP working group had not met yet, but once the results of the current consultation (Reg 18) on the New Local Plan had been made public the Parish Council would develop a plan to update its Neighbourhood Development Plan.

13. To Agree the Working Groups and Membership.

14.1 - Marden Links

Resolution – Council Agreed for the following Councillors to serve on the Marden Links Working Group were Cllr's Bennett, Ryan, Hayward and Blake.

14.2 - Neighbourhood Development Plan Group

Resolution – Council Agreed for the following Councillors to serve on the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group were Cllr's Bennett, Lees, Ryan and Paske.

14.3 - Financial Advisory Group

Resolution – Council Agreed for the following Councillors to serve on the Financial Advisory Group were Cllr's Bennett, Lees, Ryan and the Clerk.

14.4 - Marden Parish Hall

Resolution – Council Agreed for the following Councillors to serve on the Marden Parish Hall were Bennett, Morgan, Ryan, Blake and the Clerk.

14. Other Council Appointments

15.1 - Footpaths Officer

15.2 - Tree Warden

To Note – (15.1) - Council noted that Sally Postlethwaite our present footpaths officer would be happy to continue in this role for another year, but the Council do need to think of a replacement for when Sally retires.

To Note – (15.2) – The Clerk was to contact the tree Warden to see if they are happy to continue in this role.

15. Future Agenda Items or Clerk's action under delegated authority.

To Note – There were no items discussed.

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

16. Marden Parish Hall.

The Chair gave a brief update on the position of the new Parish Hall build. Tenders close on Monday 10th of June and a process of analysis will then be conducted by the Architect and Quantity Surveyor prior to the Parish Council review.

To Note – *Council noted this update.*

17. Lengthsman Contract.

The Clerk reported the Lengthsman had done sterling work over the previous 12 months and after speaking with the Lengthsman he was still happy to carry on at the same rate as before.

Resolution – *Council Agreed to re-appoint D C Gardening Services Ltd for another 12 months but to add one additional item, to keep the lines clear on Laystone bridge. With this small addition the Chair and the Clerk signed the contract.*

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Signed: Chair of the Council

Date: 18th June 2024