**MOSTERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**Draft Minutes of the Council meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 at the Village Hall**

The meeting commenced at 7.04 pm

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| **Item No.** | **Date: Tuesday, 10th January 2023** | **Action** |
|  | **Public Discussion of items on the agenda**  A resident suggested that agenda setting needed to take account of recent earlier meeting agendas and be structured to have the most significant and pressing issues dealt with first. For example, “Allotments” had been discussed early and for a significant amount of time in the past two meetings and was again at the top of the agenda today, yet did not affect a large majority of the village residents. The council will take account of the comments. | Council members |
|  | **Present and apologies, Declarations of Interest, Grants of Dispensation**  **Present:** Cllr. Robert Fry, Chair; Cllr. Chris Lamb and Cllr. Andrew House, with the Clerk and two members of the public in attendance.  **Apologies:** Cllr. Angela Bullock, illness. |  |
| **2023/001** | **Report from Local Ward Councillor, Dorset County Council**  Cllr. Knox sent apologies and a written report with a round up of issues which illustrated Dorset Council’s breadth of responsibilities. Adult Social Care continues to place significant pressure on the council, as with other county and unitary authorities. |  |
| **2023/002** | **Report from Representative of Dorset Police**  PCSO Alex Bishop sent apologies and a brief written report stating that there were no issues to report in relation to Mosterton, including at the play area and field, which he had visited on a number of evenings following earlier reports of disturbances. |  |
| **2023/003** | **Minutes from previous meetings**  The draft minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair. |  |
| **2023/004** | **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2022**  **Minute 2022/057 Allotment plots:** The Clerk reported that he had written to the 17 allotment plot holders regarding the arrangements for plot allocation in 2023-2024, starting in April, requesting a response by the end of January stating whether the plot holders intended to carry on with their plot into that financial year. 10 replies had been received so far, all to continue with their plots. The Clerk was asked to send a reminder mid-month to the remaining plot holders.  One plot holder, who was continuing, had queried the increase in fee to £25.00. After discussion, the council confirmed that the new fee would stand. The Clerk will inform the plot holder.  **Minute 2022/057 Village Newsletter/SIDs:** Bill Benge, attending, was thanked for successfully launching the first of the regular village newsletters. The next issue was due in May.  Responding to a query on the SIDS and a recent warning that SID equipment had been stolen from a nearby village, Mr Benge reported that the solar panel on the Southern end of the village SID was missing, that he was investigating this and would also obtain the costs of replacement. The Clerk was asked to report the missing device to the local PCSO, Alex Bishop.  **Minute 2022 Public Discussion: Contribution to Village Hall initiatives - Budget:** The Clerk reported that in the proposed 2023-2024 budget an amount had been included for donations. Cllr Lamb clarified that this issue concerned whether to set aside a budget for any group not only the Village Hall group, how much, whether to give this resource on a regular basis or not, what was the criteria to be and how groups were to make submissions for the funding. The item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.  **Minute 2022/058: Play Area Replacement Multiplay item:** The Clerk reported that he had been in communication with the suppliers, Wicksteed Ltd the previous week regarding the lack of contact from their installation team despite their earlier reference to *“contact within six to eight weeks*”, (which had ended in early December 2022), to arrange an installation date for the new item, and had still not heard from the team or contracts manager. The Clerk will contact them again by phone this week.  **Minute 2022/059: (a) New Noticeboard:** Cllr Fry reported that the noticeboard was ready and that following an inspection of the ground area for positioning the new noticeboard would be put in place in the next week or two. The arrangements for charging for advertising on the reverse of the new noticeboard will be discussed at the next meeting; the Clerk will place on the agenda.  **Minute 2022/059: (b) General Village Maintenance:** is on the agenda  **Minute 2022/059: (c) Church Access Way Land:** Dorset Council had written to the Clerk in response to the query on ownership, stating that (i) the piece of land was unregistered at the Land Registry, (ii) it was not owned by Dorset Council and therefore, (c) Dorset Council is not responsible for resurfacing. This response had been passed back to the PCC via Grham Fry. There was little the parish council could do. Sharon Brown, attending, said that she would also report back to the PCC.  **Minute 2022/059 (d) Play Area CCTV:** is on the agenda.  **Minute 2022/059: (e) Trees for the Jubilee (2022) and Coronation (2023):** is on the agenda  **Minute 2022/061: Budget:** is on the agenda.  **Minute 2022/062: Insurance:** The Clerk confirmed that the fixed assets of the council were covered by the insurance policy and that although there were no council premises, references within the policy to premises reflected any premises that might hold council property, such as the manual records. The Clerk will contact the insurer to ensure that all assets including the new Village Green Hamstones, are covered appropriately, both for their value and for public liability.  **Minute 2022/066 Reviewing the Policies:** is on the agenda. | Clerk  Clerk  Bill Benge  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Clerk  Sharon Brown  Clerk |
| **2023/005** | **Allotments:**  The discussion took place under Matters Arising. |  |
| **2023/006** | **Finance Report:**  The clerk had previously circulated the report and now tabled copies. For this meeting, the third quarter (October to December inclusive) 2022 bank reconciliation was included with the opening and closing bank balances reconciling with the period’s payments and receipts. Total payments for the quarter were £3,003.67, including the cost of the new noticeboard, to be put in p[lace opposite the shop very shortly. Receipts were just £4.63 in interest received on the Bank Amenities Account. The total balances at the bank were £43,663.49. Following discussion, the report was accepted by the Council. |  |
| **2023/007** | **Budget and Precept Setting for 2023-24**  The Clerk as RFO presented a report which combined the third quarter budget monitor with a projected 2022-2023 year-end total spend against the main expenditure headers and from that a draft budget for 2023-2024 financial year.  (a) **The 3rd quarter budget monitor** showed a total spend of £2,952.53 for the quarter October to December inclusive 2022 against the *notional,* (set after the start of the financial year as no clerk was in post until late April), full year budget of £14,295.00, compared with spends of £4,631.53 and £8,245.88 respectively in the first and second quarters of the year.  (b) **The projected full year spend** was £18,998.88 against the same full year budget, with the overspend mostly being due to the unplanned costs of securing the village green (purchase of Hamstones, gate and padlock) against future incursion after the 10-day traveller group occupation in May/June 2022, with significant clear-up work being undertaken free of charge by volunteers from the village.  (c) **The draft budget for 2023-2024** had been derived by taking a 10% increase on actual 2022-2023 spend to most of the known areas of expenditure, with several items being more specifically estimated, notably the cost of the new replacement multi-play item for the play area, at a total cost of £24,857.81 (including VAT recoverable from HMRC in the following financial year), which was on order at the time of the meeting and could yet still be delivered, erected and paid off in the current financial year, which, if so, would require a later budget 2023-2024 adjustment. The total 2023-2024 expenditure, otherwise, would be £35,723,81, well above previous years due to this item, but for which grants had been previously received and monies set aside for this purpose. With a projected balance on 1st April 2023 in the bank operating account of £28.106.21, subtracting the total budgeted costs for the 2023-24 year, above, would leave a deficit balance of £7,617.60, to be covered by part of the 2023-2024 precept income. A contingency to cover unforeseen spend is also needed and a significant balance at the end of the year to take into 2024-2025, to avoid the need for a substantial increase in the precept for that year. In retaining the Amenities account balance of £12,220.00 as a reserve, it was suggested that the precept for 2023-2024 be set at £14,295, the same rate as for 2022-2023; this will meet the DAPTC advice not to increase the precept if avoidable and will leave £6,677.40 for contingencies and carry forward into 2024-2025.  (d) **Precept**: A precept of £14,295.00 was therefore proposed by Cllr Fry, seconded by Cllr Lamb and agreed by all members present. The Clerk was asked to return the precept request form to Dorset Council for the Mosterton precept to be set at £14,295.00 before the deadline on 31st January 2023. | Clerk |
| **2023/008** | **Risk Assessment – Business Continuity**  The Clerk reported that this item had been considered over the past two meetings and resulted from the internal audit carried out in June 2022. The main Risk Assessment document had been adopted, subject to an addendum on business continuity, specifically the risk of having no clerk for a lengthy period of time. At the November meeting, it was agreed that council members could take on a shadow role for one of the main aspects of the clerking post, which were: Communication, Finance and Meetings. The council member would need to spend a little time to understand the essential elements within each, for example: (a) the need to respond to correspondence (almost all by email) as necessary, within a limited period of time, perhaps 3 days for an urgent item and 10 days for other communications requiring response; (b) the need make regular payments within invoice time limits using the bank operating account and to record these and income received in a timely manner in the cashbook current year Excel spreadsheet expenditure tab on the council’s laptop and to present an accounts summary, bank reconciliation and budget monitor at least quarterly at the council meetings; (c) the need to undertake most or preferably all of the six regular meetings of the parish council in a year, including an AGM on one of those occasions, to meet the requirements to continue as a functioning council.  At present, the member covering finance, essential for the RFO role of the Clerk, would have to be one of the two members who are signatories for online banking (a third member is a signatory for cheques, as also are the two mentioned above).  Communication could be undertaken currently by the vice chair, who oversaw this role previously in the absence of a clerk for six months.  It was agreed to consider this finally at the next meeting under “Matters Arising”. | Council members |
| **2023/009** | **Various Items for Discussion**  **(a) Village maintenance** – The choice was to advertise a contract for this work or to accept the offer by a resident, Jamie Ayers, to oversee a volunteer task force to undertake a modified version of the contract. It was agreed to accept the latter and the Clerk was asked to notify Mr Ayers accordingly.  **(b) Church Access Way** – dealt with under Matters Arising  **(c)** **CCTV in the Play Area** – The Clerk had checked the current legislation and guidance and confirmed that it was legally acceptable to have CCTV surveillance cameras in areas where children might be present. He had already found three examples of parish councils which had such cameras in place which covered play areas, via an internet search. Amongst the detail, the government guidance stresses that the emphasis is on:  (a) having a good reason for needing such cameras - using cameras to monitor an area where there have been significant reports over time of vandalism, littering, possible illegal use of drugs and alcohol in the area and excessive shouting and noise late at night - might be considered a sound reason.  (b) operating the system under strict rules, including deleting images as soon as possible and having very few people involved in operating the systems.  The Clerk had then contacted one supplier to discuss what was in involved in addition to the costs of cameras and monitoring equipment. Groundworks might be needed, for example to set up poles for the cameras and/or ducts for wiring to a building, with the costs relating to power source also to be taken into account, either solar panels, special batteries or cables to the mains. The average cost quoted was £16,000, although the Clerk had found one council had put in a system for £13,000 (in 2018).  The Clerk was asked to investigate further and to obtain three (non-chargeable) quotations, keeping the members informed of progress.  **(d) Tree to Commemorate the 2023 Coronation of King Charles III –** Following discussion, the members agreed that only one tree was needed, for the King’s Coronation later in the year, and decided not to proceed with a retrospective tree for the late Queen’s Jubilee in 2022. It was agreed that a fairly well-developed Cherry Tree would be appropriate and the Clerk was asked to source the tree from a local supplier such as Groves or Ashridge. Planting could be undertaken with a small ceremony at the time of the Coronation. | Clerk  Clerk  Clerk |
| **2023/010** | **Annual Review of Policies 2022-2023**  Other than the Financial Risk Assessment Policy, which had been re-written, re-named Risk Assessment and approved separately for 2022-2023, seven of the eight other policies were also approved for the current year, 2022-2023:   * Child Protection Policy * Data Breach Policy * Data Protection Policy * Mosterton Parish Council Standing Orders * Records Retention * Social Media * Subject Access Request Procedure   Additionally, the Code of Practice for Parish Councillors had been revised by the government in 2021 and this version was adopted for 2022-23, replacing the current Code of Conduct based on the government’s 2011 edition.  The Clerk will update the policies accordingly and place them on the website. | Clerk |
| **2023/011** | **Planning Report**  There had been no applications needing parish council comment since the last meeting on 8th November 2022. For notification only, one application had been made on 28/11/2022 and since approved, regarding additional private farm tracks for agricultural use (Pickett Farm). |  |
| **2023/012** | **Correspondence Report:** The Clerk had previously circulated and now tabled a copy of the Correspondence Report on village-specific correspondence since the last meeting, both sent and received (and not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda). The Clerk was asked to report the broken road sign at Fairoak Way to Dorset Highways and to post up the Dorset Council Social Services fostering flier as appropriate. | Clerk |
|  | **Public Discussion of Items:** No items were discussed |  |

The meeting closed at 8.34pm.

**Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall**