

MESHAW PARISH MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.30PM AT MARIANSLEIGH PARISH HALL, OXHAM CROSS

Present: Mr J Souch (Chairman) and Mrs S Vertigan (Parish Clerk)

In Attendance: Angus Cottey, Joy Cottey, Roger Creed, Celia Lerner, Gordon Lerner, Lorna Nott, Trevor Olver, Brendan Shaw, Jill Souch, Kevin Steele, Mary Tait, Norman Vertigan, Briony Wild, Geoff Wild

Apologies: There were no apologies for absence

1. Introduction to the new Parish Clerk, Sarah Vertigan

The Chairman, having introduced Sarah Vertigan to those at the meeting, also took this opportunity to propose that the Bank Mandate may be amended to remove Angela Avens (the previous Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer) and add Sarah Vertigan as the new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The proposal was seconded by Roger Creed.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 24 April 2017

The Parish Clerk distributed the minutes of the last meeting and, after allowing those who had been at the last meeting to read them, the Minutes were duly proposed by Brendan Shaw and seconded by Joy Cottey to motion that these be signed as a true record. The Chairman duly signed the minutes.

3. Report of the Audit Commission

On behalf of the Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman reported that a notice had been posted on the Village Noticeboard from 3 October until 26 November 2017 informing members of the public that the accounts were available for public scrutiny but that no one had asked to see them.

The Chairman reported that the Audit Commission had approved the accounts for 2016/17 but had made a recommendation that due to the fact that the Parish Meeting is still holding 15 times more funding than we currently receive, we should consider reducing this in future. However, after some discussion, it was agreed that since we may be requiring extensive funds if the planned community use of the church comes to fruition we would look at the situation at the next meeting.

4. Accounts for the year 2017-to date

The Chairman explained to the Meeting how the income from the NDDC was arrived at:
Parish Grant: was for cutting verges and the grave yard and was based on the number of people on the Electoral Roll, which was 154 and it is therefore paid at £2 per head, making a total of £308 per annum

Precept: comes out of everyone in the parish's council tax – therefore if this is to be increased it would have a slight impact on the amount of council tax everyone pays

Grant Assistance: this was a rebate that the NDDC agreed to give and it decreases each year and will eventually cease

The Chairman then ran through the payments that had been made already and were due to be made before the year end.

Angus Cottey raised a question regarding the Grant being given to Mariansleigh Parish Hall each year. The Chairman explained the background to this and advised the Meeting that he

would not be asking to make this payment for the next financial year due to the fact that there were items that the Parish Meeting would like to spend the funds on and which will be discussed in detail later in the Meeting.

5. Budget for 2018/19

The Chairman had already explained how the Income was arrived at so he ran through the expenditure that would be envisaged in the next financial year.

Audit £200 – the Chairman explained that this would most probably not be required since our income and expenditure would not exceed £25,000 and therefore we would be exempt from this fee.

Community News (£35), Chairman's expenses (£50), Clerk's expenses (£50) – no issues

Website £75 – Kevin Steele explained that this figure covered the cost of the domain name, hosting facility, email addresses and the blocking of advertising banners. After some discussion, it was agreed that this should go ahead.

Hall hire (£30) – agreed

Mariansleigh Parish Hall Grant (£500) – the Chairman indicated that he would not be seeking approval for this since it is intended to replace the Village Noticeboard in the next year. This was met with approval from everyone present.

New village noticeboard (£1000) – everyone agreed that there was a need for a new noticeboard and the Chairman explained that, after a discussion with Jeremy Yabsley, it would appear that if MPM raised £500, JY was in a position to approve a Community Council Grant of £500.

Burial Ground £308 – the Chairman explained that this is paid to the PCC and ultimately paid to the Young Farmers to maintain the Churchyard. He pointed out that it had been difficult to carry out regular maintenance in the latter half of this year due to the inclement weather and he asked Lorna Nott to enquire what is happening going forward. She agreed to report back in due course.

Christmas Tree Lights £25 – this figure has been put aside to reimburse Celia Drummond who very kindly agrees to run the lights from her home. Celia raised the point that the current lights were not working properly last year so it was agreed that Angus Cottey would spend up to £100 on some new lights on behalf of the Parish Meeting. This was proposed by Mary Tait and seconded by Lorna Nott. Angus also advised that the tree would be cut and erected at 10am on 8th December and Brendan Shaw and Jeff Souch agreed to assist him. The Budget therefore to run the Parish remained at a similar level to this existing year plus the provision of the Website at £75. The expenditure on a new Village Notice Board would come out of funds held by MPM that would have been given to Oxham Hall.

6. Matters Arising:

6.1 North Devon Community Fund – Known as the TAP Fund. We have not approached NDDC in respect of any award and have not supported any other Parish this financial year. The Fund is still available and may be able to help MPM in future developments proposed with the Parish.

6.2 Batsworthy Cross Wind Farm Community Fund – the Chairman explained that this Fund was worth approximately £82k p.a. for 25 years to 10 Parishes in the surrounding area, Meshaw being one. He was therefore hopeful that if the project to enable the Church to be used as a community hub went ahead, it would be very likely that some of the funds would come from this Fund.

6.3 Planning Applications to date – there were 3 planning applications in the period between April and November 2017 primarily for extensions to existing buildings but none were contentious and therefore no objections were raised.

6.4 Traffic issues within the Parish – during the summer a traffic census was carried out in the village and the results which came back confirmed an average speed of 28 mph, therefore the village does not qualify for any traffic calming measures. Added to which there have been no reported accidents in the last 5 years.

The Chairman mentioned that a vehicle had driven through his hedge at Gidley Cross on Monday 20 November and Angus Cottey confirmed that it happened at around 10.30pm when a vehicle travelling from Witheridge to Meshaw had to avoid a car crossing from Rose Ash to Chumleigh. It was not known if anyone had been injured.

It was reported that the hedges of one particular property had been chopped right back in the centre of the village and it was agreed that it had increased the road width considerably.

Trevor Olver raised an issue about the drainage – the Chairman reported that only part of the drainage issue had been resolved and that he was still addressing the problem with the Devon Highways department.

The Chairman and the Parish Clerk had attended a seminar given by Devon Highways earlier in the month at which they learned that it might be possible to run a Road Warden scheme if the condition of the side roads became unbearable but it was felt that it required too much work to adopt it just now.

However, the Chairman has signed up for the Snow Warden scheme and he and Angus Cottey have kindly offered to monitor the scheme, whereby Meshaw will receive 50 tons of salt which can be distributed if the weather requires it. For information, there are 2 bins on Southdown Hill, 2 bins at Parsonage Farm and 1 bin in the village square. Other drop off points can be identified if the need arises.

6.5 Neighbourhood Watch report – the two representatives, Kevin Steele (southern half of the village) & Roger Creed (northern half of the village) had nothing to report. The Chairman asked them if they were in receipt of the regular police reports, to which they answered no. Therefore it was agreed that the Parish Clerk would forward these reports to both Kevin and Roger when they were received.

6.6 Village website – as previously discussed, it was unanimously agreed that Kevin Steele was to go ahead and purchase the domain name and progress the website over the next year and see how it performed.

6.7 Update on St John the Baptist, Meshaw, Community Hub Project – PCC have agreed to go ahead with a feasibility study, the cost of which we believe will be covered by grant assistance. There are various organisations which may be willing to help, such as Devon Communities Together, National Lottery Awards for All, Community Council Grant and Devon Community Foundation. Kevin Steele raised the matter of the funds formerly held by the Trustees of the Meshaw Village Hall fund and wondered if as we had our own Hall/Church project could MPM ask for them back. The Chairman advised that this was not possible as those funds were paid across to Mariansleigh Parish Hall at a time when Meshaw had no plans for a hall of its own and those funds were allocated to make Hall improvements. A new opportunity had now arisen with available funding from a different source and that is the path the Village should take. It was still envisaged that MPM would like to continue to use Oxhall Hall given the size and facilities available for meetings and functions and any Church/Village project would take time and was unlikely to replace Oxham Hall completely.

7. Any Other Business:

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.12hrs.