

Minutes of Mersham Parish Council
Meeting held on Monday, 20th November 2023 in the Church room at St John the Baptist Church

Present	Gavin Murphy (Chair)	Peter Hawkins
	Gill McBarnett	Donna Pearson
	Stewart Ross	Melanie Wells

In attendance: Cllr Bartlett and Tracey Block (Clerk)

To be actioned by:

<p>To receive and approve apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Stewart. These apologies were approved.</p>	
<p>To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.</p> <p>Cllr Wells noted a personal interest in the Inland Border facility as a family member works on the site and a personal interest in the Village Hall.</p> <p>Cllr Hawkins declared a personal interest in planning application: PA/2023/1478</p>	
<p>To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 16th October 2023</p> <p>Minutes of the Meeting of Mersham Parish Council on 16th October 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.</p>	
<p>To discuss matters arising from previous minutes not covered by the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman is to communicate with Mr Burles to explain that the Parish Council will support Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council.</p> <p>The Clerk had not been able to obtain a bin from Ashford Borough Council for Blind Lane area. It was agreed that the Parish Council would place bins at the correct locations and hope that ABC would take on the emptying of these in due course.</p>	
<p>To receive report from Borough Councillor</p> <p>A detailed report had been circulated; a copy can be found on the website: http://www.mershampc.org.uk/community/mersham-parish-council-18392/borough-cllr-reports/</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There had been no activity regarding the resurfacing of the car park at Oaklands. -The Government have confirmed that the IBF will be available for Environment Food Checking, all checks of this type are now down to Ashford Borough Council. -A planning application is expected from HMRC to roll over the existing permission from 2025 onwards. The Application will be decided by Ashford Borough Council. Residents near the IBF are being asked to diarise the issues they have so that conditions can be requested and imposed. <p>The IBF will be only checking that VAT is being correctly accounted for by calling in random consignments for checking. The current Government believe that all of these checks will be able to be undertaken remotely.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett was asked if this would address the lighting. This is unlikely to change.</p> <p>Cllr Bartlett asked what was happening on Finberry regarding the HML issues. Cllr Bartlett explained that ABC is looking at legal options.</p>	

<p>Public Session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item</p> <p>There were no public in attendance.</p>	
<p>To receive any update regarding the creation of a green buffer zone in High Field/IBF</p> <p>There was no further update on the High Field/IBF.</p>	
<p>To receive an update on the Highways Improvement Plan</p> <p>There was no further update on the Highways Improvement Plan</p>	
<p>Parish Council Objectives for this administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at renting on a long-term rent the car park area near the shop. PC waiting for ownership to be established. - Look into using the cut and cover Cllr Murphy is to discuss at the next meeting. - Create an environmental policy The Parish Council now has a current Environmental Policy. 	
<p>To resolve the Parish Councils position regarding the land near the shop</p> <p>Cllrs Murphy and Wells had met with the registered land owner. She needs to take legal advice. When the ownership issues are resolved the PC will consider the issue again.</p> <p>The footpath demarcation was discussed. The Clerk is to contact the PROW regarding this.</p>	
<p>The Village Shop – statement</p> <p>A statement from the shop tenants was read.</p> <p>There was a discussion as to whether the PC could do anything to help save this vital asset.</p>	
<p>To agree actions regarding a Christmas Tree</p> <p>A tree has been ordered and some lights purchased. Volunteers are required to assist with putting the tree up.</p> <p>Resolved: Clerk to instigate the payment for the purchase tree Clerk to instigate the payment for the purchase of lights Contact insurance company to ensure the tree is insured.</p>	
<p>To receive an update on the Village Hall</p> <p>Cllr Wells had previously circulated an update on the Village Hall. Cllr Wells thanked Cllr Bell for the grant money awarded to the Hall.</p>	
<p>Planning matters: to authorise a response to any application(s) and to note any recent planning decisions by Ashford Borough Council or any correspondence on planning matters.</p> <p>a) The following applications required comments: Application PA/2023/1916 received a no objection response Application PA/2023/1855 received a no objection response Application PA/2023/1860 received a no objection response Application PA/2023/1897 received a no objection response Application PA/2023/1478 received a no objection response, but wonder if applicant would consider a 6ft fence for aesthetic reasons and to fit in with the immediate area</p>	

Financial matters:

a) To approve the following financial documents:

1. To note the Parish Council's financial position.

The Parish Council has £28205.55 in the bank.

2. To authorise any payments

Cheque No:	Payee	Amount
OLT	HMRC	£ 170.40
OLT	I King (November salary)	£ 136.50
OLT	T Block (November Salary)	£ 359.63
OLT	Direct 365 – defib signs for kiosk	£ 104.70
OLT	Expenses	£ 72.46
OLT	I King (December salary)	£ 176.50
OLT	T Block (December Salary)	£ 546.83

3. To agree the budget for 2024-25

The Parish Council approved the draft budget for 2024-25.

4. To agree the precept for 2024-25

The Parish Council approved to precept for £25106.00 for 2024-25.

A copy of the budget v expenditure was distributed to all Councillors.

Any Other Business

Cherry Glebe cutting was discussed. Following Social media reports, the site was checked and the Caretaker was correct in his summary that worm casts had smeared the grass. It has now cleared following the rain.

The Parish Council will not respond to social media posts.

The Parish Council has reported the building at Quarry View and they will maintain them.

The tree festival is taking place on 2nd and 3rd December from 11am - 3.30pm

Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

Monday 15th January 2024
Monday 18th March 2024

Monday 19th February 2024
Monday 15th April 2024