

BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on
9th August 2022 in the committee room of Boughton Monchelsea
village hall pursuant to notice, commencing at 7.30pm**

Present:

Cllrs S. Munford (Chairman)
A. Humphryes
I. Ellis
R. Martin
C. Jessel
R. Roome
R. Garland
R. Edmans
L. Date

Parish Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following members :
Cllrs Skinner, Wilde, Brown, Stevens, Smith and Redfearn

2. Filming of meetings : Request for notification of whether any person intends to film, photograph or record any item

No person expressed any intention of filming, photographing or recording any item.

3. Notification of late items for inclusion on the agenda

No late items.

4. Standing Order 61: To decide whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for any item

No excluded items.

5. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda / Declaration of Changes to the Register of Interests / Requests for Dispensations

As BMAT trustees, all members except Cllr Munford declared an interest in any item relating to BMAT and were given dispensation to vote.

It was noted that Cllrs Humphryes, Martin and Garland were trustees of the village hall and recreation ground charity. It was agreed that these Councillors should take a full part in the meeting and vote on items relating to the village hall.

6. Discussion items :

Cllr Munford gave a brief overview of phase 1 of the planned village hall remodelling work and noted that changes to the previously approved Parish Council budget would be required in order to fund it.

6.1 Parkwood Farm reservoir – update

Cllr Edmans noted that the Parish Council had agreed at a previous meeting to decommission the reservoir, i.e. reduce its capacity to below 25,000m³ to avoid falling within the requirements of the Reservoir Act. Funds had been set aside in the budget for this purpose but the Act had recently changed, meaning any reservoir over 10,000m³ would now fall within it. Reservoir consultants Binnies were not supportive of reducing the reservoir below 25,000m³ so would definitely not accept reducing it below 10,000m³. It was noted that although the Parish Council had previously agreed not to operate the reservoir, it was available to be used by other agencies, if required. The reservoir is currently fully compliant with the Reservoir Act, is fully insured and if required, could be operated by a third party. It has also recently had its 10 year inspection.

It was noted that £26,729.76 in restricted funds had been received from Countryside in February 2021 as a unilateral agreement but the money had already been spent on the reservoir by the Parish Council, prior to the payment arriving. In other words, a financial contribution was made towards money the Parish Council had already spent. It was therefore noted that there would be no problem in releasing the remaining sum from this 'restricted fund' into another budget head, if agreed later in the meeting.

6.2 Landscape management plan actions – update

It was noted that £20,000 had been allocated in the 22/23 budget for actions relating to the landscape management plan. Cllr Humphryes advised that no progress had been made on these actions as Councillors were busy working on other projects such as the village hall redevelopment. Any decision later in the meeting to move money from this budget head would not result in the project being scrapped, just delayed.

7. Decision items :

7.1 Village hall remodelling update. Discuss and agree phased approach including approval for the Parish Council to fund phase 1 works

Cllr Humphryes had produced an update report which was circulated to members in advance of the meeting. He added that due to rising interest rates and future precept uncertainties it was proposed to carry out the hall remodelling work in phases rather than commit to the full project scope at this time. Phase 1 works would comprise :

- Purchase and installation of heat pump and cooling system for the main hall, allowing decommissioning of the old heating system and out-dated gas boiler
- Purchase and installation of solar panel system, comprising 40 roof mounted photo voltaic panels and battery storage system along with EV charging points. This should supply enough electricity for 8 to 10 months of the year as well as generating the power needed to run the new heat pump system
- Cavity wall insulation
- Small extension to the hall to accommodate childrens' toilets and a storage room, accessed from the main hall
- Additional kitchen facilities to facilitate a small café in the foyer area

Cllr Humphryes noted that, based on recent bills and rising prices, the estimated cost of gas and electric for this year would be £12,000. He added that when the above work was complete, the hall should be self-sufficient, energy wise, for around 9 months of the year.

It was noted that the cost of carrying out phase 1 of the project was anticipated to be no more than £150,000. Budgeted funds currently stand at £50,000 therefore it would be necessary to move £100,000 from other budget heads as well as moving money to top up the Parish Council's reserves.

Cllr Humphryes noted that phase 2 of the project would come in at a later date, when the Parish Council could be more certain about borrowing the required funds.

Cllr Date queried the village hall's own finances. Cllr Humphryes advised that the hall is currently running at a small profit. He added that profits will increase once the systems are updated, with the possibility of selling any surplus energy produced.

Cllr Munford proposed that the Parish Council agree to a phased approach to the village hall remodelling, as explained by Cllr Humphryes. Seconded by Cllr Edmans and agreed by all members.

7.2 Revised Parish Council budget – discuss and approve

In order to give members information on the Parish Council's current financial status, the clerk had produced a bank reconciliation and budget monitoring report dated 2nd August 2022. These documents were included in members' agenda papers.

The clerk noted that the following changes to the approved 22/23 budget would need to be made to achieve the required £150,000 in the hall refurbishment budget head :

- Move £20,000 from landscape management plan budget head to village hall refurb budget head
- Move £10,000 from cyclical repairs budget head to village hall refurb budget head
- Move £10,000 from restricted funds / reservoir works budget head to village hall refurb budget head
- Move £6,143.70 from restricted funds / reservoir works budget head to reserves
- Move £1,500 from noticeboard replacement budget head to reserves
- Recall the £60,000 currently on loan from the Parish Council to BMAT. Terms of the loan dictate that it is repayable on demand

Based on the above changes and with the existing £50,000 in the village hall refurb budget head this would give the total required funds of £150,000 to fund phase 1 of the village hall remodelling work.

The clerk advised that the above changes would leave the Parish Council with reserves of £41,622.52 based on start of financial year figures, or £40,282.52 in actual terms, based on reserve spending of £1,340 so far this year. She noted that there were no rules about reserves but good practice dictates that typical reserves

should be between 3 and 12 months expenditure and should not be significantly higher than the annual precept. It was noted that £40,000 is approximately 38% of the 22/23 precept which would leave the Parish Council in a sensible financial position for the remainder of the year.

Cllr Munford proposed that the above changes to the budget be accepted. Seconded by Cllr Roome and agreed by all members.

It was noted that village hall refurbishment quotes (exclusive of VAT) had been obtained as follows :

- Solar energy work £36,551.61 (25% of this to be paid prior to work starting)
- Heating / air conditioning system £13,900
- Cavity wall insulation £6,600

Cllr Humphryes advised that he had gone out to 7 companies for the solar energy works but only 1 had quoted. As such, members did not feel it was reasonable or practical to delay the project by going out to tender for this work package.

Cllr Munford proposed that the above three quotes be accepted. Seconded by Cllr Ellis and agreed by all members.

CLERK

Cllr Humphryes advised that the internal work associated with the above would be carried out during the remainder of the playgroup summer holiday, while the hall was vacant.

Cllr Jessel suggested that a before and after carbon footprint be calculated for the hall and agreed to carry out this work.

CLLR JESSEL

7.3 Lyewood Biodiversity Net Gain project – discuss and approve initial fencing work to facilitate opening of footpath running parallel to Green Lane

The clerk advised that a quote for £4,880.70 (excluding VAT) had been obtained for supply and installation of stock fencing parallel to Green Lane which would allow the new footpath behind the hedge to be opened. The quote also included gates and a small section of post and rail fence to secure the site in the vicinity of the existing temporary metal gates. Cllr Munford proposed that the above quote be accepted. Seconded by Cllr Jessel and agreed by all members. The clerk advised that the contractor would be able to carry out this work during late September.

8. Any other Business

Cllr Ellis thanked Cllrs Humphryes, Smith and Martin for all their hard work on the village hall remodelling project.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Scheduled for Tuesday 6th September 2022 at 7.00 pm in Boughton Monchelsea village hall.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm.