

Laura Yates (Clerk to Moulton Parish Council)

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***Minutes of the meeting of Moulton Parish Council
held on Monday 18th January 2021 at 6.00 pm – remote meeting held via Zoom***

Present:

Chairman David Almond (Chairman)
Vice Chair Mark Price (Vice Chair)
Cllr Ryan Bragg
Cllr Ed Chambers
Cllr David Clarke
Cllr John Derry
Cllr Jane Horsnell
Cllr Tim James
Cllr Douglas James

In attendance

- Laura Yates (Clerk to Moulton Parish Council)
- Cllr Andy Drummond (SCC)
- Cllr Roger Dicker (WSDC)

Four members of the public present including John Ford (MPC Planning Working Group)

1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

No Apologies were received. Mark Price, Vice Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest in item XXX as he is a member of the Vets Football Club

2. Members of the public are invited to speak briefly on any Agenda item

No comments were made

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2020 to be approved as a true record

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting would be approved and accepted as a correct and true record, including the amendment relating to the licence for classes. These should not be held at the top end of the playing field, near the road opposite the PO Stores, or in close proximity to the play equipment

4. COVID Updates

Rookery Medical Centre in Newmarket has begun the first batch of vaccinations. They are planning to carry out the vaccine appointments three days a week. Councillors were pleased to see the vaccines were being rolled out. Doctors are sending out letters to patients inviting them to receive the vaccine.

5. Report County Councillor Andy Drummond

Andy Drummond sent a written report prior to the meeting which had been circulated. There was nothing new to report. In Cllr Drummond's opinion the elections will go ahead in May 2021. All locality funding has been allocated and currently there is no available budget to put towards any of MPC's previous requests (Highway Surveys and the playing field shelter/seating).

a) Update on B1085 – safe walkable route and speed restriction

There was nothing further to report. An impasse has currently been reached with the Highways Authority who were still not prepared to authorise a speed restriction along the whole length of the B1085 from the School to the 30 mph limit at the Kentford parish boundary.

b) Parking on Bridge Street by the church - congestion/social distancing and damage to the grass verge

It was acknowledged that the village will always attract a number of visitors, but councillors would like to direct visitors to where they can park suitably/safely. A quote of £12 per sign was received from Impress Signs previously contracted for Council work, for 'do not park on the grass' signs.

There was some concern about putting signs up in the village, questions were raised about location, and also if parking was restricted where else would people park?

It was suggested that an alternative solution could be the planting of some trees along Brookside, however overhead cables could be a problem. It was also agreed that the issue of visitors parking in Moulton could be temporary, and likely to be resolved once the Covid pandemic is over, without the need for any action by MPC.

It was resolved that some hard core would be put down to stabilize the grass surface on the riverbank along Brookside by the Church, some signs would be purchased the damaged area cordoned off. Cllr Douglas James, with help from Bill Rampling, was asked to arrange for hard core (to be ordered from D J Haird) to be laid and the damaged surface area taped off.

It was solved that:

- The payment for hardcore would be authorised on receipt of the good. How much?
- A payment of up to £200 would be authorised for purchase of signs. Need to agree size/style/ number and contact Impress Signs 01638 718878 signs@impress.co.uk – who is doing this?

During the first lockdown there had been a noticeable police presence in the village, and recently the police had been seen driving around, and it was thought it would be beneficial if the Police were able to visit on a more regular basis during the current lockdown to monitor social distancing and safety of villagers and visitors.

c) Progress on outstanding issues and communication with Highways

Moulton PC has not received a satisfactory response to the communication problem it is having with Highways. It was resolved that no further action would be taken at present.

The sweeper had been out and attended the Brookside area, as well as attending to all other roads in Moulton as requested. It was noted that the sweeper will be required again quite soon along Brookside.

d) Public footpaths and footways

Cllr Dicker had not ascertained the ownership of the damaged footpath outside the shop. Is this the responsibility of the District Council or County Council? Cllr Dicker to investigate and report back.

e) Update on School Road / Chippenham Road crossing - safety issues and parental concerns

There had been various conversations between the Clerk, CC Highways and the resident who was concerned about the speed of traffic here. The Highways Authority were unable to offer a solution or traffic calming measures until they had completed a survey, at a cost of £400. There is currently no locality budget funding available.

Safety officers have offered to visit the site, but this should be done during full school time. It was stressed that the Council are supporting the school and parents in their attempts to get a crossing

or other appropriate safety measure in place.

- f) **Updates on Newmarket Road / Moulton road safety issues (Resident Communication)**
CC Highways are not prepared to offer any traffic calming measures or assess the risks until a survey is undertaken, which would need to be financed by the Parish Council. David Chenery from Highways has offered to have a zoom call to discuss the matter. Clerk to arrange this with Highways, PC chairman and resident.

6. **District Council report from Cllr Roger Dicker and updates from West Suffolk District Council**
Emails on all issues had been circulated. The District Council had three new grants in place to help local businesses in financial difficulties during the Covid pandemic.

The Lord Lieutenant had congratulated the waste collection team for maintaining a good service for West Suffolk residents during this difficult time.

All West Suffolk District Council offices had made it compulsory to wear a face covering.

An application for 1300 new homes in Mildenhall was to be considered and it was thought would go ahead without much opposition, and development here would not be included in the numbers for the local plan housing allocation.

7. **Planning matters including**

- a) **Applications received**

No planning applications have been received since the last meeting on 7th December 2020.

- b) **Applications received since the publication of the Agenda**

No planning applications have been received since the agenda was published.

- c) **To confirm recent planning determinations**

- 1 The Green – No objections.
- 17 Benefield Road – Approved.
- 18 The Street – No Objections.
- 6 Bridge Street – Approved

- d) **Local Plan update**

Mr John Ford wanted to ask both Cllrs Drummond and Dicker if they had received any further information, and whether there was likely to be a report created from the results of the consultation.

This was unlikely and the Local Plan would have to go to Cabinet before it was released, and then passed to the full Council for consideration. In the meantime it was viewed that the Parish Council did not want to embark on any new local or neighbourhood plan as this was not a good use of parish fund/resources as ultimately these do not have much power and would be overridden at a District level.

Currently there was not a great deal for the Parish Council to act on, other than to keep up to date with communications, and watching/waiting to see what transpires.

- e) **Sunnica update**

It had been claimed that Sunnica were issuing compulsory purchase orders on local landowners. This was incorrect and currently Sunnica were only making inquiries and no action could be taken at the present time for compulsory purchase.

- f) **Updates and additional information on Moulton Pre-School - new location required**

Bill Rampling was invited to comment on this agenda item and update the Parish Council.

Moulton Pre School is currently held at the Village Hall three days a week. Five days per week are needed to be make the business profitable, and the Village Hall does not have this availability.

There is over £100,000 of S106 money available to provide preschool facilities in this area, but some of the funding must be allocated before March of this year. The Council had been approached regarding any suitable locations within the parish. There was no parish owned land and the enquiry was passed to the Moulton Charity (represented by Bill Rampling) to see whether the Trustees could help. Bill Rampling had suggested that enquiries should be made regarding the availability of Gazeley School which was vacant and could be a suitable building for Pre School use. It is understood that Suffolk County Council are proposing to sell off the property and had told representatives of the Preschool that it would cost £500,000 to bring the building back into use. This costing was greeted with some scepticism, and a discussion took place about what action the PC could take to assist the Pre School management team. This was quite an urgent situation as unless Moulton Pre School finances started to balance there was a real danger that they would be forced to cease operations.

It was resolved that:

- The Parish Council would support the Pre School to explore the feasibility of using Gazeley School or any other suitable location. Andy Drummond and Roger Dicker supported this and offered to help and assist with the relocation. Roger Dicker offered a further insight, and commented that he expected that this S106 funding, which had been allocated to the Pre School to assist in relocation, had come from new builds at Kentford. Bill Rampling confirmed that Cllr Dicker was correct on the origins of this money.
- The Clerk would write a letter to “To whom it may concern” supporting Moulton Pre School in their enquiries as to the suitability of Gazeley School for a future operating base.

g) Drainage and Hedge work on 6 Bridge Street (email communication circulated)

It was reported that the landowner wanted to install quite a large pipe across Council land at the front of the Village Hall. It was viewed by councillors that the owner should utilise his own land. It was resolved that Cllr David Clarke would meet with the resident and explain the Parish Council view on these plans and the correct legal consents should be sought.

8. Playing Field

There was nothing further to report at the meeting

9. The Village Green

There was nothing further to report at the meeting

10. Village Maintenance

a) Tree works and survey

It was confirmed that Mr Colin Price would be pleased to attend and carry out the survey as soon as lockdown had been lifted. The lime tree by the Village Hall still needs to be felled. The original quote was thought to be expensive. On receipt of the latest survey the Council would be in a position to obtain another quote for all necessary tree works to include the lime tree.

b) Sicon Tree's

Their communication had been circulated and Councillors were asked to consider the proposal including location and quantity of trees. It was suggested that the Council should approach local landowners to see whether a tree planting is something they would like to consider possibly as part of a village initiative. Clerk to draft a letter advising them of this opportunity and forward details if required.

11. Emergency plan

Councillors were asked to consider whether an emergency plan should be drawn up. Previous Councils had taken the decision not to get involved in the detail of a formal document and submission. It was resolved that no action would be taken at the present time.

12. River flooding

The Council was updated about an automated sign which if used correctly would be placed higher up the road from the ford at the Packhorse Bridge. The sign is programmed to display a message / alert for anyone coming into the area advising that the ford is flooding. The sign could prevent people and traffic coming into the area at dangerous and high risk occasions.

Questions were asked about how the flood sign worked. A resident offered to pass all details over to the Clerk to circulate.

It was also important to note that Moulton's current water level warning sign is incorrectly showing the wrong water level. It was asked whether the post could be re-located so the correct depth is notified. Enquiries should be made regarding the post and the current markings. If possible it would be easier to change the markings rather than relocate the post.

Resolution: Clerk to follow up about the automated sign and circulate details to councillors and ask the Environment Agency about the marker post.

13. Finance and Administration

a) Approve payments due and Grant Aid

The Council confirmed and authorised the payment of the accounts presented at the meeting, as per the full list detailing payments for the 2020/2021 financial year, attached to the minute book.

Grant Aid – annual donations of £100 were approved to the Parish Archivist, Magpas, and Our Special Friends.

b) To Consider the Working Party's review of expenditure to date, recommendations for the 2021/22 budget and the determination of the Precept for 2021/22

A copy of the report for the financial year ending 31/3/2021, and a budget forecast for 2021/2022 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk asked whether councillors wished to raise any questions on the report, or on the financial schedule she had sent to them in advance of the meeting. It was resolved that the report would be approved and the recommendations in it accepted.

c) Precept 2021/2022

It was reported that due to a minimal increase in the Tax Base this would result in a percentage decrease in the parish rate of £0.36%, and the cost for a Band D household for a £32,000 precept would be reduced from £75.09 to £74.73 for 2021/2022. Having considered all the facts presented in the report it was resolved that the precept request would be £32,000 (the same as the previous 2 years) and the Clerk was instructed to complete the official precept notification form for this sum for signature prior to submission to the District Council.

d) Online banking update

The Clerk had made enquiries regarding on-line banking and it had been agreed that the process involved the Clerk being responsible for setting up a payment, and the authorization would be similar to the cheque system. For example once the payment had been set up with details of who and where the payment is to be made, the Clerk would notify the councillors chosen as the authorized signatories to facilitate payment.

Authorisation status held at Lloyds - 2 councillors (or as many as required) would have a card

reader and card used only for online banking. It was suggested the Chairman and Vice Chairman should be nominated to authorise each payment. Councillors also needed to decide if the PC should have a debit card (currently the Clerk makes a purchase on her own personal card when no other payment option is available, and the Parish Council reimburses the Clerk). Suggestion was raised that the Clerk should be able to make nominal payments for an agreed amount by debit card without waiting for two authorization signatures

Resolution – Clerk to prepare a banking proposition for consideration at next meeting.

e) To confirm receipt and approve the MPC Annual Risk Assessment

A copy of the updated Risk Management Statement had been circulated, and it was unanimously resolved that this should be approved and signed by the Chairman.

f) Future format of councillor communications

The Clerk had started to indicate the type of communication being sent in the subject line of PC emails. For example: - for information, important to be discussed at next meeting or response required.

It is hoped that this would help councillors filter their emails more efficiently. The Clerk asked whether the councillors had any feedback on what is being sent over. Councillors felt the level communication was right

14. Suffolk Association of Local Councils – Confirm receipt of communications:

SALC e-bulletin, SALC – Covid cases in Suffolk, SALC – New Housing Developments, Rural Bulletin, CAS - Covid Response, CAS Newsletter, One-life Suffolk Newsletter, CPRE News, CPRE campaigns update, Suffolk Police proposal on Police element of Council Tax, Potential Funding – WSDC Local Connections Fund

15. Correspondence

Confirm receipt of routine correspondence received since the previous meeting

a) Burst pipe on Gazeley Road

b) Parking on Bridge Street – see Minutes Page 1354/55

c) Email received from Jill Goodwin - Update Village Hall information on website

The Council had been asked whether the Clerk would be making regular updates to the village website. Currently the Clerk was uploading council documents to the PC section of the website. It was agreed that any clerk future involvement beyond this should be agreed between the clerk, PC and Lisa Rampling.

16. Questions to the Chairman and urgent business

None

17. To fix the date of the next meeting

22nd February via Zoom – but subsequently postponed. New date to be agreed and published.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting which was closed at 7.30pm

Signed

Date