

Musbury Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Monday 24th May 2021 at 7.30pm in Musbury Village Hall Main Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr Colin Corbett (Chair)

Cllr Janet Albano

Mrs Jo Boyce (Clerk)

Cllr Caroline Ellis

Cllr Pete Perryman

6 Parishioners

Cllr Paul Smith

Cllr Matt Craker

- 1 **APOLOGIES** County Cllr Ian Hall
- 2 **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** held Monday 13TH May 2019 were accepted as a true record and duly signed by Cllr Corbett.
- 3 **MATTERS ARISING** There were none.
- 4 **POLICE REPORT** No report received.
- 5 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - CLLR COLIN CORBETT**

Cllr Corbett offered the Council's congratulations to Ian Hall on his re-election to DCC for the Newbridges ward.

Covid – The Musbury Collective has been instrumental in providing support for those of our parishioners who have required help with shopping, prescriptions and company. The Parish Council thank all those involved. The Clerk has kept the district and county council informed of the services provided by this group and the appropriate contact information.

Roads – As always, there seem to be more cars parked on the roads of Musbury. Please remember to park with consideration for residents, other road users and especially the emergency services.

Cllr Ian Hall has earmarked funds for supporting the placement of VASS (Vehicle Activated Speed Signs) in the village to try and raise awareness of speeding through the centre of the village. The holes are already in place and the Council hope to see this project completed soon. We will be sharing the signs with one other parish.

New Parish Clerk – New Clerk, Jo Boyce was appointed in April 2020 and after a baptism of fire and Zoom meetings is learning more every day about the wide-reaching nature of the role.

Defibrillator – The village defibrillator has now been purchased by the Village Hall and installed on the wall of the garage. It has been added to the Parish Council Insurance policy.

Devon Air Ambulance Local Landing Site – This project has moved forward in the last year with the site at Musbury Primary School being agreed as the best location for the Night Landing Site, funding has been secured thanks to the Libor fund and the generosity of both local residents and businesses and the planning application is now with EDDC.

Marlborough Road Trees

After the strong winds and multiple storms of the last few years, several of the trees along the main road needed replacing. Mike Lock has given generously of his knowledge and experience to advise on the species of trees to use, a SCARF report was carried out by DCC to ensure it was safe to dig holes to replant and the trees have been planted and staked with the help of Noel Jacks, Mike Lock, Paul Chapman, Matt Craker, Caroline Griffin and myself.

One of the new trees planted is 'Jane's Tree' – chosen as a memorial to Jane Bishop, our long-serving clerk and paid for by generous donations from the village.

Lengthsman

This is a project that the Council are still keen to see to fruition. We would like someone to take on the role of village lengthsman or woman to address both the cosmetic appearance of the village by the removal of weeds and the prevention of surface water flooding by ensuring drain gratings and gutters are kept free from debris-particularly after hedge cutting activities. Whilst in years gone by, much of this work has been carried out by volunteers, the Council would now like to put it on a more formal basis.

We are still looking for that person, so if you or someone you know are interested, please do contact the clerk for more details.

To round up his report The Chair gave his thanks to all Musbury Parish Councillors and to The Clerk for their help and assistance over the past year.

Questions from Parishioners:

There were none.

6 FINANCIAL REPORT AND INTERNAL AUDIT – CLLR CAROLINE ELLIS

The Parish Council have internal controls to ensure public money is used properly. These include Monthly Treasurer's Accounts and corresponding Bank statement sent to all councillors prior to meeting, accounts and statements checked on monthly basis along with invoices, receipts, red book and bank proofs by a nominated, non-bank signatory Councillor. All payments are seen and approved by two councillors and minuted at meetings. Two signatories to authorise all payments by cheque, Internet banking access allows immediate access to view bank statements.

The Council also maintains an Asset Register and list of payments over £100 for each year and produce a budget which informs the Precept bid and spending plans for the year. This budget includes earmarked funds for things like the maintenance of notice boards and benches and election fund.

Cllr Ellis stated that the use on online banking and instant BACs transfers had made the last year much easier given the restrictions on our movements. She closed her report by thanking the clerk for her hard work in preparing the accounts and administering the finances on behalf of the parish.

The balance of the Treasurers Account as at 31st March was confirmed:

Lloyds Treasurers Account No 1063790

Balance bought forward as at 1st April 2020 **£ 8,337.18**

Add receipts £13,319.85

Precept Apr & Sept £7,500.00

DCC Grant re DAAT £ 500.00

Donations £3,292.00

P3 £1,000.00

Allotments £ 650.63

VAT Reclaim £ 377.22

£21,657.03

Less payments £7,280.93

Balance to carry forward to 1st April 2021 £ 14,376.10

Includes:

Allotment Deposits	£ 710.00	
Allotment Funds Available	£ 1221.34	£1,931.34

P3 Footpaths		£ 944.92
DAAT		£3,730.00
Christmas Tree		£ 210.00
General Fund		£7,559.84

The VAT reclaim was submitted on the 8th April for the past year:

2020/21 £369.48

Lloyds Reading Room Account No 7502761

Balance on the Deposit Account (Trust fund & interest)

As at 31st March 2021

£ 447.41

Value of COIF share investment

£ 761.15

Questions from Parishioners

There were none.

7 OFFICER'S REPORTS

Musbury Playing Field – The Playing Field and Playground has been an invaluable lifeline to the community over the last year. It remained open and meant village children could expend their energy and play – a little bit of normality in a very strange time. It has also been the venue for some of the Musbury Movers' sessions led by Annie Stark in response to the need for people to keep active when they could not attend their usual clubs and groups.

The recent annual safety inspection has reiterated the areas of the playground in need of attention and as each year passes, the need for work grows. Cllrs Corbett and Craker have stepped forward to lead the redevelopment of this area and along with the clerk, would welcome practical assistance from interested members of the community.

The Clerk is in contact with several staff members of EDDC with regards to possible funding for the work needed on the play area and has started to look into potential sources of grants. Any help researching this area and completing applications would be gratefully received. A questionnaire has also been sent to the school to distribute to the children and pre-school asking them which kinds of activities they prefer to do in the playground. The results of this survey can then be used to formulate a design which can then go out to tender.

There is no quick fix for this area as it is an expensive task and one that needs careful planning to ensure the best result for our community now and in the future.

Musbury Village Hall – Cllr Perryman reported that it has been a difficult year for the Village Hall as for everyone else. The Hall has been closed for over 12 months. In that time however a new ceiling in the foyer has been installed, there is new flooring in the store room and will be new carpet in the foyer and the disabled toilet and gentlemen's toilets have been upgraded.

Cllr Perryman confirmed that those groups who previously held booking slots for the hall would still have these and if stage 4 of the lockdown easing goes ahead as planned there will be three bookings per day – a morning, afternoon and evening session.

The money to pay for all the building works has come from DCC's covid grants and will not need to be paid back and has allowed the Village Hall to maintain its current competitive charging - £10/hr for the main hall and £7/hr for the Committee Room.

Musbury Allotments – Cllr Corbett was pleased to confirm that all allotment plots are taken, there are now 8 people on the waiting list, including 2 from Musbury Village.

Allotment rent levels were maintained this year after the increase of 5% for the 2019-2020 season.

The main expenditure in the past year has been the payment of water bills. To counter this, the water is turned off for the months of December, January and February when there is less requirement for water and more likelihood of pipes bursting or leaks going undetected. The Clerk and Mr Parkman also regularly read the meter as the 'estimates' are frequently inaccurate. The slope has been levelled out by the bottom entrance gate, a new post for the bottom tap has been fitted and the large branches of the tree have been removed. Many thanks from the Council to Paul Chapman, Noel Jacks, Ian Rowswell, Allen Parkman and Paul Tippings for their help with the tree limb removal. Thanks to all involved in the maintenance of this great asset to the village.

Musbury Planning & Development The Clerk outlined the past year's planning applications

Applications – There were 13 applications reviewed in the past year, 2 of which were tree related. All applications had the support of Parish Councillors.

Mountfield – There were no planning applications for Mountfield House over that last year. The owners are working with EDDC to prepare a planning application for Mountfield House that will see the house fully restored as a large family home to a modern standard / purpose. When the application is made this will be the culmination of many months (years) of work. These proposals will also address the issue of the rook population and dangerous trees.

Baxters Farm – There has been no change in the situation regarding Baxter's Farm with EDDC and DCC locked in stalemate. The Council received this update in response to queries about the safety of the site: *DCC is still working with EDDC to find an alternate site for the relocation of Gypsy's & Traveller's – we are hopeful that an alternative site can be agreed by August 2021 subject to agreement with EDDC. Also, DCC inspect the site at least monthly so any safety defects will be assessed.*

P3 Footpaths – Cllr Albano read a report prepared with assistance from Cllr Smith.

The Parish Footpath co-ordinators have completed the annual survey, as required under our P3 agreement with Public Rights of Way (PROW), and submitted bids for 2021-22 repairs. In addition to the hard bit of walking the paths and noting defects, Cllr Smith has also carried out many minor repairs which are much appreciated by the Parish Council and the Public Paths Liaison Officer at DCC.

Musbury's footpaths have seen a great increase in use over the past strange year and it has been challenging to arrange maintenance. During lockdown 1, there was a shortage of materials at the DCC depot and contractors were required to obtain an essential worker's certificate from PROW and sadly for us, our trusted contractor decided to leave Devon and return to his northern roots.

PROW require a contractor to have full £5 million public liability insurance and this is essential even for minor jobs. For example, it costs in the region of £75 to install a new finger post and we should expect to pay £20-£30/hr depending on the nature and complexity of the job. So, to those in charge of hedge cutters, please take care – one careless swipe and it's a new finger post!

Hopefully we have now found a new contractor and he has made a start on our backlog.

If you find a problem, please report it to the clerk, Cllr Smith or Cllr Albano as it helps them to plan repairs. It is also helpful if you can note the path number which can be found on the ceramic discs attached to the finger posts. Happy wandering... and if you take secateurs with you to cut back stray vegetation, thank you.

All members of the Parish Council are volunteers and do their very best for the community.

Questions from Parishioners

There were none.

8 MUSBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

See separate report.

9 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Report from District Councillor Iain Chubb – Cllr Chubb was not in attendance.

Report from County Cllr Ian Hall – Cllr Hall was not in attendance.

10 OPEN FORUM ON THE PAST YEAR

The Snow Warden mentioned that the new Grit Bin has been placed in the wrong position. The Chair agreed to liaise with the warden and others to move it. **ACTION**

A parishioner raised the subject of the tree that has recently come down on Marlborough Road. The Chair agreed to remove the broken / damaged branches. **ACTION**

Cllr Albano suggested that the parish look into planting a tree in place of the damaged tree for the Queen's Jubilee as there is a project to encourage as many people as possible to plant trees.

The Chair asked the clerk to write thank you letters to members of the parish who quietly get on with things, often without being asked and make a significant contribution to the upkeep and beauty of our village.

There being no further business the Annual Parish Meeting closed at 8:10pm