

Minutes of Morebath Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 29 September 2022 in Morebath Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors A Wilson (Chairman), T Conway, Mrs P Reed, K Stone, J Wescott.

County Councillor R Chesterton

District Councillor A Moore

No Members of the public

Mrs S Squire, Parish Clerk

- 30. Apologies.** Councillor Wood who had, just before the meeting, sent an email of resignation.
Action: Clerk to inform MDDC Elections Department and enquire the position regarding co-option, subject to no by election being called, in the run up to the Parish Council elections in May 2023.
- 31. Declarations of Interest.**
Councillor Wilson declared a Prejudicial Interest in Minute No. 35.4 – spraying of weeds.
- 32. Dispensation to Councillors.** None.
- 33. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26 July 2022**
Approved and signed as a correct record.
Proposed by Councillor Stone
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Reed and unanimously agreed.
- 34. Actions Arising / Updates:**
- 34.1 Play equipment.**
Due to Councillor Wood's resignation, there was no information on his conversations with local people as to what they would like to see. Meanwhile, the Clerk was about to submit a funding application via a S106 form to MDDC for a set of goal posts / nets. The application has to be accompanied by confirmation of support by the two District Councillors, which had been obtained.
Action: Clerk to submit the paperwork to MDDC.
- 34.2 Website.** The new webmaster has asked for photographs of the Parish for inclusion.
Action: Councillors to forward old and new pictures for inclusion.
- 34.3 Resurfacing of the Parish Council Car Park Entrance.**
Councillors had been advised that a quotation from R W Gale Ltd had been accepted in the sum of £4,835.00 + VAT, having previously been delegated powers to do this on behalf of the Parish Council. The work had been carried out to a high standard and the Invoice would be paid under Minute No. 38.2.
- 34.4 Weeding / Maintenance.** Councillor Wilson advised that the spraying had taken place.
Councillor Conway suggested that the car park required spraying twice a year to keep the weeds under control.

Councillor Wilson declared a Prejudicial Interest and advised that he would get his workmen to do the job.

Proposed by Councillor Conway that the spraying is carried out twice a year and that the Parish Council sets aside £200 per annum for this work.

Seconded by Councillor Stone and agreed.

Councillor Wilson did not vote.

Action: Clerk to update the Reserves List according to earmark this amount.

- 34.5 Letter regarding amateur drama.** The Clerk had included the details in The Signpost. The Signpost editor had also passed the information to the Bampton Players. Councillors advised that no local people had been able to help.

Action: Clerk to contact the person who had made the initial enquiry to advise that no local information had been forthcoming.

- 34.6 Clerk's Contract of Employment reflecting new arrangements for leave entitlement.**

Councillors had been forwarded a draft for studying with a view to approving at this meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Stone to approve the revised document, seconded by Councillor Mrs Reed and unanimously agreed.

Action: The Clerk to bring two copies for signature at the November meeting.

- 35. Open Forum:** No members of the public were present and no items had been raised.

- 36. Reports.**

- 36.1 County Councillor R Chesterton.**

There is an ongoing issue with County Council budgeting.

Inflation pressure has hit the Council hard specifically relating to the provision of children's and adult services and highways.

There is a reassessment of the budget taking place and Locality Budgets for County Councillors are on hold.

The Council is looking at a large 7 figure deficit for this year and going into next year with inflation at 9 or 10% and will find it hard to balance the books but there is a legal requirement to do so.

Councillor Wilson asked about highways, particularly regarding the survey of a small lane between the A396 and the B3227 where defects had been marked out 10 weeks ago, but had now gone.

Action: County Councillor Chesterton will enquire about this.

District Councillor Moore asked about budgets for B classification roads and was told these were all within the budget.

- 36.2 District Councillor A Moore.**

Financial monitoring is taking place at MDDC where it has been found that the authority has a shortfall of £1.5million out of a £11.5 million budget.

Negotiations are still continuing regarding a pay award, forecast to cost £500,000. The award will vary between 3% and 10%, with an overall figure of 4% looking to be awarded.

Utilities are being impacted because of budget restrictions although the Exe Valley Leisure Centre is not so affected as it uses solar power.

Income from people using leisure facilities and car parks is down. Some areas generate more income through waste collection.

Savings will have to be made to balance the books, despite there being no guidance from the government and it is usually Christmas Eve when Councils are told the amount of settlement to be received in the coming financial year. MDDC receive just 11% of Council Tax revenue and the maximum increase is 2% per annum, without having a referendum. A 1% increase in Council Tax raises £130,000.

Councillor Wescott asked if last week's government budget would be of help to MDDC but this was not thought to be the case as it will be treated as a business where there are fixed price contracts.

MDDC does have reserves and it could be agreed to take any shortfall from these.

It is not a statutory requirement for a District Council to provide a Leisure Centre or District Councillor grants for the benefit of the Parishes they represent.

Recruitment is a problem.

Councillor Wilson asked about the new arrangements for the collection of refuse and the roll out of the wheelie bin programme, which will be collected every 3 weeks from October 2022. He had requested a second black wheelie bin and had noticed from the paperwork provided by MDDC that anything put beside the wheelie bin will not be collected if the wheelie bin is full.

District Councillor Moore advised this information was incorrect and asked that Councillor Wilson forwarded the details to him for following up.

Action: Councillor Wilson to forward the details to District Councillor Moore.

District Councillor Moore said the idea of having a 3 weekly collection is to encourage people to recycle as much as possible, and this is the fundamental message. The black wheelie bin is not a large receptacle to further encourage people to recycle as much as possible.

Councillor Wescott asked about how MDDC is regulated regarding investing reserves.

District Councillor Moore clarified there is a Treasury Policy, adding that there is a specialist team dedicated to investigate investment opportunities and sets out the strategy for long and short term investments.

**37.
37.1**

Planning.

Planning Application 22/01234/FULL - Gilberts Lodge. It was brought to the Parish Council's attention that there were two additional documents which were not included in the original bundle of documents when the Parish Council considered the application on 26 July 2022.

At the request of the Chairman, the Clerk contacted MDDC Planning Department in this regard and the reply from the planning officer was as follows:

'You are correct that the design and access statement was initially missed off the application file, I understand that it was inadvertently not provided when the application was submitted. In answer to the first question, it is not normal practice to send a formal re-consultation when additional information is received, although I appreciate that it may have been useful on this occasion. There is no expectation that the Parish Council reconsider the application at the next meeting, however should they wish to, there will be time to do so as this application will need to go to Planning Committee'.

The Chairman has requested that for completeness, this is noted at the meeting and to ensure that all Councillors are in agreement with the original response submitted, which was:

Morebath Parish Council wishes to recommend approval of this application.

Proposed by Councillor Conway to reiterate the Parish Council's comments.

Seconded by Councillor Stone and unanimously agreed.

Planning Correspondence: The following Application was received between meetings and a response of 'no objections' was submitted to MDCC: **22/01499/FULL – Change of use of land from agricultural to domestic garden – land and buildings at South Combe Farm, Shillingford.**

38. Finance.

38.1 Balances: NatWest Current Account as at 1/9/22: £25,878.12
NatWest Business Reserve Account as at 1/9/22: £6,232.85

Reserves as at the end of August were circulated to Councillors.

Action: The Clerk to reduce the car park column by £4,000 and the contingency column by £710.00, to take into account the payment for resurfacing the car park entrance.

The VAT element of £942.00 to be reclaimed.

38.2 The following payments were approved and authorised.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Reed

Seconded by Councillor Wescott and unanimously agreed.

	Ch.No.	
• Mrs S Squire Salary and Expenses	621	£231.80
• HMRC	622	£51.60
• R W Gale Ltd Road resurfacing at Morebath car park Includes reclaimable VAT of £942.00	623	£5,652.00
• DALC Training	624 (£55.20
• DALC Attendance of Cllr Stone at the AGM	(£35.00

38.3 Online banking with NatWest.

Councillor Conway advised he had spoken to the bank and registered himself, Councillor Wilson and the Parish Clerk as signatories for log on details.

Confirmation was awaited that this has been done.

38.4 2021/22 Audit. Email from external auditor P K F Littlejohn acknowledging receipt of the Notification of Exempt Status which has been logged. No review will be performed and consequently no auditor certificate and report, or any other closure documentation will be issued by them.

Smaller Authorities Audit Arrangements (SAAA). This is the last year of the current five year contract and Councillors have been circulated with the details.

The Clerk recommended that the Parish Council continues to remain opted in with the arrangement.

Proposed by Councillor Conway that the Parish Council remains opted in.

Seconded by Councillor Wescott and unanimously agreed.

It had been hoped that the internal auditor's Report would have been received and this would be an item on the November Agenda.

Action: November Agenda.

The period for the exercise of electors rights ended on 11 August 2022.

39. Correspondence.

39.1 Information Commissioner's Office. The data protection renewal fee of £35.00 is due and will be taken by direct debit on 21 September 2022. A fee of £40 is applicable if paid by other means. Confirmation has been received that the data protection has been renewed and a Certificate received expires on 21/9/23.

39.2 MDDC Parish Review. Email circulated to Councillors on 24/8/22 refers.

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 31 May 2022, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that Morebath Parish Council should not merge with Bampton Town Council.

Because of this proposal, the item cannot be revisited for six months (November 2022).

The Second Stage Consultation is allowing the electorate to comment on proposals from 23 August to 23 October.

Councillors discussed whether Morebath Parish Council should make residents aware of this consultation and that they can have their say on the future arrangements of the Parish and it was felt that it would be MDDC, and not the Parish Council, who would make residents aware of this.

The draft proposals for Morebath on the MDDC website state:

'A submission was received suggesting that the parish should be merged with Bampton Town Council. However, no formal representation from Bampton Town Council has been received. As Morebath's only boundaries are with Bampton, it was agreed that this should be put forward for the 2nd Stage giving the opportunity for making any further representations from both councils and residents.'

This matter was discussed by all Councillors and the following reply to be sent to MDDC:

Morebath Parish Council discussed the option of merging with Bampton Town Council at the May Parish Council meeting.

The Parish Council voted in favour of remaining as a separate Parish Council. The consultation was discussed further on 27 September 2022 and the Parish Council is providing this submission based on the decision made in the May meeting.

Action: Clerk to forward to MDDC.

40. Items raised by Councillors / Clerk:

40.1 Training.

Councillor K Stone has attended for a DALC e-learning course 'The Introduction to Local Councils'.

Councillor K Stone has been booked onto 'Being a Good Councillor' Webinars delivered by the Devon Association of Local Councils as follows:

- **Webinar 4 – 14 September. The Council in the Community**
- **Webinar 3 – 16 November. Local Council Meetings.**
- **Webinar 1 – 21 September. Roles and Responsibilities**

▪ **Webinar 2 – 19 October. Powers, Duties and the Precept**

Councillor Stone advised he had found the courses attended so far useful and informative.

The training fee of £18.00 per Webinar will be deducted from the budget of £100.00 agreed at the 2022/23 budget setting meeting on 11/1/22 and ratified on 18/1/22, set aside for this purpose.

One of the items suggested was that Councillors have their own dedicated email address for Parish Council matters and not use their own private / personal email address. Councillor Stone had organised this for himself.

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has its own email address but it kept dropping out so she has used her own address as a result. It was thought that when the new website was up and running, a new dedicated Parish Council email address could be organised at that time.

Councillor Stone wishes to represent Morebath Parish Council at the DALC AGM on 5 October 2022 at Exeter Racecourse.

Proposed by Councillor Conway that Councillor Stone is given voting rights on behalf of Morebath Parish Council at the event.

Seconded by Councillor Wescott and agreed.

Action: Clerk to submit the Form of Proxy to the DALC by 3/10/22.

- 40.2 Councillor K Stone** asked for permission to put a poster in the Mason Kings Farm Shop with a short biography and contact details to encourage parishioners to contact him, and other Councillors if they wish to be included, with any issues for the Parish Council to consider. Councillors were in full support of this and the poster is to include all Parish, County and District Councillors.
- 40.3 Clerk's Leave.** To date, the Clerk has had 11 days leave. The new entitlement is that 28 days are applicable. Leave requested to the end of the year is:
24 – 28 October 2022 (5 days)
11 November (Friday) (1 day)
24 November – 2 December 2022 (7 days)
9 & 16 December (Fridays) (2 days)
22 & 23 December (2 days), then the usual leave in line with MDDC for Christmas
- 40.4 Archive Filing.** The Clerk has undertaken extensive archive filing during the Summer and asked Councillors for permission that Minute Books are deposited in the Devon Record Office. An inventory will be provided as to the details in the Record Office's care.
Proposed by Councillor Stone that the Clerk proceeds with the suggestion.
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Reed and unanimously agreed.
- 41. Next meeting:** Tuesday, 22 November 2022 at 7.30pm in Morebath Village Hall which will include setting the 2023/24 Budget and Precept.
The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

Summary of Decisions:

- **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26 July 2022**

- **Spraying of weeds in the Parish Council car park to be carried out twice yearly at a maximum price of £200.00**
- **Revised Contract of Employment for the Parish Clerk reflecting new legislation in relation to holiday entitlement**
- **Reiteration of planning response for Application 22/01234/FULL - Gilberts Lodge**
- **Payments**
- **That the Parish Council remains opted into the Smaller Authorities Audit Arrangements (SAAA) where the current five year period ends in 2022**
- **Councillor K Stone given voting rights via a Form of Proxy to represent Morebath Parish Council at the Devon Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting on 5 October 2022**
- **Agreement that the Parish Clerk proceeds with making arrangements for archive Minute books and other paperwork to be stored in the Devon Record Office**

Chairman

Date