

Merriott Parish Council

**Minutes of the December Meeting of the Parish Council
held on Monday 9th December 2019 at 7pm in The Blake Room, Merriott Village Hall.**

Cllr Iain Hall (Chair)
Cllr Jim Shorting
Cllr Steve Ashton
Cllr Grant Wright
Cllr Dave Aslett
Cllr N Rochford
Cllr J Graham

In attendance

Cllr Paul Maxwell, Julie Chant (Clerk) and 3 members of the public

19/150 Public Open Session

Cllr Hall welcomed everyone present to the meeting. Those present to speak about items other than those on the agenda were invited to address the Council.

A member of the public wished to raise concerns at the state of disrepair to a wall adjacent to the pavement at Lower Street. The Council had previously written to Building Control at SSDC to report the wall and gate, which had been repaired, but the wall was now cracking into chunks. It was suggested that photographs be taken and sent to SSDC and the Clerk would raise the issue again.

Action: Clerk to write to SSDC Chard – Building Regulations

19/151 Apologies for absence

Cllr Mick Burnham(unwell) Cllr C Paine (work) and Cllr A Dance.

19/152 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests

Cllr I Hall declared an interest in payment list , 19/159 b) as his expenses were due to be agreed.

19/153 Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

19/154 Matters arising for the minutes;

The Clerk confirmed that Highways had agreed to clear the drains in Moorlands Road, following the complaint received which had been forwarded to Cllr A Dance after the November meeting.

Cllr J Shorting requested that 3 items not on the Agenda be included on the January Agenda:

To consider legal advice on planning, to consider recycling at the pavilion and to consider additional defibrillators.

19/155 Report from County Councillor

Cllr Adam Dance was unable to attend the meeting, but had sent a message to the Clerk confirming that there was no news from Somerset County Council on the amended SIS.

19/156 Report from District Councillor

Cllr Paul Maxwell confirmed that the Area West committee had approved the application for two dwellings at Boozer Pit and had agreed the variation to 106 conditions on the Feed Station. He had a meeting planned to discuss the appeal with regard to the land set aside for a medical Centre and there was a discussion on the Parish Council's position. Councillors felt it was important that SSDC enforced the conditions set under 106 agreements. He also confirmed that planning applications for land at Tail Mill were being reviewed by the Planning Officer.

Merriott Parish Council

19/157: Highways and Footpaths;

- a) **To note road closures:** Planned closures for Higher Street to Boozer Pit and Snails Hill were noted
- b) **Update on A356**

The Clerk had forwarded the reply from Highways to Councillors and it was noted that the broken sign had been repaired. Councillors discussed the unauthorised access and the temporary police signs which had been in place during the wet weather. Cllr Hall considered that engineering works, rather than signs were required and noted that at least 4 bends had no chevron signs.
- c) **To note approval of fingerpost grant from Merriott Heritage Trust.**

Councillors were pleased to note the approval of the grant and it was agreed that Cllr Wright would contact the chosen contractor ready to approve the order at the next meeting
Action: Clerk to add approval of work to January Agenda
- d) **To determine action on signage decluttering.**

Cllr G Wright suggested he take some photographs over the Christmas Holidays and report back to the January meeting
Action: Signage decluttering to be on January Agenda

19/158 Amenities

a) **To determine Councils position on cutting the Churchyard for 2020/21**

A member of the public was invited to speak on behalf of PCC and he thanked Councillors for all their support over the years and explained that finances for the Church continued to be very strained. This year the Church had undertaken repairs to the roof and the main wall, so expenditure on grass cutting would not be possible.

Councillors discussed the conflicting advice with regard to upkeep of churches and discussed the need to follow guidance but also the desire to maintain a very prominent building and grounds within the village.

Cllr J Graham wished the following paragraphs from NALC guidance to be quoted when minuting the vote of Councillors.

"s.214(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 which provides that councils which are burial authorities may contribute to another person's expenses (e.g. the PCC or synagogue) in providing a cemetery in which residents in the councils` area may be buried" and the following.

"the Governments` current view on the legal issues is that there is no need for any further legislation as they believe the 1894 Act restrictions do not override the provisions in later Acts of Parliament"

Councillors voted 6 in favour of paying for Churchyard grass cuts in 2020/21, with Cllr S Ashton voting against the decision.

b) **To consider joining the Parish Ranger Scheme**

Councillors discussed the costs and possible works which could be undertaken by the Parish Ranger, but voted not to join the scheme.

c) **To approve adoption of BTphone box in Lower Street**

Councillors discussed the proposal again and Cllr J Shorting mentioned some of the conditions of the contract with BT.

Councillors voted to adopt the box and the Chair signed the necessary paperwork.

d) **To approve Environment Champion to be SSDC contact**

Councillors nominated Cllr S Ashton to be the Environment Champion.
Proposed Cllr D.Aslett seconded Cllr N.Rochford – all agreed.

Merriott Parish Council

Action: Clerk to send Cllr Ashton’s contact details to SSDDC

e) To determine proposal to remove “dog bin”

The Chair updated Councillors on a complaint received concerning a dog bin in the village and mentioned that the bin at the end of Hitchen was not officially on the refuse collectors list for emptying. It was also difficult to empty given the old design and wire basket. Cllr J Graham also mentioned that the dog bin by the school had no lid.

Councillors agreed to purchase a modern black plastic bin to replace the one at the end of Hitchen and to purchase a new bin to replace the broken one by the school. All agreed.

Action: Two new bins to be ordered as discussed.

f) To receive Burial Ground quarterly report

Cllr J Shorting reported that the trees had now been cut back and the ground was looking much better. He gave Councillors an update on the headstones and memorials and highlighted three which were of concern as they rocked. One had been repaired, but this had failed and the stone was now cracked, and the Clerk had been unable to contact relatives for the other two. Cllr J Graham was reluctant to see any headstones “laid down” and enquired of the Parish Council could cover the repairs.

Action: to determine action on headstones to be on January Agenda

19/159 Finance and procedure:

a) To agree S137 donation to Royal British legion

The Chair suggested that the usual donation of £ 50.00 be increased to £ 100.00
Proposed Cllr D.Aslett seconded Cllr J.Shorting - all agreed.

b) To agree invoices for payment

<u>Voucher</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>VAT</u>	<u>Total Payment incl VAT</u>	<u>Budget Line</u>
491	Martin Paull	mowing		£ 50.00	mowing
492	I Hall	Expenses/ materials	£ 392.67	£ 2,402.01	Clapperhay & rec
493	BT Payphones	adopt payphone		£ 1.00	Amenities
494	British Legion	donation		£ 100.00	S137 donation
495	SSDC	Verti drain	£ 51.49	£ 308.92	Pitch expenses
496	Julie Chant	Salary & mileage		£ 442.70	Salary and mileage
497	Jess Searle	Cleaning		£ 60.00	Pavilion Cleaning
498	Village Hall	room hire		£ 12.00	room hire
499	AMS Services	Cleaning		£ 30.00	Pavilion Cleaning
500	Yarcombe Timber	Wood and postmix	£ 8.39	£ 50.35	Rec & community land
501	R Keylock	Accounts	£ 5.00	£ 30.00	Accounts
502	PWLB	Loan on Pavilion		£ 4,524.76	Loan repayment
503	SSDC	mowing	£ 13.08	£ 78.48	Pitch exps
		Total VAT to reclaim	£ 470.63		
		TOTAL		£ 8,090.22	

Merriott Parish Council

Councillors noted that the Chairs expenses included the fencing and gates for the community land. Approval of payments proposed by Cllr J Shorting, Seconded Cllr S Ashton – all agreed – approved.

c) To note payments received and bank reconciliation

Receipt no	Date	Name	Payment for	Amount	Budget line
254	29.10.19	Active Learn	Pavilion Hire	£ 60.00	Pavilion Income
255	29.10.19	Merriott Youth FC	Pavilion/pitch	£ 250.00	pavilion/pitch
256	13.11.19	Preston dancers	Pavilion Hire	£ 30.00	Pavilion Income
257	15.11.19	HMRC	VAT reclaim	£ 2,008.64	VAT Refund

TOTAL £ 2,348.64

Councillors noted the receipts and the Clerk informed them that the income to end of November was higher than the estimated income for the year 2019/20 . There was also a deficit figure for one budget heading, so a small transfer to that fund would be required.

d) To note any changes to the risk register.

Cllr J Shorting felt that the community land risk assessment required a review given that work had started.

Action: The Clerk to forward the current inspection report to Cllr Shorting for alteration.

e) To approve amendment to Financial Regulations

Councillors had been sent a copy of the proposed alteration which gave the Clerk authority to waive fees at recreation ground for Charity events.

All agreed and the Chair signed the amendment to the Financial Regulations

f) To approve budget and precept for 2020/21

Councillors had seen the draft budget at the November meeting and discussed various projects for the coming year.

Cllr J Shorting proposed approval of the budget, seconded Cllr D Aslett – all approved. The budget for 2020/21 was approved.

Having discussed the Budget Councillors confirmed that the precept should remain the same, at £ 44,000.

Proposed Cllr J Shorting, seconded Cllr D Aslett – all approved – precept for 2020/21 was agreed.

g) To make arrangements for recruitment of new Clerk.

Councillors discussed the best places to advertise the vacancy and agreed the advertisement.

Action: Clerk to place advert on social media, in the Merriott Messenger and with SSDC democratic services.

19/160 Planning applications currently in circulation:

19/01021/FUL – Land at Pye Corner, Merriott Road, Merriott -Demolition of existing steel open sided barn, and change of use of site to residential. Conversion and extension of existing stone barn to a single storey dwelling with new detached garage and the construction of three two storey detached houses and garages, with associated courtyard, parking and garden areas. Development to provide a total of four dwelling units. - Councillors discussed the amended plans and the planning working party were pleased to see the developer had been responsive to comments from neighbours and Councillors and had re sited buildings accordingly. There was a discussion about footpaths to the village from the site. Council had no objection to the application.

Merriott Parish Council

19/03221/TCA- The Old Vicarage Church Street, Merriott – tree works within conservation area

b) Planning determinations:

18/03718/S73A- The former Sunday School, Bull Bridge Lane, Merriott – to vary condition 3 (opening hours) and remove condition 7 (obscure windows on the eastern elevation) of approval 17/03983/FUL- approved

19/00911/FUL – Land at Boozer Pit Merriott -erection of two dwellings – approved

19/00925/FUL – Mr. J Stokes- Springfield House and Hamstones, Church Street, Merriott- proposed alterations to access, remodelling of existing dwellings Hamstones, and erection of two private dwellings with garages and domestic curtilage – permitted with conditions

Councillors noted the determinations.

c) To determine response to appeal 19/00564/DPO- Mr. and Mrs. Passey, Moorlands Farm, Broadway Merriott – application to vary section 106 Agreement dated 27th March 2013 between SSDC and Clipper Development Partners LLP in relation to removing provision for GP surgery and pharmacy.

Councillors had discussed the appeal earlier with the District Councillor and felt they had already made their feelings clear, that the 106 agreement should be enforced and the land be set aside for provision of GP surgery and pharmacy.

Councillors determined not to write to Inspectorate as they had already stated their position.

19/161 Recreation ground/Pavilion

a) To receive the October and November inspection reports.

Cllr D Aslett handed the Clerk the completed reports and noted that there were some branches at the side of the football pitch. The Chair confirmed he had removed these.

b) To determine work to trees.

Following discussion with the football manager, The Chair has contacted a local contractor to cut back trees overhanging the football pitch. Cllr J Shorting had found a copy of an earlier Tree Report which had been forwarded to the Open Spaces working party. After some discussion it was agreed to send tree report to all Councillors for consideration.

Action: Clerk to forward tree report to all councillors and add tree works to January Agenda

c) To consider quotes for Solar Panels at Pavilion

The Clerk had forwarded 3 estimates to Councillors for the ground mounted solar panels. Councillors requested the full details of the estimates and suggested one other company be invited to make a site visit. The Clerk should also complete pre application planning form.

Action: Clerk to forward all details to Councillors, request a site visit and contact SSDC re planning permission.

Action: To consider quotes for Solar panels to be on January Agenda

19/162 Clapperhay Community Land.

The Chair confirmed that the fencing and gates had been purchased and some have already been erected as discussed. There was a discussion around the tree planting and the Chair felt discussion on hardwood planting was required.

19/163 Correspondence received:

Merriott Parish Council

SSDC Environment update
SERC records re Wildlife Site

19/164 Items for next meeting:

Legal advice on planning, signage decluttering, headstones, Defibrillators, recycling at pavilion, finger post order, solar array, tree report and signing precept request.

19/165 Next meeting: Monday 13th January 2020 at 7.00 p.m. in the Blake Room Merriott Village Hall.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.