

MINCHINHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 26th July, 2021,
at 7.00pm at Box Village Hall.

088/21: Present: Cllrs N. Hurst (chair), M. Allen, G. Ford, S. Hemmings, C. Morriss, A. Mylechreest, L. Reid, P. Schwartz, A. Smith (from 8.15pm) , S. Waddington, L. Woakes, Gloucestershire County and Stroud District Cllr R. Turner, one member of the public, the clerk.

089/21: Apologies: Cllrs A Bathe, M. Huband, A. Nicholls, Gloucestershire County Cllr S. Robinson.

090/21: Public questions: A member of the public raised an issue of access to the tennis courts and also the general sporting facilities within the Minchinhampton Sports Association field off Friday Street/Tobacconist Road. She felt the current gate system precluded bicycle and powered bicycle riders, pushchairs, and disabled people in wheelchairs/using mobility scooters and similar. She had approached the MSA, but had not received a positive response and had therefore turned to the council for support. Chair Cllr Hurst drew attention to a report including information about the same matter which was already scheduled as agenda item 10d. It was agreed to bring that report forward to assist debate. MSA was a charitable collective, within the knowledge of Cllr Hurst, and so the council had no direct responsibility for it, or influence on it. However, the 10d report, submitted by the council's representative on the MSA Cllr Nicholls said the MSA had felt there were plenty of places to chain bikes to the entrance railings and that to widen the entrance might allow moped/motorbike access to the field which could be a real problem. Discussion ensued and concluded with agreement that Cllr Hurst should write to the MSA expressing MPC sympathy with the request for better bicycle etc access which it considered reasonable with, however, a proviso that the scheduled ancient monument should be clearly signposted to prevent it being enjoyed as a cycle jump.

Cllr Hurst then dealt with the further items raised in Cllr Nicholls item 10d report, which is available from the clerk on request, and included debate about the possibility of providing an on-site defibrillator. His advice was, however, that any defibrillator acquired by whatever means should be wholly accessible which meant it was probably best to wait until imminent C of E plans for the redevelopment of the former youth club etc site known as The Hub were finalised and entered the public domain. This was particularly because the likely scheme might involve a gym, which would possibly itself benefit from a defibrillator. Cllr Hurst expected to bring forward a report about The Hub to August council.

091/21: Declarations of interest: None.

092/21: Minutes: The minutes of the council meeting held on 28th June, 2021, were proposed by Cllr Morriss, seconded by Cllr Ford, and approved. The minutes of the final meeting of the now closed A. E. Pash Charitable Trust Fund, held on 24th May, 2021, were proposed by Cllr Morriss, seconded by Cllr Hemmings, and approved. (MPC members were all trustees of the independent Pash charity).

093/21: Planning Committee minutes: The minutes of this committee held on 12th July 2021, were received for information only.

094/21: County and district councillors' reports: Gloucestershire County Cllr Turner's report had been circulated (and is available on request from the clerk). Of particular interest was her casework in

Minchinhampton which included the acquisition of an air quality monitor to be used initially on Well Hill. Cllr Turner had further requested that junction markings, disabled parking bays in Tetbury Street, and double yellow lines be re-painted in central Minchinhampton; and had further liaised with the GCC Fastershire (broadband) team about installations to help both Beeches Park and Chapel Lane. She was asked to make enquiries with the GCC traffic regulation order section as it appeared Minchinhampton's aspirations for lowered speed limits including across the common were not on a recent list.

Stroud District Cllr Hurst reported SDC finances at year end were in reasonable shape. Cllr Morriss continued to be concerned about applicants offering false information in SDC planning applications which was not picked up by the planning department staff. Cllr Hurst replied that an audit of planning system issues was already underway with its results to be reported in future. He drew attention to the benefits of Cllr Morriss' volunteer VASCAR (visual average speed computer and recorder) recordings which had found traffic going up a hill to be faster than that travelling down. While most useful data was being obtained the VASCAR only recorded one vehicle in every convoy.

095/21: Financial matters: **a) AGAR** – The submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditors was further delayed while work was completed on the required internal audit. Meetings with the council's financial software providers had progressed matters, including solving glitches in the software system, and a raft of financial reports was now complete and was assisting compilation of the required final documents; To more speedily progress matters it was likely the council's scheduled Finance Committee in mid-August would be changed to an Extraordinary Council meeting. A discussion about potential future venues for physical council meetings then ensued although a conclusive option was not agreed; **b) Laptop purchase** - Cllr Hemmings presented a case for the purchase of an additional council laptop, which would in an case be required once the planned new deputy clerk was appointed. It was an unbudgeted item but was expected to be £8-900. It was agreed a quotation would be obtained from the council's existing computer providers taking into account the viability of obtaining a refurbished model. **c) Market House grant:** An application from the Minchinhampton Market House had been circulated. Cllr Hemmings proposed, Cllr Morriss seconded and it was agreed that £5,000 be granted to support the charity's refurbishment of what many considered was the most important historic building in the parish.

096/21: Parliamentary boundaries: A link to Boundary Commission for England proposals to change local parliamentary constituency areas had been circulated. Currently most of Minchinhampton parish was within the Cotswolds Constituency, although Amberley was in the Stroud Constituency. Members' debate drew the broad opinion that the parish was already split in two, with two MPs, further/continued division was to be deplored and most people in Minchinhampton wanted it to be wholly back in the Stroud Constituency. The chairman was delegated to phrase an on-line response along those lines by the deadline of 2nd August, 2021.

Cllr Turner left the meeting at 8.10pm.

097/21: Play areas: Annual safety inspection check reports had been received for play areas run by the council at Box Lane, The Bulwarks, and Orchard Lane. Among actions needed were repairs/replacement(s) to/of an activity trail at Orchard Lane, which had been found to be of high risk with multiple faults; and a swing at Box Lane, a multi-play unit at The Bulwarks and two swings and a cable runway at Orchard Lane all of which were of moderate risk and again in need of repairs. Cllr Schwartz suggested the GCC "Build Back Better" fund, mentioned earlier in the meeting by Cllr Turner, might help with funding the required works. Cllr Waddington drew attention to the necessity to close the high-risk unit and Cllr Reid, who offered to visit it the following

morning and hazard tape it around, offered the view that play areas were “hugely underfunded” and needed serious financing.

Cllr Smith joined the meeting at 8.15pm.

It was agreed the council’s usual specialist repairer would be asked for quotations for the high and moderate work(s) identified in the reports.

The member of the public in attendance left at 8.30pm.

098/21: Updates on: a) Allotments – Cllr Morriss reported a volunteer might now have been found to organise a new Allotment Association. The search for land for new allotments, as there was now a waiting list of over 30, was continuing. Sub-division of plots was a possibility, further repairs to the allotment walls were starting shortly, and the chair authorised Cllr Morriss to carry on with minor changes to the allotment rules; **b) Staffing Working Group** – A job description for the new post of deputy clerk was still awaited from the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils who were assisting with the process although it was hoped the vacancy would soon be advertised; **c) Minchinhampton Climate Action Network** - Cllr Reid said the group was currently discussing its next steps.

099/21: Clerk’s report: Stroud District Council had asked the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council to conduct a Housing Needs Survey in Minchinhampton. It was anticipated it would be distributed in late August and GRCC’s Barbara Pond had offered to discuss it with any parish councillors who were interested. A copy of the survey had been sent and could be forwarded on request. Several councillors were unhappy about this process and would seek answers from the SDC as to what had triggered the survey.

Thanks were due to Cllr Morriss for cleaning the Burleigh bus shelter, although matters were ongoing as it was believed a cill was needed to prevent further mud fouling in the future.

The Five Valley Sounds talking newspaper for the blind previously rented the Vestry Room from MPC for their recordings but found problems with its continued use including the hazardous outside access steps, and lack of both running water and toilet facilities. After Covid forced changes in their arrangements FVS moved elsewhere but had now, after an invitation from the chair, begun using The Trap House office on Wednesday afternoons. The longer-term plan was for them to possibly use the council office’s basement once it was eventually vacated by the former Minchinhampton Local History Society. Cllr Morriss at this point expressed an interest in the former local history society records.

The locum assistant clerk Sue Black was progressing both provision of four new grit bins at Besbury Lane, the Old Common/Cirencester Road and Well Hill (two) and the gradual repairs/replacement of many of the 82 seats on the common. The latter project, being undertaken in liaison with Cllrs Ford and Bathe, included families’ request(s) for memorial seats/plaques in remembrance of relatives and the possible involvement of Leyhill Open Prison volunteers both in outside repairs and reinstatements in their workshop.

She was further involved in arrangements for MPC’s potential change over to e-banking.

MPC’s South Ward vacancy had been advertised with a deadline of 1st September, 2021, and already one response had been received.

Further locum assistance continued to be provided to support the council's bookkeeping/financial records while details of the new deputy clerk vacancy were finalised and advertised.

The chair's approach to SDC for allotments land, including the possibility of the land off Summersfield Road and Trinity Drive, had drawn the response that SDC viewed the aforementioned site as recreation space for local residents and that it had evident long term use value, although a Microsoft Teams meeting was offered for MPC to outline more details of its proposal.

100/21: Payments: Cllr Morriss proposed and Cllr Reid seconded the approval of the below listed payments of the council, which was agreed. Cllr Mylechreest requested a more explanatory format of list in future, which would be undertaken by the clerk.

Invoices:

SDC (Trap Ho rates)	£271.66
Edge IT Systems Ltd	£532.80
Chalford Building Supplies Ltd*	£1,543.51
T.Kirby* (four invoices)	£345.00
H. R. Wilson (two invoices)	£486.00
Sarah Athey	£29.40
Softlink Computer Systems Ltd	£9.60
S. Hemmings	£14.39
Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association	£50.00
N. Hurst* (five invoices)	£150.75
Minchinhampton C of E Primary Academy	£40.00
T. W. Hawkins and Sons SGMS	£800.58
Minchinhampton Life	£85.00
Rock & Wood*	£346.80
Wolseley UK Ltd*	£2,999.72
D. Clements* (receipts, invoice)	£863.52
Staffing	£1,391.85
A. Bullock	£78.00
L. Taylor & Sons Ltd (petty cash)	£50.00

Direct debits:

Sage	£28.80
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Vestry building works, mostly reclaimable, are marked*

101/21: Councillors' items for future discussion: The clerk apologised that this had been mistakenly added to the agenda as the next (August) meeting would be for the discussion of only essential business due to staff holidays.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Signed: Date: