**MILTON BRYAN PARISH MEETING**

**Minutes of the Milton Bryan Parish Meeting**

**held on Wednesday 30th October 2024**

**in the Village Hall**

Present*:*  26 members of the public, Peter Horrocks – Chairman,

Karen Barker – Clerk, CBC Cllr John Baker

747 **Apologies**:

Clare Francis, Steve Harris, Robin Friend, John Hinton, Terry McCann

748 **Vice Chairman vacancy**:

The Chairman said that Robin Friend had stepped down as Vice Chairman. He said that although there is no requirement for a Parish Meeting to have a Vice Chairman, it is good practice to have someone who is able to stand in if the Chairman is not available. No members of the public stepped forward for the role. To be considered further at the next meeting.

749 **Minutes of previous meeting**:

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 29th May 2024 were approved and agreed by all those present. The minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record of events.

750 **Matters Arising**:

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

751 **Reports and Representations:**

751.1 CBC Cllr J Baker gave a report:

* Fix my street – a service level agreement has been agreed to ensure that all defect reports are dealt with within 10 days of reporting and any action taken must be within 12 weeks or closed if no action is necessary.
* HGV Ban – there are persistent breaches of the rules and some vehicle registrations have been reported.
* Bus Stops – some new bus stops have been installed and residents should confirm if they have any issues with this or if they want any removed or relocated.
* Speed Check – a speed survey to be requested by CBC Cllr Baker as requested by a resident.

752 **Updates from Village organisations:**

752.1 St Peter’s Church – Church Treasurer Alan White

Mr White gave an update since the last meeting. It is 10 months since the visit by the Archdeacon and lots of events have been held. £4,000 has been raised in the current financial year and congratulations were expressed to everyone involved in the fund raising. A small number of regular donations by standing order have been set up and they represent about 50% of the monthly running costs of the Church. The Church will still give a portion of money, £6,000, to the diocese in 2025 as part of the ‘parish share’ and £8,000 in 2026. Upcoming events will include the Remembrance Day Service and the Christmas Tree Festival on 6th to 8th December.

752.2 Village Hall – Rosemary Rogers

The hall has had an active year and held a village lunch given in honour of John Harris who used to be Chairman of the Parish Meeting. A quiz night was held which was well supported and the Committee are hoping to hold a film night. The AGM will be held on 4th November and new members are welcome.

753 **Village Matters:**

753.1 Village Charity

The Chairman began by explaining the purpose of the meeting: to appoint a new trustee and allow residents to raise questions about the village charity. The Chairman noted that all trustees had chosen not to attend the meeting and had sent apologies, indicating that their previously issued statement on the village WhatsApp group represented their final position. This statement was read aloud to clarify their stance.

The Chairman invited comments from the residents regarding the village charity. Questions raised included: how much money does the Charity intend to spend on undertaking maintenance of their properties, how does the Charity intend to deploy their funds, how can any surplus funds be used for the village and what are the Charity doing to be more transparent about their processes.

753.1.1 Trustee appointment

The Chairman outlined the appointment process for a new trustee, following the vacancy left by Barbara Wickens. Eligibility criteria were shared, barring current tenants and paid service providers from the role to prevent conflicts of interest. The appointee should be actively involved in administrative duties.

Andrew Bell proposed, seconded by Andrew Creamer that Peter Horrocks be appointed as a Trustee of the Village Charity. Peter Horrocks accepted the position.

753.1.2 Summary of discussions

A summary of recent developments was provided by the Chairman. At the previous meeting in May, residents had expressed concerns about the rental price of a vacant property potentially being set at a commercial rate, which might exclude those with village connections. The trustees explained that the highest rent paid for a property was at least 30% below market rent.

In discussions with the Charity Trustees’ Chair and Clerk, the Chairman said he had raised concerns about ambiguities in the charity’s annual report, particularly regarding the balance between prioritising villagers and obtaining market rents. The Chairman suggested that the charity’s policy language be clarified and updated, which the Charity Clerk agreed to do. Additionally, after tenant requests, the charity had initially intended to hold a tenants’ meeting before Christmas.

In September, a vacant property was advertised commercially without mention of priority for local residents, which led to questions on the village WhatsApp group. On 12th October, the Trustees issued a statement justifying their use of a professional adviser to manage rentals, ensuring compliance with market legislation and achieving an accurate market rate. They emphasised that the requirement to seek the “best rent” was legally binding and consistent with the Charity Deed. The trustees further stated that the village meeting held no oversight over the charity beyond appointing Trustees.

The Trustees also addressed allegations of abusive behaviour, expressing regret that recent decisions had caused discomfort and highlighting their voluntary role for the benefit of the village. They stressed that they would not issue further statements on the matter.

Updates were shared regarding the Charity Commission website. The charity’s policy was amended to indicate that prospective tenants with village connections must meet “affordability requirements,” omitting the phrase “viable market rents.” The charity’s financial reserves had also exceeded the £400,000 target, with £50,000 of its £75,000 annual revenue allocated to reserves.

The Trustees had asked that residents submit written questions rather than engage in open debate at the meeting. Consolidated questions on financial and reserve policies were sent to the Trustees, though responses were still awaited. Efforts by the Chairman to meet with the trustees for conciliatory discussions were not accepted. The Trustees ultimately decided that the planned tenants’ meeting was unnecessary, citing lack of demand. The Trustees did offer to all tenants the opportunity of individual meetings to discuss concerns with the Trustees but none of the tenants took up this offer.

753.2 Village projects/highways

The Chairman gave an update:

* Signs – speed sign missing on Mags Lane
* Speed assessment – this is necessary before any projects are undertaken, CBC Cllr Baker to look into
* Highways – improved road markings and stronger speed measures are necessary
* Projects - potential for village gates to be installed
* 20mph – a 20mph speed limit through the village will be looked into, a speed assessment would assist with this

754 **Open Forum:**

There were no further comments from members of the public.

755 **Finance:**

755.1 Accounts to 30th August 2024:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | £ |
| Barclays Current Account | 4,069.85 |
| Barclays Savings Account | 2,373.02 |
| Less unpresented chqs 774, 777, 781 | 67.20 |
| **TOTAL** | 6,375.67 |
|  |  |
| B/F 2023/24 | 4,614.18 |
| Receipts to 30th August 2024 | 2,883.84 |
| Payments to 30th August 2024 | 1,122.35 |
| **TOTAL** | 6,375.67 |

755.2 Other finance matters:

755.2.1 Budget/Precept 2025/26

Andrew Bell proposed, seconded by Nigel David to approve a budget of £3,025 and with the allotment rent income of £165, an increase in the precept to £2,860, this was agreed by all present. This equates to £150 over 2024/25 which equates to a 5.54% increase. The Clerk to send the precept form to CBC by the middle of January 2025. (**Action Clerk**)

756 **Planning:**

There were no planning matters to be raised.

757 **Correspondence:**

There was no correspondence.

758 **Date of next meeting:**

Meetings will be held in February, May and October each year.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th February 2025 starting at 7.30pm.

The Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed: ……………………………………. (Chairman) Date: ………………………….