

# North Marston Parish Council

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## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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Present: Councillors A Boyt (Acting Chairman), K Du-Plessis, B Newman, S Hill, and Jan Roffe (Clerk)

**177/24 Apologies:** Apologies were received from Councillors Mordue and Hogbin-Mills. Also from Buckinghamshire Councillor, Phil Gomm.

### **178/24 Members Interests:**

There were no declarations of interest at the top of the meeting. However, there was an update on the Forest School later under item 187/24 and Councillor Du-Plessis declared an interest as a Governor of North Marston C of E School at that time.

**Open forum for Parishioners:** (under adjournment – 20 minutes. 3 minutes per person speaking) to include 100 Club Draws for February 2024.

- The Clerk said that she would report that the streetlight at the bottom of School Hill is on all day.
- A resident reported that the kerbstones along the grass verge on the north side of Quainton Road have been damaged by tractors. The Clerk said that she would report it to the Local Area Technician.

**100 Club Draw:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize – £30 - No.10 – Lisa and Bradley Simmons
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize – £20 - No.29 – Rachel Callender
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize – £10 - No. 91 – Bill McWhirter

**179/24 Buckinghamshire Council update:** In his absence, Councillor Gomm had written to the Clerk to say that there were no Buckinghamshire Council updates. However, Councillor Gomm wished it to be known that, following a request by the Parish Council at the January meeting, he had written to HM Land Registry to complain most vehemently that extracts from his emails used in support of those claiming ownership of the land to the north of Quainton Road had been taken out of context and manipulated. Councillor Gomm had received a reply from HM Land Registry to say that his comments had been taken very seriously when deciding how to proceed with the issue over the ownership of the land, and that, at the time of writing to Councillor Gomm, HM Land Registry was awaiting a substantive response from the claimant in light of the matters brought to HM Land Registry's attention by the Parish Council.

### **180/24 Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024 were approved and signed.

### **181/24 Land to the north of Quainton Road:**

In the absence of the Chairman, the Clerk gave the following update on behalf of the Parish Council, namely that HM Land Registry had now received notification from the claimant to the ownership of the land that she objected to the Parish Council's submissions. HM Land Registry advised that as an objection had been received and the claimant had made it known that she had no wish to negotiate, the next step would be for the Parish Council agree whether or not it wishes the matter to be referred to the Land Registration division of the Property Chamber, First-tier Tribunal, which has the power to determine these matters. If determination does not prove possible from the evidence laid before the Tribunal, it may advise that legal proceedings are necessary to resolve the issue.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council agreed to request that the matter is referred to the First-tier Tribunal.

**182/24 To consider the following Planning Application:**

**24/00473/APP - 8 High Street North Marston Buckinghamshire MK18 3PD**

Householder application for front porch, single storey side extension and veranda to rear.

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council had no objections to the application.

**183/24 Grass and hedge cutting:**

**(i) To consider the bids received for the Grass and Hedge Cutting Contract 2024-2026:**

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council considered all three bids received for the two-year village grass, verge and hedge cutting contract (out of six invited to bid), and decided to continue with its present contractor, Blades, who had supplied the most cost-effective quotation. It was noted that the Sports Field Committee may wish another contractor to continue to cut the Sports Field hedges and that to be decided by the committee at the appropriate time.

**(i) To consider a request by a resident who has recently bought part of St John's Manor's land to leave part of the verge uncut to allow for wild flowering.**

**RESOLVED:** To speak to the contractor and write to residents affected if part of the verge identified, (just after the gate into Green Lane footpath up to the side of the culvert before the Manor's garden), is allowed to grow to a slightly longer length to allow for some wild flowering and to attract bees and butterflies. Jenny Copnall has offered to keep an eye on the growth and scythe any that is overgrowing to prevent it causing a visual obstruction to drivers, especially considering the increase in traffic to and from Animal Antiks. The Parish Council noted that the Local Area Technician would insist that the verge is cut right back on safety grounds if any complaints are received.

**184/24 To receive any updates and discuss actions on the following matters:**

**Environment**

**1. Highways:**

(i) To receive an update on any new and resolved issues (Councillor Carrie Smythe)

There were no Highways updates.

**(ii) MVAS**

The Local Area Technician and contractor are in contact about the supply of utility drawings at the proposed socket locations to prevent interference with any shallow lying services. The weather has also contributed to the delay in the installation of the sockets.

**(iii) The ditch in Quainton Road**

No further update, except that the weather has been too wet to carry out the work.

**Parking:**

(iv) The Local Area Technician will let the Clerk know the outcome of a Highways meeting taking place on the 13 March to decide on whether design elements will come in-house for private works. If so, the cost of design for the proposed bollards along some of the village grass verges would be reduced as the Local Area Technician would be able to design and cost the project.

(v) There was a brief discussion about parked vehicles obstructing the highway along the High Street parallel road.

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk was asked by the Parish Council to write to residents along the High Street parallel road to explain that it is a public highway and should therefore be kept clear of parked cars and obstructions to emergency and other vehicles. Also to be aware that owners will be asked to park their vehicles elsewhere when the High Street is resurfaced later this year so that the road is available for local drivers to use as an alternative route when the resurfacing work is carried out.

This will hopefully be in the summer whilst the school is in recess, but there are no dates available yet. The Clerk will notify residents when she has been given the dates.

(iii) **Any other matters**

The Clerk reported that the Local Area Technician is aware that the 30mph speed sign opposite Stevens Farm has been knocked down and has raised it as a job. Also, the replacement of the village gate at the Oving end of the village is on his agenda.

**185/24 Parish Action Plan: To receive any relevant updates on/discuss the following:**

**1. The Parish Barn**

(i) Inspection during and upon completion of the works and insurance:

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council agreed the surveyor, John Nettleton's, fee of £225 + VAT to inspect the repair work carried out on three occasions at the beginning, middle and upon completion of the work.

The Parish Council remained concerned that it would still be liable in the event of an accident even if volunteers signed a waiver as had been suggested. The Clerk was asked to obtain three quotations from contractors to the specification of the repairs required in the commissioned survey and to clarify the insurance position regarding waivers.

(ii) Proposal by the History Club (John Spargo)

**RESOLVED:** The History Club's proposal, presented by John Spargo, is for the barn to be used as a heritage asset in which to display the original threshing machine and old tools that would have been used in the 1800's, as well as information about the history of the barn and village. The Parish Council supported the idea and asked John to find out more details, particularly about the possibility of Heritage Lottery funding for the project to include the cost of the repairs needed. This would keep the barn maintained as an asset in the village.

2. Village Hall – no updates

3. Play Area – no updates, other than the ground is like a swamp because of the rainfall and one of the bins is missing its lid.

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk to research and cost a replacement bin. It was agreed that there is no need to have two bins located by the pagoda and the broken bin does not need to be replaced.

4. Village Pond and Parsnip Pond – All good and clear of algae.

5. Defibrillators – All status checked. Thanks to Christina Hutson for checking all three defibrillators monthly and logging their status on the Circuit.

**186/24 Projects: To receive any updates and/or discuss:**

(i) New streetlight opposite Sports field entrance

No updates, but Councillor Mordue is researching suitable streetlights to be located on the Sports Field side of the road in the car park.

(ii) Website upgrade: The new website is still under construction.

(iii) Church Street kerbing: no updates as waiting to hear of the outcome of the 13 March Highways meeting referred to at item 184/24 (iv)

(iv) Encouraging Wildlife/Aylesbury Vale Wild Project: The seeds are germinating in the soil cultivated on the north side of Quinton Road.

**187/24 Sportsfield Updates:**

(i) The Sports Field Committee is waiting to hear whether its application to the Winslow and Villages Community Board for funding to improve the drainage on the sports field has been successful or not.

(ii) The Forest School is having difficulty applying for grants because it is associated with North Marston School. As the land is owned by the Parish Council, it was suggested that the Parish Council submit the applications in its name. This would be on the understanding that anything purchased or built with grant funding would become assets of the Parish Council for reasons of VAT legality.

**RESOLVED:** The person responsible on behalf of the Forest School to liaise with the Clerk about the above.

(iii) There was a discussion about the general untidiness of the Sportsfield at the moment.

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk to write to the Sports Field Committee to ask that the cladding is completed as soon as possible to improve the appearance of the containers and that the piles of vegetation left on the field from the autumn clear-up are removed or burnt (being mindful of wildlife that may be under them). Also, that the large canisters, bags of builder's rubble and wood debris is cleared from the area.

(iv) There was also a brief discussion about the possibility of an artificial football pitch as it is felt that the football club is losing members with so many sessions being cancelled because of the wet weather and condition of the pitch. As this was not an agenda item, the Clerk said that she would include it on the next agenda.

**188/24 Trustee Vacancy: Poors Piece and Clockland Charity:** The vacancy was advertised at the meeting and anyone interested should contact the Reverent Petra Elsmore for further information.

#### **189/24 Finance:**

1. To approve and sign the Devolution Agreement:

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council approved the agreement and it was signed by the Acting Chairman.

2. Appointment of Internal Auditor:

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council approved Mr. Roger King as Internal Auditor.

3. Approval of the Asset Register

**RESOLVED:** The Parish Council approved the Asset Register for the 2023-24 audit.

4. Donation/Small grants Scheme 2024

**RESOLVED:** The Clerk to write to local organisations and groups to let them know that the Parish Council's small grant scheme is once again open to applications as from April.

5. To agree the following Receipts and Payments of Accounts:

6. **RESOLVED:** The Parish Council approved the following Receipts and payments:

#### **Receipts and Payments of Accounts**

##### **Parish Council**

##### **Payments made on behalf of the Parish Council**

Tesco Mobile – Parish 'phone contract - £7.50, no VAT (DD)

HP Instant Ink - £4.49, £0.75 VAT

McAfee - £129.99, no VAT

Blades Turfcare – Grass February £915.00, £152.65 VAT

BMKALC Councillor in person Training - £420.00, no VAT

Buckinghamshire Council – dog bin contract - £630.94, no VAT

Microsoft subscription - £59.99 (DD)

SSE Energy - Streetlighting 1<sup>st</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 - £18.80, £2.06 VAT and £0.06 CCL (DD)

##### **Payments to be paid on behalf of the Parish Council**

Clerk Salary – February £\*\*\*.\*\*, no VAT

Clerk expenses – February - office allowance, £26.00 no VAT

Amazon Business – 2 x spin mop heads - £14.63, £2.93 VAT

##### **Payments received on behalf of the Parish Council - none**

##### **Village Hall**

##### **Payments made on behalf of the Village Hall**

Katherine Wetherell – Village Hall cleaning January 24 - £150.00, no VAT

E-On Next – Electricity SR 4<sup>th</sup> January-3<sup>rd</sup> February - £43.11, £2.05 VAT

Wave Anglian Water - £69.09, no VAT

**Payments to be made on behalf of the Village Hall**

E-On Next – Electricity SR 4<sup>th</sup> February-3<sup>rd</sup> March 24 - £36.14, £1.72 VAT

**Payments received on behalf of the Village Hall**

A Peasley - VH hire for party – deposit - £50.00, no VAT

Craig Wilson – VH hire for party – deposit - £50.00, no VAT

Mark Charman – VH hire for party – deposit £50.00, no VAT

**Sports Field**

**Payments made on behalf of the Sportsfield**

Rebecca Parker (Marvellous Marigolds) – SF pavilion cleaning February '24 - £67.50, no VAT

E-On Next – Electricity Pavilion 1<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January 24 - £79.05, £3.76 VAT

**Payments received on behalf of the Sportsfield**

**The following 100 Club subscription fees :**

PO Counters – Rotary Club Santa Float donation - £565.00, no VAT

**100 Club Subscriptions**

Andrew Keegan - £60.00

P Cockton - £15.00

O'Connor - £15.00

Still - £15.00

Symonds - £15.00

Saunders - £15.00

Morton - £15.00

Howes - £30.00

Andrew Boyt - £75.00

K York - £15.00

Ian Mordue - £15.00

P A Robinson - £15.00

E Calver - £15.00

**Payments to be made on behalf of the Sportsfield**

000806 100 Club 1<sup>st</sup> prize February Draw, £30.00, no VAT

000807 100 Club 2nd prize February Draw, £20.00, no VAT

000808 100 Club 3rd prize February Draw, £10.00, no VAT

**190/24 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024** at 8pm in the Village Hall

At the end of the meeting, the Clerk announced the resignation of Carrie Smythe from the Parish Council. Carrie was thanked for her valuable contribution to the Parish Council during her time as a councillor. The vacancy will be advertised shortly.

***Jan Roffe, Clerk to North Marston Parish Council  
18th March 2024***