

MINUTES of the Ordinary meeting of Lydiard Millicent Parish Council held on Thursday 5th November 2020 at 7.00pm. Due to COVID 19 restrictions this meeting was held remotely.

PRESENT : Cllrs Richard Selwood, Mike Sharp, Phil Shepherd, Jim Stubbs.
Officers: Mrs Deborah Bourne (clerk), Mr Colin Tydeman (handyman)

Also Present : Five members of the public

060/20 **Election of Chairman**

Due to the resignations of the chairman and vice chairman, Lydiard Millicent Parish Council's first item of business must be Election of Chairman.

No Councillor present wished to stand nominated as chairman of the council at this time. Members preferred to nominate a chairman specifically for this meeting, deferring election of council chairman to the next meeting.

RESOLVED to nominate Cllr Phil Shepherd as chairman for this meeting only; and to defer election of a Council Chairman to the next meeting.

Public Question Time

Various questions were raised by the members of the public present.

061/20 **Acceptance of Office**

As Cllr Shepherd is chairman for this meeting only it is not necessary to sign an Acceptance of Office. This will be carried out next month on the election of a Chairman to the Council.

062/20 **Election of Vice Chairman**

This action is deferred to the next meeting, after election of a Parish Council Chairman.

063/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Andre Kayani, his reasons for absence were accepted at the last meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Vernon Montgomery; he had been called to his place of work urgently.

064/20 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in items on this agenda.

065/20 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Cllr Sharp requested a change to Minute 058/20. He wished the heading (*Help with Administration for the Parish Hall*) struck through and replaced with *Parish Hall*.

Cllr Sharp declared an interest as chairman of the Parish Hall Trustees. He declined to vote.

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Chairman

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1st October 2020, with Cllr Sharps amendment, as a true record of the meeting and instructed Cllr Phil Shepherd to sign, as the meeting chairman. Due to the meeting being remote the minutes will be signed during the next week.

066/20 **General Correspondence / Diary Dates**

The following items were noted by the Council.

- i. Card sent by the Lord Lieutenant to all those in the community who volunteered to help with neighbours during these stressful times.
- ii. Remembrance Sunday (8th November) is being marked by smaller services this year. The Act of Remembrance at Lydiard Millicent will take place at 11.30am at the War Memorial. Cllr Sharp will lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.
- iii. Members reported that the putting up of the Christmas Tree this year will be carried out under the responsibility of the Parish Hall. No contribution from the Parish Council is required.

067/20 **Planning Matters**

- a. The Council noted recent planning decisions made by Wiltshire Council for properties within the parish since the last meeting.
- b. The following planning applications were considered:
 - i. 20/08074/FUL – 38 Stone Lane, Lydiard Millicent
Proposed alterations to garage fenestration to include decking and a change of use of part agricultural to residential.

RESOLVED to send an objection to this application; the application is proposing to change agricultural land to residential in conflict with the core strategy, and our Neighbourhood Plan.

- ii. 20/08131/FUL - The Hayloft, 8a Wood Lane, Brinkworth
Proposed conversion of Barn to 1no Residential Dwelling, erection of boundary treatments including boundary wall and associated works.

RESOLVED to send no objections to Wiltshire Council regarding this application.

- iii. 20/08326/FUL – 9 The Beeches, Lydiard Millicent
Proposed single storey extension to front, side and rear elevations.

RESOLVED to send no objections to Wiltshire Council regarding this application.

- iv. 20/08777/FUL – 31 The Close, Lydiard Millicent
Proposed detached garage.

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Chairman

RESOLVED to send objections to this application. The proposed garage would be over development in this area. The building, being so close to the pathway, would restrict visibility for both vehicles and pedestrians.

068/20 **Finance**

- a. *Grass Cutting Contract:* Members had previously met to discuss this contract, and make alterations. An amended copy will be available to the clerk after this meeting.

RESOLVED to accept the Contract, as amended; it is to include all hedge and tree management within the same contract. Invitations for tender will be sent to all interested parties.

- b. *Fees and Higher Charges:* RESOLVED to keep all fees and higher charges unchanged for the next 12 months.
- c. *Equipment / Tools:* The Council was asked to consider delegating authority to its officers to purchase tools or replacement equipment.

Officer Advice:

- The Council currently has no tools for the handyman, apart from a brush, spade and wheelbarrow.
- If no tools can be purchased without prior approval, it will be impossible for the handyman to react in a timely manner to any issues.
- Officers will find it difficult to predict what equipment is necessary, if the council is not able to articulate the scope of work to be carried out.

Members were uneasy with this approach, requesting that a list be drawn up and presented to the council so that duplicates were not purchased inadvertently.

RESOLVED to limit authorisation for tools and equipment up to a limit of £50.00 (fifty pounds) per item, up to a maximum of £500.00 (five hundred pounds) this month and £200.00 (two hundred pounds) each month moving forward.

069/20 **COVID-19 Pandemic**

- a. *Actions required due to any changes in Government Advice:* The national government may send out advice which is either urgent or requires local action quickly; this is particularly noticeable in the current situation. Members have been unhappy that action has been taken by the Council without first consulting all members. In order for Members and Officers to fully understand their roles in these situations the council is asked to set out guidelines in readiness of any future situations that may occur.

Officer Advice:

- Delegated authority can be given to a committee or sub committee of the council; another local authority or to an officer of the council. (LGA 1974 s101)
- An individual Councillor can be consulted prior to a delegated decision being taken. An individual Council can not direct an officer to make a decision.

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Chairman

Discussion included:

- The clerk should not be making decisions on their own in the name of the council.
- An officer should be contacting councillors before any decision is taken, only if no councillor can be contacted can a decision be made on behalf of the council.
- Sending an e-mail is not considered contacting councillors.

RESOLVED that every effort should be made to consult with a councillor prior to any decision being made.

- b. *Community Leadership during this time:* During the National lock-down and shielding in March of this year a group of volunteers helped with shopping and errands for vulnerable residents. At that time Councillors agreed that it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to be the first point of contact for residents and partner organisations, with the clerk keeping in contact with the volunteers by e-mail and telephone. In this way all volunteers were protected by the Council insurance in case of accident or claim.

RESOLVED that moving forwards the Parish Council would promote an informal approach, where neighbours shop and run errands for those not able to go out; and anyone without help should contact Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council to be contacted so that they can amend their records accordingly.

070/20

Communications

Some residents are becoming frustrated at the perceived lack of communication from the Parish Council. This is an on-going frustration, with the Council formally considering this in 2017 (ref: 099/17), when a Communications Working Group was set up.

Officer Advice:

- Officers are able to communicate Council Policy and Council Decisions; Officers are not able to offer opinion.
- Councillors can communicate their views and opinions on an individual basis, they should make it clear this is not a Council view
- Best Practice is that Councillors reassure residents, whether in person or via social media as individual Councillors.
- The Chairman is usually recognised as the spokesman for the Council, again it should be made clear if a personal view is given rather than as representative of the Council

Discussion included:

- Project progress is not being updated regularly enough for residents
- Website needs to be updated regularly
- Recent posts on the Lydiard Millicent Community Facebook page updating residents on progress of the Speed Indicator Devices has been well received.

RESOLVED to defer this item to a future meeting, due to the small number of councillors currently serving on the Parish Council.

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Chairman

071/20

Play Area Reports

It was noted that the Annual RoSPA inspection reports have been received for the play areas in The Mews and the Recreation Field. The Handyman will review and carry out any necessary maintenance.

072/20

Casual Vacancies

It was noted that there are currently five vacancies on Lydiard Millicent Parish Council. Three of these are able to be filled by co-option immediately, while two are awaiting confirmation that no election has been requested from ten electors of the parish.

It was concluded that this discussion should take place outside the Council meeting, with members working together on a strategy for recruiting from a wider demographic.

073/20

Date and Time of Next Meetings

The next three meetings December, January and February, will be held virtually; March and April will be considered at a future meeting.

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 3 rd December	7.00pm	via ZOOM
Thursday, 7 th January	7.00pm	via ZOOM
Thursday, 4 th February	7.00pm	via ZOOM
Thursday, 4 th March	To Be Arranged	
Thursday, 1 st April	To Be Arranged	

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

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Chairman

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Chairman