

REPORT FROM THE CLERK TO LYDIARD MILLICENT PARISH COUNCIL OCTOBER 2020

Purpose of Report

To update members on council activity between Council meetings. This report is for noting and contains publically accessible information, any confidential updates will be sent out to Councillors separately.

COVID-19 Lock Down and Vulnerable Residents

During March there were several residents who volunteered to help during the time vulnerable people were told to isolate and protect themselves. Some residents worked under the guidance of other charities and there were 25 volunteers who worked under the guidance of Parish Council.

All volunteers were contacted at least twice, and a Volunteering Policy was drafted as the Council did not previously have one. The insurance company asked that a record be kept of volunteers and those being helped. Forms to collect this information were sent to all volunteers, as yet there have been no forms returned.

During discussions with the chairman during the summer, he felt that the Parish Council should now distance itself from this type of support. During the last two months there has been no further contact with volunteers under the supervision of the Council. Volunteers within the community under the supervision of other organisations, have kept in touch with the clerk on an ad hoc basis.

Handyman Appointment

The Handyman was appointed in March, unfortunately just before the lock down which interrupted his induction, but this has now been completed. At the time of appointing for this post there was a lot of discussion about the job title, members did not like the term Groundsman and Parish Steward would create confusion with the Wiltshire Council contractors. On appointment it was agreed to be titled Handyman. Although, on first appearance, it seems to be sexist the title is not meant to make a gender assumption, if a female is appointed to the position her title will still be Handyman.

Time has been spent on completing all employment paperwork, ordering uniform and safety clothing, visiting all areas so Handyman is familiar with the whole parish.

Grass Cutting Contract

The grass cutting contractors used by the Council have been taken over, although at present they are still using their own company name. The new contracts manager has made several visits to the office, discussions have been positive with the new owners wishing to work with the Council in the future. They have cleared the hedge behind the play area and the Jubilee Club House and flailed the field hedge around the Recreation Field. At the moment this contract is running informally, members should note it will be necessary to obtain formal quotations in the near future. The Council is also contracting some work out to another contractor on a month by month basis, it is hoped at the time of any new contract being drawn up all work will be placed with one company, making it easier to manage.

Cricket Square

There have been three teams playing toward the end of this season, due again to the COVID-19 restrictions. The square has been maintained throughout the summer, as advised by the contractor. Teams comment that the square is playing much better this year than last and on the whole they are pleased with the improvement – it would make an even bigger improvement if the outfield could be weed treated and re-sown where necessary. This is on the agenda for this meeting under a separate heading.

Football

Again COVID-19 restrictions have impacted on use of the pitches. Lydiard Millicent Junior Football Club have worked really hard to get all members back into the club whilst still observing all the guidelines. The QR codes currently on display in the club house are attached to LMJFC. The liaison reps have kept the council informed of their actions and the procedures they have in place.

Jubilee Club House

The cleaning contract is now underway again. During lock down, when the building was completely closed the clerk arranged for the contract to be paused, a thorough clean was arranged in March, with the cleaner starting again in August. Although the building is not yet fully open, with cricket and football teams not using the changing rooms at the present time the toilets are obviously still needed.

A contract has been set up for the supply of janitorial products (toilet paper, feminine hygiene units, hand soap, hand sanitiser) and two entrance hall mats.

The Handyman has been carrying out maintenance around the building, which is detailed in his report.

Policies and General Administration

The Internal Auditors report is awaited, there have been personal issues in addition to the COVID-19 restrictions this year making everything slightly later.

In readiness for the Council to carry out adoption of all policies it requires the clerk has started researching, and collected several examples which, when adapted slightly, will work well for Lydiard Millicent. Policies will be brought to monthly meetings for adoption throughout the year.

The clerk has received numerous e-mails from Wiltshire Council, and other partners which have required reading and replies/ forwarding to members. Meetings have been virtual, again there have been fortnightly briefings about cemetery usage, community needs, supporting volunteers, changes taking place because of the current restrictions, Police Liaison; not all meetings have been attended it has been useful to catch up on a meeting every so often.

The current legal work will be commented on once they have been completed; as will any contact with Planning Enforcement in connection with various sites around the parish.

Moving Forwards

The clerk attended a seminar entitled “*Leadership in Crisis : Decision Making under Stress*” (29th September). This was a very useful seminar given the current situation. It provided a good platform for reflection.

The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) National Conference this year will be virtual. On discussion with the chairman it was agreed that the council would pay the £30.00 fee for attendance. The conference will take place 12th to 16th October.

DEBORAH BOURNE
Parish Clerk/RFO