

# MURTON PARISH COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF MURTON PARISH COUNCIL

5 November 2019

**Present:** Councillors Alastair Bell, Barbara Govan (Chairman), Debbie Hewitt Anne King, John McDarren and Tina Longstaff. EDC Councillor William Patterson and two members of the public were also present.

**74/19 Apologies for Absence.** Cllr Laverty (unwell).

**75/19 Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Bell declared an interest in item 9.1. Cllr Hewitt declared an interest in item 9.2.

**76/19 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting on 5 August 2019 be signed by the Chairman of the meeting as an accurate record.

**77/19 Open Session.** Gavin Bell gave a statement and answered questions on the planning application which was to be discussed by the Council under item 9.1. He was thanked for attending the meeting and clarifying details on the application.

**78/19 Parish Council Website.** Councillors agreed that the new website was an improvement, easy to navigate and looked good. The Clerk was congratulated, and she in turn complimented the developer, Rocketsites. It was agreed that Murton Institute could have the e-mail address [institute@murton.org.uk](mailto:institute@murton.org.uk) hosted by the same provider. The Clerk will re-issue the instructions for accessing new e-mail accounts.

**79/19 Defibrillators.** In August it was reported that the Murton defibrillator light was not working. The defibrillator uses the power supply to the adjacent footway light to ensure the defibrillator is kept at an appropriate temperature. EDC's footway light contractors were unable to locate the problem. The original installers have been contacted and a part might need replacing, although this model of defibrillator is no longer available. The Community Heartbeat Trust maintenance and service contract for the Hilton defibrillator ends in February 2020.

It was noted that the ring-fenced budget, which shows how the money originally donated for the defibrillators has been used, has fallen below £300 and will be largely used to cover the electricity connection problem. This would be noted when setting the 2020/21 budget (item 15.2).

**80/19 EDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**80/19/1 EDC Council Plan 2019-23.** It was noted that the PC did not make a response to this consultation. It arrived and had a deadline between the quarterly meetings.

**80/19/2 Footway Lighting.** Although the pole outside Hilton Hall had been replaced, it was noted that the old lamp was still providing the light. The Clerk would investigate this with EDC.

**80/19/3 Planning Application 19/0671 – Langton Field Caravan Site, Langton.** Councillors considered the information given by the applicant earlier in the meeting, noted the compliance with EDC recommendations on the earlier application and the reported approval of Cumbria County Council regarding access and safety. Cllr Bell had declared an interest and was excluded from the discussion and vote.

**Resolved:** to support the planning application for twelve static caravans at Langton Field.

**80/19/4 Planning Application 19/0763 – Langton Field.** The applicant described the alterations to the ground floor layout which had been approved in application 18/0864. There was no extension to the footprint.

Cllr Hewitt had declared an interest and was excluded from the discussion and vote.

**Resolved:** to support the planning application for the alterations as described.

**81/19 Financial Regulations (Appendix 1).** The updates to the NALC model financial regulations had been reviewed by the Chairman and Clerk and incorporated in a new document.

**Resolved:** to approve the revised Financial Regulations as presented for Murton Parish Council.

**82/19 Hilton Drainage System.** Following the report of a foul water leak from the drains at the last meeting Cllr McDarren and two residents effected a repair to a broken drain on the edge of Hilton top green. The damage had been caused by heavy vehicles driving over an old brick drain close to the surface.

The enquiry regarding responsibility for the Hilton village drainage system from a resident wishing to sell their house had resulted in considerable research on the parts of Councillors, EDC Cllr Patterson and the property vendor. In summary:

There is 'village system' for foul water in Hilton. There is no knowledge of where it lies or how or to where the wastewater flows. Cllr McDarren's research shows probably eight properties using this system. Other properties, with septic tanks, are reported to be using it for the disposal of rainwater.

EDC, CCC, United Utilities (UU) and the Environment Agency have acknowledged the existence of the 'village system' but accept no responsibility for the 'village system'. All other properties have septic tanks.

Historically a public drain was installed in 1929 by the Rural District Council. A recommendation for a treatment plant was shelved during and after the War and the notion appears to have subsequently disappeared from official records. In 2003 United Utilities provided a new waste water treatment plant for Murton. At that time the PC expressed concern that the Hilton waste/foul water was emptying directly into Hilton Beck and requested a similar plant for Hilton, United Utilities stated that numerous schemes were under development and Hilton was not prioritised at that time (ref PC Minutes 19<sup>th</sup> May 2003).

EDC Environmental Protection Officers made a site visit and advised a survey of the drains to identify the line of the sewer, septic tank and outlet. However it was noted that the maximum length of the camera would be 60m and therefore this may not reveal very much. The cost of this could be c£400.

EDC have provided information regarding possible ways forward. The options all put the costs of any rural sewerage installations or applications to UU on the householders.

There is also new legislation that "all owners of septic tanks which have soakaways that discharge to any surface water (stream, river etc) or discharge directly to surface water are bound, by the General Binding Rules, to replace or upgrade their systems by 1 January 2020". Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/general-binding-rules-small-sewage-discharge-to-a-surface-water>

The PC is aware that the new legislation has caused alarm amongst some householders. In the meantime the property vendors have been unable to provide the necessary information to purchasers and at least one sale has fallen through.

The PC is pursuing this problem with the various authorities on the behalf of residents. Cllr McDarren is in contact with the Chief Executive of United Utilities.

Cllr McDarren and EDC Cllr Patterson were thanked for their efforts.

Cllr McDarren had also been in touch with the MOD regarding shutting off the tanks on the Range which supply the freshwater system to Hilton (unused). Water from this system leaks onto the road and creates a hazard when it freezes.

### 83/19 CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

**83/19/1 Hilton Bridge Widening.** There was general approval for the excellent work done over the summer by the contractors – Eden Stonework.

**83/19/2 Highways.** The following problems were reported for the Clerk to forward to CCC. Coupland Beck cattlegrid – the damage to this had been inspected earlier in the year but no action taken. Stock had strayed off the golf course. The cattlegrids here and at Brackenber flood in heavy rain.

Blocked gullies: outside Brook House, and to the west of the Institute on the road between Hilton and Murton. At Ash Bank and near Atlast on the road between Hilton and Appleby.

### 84/19 CEMETERY

**84/19/1 Cemetery Management.** No response had been received from the Rural Payments Agency regarding the application for financial support for rebuilding the cemetery walls.

**84/19/2 Health, Safety and Maintenance.** The walls did not currently need repairing and trees had been trimmed by volunteers.

### 85/19 PARISH PROPERTY, VILLAGE GREENS & ENVIRONMENT

**85/19/1 Parish Owned Property.** Hilton residents had made an excellent job of refurbishing and reinstalling the metal bench in the village. The Clerk was asked to write and thank these volunteers.

**85/19/2 Village Greens & Environment.** It was noted that the MOD had undertaken to repair Scordale Steps as these were currently impassable and dangerous. A letter had been received from a new resident at Hilton Hall asking if the PC had any objection to her maintaining the piece of grass at the Hilton noticeboard and planting bulbs there. The PC were happy for this to happen. A further request to use the sheepfold adjacent to this area for personal use was referred to Hilton Commoners.

### 86/19 FINANCIAL REPORTS

**86/19/1 Budget 2019/20 (Appendix 2).** This report was reviewed. It was noted that there would be bills for items for maintenance and repair (electricity supply to defibrillator, bench repairs, installation of Coupland Beck noticeboard) which could only be estimated at this point.

**Resolved:** that the current Financial Report and list of Clerk's Expenses be signed by the Chairman.

**86/19/2 Budget 2020/21 (Appendix 3).** This item was discussed at length as the task involves setting the precept for 2020/21.

The proposal to merge the budget heads *Village Environment* and *Section 137* in order to facilitate greater flexibility in allocating items of expenditure during the year was discussed.

**Resolved:** that the two budget lines be merged.

The proposal that the PC adopt a formula to assist the precept-setting process each year was also discussed. A formula was discussed which included taking account of the following items: Regular Payments (those payments to which the PC was committed annually); any deficit in the budget created by using the previous year's precept figure and increasing the PC's reserves.

The background to this included acknowledging that the reserves had decreased year on year as follows:

Prediction for end of FY 2019/20 = £5,530

Actual for end of FY 2018/19 = £6,111

Actual for end of FY 2017/18 = £8,552

The recommendation is that a parish council should hold at least 1.5 times the annual precept in reserve. The precept for 2018/19 was £4,365.

**Resolved:** that the principle of the formula proposed be adopted for this and future budget discussions.

The formula includes applying a percentage of the predicted shortfall. Options for precept figures utilising 100%, 50%, 30% and 25% of the shortfall were discussed. The effect of this would increase the precept by between £2.12 and £7.97 for the next financial year per Band D household. Considerable discussion took place, but it was agreed that re-instating higher reserves was essential. More tasks were being devolved to parish councils which had necessitated an increase in the Clerk's hours, the cemetery was in need of repairs (new gravel, future wall repairs), there would be full running costs for the three footway lights which had been transferred to the parish and the defibrillator fund had been used up.

**Resolved:** that the percentage of the shortfall applied should be reviewed on an annual basis in order to reach the target for reserves.

**Resolved:** that the % for of shortfall for the 2020/21 budget should provisionally be 100%. An extraordinary meeting of the PC will in the New Year will be arranged to review the calculation in light of the updated CTR and CTB figures issued by EDC and confirm the budget and precept for 2020/21.

- 87/19 General Data Protection Regulations.** Copies of the GDPR Councillor Checklist regarding data protection for Councillors were circulated and completed by Councillors.
- 88/19 Correspondence for Information (Appendix 4).** The Clerk drew attention to the e-mail regarding the national planning for VE Day Celebrations. This would be raised at the next meeting.
- 89/19 Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 2 March 2020.** It was agreed that the Officer from the North Pennines AONB who had offered to give an illustrated talk on the peat restoration project on Murton Pike be invited to talk at this meeting.
- 90/19 Clerk's report on any actions taken under delegated powers not otherwise mentioned.** There were none.
- 91/19 Councillors' reports and items for future agenda.** There were none.
- 92/19 Date of next Ordinary meeting: Monday 3 February 2020 at 7.30 pm.**

**The meeting closed at 10.10 pm**

A large print version of these minutes is available on request from the parish clerk. All documents relating to this meeting are available here: [www.murton.org.uk](http://www.murton.org.uk)