

Milton Damerel Parish Council Minutes

Of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 in Milton Damerel Parish Hall commencing at 19:30

Present: Councillors Stephen Moyse Chair, Richard Piper Vice- Chair, Gareth Piper, Teresa Walters, also present was District Councillor Ken James and Lorraine Buttery- Clerk.
Lorraine Buttery- Clerk. 14 members of the public

1. Apologies were received from: District Councillors Kit Hepple, Parish Councillor Jim Richardson

2. Declarations of Interest

a) Register of Interest: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
None were declared.

b) To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature. *None were declared*

c) To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
None were declared

3. Chair's announcements:

The Chair, Councillor Stephen Moyse welcomed all to the meeting, Stephen stated that he was absolutely disgusted at the treatment and victimisation of Peter Buckpitt by some residents. There has been nasty comments posted on social platform, he has also received abusive telephone calls. Peter was an extremely good Parish Councillor and is a great loss to the community and Parish Council.

Councillor Moyse asked whether if those present knew who was in charge of the Community Facebook page? One person thought it was Sandra O'Conner with Robert Stennet assisting, the Clerk mentioned that she thought Sandra had notified that she could not carry on with it. No further information was forthcoming, Stephen asked that the item be put on the matters arising for the next meeting.

4. Public Comments

The Chair Councillor Stephen Moyse asked if there were any residents present who wished to speak? There will be a strict 15 minute allowance.

Christian Whitely stood up to speak and informed the Parish Council that a residents group had been set up because of their concerns regarding the building of the slurry pit. It is the intention of the group to create a formal group with a committee, Chair etc.

Councillor Gareth Piper asked "if this is a residents group why weren't all residents informed regarding the meetings that have gone on?" It seems apparent that only a selected few were invited. No satisfactory answer was given.

At this point the Chair Councillor Stephen Moyse read out the reply that was received from the environmental department after their initial questions put to them by the public at the last meeting.

It was confirmed Mr Peter Buckpitt and his associates had followed all legal requirements and everything was in order. Any concerns regarding proximity to neighbouring properties or potential odours are a matter for the LPA and/or environmental health as relevant

Christian went on to ask whether the Parish Council can help with enquiring as to whether an Odour impact assessment had been done? What about other developments, can the Parish Council be proactive and keep us up-to-date with proceeds with the environment department.

The group are just asking for support.

The Chair, Councillor Stephen Moyse replied that the Parish Council would support the group if its relevant or in its remit to do so. The Parish Council cannot comment on something that they had not been asked to comment on.

Councillor Ken James commented that he cannot ask if the Planning Application had been checked and if it was legal as this Slurry pit did not need Planning permission, but was assured by the enforcement officer that all was in order.

Another member of the public spoke up and said " the Residents group initially came about to collate information from those who had raised concerns at the PC meeting in August and was not meant to be a 'formal' group. Thus enabling one complaint being sent to Councillor James and not lots of different letters.

Councillor Gareth Piper commented that would it not have been a good idea to ask someone with knowledge about slurry pits to advise the group , as it was obvious that a lot of people attending here have no idea what it was all about.

Councillor Stephen Moyle commented that maybe if residents had asked Peter in a good manner for information in the first place and not posted nasty remarks and comments on facebook maybe none of this would have happened.

A member of the public got up and asked why didn't Peter Buckpitt get up at the last meeting and explain what was happening?.

Councillor Gareth Piper remarked that after all the nastiness and victimisation shown against him it was very surprising that he attended the meeting at all. As this was a private matter and nothing to do with him being a Parish Councillor he was not obliged to explain anything at the meeting.

The aggressiveness of some residents at that meeting was not conducive to any explanations being offered.

At this point Councillor Moyle called time but asked if there were any more comments?

A couple of experienced farmers John Elliot and Fernley Luxton said they would have gladly attended the meeting to advise residents but were not asked, they made the following comments:

I have had slurry pits for 40 to 50 years but have never had any complaints, people do not even realise that they have one quite close by.

Its very rare for there to be any smells as a crust forms in a matter of days.

For larger pits another way is to cover the area with clay balls which inhibit any odours.

Putting a cover over the top can escalate any problem if there were any in the first place.

Councillor Moyle thanked everyone for their comments.

5. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 16th August 2023 had been circulated by email, they were then unanimously approved as a true record of the meeting, they were duly signed by the Chair Councillor Stephen Moyle.

6. **County and District Councilor's reports:**

Councillor Ken James said there was not a lot to report. It is unsure whether Torridge is classed as a deprived area, if this was the case extra money from the government would be forthcoming.

I did have a meeting in London with the levelling up Minister Dehenna Davison but this was cancelled at the last minute due to the Minister being ill, she had since resigned. At present we have no idea how much extra money is available, difficult times, but at least Torridge has balanced their Budget.

7. **Matters Arising**

1) Permanent Memorial, the invoice for the Soldier Figure has been received, and will be ready for erection shortly, Councillor Moyle said that he would sort out with Councillor Piper a date to put the concrete plinth in place. An official unveiling will be arranged for before remembrance Sunday.

2) Blocked Gulley, this had improved and there was not a problem with the recent heavy rainfall

3) Sign – shop cross, Councillor Piper reported that the sign was still broken, the Clerk had contacted highways again and it was in hand.

4) New Councillor, two applications had been received, ballot papers had been supplied by the Clerk Councillor Richardson was unable to attend but had cast his vote via email as approved by Torridge elections office. By a 3 to 2 majority Peter Bromley was elected as a New Councillor, Peter will be replace Rose Haynes. The replacement for Peter Buckpitt is now in the hands of Torridge Elections office, due to the fact that more than 10 residents had requested an election in the event of two or more candidates.

The Clerk explained that this would be at a cost of between 3 and 5 thousand pounds, this caused some concern to the Parish Councillors as it would bankrupt the Parish Council or the precept would have to be raised by this amount to cover the cost , this would have an effect on all Residents, all Councillors were very surprised, saddened and somewhat angry by the action of some of the residents. Information by the Elections office would be available in October with the election being in November.

It was remarked that this had never happened in Milton Damerel

Christian Whitely remarked that an election was more democratic.

8. Planning Applications

None were received

9. Planning decisions

1) 1/0449/2023/AGMB

Proposal: Prior notification for change of use of agricultural building to 1no dwelling house and Associated building operations under Class Q (amended red edge)

Location: Agricultural building at grid reference 237838 109926, Milton Damerel Devon

2) 1/0718/2023/FUL

Proposal: Proposed conversion of former pool building to provide 1no unit of holiday

The above applications were given permission.

Planning Appeals

None received

10. Financial Matters

a) Councillors unanimously approved the following cheques and three Councillors signed

i) Clerk's salary £287.43 (Not on the Agenda) Beechwood Trinkets WW2 Soldier £645.60

b) Annual Grants approved at the meeting held on the 23rd November 2022.

i) M.D. Newsletter £100 ii) M.D. Parish Hall £150 iii) M.D. Parish Church £150

iv) M.D. & District Gardening Club v) North Devon CAB £50

b) financial report to date, the Clerk had circulated the financial spread sheets by email prior to the meeting, no issues were raised. The bank balance was supported by the current bank statement and reconciliation. There being a balance of £3,053.73 Restricted funds

SBiT £103.02, P3 £174.65, TDC Grant £800 and DAAT grant £900. The Remaining £1,073.06 being PC general funds.

11. Correspondence as below and as available at the time of the meeting

All correspondence received by email had been forwarded to Councillors when received.

No issues were raised. No correspondence has been received by post.

12. Matters brought forward with the permission of the Chairman

1) Councillor Gareth Piper asked whether the sighting of Japanese Knot weed had to be reported as there is a lot visible in around the Parish?. Councillor James said he would enquire with DCC.

2) Dog fouling around and in the Churchyard was a big problem, the Clerk was asked to enquire whether one could be supplied.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm

signed.....

Date..... *page 3 of 3 20th September 2023*