



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Working together for a better future

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY USING MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2020

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”) came into force on 4th April 2020. The Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May next year.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Clarke (Chairman), Court (from Min.127), C Esdaile, J Esdaile, Hare, Henly and Kipp

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs H Knight (Clerk and RFO)

The meeting opened at 7.45pm

122. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All were present.

The Clerk apologised for the delayed meeting start due to technical difficulties. It was noted that Cllr Court’s attendance was late due to technical issues joining the meeting.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest or changes to register of interests made.

124. MINUTES

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the online Meeting held on Thursday 24th September 2020 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman would sign them.

Clerk's Report

Min. 110, Finances/I&E report:

The Clerk advised that she and the Committee Chairman had reviewed the query of apparent underspend on the administration salaries/staff costs for the first quarter. Payments during the second quarter were now closer to the expected spending level and it appeared that this was likely to be a matter of timing of invoices arriving for payment, affecting when they are input onto the accounting system.

Min.118 Covid-19 and Tenancy rents:

Tenant clubs had been contacted as per the decisions made at the last meeting regarding rent payments affected by the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Sports and Social Club had now paid their revised August invoice, with the September one awaiting payment (not overdue). No correspondence had been received to date from the club regarding the Council's partial waiving of rent payments.

The Cricket Club written thanking the council profusely for the generous decision which would assist their finances considerably.

The Snooker Club had paid their annual rent before the Clerk had contacted them to advise the Council decision that not enough information had been available. Having also spoken with the club chairman, it was likely that they would contact the council again in due course regarding a possible rent reduction on next year's invoice.

125. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers.

126. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES

Members received bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1 and 3 as at 30th September 2020. The Committee Chairman would arrange to visit the office in order to compare reconciliations to bank statements, which would be duly signed by him if no issues were identified.

Members received a summary of income and expenditure compared to budget to 30th September 2020.

Members received a statement of earmarked reserves as at 14th October 2020.

The Clerk reported that there were no creditor invoices over 30 days outstanding.

Cllr Clarke had completed the Q4 internal control inspection to 31st March 2020. The Q1 inspection to 30th June and Q2 to 30th September 2020 now needed to be undertaken. It was **AGREED** that either Cllr Hare or Cllr Clarke would arrange to complete the quarterly internal control inspections for the latest periods, depending on dates and availability.

127. BUDGET 2021/22

Members had received a draft budget paper prepared by the Clerk as a starting point and discussion took place regarding the potential budget for the 2021/22 civic year. The Clerk had undertaken a comparison of the previous year's spending against current budget spends, incorporating known or anticipated costs. Some cost centres had had to be increased whilst others included a standard 2% increase. The following points accompanying the draft budget had been included in the Clerk's initial draft:-

- 101/4077 Legal Fees: Remaining at £5000 anticipating costs of new leases if Sports Pavilion project proceeds within the next 12-18 months.
- 101/4021 Rent/Room Hire: Increased by £200 to more realistic projection. Unknown if/when physical meetings will resume but should be anticipated as an increased cost.
- 101/4022 Training: Increased to £2000 to allow new cllr training, staff training and Clerk CiLCA qualification cost (advisable to retain).
- 101/4035 Insurance: Known premium £ 4654.54.
- 104/1040 Interest on A/cs: This had been left low due to the nature of financial unknowns and low rates generally.

- 105/1050 MSF Income: Unchanged as currently hiring increased, but may need to be reduced as under used resource during lockdown.
- 106 Staff Costs/Salaries: All staff salaries had an assumed 2% cost of living and incremental spinal column point + potential additional 1scp if Clerk attains CiLCA.
- 106 Staff Costs/Superannuation, Employers NI and Tax: Increased assuming anticipated 2% increases, but superannuation slight discount due to IHLI insurance.
- 106 Staff Costs/Neighbourhood Wardens: £64,000 budgeted including potential 2% salary increase.
- 107/2021 Discretionary/Street Cleaning: Assumed would continue.
- 107/4090 Discretionary/Contingency: Increased from £1,500 to £3,000. Standard advice is to allow £3k.
- 107/4091 Discretionary/Grants & Donations: Grand Aid kept at £5k, could be further reduced.
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Pavilion Rebuild not budgeted (previously agreed to cover from General Reserves).
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Memorial Garden: Unchanged at £100 as minimal spends/volunteer work.
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Neighbourhood Plan: £0 as EMR of c£7000 remains, further costs not expected.
- 201/1020 Highways/Christmas Lighting: Income increased slightly as business contribution of £15/tree x 38.
- 201/4200 Highways/Christmas Lighting: Expenditure increased to £3,310 for x38 take up @ £85/tree + 2x£40 lights – supplier cost did not increase this or last year.
- 201/4220 Highways/Hanging Baskets: Reintroduced? Removed last year as preceding two years had been limited success due to staff absence/maintenance issues, resulting in unattractive/dying displays.
- 202/4225 Refuse collections: 2% increase.
- 202/4250 Street lighting: 2% increase.
- 301/1100 Allotment Tenancies: Income - Last meeting agreed no rent increase.
- 301/4301 Allotments Water: 2% increase.
- 303/4340 Grounds Maintenance/Contracted Maintenance: unchanged.
- 303/4342 Grounds Maintenance/Tree Works: Reduced from £6000 to £4000 as urgent work complete, now allows £2050 for allotment tree survey, all tagging and £2000 for general works. Works arising from the allotment tree survey would be incorporated into the 2022/23 budget.
- 304/4360 Pavilion Boiler/Showers: Unchanged – may need increasing.
- 304/4363 Pavilion Fire Equipment/Maintenance: Increased to £1000 from £500 previously overspent.
- 304/4364 Pavilion Repairs: Unchanged but if rebuild not commenced needs increase.
- 305/1120 Social Club Tenancy: Income unchanged at £8772 needs decision on new rent amount.
- 305/1121 Sports Club Tenancy: Income unchanged at £3000 needs decision on new rent amount – Stoolball club 2021 annual rent to be reduced by 2020 amount as per previous decision.
- 305/4391 Other Recreation/Maintenance Supplies: Unchanged but may need increase.
- 305/4392 Other Recreation/Playground: Static at £3000 but may need to increase.
- 305/4393 Other Recreation/Tractors and Equipment: Decreased by £1k to £6000, separate EMR already for new tractor.
- 305/4395 Other Recreation/NCRG: Static at nominal £100, Actual YTD £0
- 305/4396 Other Recreation/Pocket Park: Reduced from £950 to £200 as current year contractor planting was one off. Could further reduce.

- 305/4397 Other Recreation/Youth Worker: Increased to £15,000, previously 3.8% increase agreed, 3% increase this year allowed for.
- 305/4399 Other Recreation/Rivermead: Reduced from £300 to £100, minimal expenditure anticipated.

This produced a precept requirement of £243,995 which gave a Band D equivalent of £96.65, using the previous HDC tax base (which will not be confirmed until November/December 2020). This represented an increase of £3.70 or 3.8% on the 2020/21 precept. Members were reminded that it was also important to bear in mind that the Council had been running at below recommended general reserves level. The cost of funding the Pulborough Neighbourhood Warden scheme now had to be fully met.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** the following adjustments to the draft budget, for further consideration at the 19^h November 2020 budget meeting:

- 101/4017 Administration/Legal Fees: It was noted that the leases and licences may need addressing next year, since progress on the sports pavilion project was unlikely to reach fruition before summer 2021. Costs for legal fees may therefore need increasing as £5k may be insufficient level – to be increased.
- 201/1020 Christmas Lighting/Trees - Income: Continue this discretionary service but request donations of £15 per tree.
- 201/4220 Highways/Hanging Baskets: Not to provide these as regrettably not cost effective and therefore delete from budget, saving £800.
- 301/1100 Allotment Tenancies: Already decided no increase for 21/22 budget – this would be reviewed for the 22/23 budget setting process to apply an increase for the 21/22 and 22/23 years at that point.
- 305/1120 & 1121 Other Recreation/Club Tenancies: November 2020 RPI figure to be taken to calculate budget increase; Income to be reduced according to agreements and likely agreements with clubs on waivers for next year's rental invoicing as a result of Covid-19 financial impacts.

The Clerk would re-calculate figures for a revised draft budget for consideration at the next meeting. The Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman would send the Clerk some potential dates if possible for an internal discussion with the Clerk to fine tune budget figures.

128. S106/CIL MONIES

Members noted receipt of the HDC October quarterly report of Unspent / Potential S106 monies and CIL Report. It was noted that the Parish Council had been awarded HDC CIL funding for the first time, in the sum of £2,442.22 re. DC/17/2125.

Members had also received the SDNP CIL Funding Letter announcing that the window for project bidding for the 2020/21 pot was now open. The Clerk reported that within the SDNP communication, allocation had been made in their current infrastructure programme of the PCC's previous request for improved broadband provision.

Members discussed potential projects for submission for the SDNP CIL funding pot. One suggestion considered was for a replacement, modern MSF (MUGA) court to replace the existing shabby and outdated facility. The Council would be able to provide some funding too from its MSF Resurfacing EMR, which would be expected by funding bodies. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that officers would investigate the eligibility of this with SDNP and if feasible the matter would be referred to the Recreation & Open Spaces Committee for consideration of submitting a funding bid.

129. SPORTS PAVILION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Clerk reported that following registration by the Council's agent for pre-planning application advice from Horsham DC, she had received confirmation that the HDC case officer was visiting the site the following day (23rd October) to take external photographs. It was anticipated that HDC's report would be back with the agent by the end of the month, so Council or the Committee should have an update in November.

130. PULBOROUGH CRICKET CLUB LICENCE

It was noted that the current licence is due to expire on 31st March 2021. The Clerk asked the Committee whether they wished her to commence legal work in drawing up a new licence, which was likely to take several months to progress. The Committee discussed the aspirations for a new sports pavilion, with new leases and licences all updated to suit the new premises. Unfortunately, it was unforeseeable whether this would be likely to be in place for next summer, combined with the pandemic situation causing delays, but seemed unlikely. Ideally it would be preferable to have all new licences/leases issued simultaneously. The Clerk confirmed that although in her view it was not good practice to do so, previous legal advice received was that leases/licences not renewed following expiry and not having been terminated by either party would be deemed in law to continue. The Council had done this with the other pavilion tenant licences/leases until such time as new agreements were drawn up for the new premises.

It was **RESOLVED** to advise the Cricket Club that the Council would not be commencing licence renewal work until the situation with Covid-19 and the pavilion rebuild/refurbishment planning application was clearer. This would be in line with all other pavilion leases and licences for tenant clubs that had expired.

131. GRANT AID 2020

Members considered the previously circulated schedule of recommendations from the Grant Aid Working Party. It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that the awards be approved unamended as per the schedule, totalling £2,700.

132. WEST SUSSEX PENSION FUND – POOLING AGREEMENT REVIEW

Members considered the previously circulated WSCC WSPF West Sussex Letter of Variation for Small Scheduled Bodies Pooling Agreement. WSCC advised that as part of the review of this arrangement, some minor amendments to the Agreement are required to take account of changes in regulations. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that this be signed by the Clerk on behalf of the Council.

133. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Members reviewed the previously circulated Risk Register, which included the Clerk's updated entries for Covid-19 risk assessments for safe re-opening of the Parish Office, the Sports Pavilion, the MSF (MUGA) court and the two children's playgrounds plus the outside gym equipment. It was noted that some entries needed further refining as some still included the LCRS system default statements, which were not necessarily applicable to PPC. It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to full Council the adoption of the Risk Register.

134. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS AND POLICES

Members reviewed the previously circulated Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and Internal Control Policy, noting there were no amendments or recommendations from the Clerk. It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to full Council the adoption of these without amendment.

135. CORRESPONDENCE

Members received the Correspondence List, as below.

Pensions Employer Services (Hampshire Pension Services)

Email 05.10.20: Update on the impact on the LGPS for the HMT Exit Cap Regulations following the McCloud judgement.

The Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 was approved in the Lords on 23rd September and then in the Commons, therefore it will become effective within 21 days of the Commons vote. Due to these changes the Government are making to the way exit payments are made to public sector workers, the LGPS regulations will also need to be amended. MHCLG have issued a consultation on potential changes to the regulation which is due to close on 9th November 2020. These changes will remove the automatic right to a payment of an unreduced pension for members over the age of 55 who are made redundant.

Pulborough Cricket Club

Email 02.10.20 from PCC member thanking the council for the much appreciated waiving of annual rent, which is a financial lifeline for the club.

136. PAYMENTS

Members had received the list of Payments for Authorisation. It was noted that now that scheduled committee meetings were taking place again, payments were now reverting to normal committee/council approval, all previous outstanding 'ratification' payments having been caught up with. It was **RESOLVED** to approve these, detailed below, and the payments list and invoices would be physically signed by the required two signatories at the earliest opportunity.

£

Mr F Bushby	10.00
Pulborough Social Centre (Village Hall)	1,479.29
Festive Illuminations	3,310.00
Beechdown Arboriculture Ltd	5,825.00
Burgess & Randall Ltd	11.99
Derek Paxton	2,340.00
Kent County Council	110.91

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

.....Chairman

.....Date