



**PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**  
*Working together for a better future*

## **PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL**

Swan View, Lower Street

Pulborough

West Sussex RH20 2BF

Telephone: 01798 873532

Email: [hquenault@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:hquenault@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### **MINUTES OF A FINANCE & POLICY MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023 AT THE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Wallace (Vice Chair), Clarke, Court, Ellis-Brown, Lee, Mote

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr H Quenault (Clerk)

*The meeting opened at 7.30pm.*

#### **38. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and reasons were received from:

Cllr Penny Hands (Personal Commitment)

Cllr Elizabeth Hunt (Personal Commitment)

#### **39. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests**

There were no changes to Councillor's register of interests.

Cllr Lee made the committee aware that as a member and user of the Cricket Club he would not take part in the voting on Agenda Item 12.

#### **40. Minutes**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman sign them.

#### **41. Public Speaking**

There was no public speakers present, therefore the Chair moved onto the next item on the agenda.

#### **42. Parish Council Finances**

There were some questions raised during the discussion of the budget lines:

Line 1075: The Environmental Cleansing Grant, also known as the street cleaning grant, is included in this figure but will be moved to Line 1021 on the 30th of September due to a miscode. This budget line also includes a grant of £200.00 received on the 28th of April, known as the Coronation grant.

Line 4031: The question was raised about PPC not paying rates in the past and its inclusion in the budget. It was clarified that this relates to the Sports & Ground Pavilion Businesses Rates, which were heavily discounted by HDC and signed off by previous Council. COVID provided protection to many sports buildings, exempting them from business rates during previous periods.

Line 1040: It was noted that higher interest rates are bringing good news for some aspects of the budget.

Line 1021: There was a query about the allocation of funds for street cleaning grants. It was explained that, as mentioned earlier, this grant will be properly allocated to Line 1021 on the 30th of September. The reason for the income being lower than the budgeted amount was due to it being paid concurrently with the precept (paid twice yearly).

Line 1100: Concerns were raised about the low income from allotments. It was clarified that this is a timing issue, as bills for the new year are sent out on the 1st of October 2023, and payments have already started coming in. The figures are expected to reflect differently in October's Profit and Loss statement.

Line 4014: The nature of this budget line was inquired about, and it was clarified that these are bills for DCK Accounting. It was explained that the movement of funds from the contingency budget to professional fees is a transparent way of accounting for an unbudgeted expense. There is currently over £500 in the contingency budget, which is also a result of a miscode. Additionally, in Pavilion, the Sports & Social Club Surveyors Report is listed as an expenditure line, and it was noted that this will be moved to the EMR into Legal Fees on the 30th of September, based on a recommendation from the Clerk. This adjustment is not a miscode but a deliberate change.

Members **NOTED** bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1 & Cashbook 3, a summary of income & expenditure and the statement of earmarked reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

#### **43. Risk Register**

Maintenance of Building: It was suggested that the current figure for building maintenance should be revised to reflect a more accurate assessment. The current assessment is considered a high risk.

IT Security Risk: It was emphasized that IT security risk should be included in the assessment. An external source had previously spammed our entire system, highlighting the need for improved security measures.

Members' Declaration of Interests: There was a suggestion to adjust the assessment criteria for members' declaration of interests. Specifically, it was proposed to lower the likelihood rating for this issue to better reflect the risk.

The members **RESOLVED**, that per appendix D, with the above changes revised into the document the risk register was approved by this committee and would be reviewed yearly.

#### **44. Asset Management – Land Ownership**

##### **7.1 – Rivermead Nature Reserve**

Questions were posed concerning the inclusion of water testing in the plan and the feasibility or need for this due to the water runoff. It was noted that the ditches tend to become boggy during the winter months. It was emphasised that the plan needs to include the management of ditches and watercourses, especially given previous property flooding incidents. A key point made during the discussion was the need to streamline the document. It was acknowledged that legislation regarding this matter may change over time, and the Clerk suggested that this document can be adapted as a working document to accommodate such changes.

##### **7.2 – Cousins Way**

There were deliberations regarding the rationale behind assuming the inclusion of a new building or structure within the management plan. It was also considered and agreed upon that the idea of a Repair Café should be excluded from the management document.

The Clerk informed the committee that he was still awaiting a formal response from Horsham District Council, however, based on research it was highly unlikely that Horsham would accept a structure on a space designated for 'Recreation'.

### **7.3 – Pocket Park**

The Clerk informed the committee that the shrubbery had been removed from Pocket Park without disturbing the current TRO's in the park. A tree had come down in Pocket Park and had been tackled by the Groundsman, the wood had been collected by a resident.

### **7.4 – Main Recreational Ground**

The meeting included a discussion about the necessity of including grey water capture in the management document, with conflicting views expressed on this matter.

### **7.5 – Nutbourne Common**

The Clerk informed the attendees that a new document had been prepared and presented to the Councillors at the beginning of the meeting. (This document has been attached to the meeting minutes for clarity). This revision was prompted by the Clerk receiving essential information that necessitated changes to the management plan. The suggestion was made to consider including other species, such as lizards, in the listing. It was noted that this could be a valuable opportunity for councillors to actively engage with the initiative. Furthermore, the significance of Nutbourne Common and its importance to the community of Pulborough was highlighted.

The members **RESOLVED**, to accept all the above management plans as working documents so that the above suggested amendments, eliminations or technicalities could be edited in by the Clerk.

## **45. Sports Pavilion Development Project**

The Clerk updated the committee about the work that had occurred for the Sport Pavilion Development Project.

Fire Risk Assessment:

A comprehensive fire risk assessment was conducted by a certified fire safety expert. The assessment included a thorough evaluation of the entire Sports Pavilion to identify potential fire hazards and develop strategies for mitigation. Key findings and actions taken include:

- Identification and removal of combustible materials in storage areas.
- The acknowledgement of damage to the fire doors in the snooker room.
- Installation of P50 fire extinguishers.
- Establishment of clear evacuation routes and assembly points.
- Employee/tenant training on fire safety procedures and equipment usage.
- Regular fire drills, test completed and to ensure preparedness.

Restoration of Hot Water:

The hot water system within the building has been successfully restored. This involved:

- Replacing a faulty breaker
- Monitoring the gas levels surrounding the boiler
- Testing and certifying the hot water supply for safety and compliance

Ongoing Work:

#### Grade One Electrical Work:

Grade one electrical work is scheduled to take place in the coming week. This work involves upgrading the electrical infrastructure and remove potential electrical hazards to meet current safety standards. Key aspects of this ongoing work include:

- Replacing internal cables (currently outside) and to re-run them safely.
- Remove dangerous exterior lights that have not worked for a significant amount of time and that possess exposed cabling.
- Replace plug covers.

#### Electrical Installation Condition Report:

In addition to the grade one electrical work, an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is scheduled to be completed as an essential component of our ongoing efforts to ensure electrical safety. The EICR will involve.

- Conducting a thorough assessment of the entire electrical installation in the Sports Pavilion.
- Identifying and documenting any electrical defects, faults, or potential hazards.
- Providing recommendations for necessary repairs, improvements, or replacements.
- Verifying compliance with current electrical regulations and safety standards.
- Issuing a detailed report summarising findings and actions to be taken.

#### Potential Works Going to Full Council:

As part of the Sports Pavilion Development Project, there is potential work that requires approval from the Full Council. The Boiler Relocation Project, which involves the relocation of boilers to the staircase area, subsequent staircase removal, installation of a power flow system with smaller cylinders using existing piping and the creation of a self-contained changing room facility. The Clerk is meeting with the architect soon and should be able to confirm the feasibility of this works for approval at the next Full Council.

There was a discussion regarding the asbestos report for the new build area, and it was suggested to wait for the refurbishment project to determine the total cost of addressing all defects. The Clerk informed the attendees that the primary risks, including plumbing, electrical, fire, and asbestos, had been addressed and cost estimates had been provided at the last Full Council meeting. It was also noted that the roofs were listed as a noteworthy defect, but the cost might not be relevant depending on the build date for the new building. Additionally, new elements like the boiler could potentially be addressed through Section 106 funds, and the idea of using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds was open to consideration.

#### **46. Grant – Election of Members (Special Group)**

There was a clarification over the agenda item.

The members **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Lee, Cllr Court & Cllr Wallace to review the grants received and to bring the recommendations to the next Finance & Policy meeting (26<sup>th</sup> October) for discussion.

#### **47. Internal Audit Provision**

The members **RESOLVED** to exclude press and public for the rest of the agenda items due to the sensitive nature of the discussions.

**(PRESS & PUBLIC were excluded)**

The Clerk provided an explanation that the previous internal audit failed to identify errors in the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return). The internal audit report drew conclusions that omitted critical information that should have been brought to the attention of the finance committee. In response to this, the Clerk suggested that the committee consider appointing a new internal auditor, specifically the one recommended by WSALC, which coincidentally is Mulberry and Co. This suggestion led to extensive discussions, with a focus on the need for change and a review of the provider. The expense of the audit, was also mentioned as a factor for the new recommendation.

The members **RESOLVED** to elect Mulberry & Co as the internal audit provider for the 2023/24 financial year.

**48. External Accounting Provision**

The Clerk was queried for their perspective on the matter. Subsequently, a conversation ensued regarding the time required for account preparation and its potential effects on the existing workload. It was brought up that the year-end accounts had been handled by DCK Accounting, resulting in a qualified audit, which prompted further discussion and clarification on this issue.

The members **RESOLVED** to revert to the Clerk, with the option of bringing this back to the committee if the workload increased, due to the external accounting provision no longer needed and the accounts being up to date.

**49. Pulborough Cricket Club**

During the meeting, there were comments regarding the assistance previously provided to the cricket club and the need to establish a more positive and cooperative relationship in the future. Concerns were raised about the parish council not having access to the cricket club's financial accounts. The issue of the cricket club experiencing a lack of hot water during their games was deemed unacceptable. It was proposed to offer a discount on the original bill, although there was extensive discussion on the matter. There was also a clarification on the number of matches played. Some participants expressed the view that it was unproductive to argue over a small settlement amount for the cricket club. Furthermore, it was noted that the contract and lease had been adjusted to create a more affordable bill for the cricket club. It was discussed that any delay could potentially affecting the construction of a new community asset. To address these issues, it was recommended to initiate discussions with other stakeholders, including those users of Recreational Ground including the Stoolball Club and the Football Club, while ensuring that the development of community assets is not unduly delayed.

A MOTION was put forward that the members accepted to revise the outstanding bill (INV 1270) for the Pulborough Cricket Club due to actual matches played and the lack of hot water. The bill was revised to £150.00 but would also lead to termination of the current lease.

This motion failed to get a second and so was defeated.

A new MOTION was put forward and resolved.

The members **RESOLVED** to revise the outstanding bill (INV 1270) for the Pulborough Cricket Club due to actual matches played and the lack of hot water. The bill was revised to £150.00 and would allow for the start of a renegotiation with the lease/contract with the Cricket Club.

**50. Payments**

BURGESS & RANDALL	CHAINSAW ACCESSORIES - TREE POCKET PARK	£145.24
RJB HAULAGE & GRAB HIRE LTD	GRAB LORRY FOR S & SC - BUILDING WASTE & GREEN WASTE	£936.00
KCS PRECUREMENT	RICOH - PRINTER COPY CHARGE	£56.54
MOORE	EXTERNAL AUDIT 22/23	£756.00
NALC	ADVERTISMENT FOR CLERK/RFO	£120.00
VIKING DIRECT	FIRST AID KITS FOR S&SC/OFFICE - FILES FOR OFFICE	£100.86
WSCC	SALARIES - SEPTEMBER 2023	£9,930.74

***The meeting closed at 9.15pm.***

.....Chair

.....Date