



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 28TH JANUARY 2021

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 2021.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Clarke (Chairman), Court, Hare, Henly and Kipp

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs H Knight (Clerk and RFO)

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

150. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and approved from Cllrs J and C Esdaile, who were attending online SSALC councillor training.

151. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS

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

152. MINUTES

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the online Meeting held on Thursday 19th November 2020 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman would sign them.

Clerk's Report

In November 2020 the Clerk had successfully applied for a Government grant available through HDC and a further £1,334 had been received, identified in the accounts system under Administration Income//HDC Grant-Covid. The Clerk was currently reviewing other business support grants available for the 3rd lockdown that the Council may be eligible for.

Min.144 (third paragraph): Regarding the financial report awaited from them, the Snooker Club had advised the Clerk that the chairman was waiting to see how long the club is out of use for and will report when it was known for certain how long the closure had been (currently 5 months).

153. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers.

154. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES

Members had received bank reconciliations for Cashbooks 1 as at 30th November and 31st December 2020, for Cashbook 2 as at 30th November 2020 and Cashbook 3 as at 30th November and 31st December 2020.

The Committee Chairman would arrange to visit the office to compare reconciliations to bank statements, which would be duly signed by him if no issues were identified.

Members received a quarterly comparison of Income and Expenditure to budget as at 31st December 2020. The Clerk clarified some points where spending percentages were slightly at variance to budgeted amount.

It was noted that the Q1 inspection to 30th June and Q2 to 30th September 2020 had been completed. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Clarke would arrange a separate date with officers to carry out the Q3 inspection to 31st December 2020 and other necessary paperwork signing.

Members received a statement of Earmarked Reserve funds. A query was raised regarding the transfer of £572.99 from the Pavilion Refurb/Tractor Shed account. The Clerk was asked to check but it was felt likely to be expenses arising from the work by the architect in preparation for a planning application for the sports pavilion project. *[NB: It has been confirmed that the £572.99 was the net amount following payments of Studio 5 pre-application work and Eyelevel Deign for the project brochure, plus account interest gained].*

There were no creditors outstanding other than the pavilion tenants which Members were already aware of and were the subject of separate item discussion.

155. COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACTS: TENANT RENT REVIEW REQUEST

As requested by the Committee Chairman, the Clerk had reminded the Social Club of links to HDC grants available that they may be eligible to apply for. The Clerk reported that the Social Club had now sent in their cheque for the October rent.

Members had received the request from the Sports & Social Club seeking cancellation of rent due for the periods that the club has been closed. Members noted that the club would have had an opportunity to apply for grants in November, December (2020) and January (2021). The club had confirmed it had received Business Support Grant for Lockdown 1 and had applied for Lockdown 3. It was noted that the financial reports provided by the club did not show the grant the club had received.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk advise the Social Club that the Council is not cancelling the rent currently and will continue to invoice monthly, but without actively pursuing overdue amounts, and would seek to resume discussions with the Club at the first opportunity once matters regarding lockdown restrictions are clearer for 2021. Additionally, the Council would like to be kept informed of whether the Club has been successful in receiving grants and whether the Government furlough scheme has been used.

156. S106/CIL REPORTS

Members noted receipt of the latest quarterly HDC reports. It was also noted, as also recorded in the Full Council correspondence list, that Pulborough Community Partnership had advised its intention to apply for S106 funds (held by HDC for the Tesco development) for Lower Street improvements and would keep the Council informed.

157. SPORTS PAVILION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

There was nothing further to update currently.

158. GRANT AID 2020/21

Members considered the grant aid application (circulated) received from West Sussex Mediation Service. The Clerk had been approached by the group who had explained that the Covid-19 situation had considerably impacted on the service use and delayed their ability to apply for the grant by the deadline.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that due to the special circumstances and increased need for this service, the requested amount of £200.00 be paid from the unspent Grant Aid 2020/21 budget.

159. REVIEW OF LGPS SCHEME EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS POLICY

Members reviewed the Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend re-adoption of this without amendment to Full Council.

160. STAFFING

The Clerk reported that staff appraisals needed to be arranged. These had unfortunately not taken place in 2020 and the Clerk was keen to ensure that they were held for 2021. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would liaise with staff and Chairman of Council to arrange virtual appraisal meetings in February or early March. She would liaise with the Chairman of Council and Committee Chairman regarding her own appraisal.

Due to the confidential nature of the following point, it was **RESOLVED** to move to confidential business for the remainder of this item.

The Clerk advised Members regarding recent staff absences and personal circumstances.

161. CORRESPONDENCE

Members received the Correspondence List, as below.

West Sussex Pension Fund

- Email 04.12.20 from Principal Pensions Consultant: Further to communication of 05.11.20 advising that due to conflict between Government newly introduced Exit Cap regulations and LGPS regulations, resulting in WSPF suspension of issuing further exit payment calculations pending legal advice; Suspended exit payment calculations will be reinstated from 04.12.20 and the WSPF has now received legal advice as to how it should administer redundancy or business efficiency related exit payments whilst the discrepancies between the two sets of regulations exists.
- Email 11.12.20 from WSCC Finance Manager advising that the WSPF has reviewed and updated its Investment Strategy Statement and is seeking feedback from employee and employer members. More information on the consultation can be found on the WSPF website at <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/pensions/local-government-pension-scheme-lgps/pension-fd-investment-strategy-consultation/>
It should be noted however that the consultation ends on 22nd January 2021.
- Email 17.12.20 from WSCC Pension Strategist advising that the WSPF had recently undertaken a review of its arrangements for additional voluntary contributions (AVCs), Following comprehensive investment and legal advice as part of its review, Legal & General had now been chosen as the new AVC provider for West Sussex LGPS members (previously Standard Life).

162. PAYMENTS

Members had received the list of Payments for Authorisation. 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.

£

Burgess & Randall Ltd	17.98
Arbtec Tree Care	395.00
National Westminster	35.30

The meeting closed at 8.18pm.

.....Chairman

.....Date