



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Working together for a better future

Swan View, Lower Street
Pulborough
West Sussex RH20 2BF
Telephone: 01798 873532
Email: clerk@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY USING MICROSOFT TEAMS ON THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 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, C Esdaile, J Esdaile, Hare, Henly (from Min.141) and Kipp

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs H Knight (Clerk and RFO)

The meeting opened at 7.31pm

137. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All were present. Cllr Henly's attendance was late due to technical issues joining the meeting.

138. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS

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

139. MINUTES

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the online Meeting held on Thursday 22nd October 2020 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman would sign them.

Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that she had, as usual at this time of year, renewed the annual tax and insurance of the Council's tractor. The insurance cost via Came and Co. was £307.23, slightly reduced from the previous year. The Clerk had also renewed the required DVLA tax registration.

Min. 128 S106/CIL Monies: An application to apply for SDNP CIL funding to replace the MSF had not yet been progressed. It had been discovered that the deadline for applying was January 2021, which was insufficient time for the Deputy Clerk to research quotes for the bid, discussion at R&OS C'ttee and subsequent submission by the deadline. The matter had been diarised for action in late summer to apply for the next (2021) round instead.

Min.130 Pulborough Cricket Club Licence: The Club had been advised that licence renewal work would not be undertaken until the situation with Covid-19 and the pavilion rebuild project was clearer.

140. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no public speakers.

141. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES

Members had received bank reconciliations for Cashbooks 1 and 3 as at 31st October 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.

It was noted that the Q1 inspection to 30th June and Q2 to 30th September 2020 were still to be carried out, and that Cllr Hare was attending the office on the following Wednesday for signing of various papers and Q1 inspection. Cllr Clarke would arrange a separate date with officers to carry out the Q2 inspection and other necessary paperwork signing.

142. BUDGET 2021/22

Members had received a revised draft budget paper incorporating the revisions discussed at the previous meeting. The Clerk had also had discussions with the Committee Chairman about further revisions, resulting in some amendments. Subsequent to the agenda and meeting papers being issued, HDC had advised the new (draft) tax base figure and the Clerk had recalculated a third draft budget for discussion. The new HDC tax base for Pulborough had reduced due to more council tax benefit claims during the pandemic, thereby increasing the Band D figure and resulting precept required. Based on these factors, the revised precept would mean a likely increase of just over 5% on a Band D property.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that under cost centre 107 Discretionary, the Clerk would further reduce the Grants and Donations amount to £2,000 and the Contingency amount to £2,000 saving potentially £3,000 from the precept figure.

The Clerk would re-calculate figures for a revised draft budget for consideration at the 26th November Council meeting. It was noted that final budget approval would be at the 21st January 2021 full Council meeting.

143. SPORTS PAVILION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Clerk reported that HDC had provided the Council's agent with the pre-planning application advice report. HDC was supportive, in principle, of the Council's proposals, which they saw as an enhancement of current facility provision and recommended a full planning application be made with required validation evidence, which would allow for public consultation and formal planning consideration. The Clerk had spoken with the Council's architect about the report and validation requirements. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that a meeting be arranged before Christmas between the architect and the Sports Pavilion Working Group (to include invitation to all F&P Committee).

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

The Committee Chairman advised that HDC website now had details of the latest financial grants available to apply for, which the Council should be eligible for. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk make an application for this on behalf of the Parish Council.

A brief request from the Social Club had been circulated to Members asking for favourable consideration of the club rent invoice during Lockdown 2. It was noted that

the Social Club had not acknowledged the Council's review of the rent for the Lockdown 1 period, although their revised invoice had been paid. No financial report had been made to the Council. It was **RESOLVED** that the Social Club be advised that a financial report should be submitted to the Council, as had previously been requested, following which consideration of their request would be made. It was further **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be given delegated authority to make a decision on deducting 4 weeks' rent upon receipt of such report. In the meantime invoicing of the club would continue.

A financial report was also awaited from the Snooker Club and the Clerk was asked to remind them that this was needed before a review of their annual rent could be made to adjust the 2021 annual invoice.

145. WEST SUSSEX PENSION FUND: FUNDING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Members considered the previously circulated WSCC WSPF Funding Strategy Statement Consultation. Members felt the document was not very well put together and would have benefited from a precis at the start showing all changes for comparison. It was felt that the terminology and level of pension knowledge required was beyond most ordinary people and was a very weighty document to follow or understand. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would respond to advise in diplomatic terms that no comments on the actual consultation were made but that Members felt the consultation document was not well constructed.

146. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (INTERIM)

Members considered the previously circulated Internal Audit Report (Interim) and were pleased to note the positive comments, with no recommendations, by the Internal Auditor. Members congratulated and thanked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their efforts. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the report for adoption by Council.

147. STAFFING

The Clerk reported that under the Council's duty of care to staff, specifically in relation to home-working, she and the Deputy Clerk had undertaken DSE assessments of their home 'office' space. As a result, to ensure ergonomically appropriate conditions, she had authorised the purchase of 2 x laptop stands (for Clerk and Deputy Clerk) and 1x keyboard (for Deputy Clerk), the total cost of which was £47.97. The Deputy Clerk had ordered the equipment and would be reimbursed on production of the receipt.

Due to the confidential nature of the following item (staffing), it was **RESOLVED** to move to confidential business.

The Clerk advised Members regarding recent staff absence and action she was taking to keep matters under review. It was **RESOLVED** to approve that if necessary the Clerk seek appropriate professional advice, which may incur costs.

148. CORRESPONDENCE

Members received the Correspondence List, as below.

West Sussex Pension Fund

Exit cap information update / LGA Information for employers: Email 05.11.20 regarding changes to the way in which exit payments are dealt with when an individual is subject to redundancy or business efficiency, coming into effect via statutory regulations from 04.11.20. As these regulations are currently out of line with existing LGPS regulations, there is a significant amount of uncertainty about which statutory regulations take legal precedence. The WSPF is seeking further legal advice as to how it should administer redundancy or business efficiency related exit payments whilst discrepancies exist. They have been advised that changes will need

to be made to the strain cost factors used to calculate exit payments. As a consequence of these circumstances, the WSPF has decided to suspend the issuing of any further exit payment calculations until legal advice has been received and calculation changes are in place. *(Email and LGA attachment copied to C'ttee)*

Pulborough Stoolball Club

Email 26.10.20 from club thanking the Council very much for the annual rent waiver of this year's rent against next year's invoice.

NatWest Bank

Notice of changes to business account terms with effect from 04.01.21

149. 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.

£	
SSALC Ltd	72.00
Laker Builders Merchant	11.51
Horsham District Council	48.40
Horsham District Council	26.60
National Westminster Bank	16.45
Daisy Communications	26.48

The meeting closed at 8.52pm.

.....Chairman

.....Date