



# 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 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 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 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. The Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Clarke (Chairman), Court, Ellis-Brown, Esdaile, Hare, Henly and Kipp

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs H Knight (Clerk and RFO)

*The meeting opened at 7.33pm*

### **190. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All committee members were present.

### **191. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

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

### **192. MINUTES**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the online Meeting held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman would sign them.

#### Clerk's Report

Min.15, Photocopier contract renewal: The renewal agreement had been signed by the Clerk and matters were in hand for the new photocopier to be installed in due course and the old one removed.

### **193. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no public speakers.

### **194. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES**

Members had received bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1 and 3 to year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. No queries were raised and the Committee Chairman would arrange to compare reconciliations to bank statements, which would be duly signed if no issues identified.

Members had received a summary of Income and Expenditure compared to budget to year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The Clerk clarified some items where expenditure was below or above budget level. The variance of £7,201 underspend for Administration, for example, was due to factors such as legal fees, staff/member expenses, training etc. not being spent. Members were reminded that the Audit Fees always showed as a negative at the year end due to the timing of these requiring accrual. The Clerk was asked to check the reason for the £110 overspend and negative status on 4340 Contracted Maintenance. It was noted that pavilion maintenance was overspent by £789 and rental income was down to around half normal budgeted revenue, due to the pandemic related restrictions on club sport or social activities. The underspend of £3,951 on 4393 Tractors & Equipment was queried. The Clerk reminded Members that the unspent balance had been transferred to the New Tractor/Machinery EMR, to build this budget area up in anticipation of tractor renewal in the future. The budget had been set high for the past two years based on unexpected high costs at that time.

The Clerk advised that the first instalment of the new financial year Environmental Cleansing Grant of £3,031 had been received, as had the first payment of the precept, £121,831.50.

Members had received the latest available report of Ear Marked Reserves.

The Clerk reported that there were no creditor invoices over £30 outstanding, other than the arrears already under discussion for the Social Club. The November and December rent payments had been received from the club.

**195. S106/CIL MONIES**

It was noted that a CIL payment of £75 had been received from the SDNPA and a CIL payment of £2,444.22 had been received from HDC.

**196. INTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the re-appointment of Auditing Solutions for the financial year 2021-22.

**197. SPORTS PAVILION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

There was nothing further to update, as the Planning Statement was still awaited from the architect / appointed contractor.

**198. COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club had been advised of the reviewed annual rent arrangements agreed at the last meeting and had emailed their thanks and appreciation to the Council.

Members discussed likely rental income for the year ahead. As previously reported, the Social Club had paid their November and December monthly rents and had stated intention to pay outstanding amounts as soon as possible, depending on Government grants applied for.

It was noted that with the Clerk's approval, the Stoolball Club had recommenced training and matches from 26<sup>th</sup> April, under current Government and national governing body guidelines/restrictions. The changing rooms remained closed except for access to toilets. The Cricket club were also due to recommence activities from 8<sup>th</sup> May 2021, with restricted changing room access (toilets / storage only). The Snooker Club had approached the Clerk but it was unclear when they would fully re-open as it appeared they should not do so until the next Roadmap date of 17<sup>th</sup> May. It was unknown whether the Football Club had resumed full activities as they had been seen training on the pitch but had not confirmed a re-start date.

**199. ANNUAL REPORT OF COUNCIL 2020-21**

Members had received the draft Annual Report of Council to year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve this for publication, but that this would not be produced for distribution to each household. Instead, the report would be available on the Council's website and some in house printed copies would be deposited in public places when open such as Pulborough Library, the Village Hall and the Parish Council Office.

**200. STAFFING**

Due to the confidential nature of this item, although no public were in attendance, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the public and press for this item only (SO 3d (staffing) refers)

Members considered the annual review of staff salaries, noting the Clerk's recommendations regarding other members of staff and that adequate budgetary allowance had been made, in addition to the recent positive appraisals. Due to her personal and pecuniary interest, the Clerk left the meeting at the point at which Members reviewed the Clerk's salary, returning for the decision. Following discussion, the following was **RESOLVED**:

- All non-office (non-Green Book contract) members of staff to receive an increase of 2% backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.
- The Deputy Clerk to move 1 SCP to SCP 17, (approx. 2%) increase backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021
- The Clerk to remain on the same SCP but to receive a 2% uplift to this in recognition of the particularly difficult year and additional workload, increase backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

Members commented on the Council's appreciation of the loyalty and commitment of its staff.

**201. CORRESPONDENCE**

Members received the Correspondence List, as below.

**WSCC**

News release 19.03.21: £3m boost for council tax reduction schemes – Funding of £3m has been allocated by WSCC to extend support for residents struggling to pay council tax. This will allow districts and boroughs to consider continuing the additional discretionary relief for a further year.

**HDC**

Business Waste: Email 25.03.21 advising of a change to the pricing structure for business waste customers (*copied to C'ttee*)

**Pulborough Brooks Baptist Church**

Email 19.04.21 from church treasurer advising that due to non-progression of their project, the church would be returning the Council's donation of £400 made approximately 4 years ago to provide additional playground equipment at Carpenter's Meadow.

**202. 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 signed by the required two signatories at the earliest opportunity.

£

WSCC	8,561.46
Sussex Clubs for Young People Ltd	3,595.68
Fire Risk UK	168.35
National Westminster Bank	2.80
Daisy Communications	27.67

**The meeting closed at 8.50pm.**

.....Chairman

.....Date

UNCONFIRMED