



# PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

*Working together for a better future*

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## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2019 AT THE SPORTS PAVILION**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Clarke (Chairman), Kipp, Henly and Wallace

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

*The meeting opened at 7.34pm*

**34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Court (ill health), Hare (prior commitment) and Qusted (personal) and the absences approved by the Committee.

**35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

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

**36. MINUTES**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. The Committee Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

Clerk's Report

Min.6, 27.06.19 - S106/CIL: The Projected Planning list had been forwarded to HDC and to WSCC. HDC had confirmed the list had been shared with its Strategic Planning Department and with the relevant officer at WSCC.

Min.11, 27.06.19 – Staffing Matters: WSCC had subsequently advised that due to tax implications, the one off pay award made to the Clerk had to be subject to employer and employee pension contribution deductions. This had therefore been processed accordingly.

Min. 31, 26.09.19 – Items for next Agenda: Cllr Qusted had proposed an item to consider the introduction of a Parish Council or Chairman's Award. As he had tendered apologies for tonight and the next Committee meeting this would be added to a future agenda instead.

**37. ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no public speakers.

**38. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES**

Members received bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and Cashbook 3 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Agreement to bank statements was confirmed, which were duly signed by the Committee Chairman.

Members noted the quarterly comparison of Income and Expenditure to budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (Q2).

Members received a statement of Earmarked Reserve funds as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The Clerk reported that the creditor invoice to HDC of £66 was still outstanding from 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019, as reported at the previous meeting. This was for the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme portion of the fee for the PPC Village Market stand (as previously offered by HDC). Payment had been chased twice.

It had been agreed at the previous meeting that Cllr Kipp would carry out the internal control inspection for quarter 2 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It was anticipated this would take place during the following week.

### **39. BUDGET FOR 2019/20**

Members received a draft budget paper prepared by the Clerk as a starting point. Discussion took place regarding the potential budget for the 2019/20 civic year. The following points accompanying the draft budget had been included in the Clerk's initial draft:-

- 101/4077 Legal Fees: Increased substantially to £5000 anticipating costs of new leases if Sports Pavilion project proceeds within the next 12-18 months.
- 101/4029 Postage: Reduced slightly to reflect current spending.
- 101/4021 Rent/Room Hire: Increased slightly to more realistic projection.
- 101/4022 Training: Increased to allow new cllr training, staff training including Clerk CiLCA re-registration discussed with Committee.
- 101/4037 IT Support: Increased significantly to £6,000 to accommodate new website costs of c£2-4k. Budgeted amount Includes maintenance/support/hosting costs + needing to comply with Website Accessibility legislation requirements and to improve website to modern standards.
- 104/1040 Interest on A/cs: This had been left low due to the nature of financial unknowns but in fact last year Actual Year to Date had been £953 and current Actual Year to Date was £942. Budgeted amount could be optimistically increased if Committee wished.
- 105/1050 MSF Income: Reduced as currently under used resource.
- 106 Staff Costs/Salaries: All staff salaries had an assumed 2% cost of living /incremental spinal column point + potential additional 1scp if Clerk attains CiLCA
- 106 Staff Costs/Superannuation, Employers NI and Tax: Increased assuming anticipated increases, but superannuation slight discount due to IHLI insurance.
- 106 Staff Costs/Neighbourhood Wardens: If continuing, the Pulborough scheme salary costs must now be fully funded as no further HDC financial contribution from 1.4.20. Therefore £60,300 budgeted including potential 2% salary increase.
- 107/2021 Discretionary/Street Cleaning: Assumed would continue.
- 107/4090 Discretionary/Contingency: Kept at £1,500. Standard advice is to allow £3k. Could be removed altogether but inadvisable.
- 107/4091 Discretionary/Grants & Donations: Grand Aid kept at £5k, could be further reduced.
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Pavilion Rebuild: Kept at £10k.
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Memorial Garden: Reduced to £50 as minimal spends/volunteer work.
- 107/4092 Discretionary/Neighbourhood Plan: £0 as EMR of £7,853 remains.

- 201/2020 Highways/Christmas Lighting: Reduced as only 34 applications this year. Applicants donate £10 per tree (Ref 4200 Income).
- 201/4210 Equipment: Static at £500 - potentially increase to purchase water bowser for hanging basket maintenance.
- 201/4220 Highways/Hanging Baskets: Static at £700 – the past two years had been limited success due to staff resourcing/maintenance issues, resulting in unattractive/dying displays.
- 201/4230 Highways/Other: Covers highway maintenance including bus shelter cleaning
- 202/4250 Street lighting: Increased from £4,600 to £5,200 as Actual YTD £4,824, two additional streetlights added @£89ea, plus predicted 6% increase.
- 303/4342 Grounds Maintenance/Tree Works: Increased to £6,000 as priority works agreed for 2020 following tree survey.
- 305/4391 Other Recreation/Maintenance Supplies: Reduced from £500 to £200 (Actual YTD £80).
- 305/4395 Other Recreation/NCRG: Reduced from £200 to £100, Actual YTD £0
- 305/4396 Other Recreation/Pocket Park: Reduced from £200 to £100 as mostly volunteers or Operation Watershed funding.
- 305/4397 Other Recreation/Youth Worker: Increased from £14,000 to £15,000 – SCYP requesting 5% increase.

This produced a precept requirement of £252,314, which gave a Band D equivalent of £99.82, using the previous HDC tax base (which will not be confirmed until November/December 2019). This represented an increase of £15.12 or c17.85% on the 2019/20 precept. Members were reminded that the Council had decided to set a 5% capped deficit budget and it was also important to bear in mind that the Council was currently running at below recommended general reserve level. The cost of funding the Pulborough Neighbourhood Warden scheme now had to be fully met. It was therefore now necessary to address previous budget shortfalls.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** the following adjustments to the draft budget, for further consideration at the 14<sup>th</sup> November budget meeting:

- The IT budget to be reduced from £6,000 to £2,000: The EMR Community Benefit Fund of £3,515.41 could potentially be utilised for the proposed new accessibility compliant website.
- The Sports Pavilion budget of £10,000 could be removed since it is intended to use council reserves and S106/grant funds. That sum could instead be put towards the cost of the Neighbourhood Warden scheme.
- No budget to be set for the Neighbourhood Plan since the EMR was deemed adequate provision.
- Christmas Lighting/Trees: Continue this discretionary service but request 2020/21 donations of £15 per tree.
- Hanging Baskets: Remove this discretionary service, saving around £600/£750 and related maintenance costs.
- The Clerk was asked to investigate what other parishes charge for allotment plot rental, for comparison.
- Rivermead: Reduce from £1,000 to £500 as species survey not recurring.
- Youth Worker: The Clerk was asked to liaise with Billingshurst PC regarding their intentions. Meantime, the budget would be capped at £14,500 instead of £15,000.

These amendments produced a potential saving of at least £15,000 and revised approximate precept requirement of £238,000, which would reduce the precept increase to around 11%. The Clerk would re-calculate figures for a revised draft budget for consideration at the next meeting.

#### 40. **S106/CIL**

Members noted receipt of the HDC October report of Unspent / Potential S106 monies (previously circulated). It was noted that the pooling restriction of only using five fund streams had been lifted as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

HDC had advised that they intended to issue quarterly reports for CIL funds and had asked parish councils to advise what information would be most useful to receive. It was **RESOLVED** to request that CIL reports include: Identity of the related planning application/development; The funding amount; Expiry or deadline; and Whether any conditions apply.

#### 41. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

Members discussed a proposal by Cllr Quedstedt to reduce the cost of employing Neighbourhood Wardens to reflect the additional level of local policing (PCSOs) being introduced from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (proposal report previously circulated).

Unfortunately, Cllr Quedstedt had been unable to attend this meeting but had wished the Committee to discuss the matter in his absence. The proposal related directly to the announcement by the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and Sussex Police that the PCC had been instrumental in sourcing funds to provide new PCSO posts. The new posts would mean that every community will have a named PCSO and would take effect from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Members discussed the positives and negatives of funding the Pulborough scheme: Residents are paying for two Neighbourhood Wardens and also through police precepting for police and PCSO services. With expanded police services it could be seen as doubling up. However, whilst the two roles had some similarities and cross-over elements, eg dealing with ASB matters, the role of the wardens is 'softer' and encompassed many aspects that a PCSO would not cover. Comment was also made that the Neighbourhood Wardens are under the direction of the Council, in contrast to the police. It was noted that the electorate has previously indicated support for continuation of the warden scheme. Whilst a dedicated PCSO will be allocated for Pulborough, it was likely that that officer would cover a considerably larger geographical area. It was possible that, as in the past, PCSO cover could be removed again. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to retain the two Pulborough Neighbourhood Wardens.

#### 42. SPORTS PAVILION REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Chairman advised that matters were no further forward in terms of progressing a business plan for the project. This item was therefore deferred to the next meeting.

#### 43. GRANT AID 2019

Members considered the individual applications received and the recommendations from the Grant Aid Working Party. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend these to Council without amendment, as follows:-

St Mary's School PTA	:	£ 500
Horsham & District Age UK	:	£ 200
PDCCA Lunch Club	:	£ 200
PDCCA Community Transport:		£1,300
St Mary's Church	:	£ 500
Victim Support	:	£ 100
Pulborough Cricket Club	:	£ 623
Pulborough Bowls Club	:	£ 0
4Sight	:	£ 100
Citizens Advice Bureau	:	£ 100

This resulted in a total of £3,623 grant awards from the £5,000 budget allocation.

**44. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members had received the Financial Regulations, highlighting amendments in line with the updated NALC (July 2019) model, for consideration. Changes of note to current Financial Regulations related to section 4. Budgetary Control and Authority to Spend, which had revised/increased figures.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the adoption of the updated Financial Regulations to Council, but with the following monetary values against section 4:-

4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- The council for all items over £3,000;
- A duly delegated committee of the council for items over £500; or
- The Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £1,000.

4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1,000. The clerk shall report such action to the Chairman as soon as possible ad to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.

It was further **RESOLVED** to retain the Council's current version of section 11 Contracts, rather than adopt the NALC amendment relating to section 11.1a ii.

**45. STAFFING MATTERS**

- Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk's attendance at the SALC Clerk's Networking/Training seminar on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at a cost of £110.00 + VAT and associated travel costs.
- The Clerk gave a verbal update on delayed progress with the CiLCA portfolio completion. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk re-registering to take achieve this qualification, and noted that this had been incorporated into the draft budget figures.
- The Clerk gave a confidential (verbal) report on recent HR related matters, which had involved a considerable amount of dedicated time in recent weeks. Members noted that it may prove necessary to consider temporary or seasonal assistance to the Groundsman in 2020.

**46. ITEMS FOR NEXT F&P AGENDA**

- Sports Pavilion – Update on over-roofing quotes and refurbishment costs, including Business Case
- Draft budget, including Neighbourhood Warden Scheme

**47. CORRESPONDENCE**

None received.

**48. PAYMENTS**

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments and these were duly authorized:

£

ABA (Construction) Ltd	592.20
Travis Perkins	73.52
Festive Illuminations	2,970.00
HDC	51.09
HDC	28.86

***The meeting closed at 9.50pm***

.....Chairman

.....Date