

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 25th February 2016 **Time:** 6.30p.m.

Place: Burghfield village hall committee room

Present: Mr M Paterson-Borland Mr P Lawrence
Mr D Godding Mr I MacFarlane
Mr C Greaves (arrived 7.00pm)

Attending: Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies: Mr N Morse

1. To receive members apologies for absence and written requests for Disclosable Pecuniary Interest dispensations

There were no items upon the agenda that necessitated a member to present a written request for dispensation for a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

2. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 3 December 2015, having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record and signed by the presiding Chairman.

3. Matters Arising on the Minutes

- i) The Burghfield Citizens Advice Outreach service has successfully been operating from the West Wing Committee room since the beginning of January. Thanks have been expressed by CAB for usage of the room.
- ii) The revenue and capital estimates were approved at full council for implementation as of 1st April 2016.
- iii) The precept request recommendation from the finance committee was presented and approved at full council and subsequently presented to West Berks Council for implementation as of 1st April 2016.

4. To deal with any items requiring URGENT attention by the committee

All items requiring consideration by members are listed accordingly on the agenda.

5. Accounts

- i) To consider requests for donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

Members gave consideration to a request presented by the Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre to assist with the shortfall in treatment costs for Burghfield residents. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously to donate £635 to assist with providing a continued service within the parish.

Members gave consideration to a request presented by the West Berkshire Citizens Advice Bureau to assist with the variety of services on offer to residents within West Berkshire area. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr D Godding and **resolved** unanimously to not donate due to the service not being Burghfield specific.

Members gave consideration to a request presented by the Berkshire Vision to assist with the variety of support, clubs, trips and home visits offered for 25 Burghfield residents. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr D Godding and **resolved** unanimously to donate £500 to assist with providing a continued service within the parish.

Members present gave consideration to the request received from the BRA for a financial contribution towards the cost of the hire of the marquee required for the upcoming May Fayre. Members present **resolved** to allocate £1,000 towards the overall cost of the marquee hire. Written confirmation is to be obtained to clarify that the monies will be used specifically for the marquee hire only.

Members present gave consideration to the request received from the Burghfield WI for a financial contribution towards the cost of hiring the village hall to hold their Centenary celebrations in 2017. Members present **resolved** unanimously to cover the cost of the hire of the hall on behalf of the WI.

- ii) To receive the budget comparison figures for the current financial year.

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 1 December 2015 were presented and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 91.5% was based on the current year's budget and excluded those figures that related to the previous year's commitment but had been paid in the current financial year.

- iii) To give consideration to any financial implications from the WBC budget proposals 2016/17

Members present confirmed that the Parish Council has previously discussed the subject of devolved services, specifically in relation to the proposed cuts from West Berks Council. Members advised they needed to be provided with all the necessary information from West Berks Council on which to base a decision, particularly in relation to both the library and the children's centre. Further information is also required in relation to the £1.4m "additional monies" provided as part of transitional arrangements; being advised on what basis the money will be allocated.

The Finance & Governance Committee believes that the PC can only make firm decisions once in receipt of all the necessary information, as the longer term and financial impact on the Parish council requires full exploration and planning. A formal response to WBC advising of the council's dissatisfaction regarding the level of information available is to be drafted and presented at the Extraordinary parish council on 3rd March for consideration by full council for submission.

- iv) To give consideration to the request presented by the Communications Committee for the purchase of Gas BBQ's for use at parish events

Members present gave consideration to the request from the Communications committee to purchase two large BBQ's for use at parish events. **Resolved** unanimously by members present to purchase two large gas BBQ's for use at parish events.

6. Governance & Compliance

- i) To receive an update of matters being dealt with by the parish council appointed solicitor

Further details have been requested from the Scouts in relation to the license with the Montessori Nursery. Upon confirmation from the councils solicitor that the queries have been answered satisfactorily, a meeting will be arranged to duly sign the required documentation.

- ii) To receive an update in relation to the Accounts year end process

The clerk presented details to members of the Accounts Year end process. The accounts closedown is scheduled for May 3rd, with internal audit being scheduled for May 9th.

- iii) To review the current Asset Register for upcoming financial year

The Clerk is to prepare and present the Asset Register for the current Financial Year, with accompanying photographic documentation for the purpose of assisting the council with any potential insurance claims in the future as evidence of assets held.

- iv) To undertake a review of the councils risk assessment in preparation for the new financial year

In accordance with the guidance in the Practitioners Guide, members reviewed the councils risk assessment and management schedule, covering both financial and operational risks. Members were satisfied that the current system was effective in ensuring the council remained up to date with their responsibilities. Details relating to the Fire Risk Assessment have been incorporated accordingly. The schedule is to be adopted for the new financial year and reviewed annually.

7. Policies & Templates

- i) To undertake a review of the Councils Standing Orders due to recent changes in legislation

Following the recent changes in legislation, a review of the council's standing orders is to be undertaken to ensure the council remains fully compliant at all times. Members present **resolved** unanimously to delegate powers to the clerk to undertake the review accordingly. The document is to be presented at the next schedule meeting for approval.

Members of the parish council are to re-sign their declarations confirming they have read and understood both the councils standing orders and financial regulations.

8. Administration: Burial Ground

- i) To receive an update & consider any administrative issues in the daily operation of the burial ground

Rev. Lovell advised the council that the closure award for the existing Churchyard had been received and confirmed from the Diocese. Rev Lovell advised 12 months' notice would be provided to the parish council regarding the maintenance of the existing churchyard.

Members present gave consideration to the existing Burial fees. Resolved unanimously the fees are to remain at their current level. A review of the fees is to be scheduled for 12 months' time.

- ii) To review the quotations received for the retendering of the maintenance contract for the burial ground

Members gave consideration to the quotations received for the weekly maintenance of the burial ground. The quotations were checked for both accuracy and compliance with the specification provided.

- iii) To confirm the allocation of the grounds maintenance contract at the Burial Ground for the upcoming financial year

After careful scrutiny of the quotations received for the maintenance of the burial ground, member present resolved unanimously to award the contract to Ian Phillips. A three month review is to be undertaken to ensure the contract is progressing as per specification with the option to withdraw on both sides being provided. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously.

9. Staffing

- i) To consider any issues regarding council's employees

Any staffing matters requiring attention have been dealt with accordingly by the clerk.

Staff appraisals have been undertaken with a verbal report being provided to members by the clerk.

- ii) To give consideration to any action required regarding auto-enrolment for parish council employees

All eligible members of staff have been written to regarding their right to a workplace pension. Details relating to the NEST scheme have been forwarded to assist staff in determining contribution levels required. Upon confirmation from eligible staff the schemes are to be initiated accordingly.

- iii) To receive a report following reviews of wage and salary payments for Parish Council employees

Due to time constraints, this item was referred to an additional meeting scheduled for Thursday 3rd March.

10. Matters for future discussion – Residency rules regarding Burial fees

11. To receive items for information only - None

Conclusion: The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 19.30p.m

Chairman: