

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 23rd July 2015 **Time:** 6.30p.m.

Place: Burghfield village hall committee room

Present: Mr M Paterson-Borland Mr P Lawrence
Mr D Godding Mr I MacFarlane (arrived 18.40pm)
Mr N Morse (arrived 18.45pm)

Attending: Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies: Mr C Greaves

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 of the Governance & Finance Committee held on Thursday 21st May, having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record and signed by the presiding Chairman.

3. Matters Arising on the Minutes

- i) All donations approved at the previous meeting have been distributed accordingly.
- ii) A request was presented to the accountants for an amendment to the description within the statement of accounts. Members were advised the report was system generated, complying with the regulations determined by law.
- iii) The maintenance of the burial ground was awarded to the Shaw Trust following approval at the previous meeting.
- iv) The annual return has been completed and submitted to Mazars with the requested supplementary documentation for review.

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

All items for consideration are listed on the agenda accordingly.

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 Together in Mission, Befriending Service, for a contribution of £300 towards the cost of ensuring the many services they provide within the parish continues for the coming period.

Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously to donate £150 to enable the work of the organisation to continue. However, TiM are to be advised that any future donation requests are to be predominantly Burghfield specific with clear information and evidence provided highlighting the direct benefit to parishioners.

Members present received a request from St. Mary's Church for a contribution towards the "Holiday at Home" scheme initially launched last year. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr D Godding and **resolved** unanimously to donate £150 towards the running of the event only. The organisers are to be advised that a parish council is prohibited by law in subsidising maintenance works to any place of worship. Therefore, the funds are not to be used towards the fabric of the building. Future requests are to be clear on the intended purpose, ensuring they are to be Burghfield specific only.

Members present gave due consideration to a request received from a local resident to subsidise the hire of the village hall to put on a "Charity Race Night" in aid of Action Medical Research for Children. Proposed by Mr P Lawrence, seconded by Mr D Godding and **resolved** unanimously to donate £100 for the cost of the hire of the hall.

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

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 23rd July 2015 were presented and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 28.3% 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.

6. Governance & Compliance

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

A meeting was held to progress the issue of a licence renewal between the Scouts and the

Montessori nursery. A request was presented to the Scouts for 50% of the outstanding solicitor's fees to be met by the Scouts to progress the matter accordingly. The parish council solicitor has been asked to prepare for a letter to the scouts explaining the parish council would waive the clause regarding the period of time upon which the premises can be sub-let for educational purposes only, this will enable the Montessori Nursery to continue providing their much valued service within the parish. A time limit is to be applied to the waiver.

- ii) To consider the effectiveness of the councils Risk Assessment documentation for the current financial year

In accordance with the guidance in the Practitioners Guide, members reviewed the councils risk assessment, 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. The Risk Assessment is reviewed during the audit process undertaken twice a year by the councils appointed internal auditor. Throughout the process no issues have been identified or brought to the attention of the council.

7. Village Hall

- i) To receive an update following the installation of the Solar panels and air conditioning units

Following the installation of the air conditioning/ heating units, an Energy assessment of the village hall was undertaken. The village hall was categorised as a "D", confirming eligibility for the higher rate feed in tariff. The solar panels have now been connected and are fully operational. The application to claim the Feed in Tariff from the FiT Bureau has been submitted. An article is to be published on the website, within the next newsletter and on the Facebook

A grant of £4,000 has been awarded to the parish council by West Berks Council to assist with the costs involved in the installation of a sustainable heating system at the village hall.

8. Administration: Burial Ground

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

The new software package supplied by RBS Software solutions for the daily operation of the burial ground has been installed. All data has been input with the system now fully operational.

- ii) To give consideration to the quotations received for the maintenance of the burial ground for the next 12 month period

The contract for the maintenance of the Burial ground ended 31st March 2015. Alternative arrangements for the day to day upkeep and landscaping of the site were made with three alternative quotations having been received. Members gave consideration to the quotations, checking for both accuracy and compliance with the specification provided. Resolved to instruct the Shaw Trust, effective as of 1st June 2015, for a 12 month period. Unfortunately, upon awarding the contract, funding to the Shaw Trust was withdrawn, leaving them unable to fulfil the requirements for the daily maintenance of the burial ground. A temporary member of staff has been instructed to keep the area maintained until further notice.

Following further advertisement of the vacancy, two alternative quotations for the maintenance of the burial ground were considered by members present. Upon satisfaction both quotations complied with the specification provided, members **resolved** unanimously to instruct A Star Garden Care for a trial period of 6 months initially from 1st September 2015. Proposed by Mr N Morse, seconded by Mr D Godding and resolved unanimously.

8. Staffing

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

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

A payment is to be forwarded to Miss S Eagle for the value of £50 as an apology for the delay in her salary payment this month.

The clerk is to provide a report regarding the next stage of her further education and the value of the course to the council and the parishioners.

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

The law on workplace pensions has changed. All employers are legally required to automatically enrol certain staff into a pension scheme and make contributions. Further investigations are required in to the NEST option with details relating to leaving the scheme and transfer costs being obtained. A report is to be prepared and forwarded at the next meeting for further consideration.

9. Matters for future discussion - Parish Plan Action plan review, criteria template for the hire of parish council open spaces, template for grant applications and donations to local organisations.

10. To receive items for information only - None

Conclusion: The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 19.30pm.

Chairman: