

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 19th September 2019 **Time:** 6.55pm

Place: Burghfield village hall committee room

Present: Mr T Ansell Mr C Greaves

Mrs C Jackson-Doerge

Attending: Clerk to the Parish Council

Apologies: Mr N Morse Mr I MacFarlane (Chair)

The meeting opened at 6.55pm due to traffic conditions for members attending.

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 6th June 2019, having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record and signed by the presiding Chairman.

3. Matters Arising on the Minutes

- i) No items were identified that are not already contained within the main body of the agenda.

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

Members signed the banking mandate for the issue of a parish council credit card accordingly. An upper spending limit has been set at £2,500, in accordance with delegated authority.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following:

*Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Mr T Ansell and **resolved** unanimously to exclude the public and press accordingly.*

Staffing

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

The Clerk advised that the Village Hall Manager was now working from the parish office on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon.

A review is to be undertaken of the requirements for caretaking duties necessary on a daily basis at the village hall. Upon determining the necessary duties, discussions are to be held with the keyholder to ascertain whether additional duties can be incorporated within their role. An update is to be provided at the next scheduled meeting.

- ii) To receive an update in relation to the provision of staff pensions

The assistant clerk has been enrolled in to the LGPS accordingly. The scheme is now active and has been implemented.

- iii) To receive an update in relation to the management of the village hall

Members present were advised of the following actions having been implemented in relation to the management of the village hall:

- The West Wing Committee room is being marketed to local businesses with the option of tea & coffee and lunch facilities being available.
- An auto responder is to be set on the villagehall@burghfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk email address advising all enquiries are to be responded to within 48 hours
- Invoicing is being established via email with an aim to go paperless by the year end
- The village hall mobile number has been removed from the website
- A Burghfield village hall specific website is being investigated
- To assist the Community Hub committee with their business plan all enquiries from potential hirers of the hall are being logged, with responses being sent via email only. The log is to enable a picture to be built of space and specific hire times being enquired after.

6.

Accounts

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

A request was present by the Burghfield Santa's for consideration to be given to a donation of £600 towards the provision of toilets at the upcoming Beer Festival. Members present reviewed the accompanying accounts and **resolved** unanimously to forward a donation of £600 accordingly for the provision of toilets only. A copy of the invoice is to be requested for auditing purposes.

(Mr T Ansell declared a personal interest in the item. Members present resolved that Mr T Ansell was to remain in the room)

A request was present by the Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre for consideration to be given to a donation of £750 towards the provision of their service within the parish, reviewed the accompanying accounts and **resolved** to forward a donation accordingly. **Resolved** unanimously by members present to donate £750 as requested.

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

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 1st September 2019 were presented and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 45% 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.

The clerk is to undertake the budget preparations for the upcoming financial year with support and online training being provided by RBS Software solutions.

- iii) To receive an update in relation to the external audit and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019

The Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2019 had been signed off and returned by PKF Littlejohn, the external auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. Members were alerted to assertion 4 having been completed as "yes" when it should have been "no". Confirmation was provided that the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices, relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. Thanks were expressed by members present to the clerk for the completed audit documentation.

- iv) To consider any specific projects for inclusion within the revenue and capital estimates for financial year 2020/2021

Committee members are to discuss at their relevant meetings with suggested projects being presented to the Governance & Finance Committee at the next meeting for consideration alongside any potential precept increase being required.

- v) To receive the quotation received for the installation of heating and air conditioning units within the West Wing

Members present gave consideration to the quotation presented for the installation of an air conditioning/heating unit in the West Wing Committee room and the Office. Resolved unanimously by members present to instruct Industrial Air to install both units as soon as possible. Proposed by Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, seconded by Mr C Greaves and **resolved** unanimously to instruct Industrial Air to fit a cassette air conditioning unit to both the office and the West Wing as per quotation provided at a total cost of £5,261.

- vi) To give consideration to the allocation of a budget for the provision of a Christmas Market on 7th December 2019

Members present gave consideration to the allocation of a budget for a Christmas Market on the 7th December. **Resolved** unanimously to vire £6,000 with immediate effect to support the initiation of a Christmas market. Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Mr T Ansell.

7.

Governance & Compliance

- i) To determine any specific actions required in relation to the Community Hub

Members present requested a copy of the document identifying the stages upon which an exit plan is to be implemented, highlighting clear exit points with maximum cost levels provided to establish as and when the project is no longer viable for implementation.

Members present requested a copy of the completed business plan as soon as possible. The document is to be reviewed by the finance committee prior to submission to full council.

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

In accordance with the guidance in the updated 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. Proposed by Mrs C Jackson-Doerge, seconded by Mr C Greaves

and **resolved** unanimously to adopt the Risk Assessment for full operation for a further financial year.

iii) To give consideration to the following proposals as presented by Cllr Kellaway:

a) *The Standing Orders are changed to have a mandatory requirement for the way each councillor votes to be recorded at main council meetings.*

Members present gave consideration to the request presented by Mr D Kellaway, **resolving** to include an item within the Standing Orders whereby any councillor can request a named vote on any agenda item. The decision for the vote to be named will be at the Chairman's discretion. The clerk is to formulate wording and circulate to members via email for approval prior to submitting to full council for their consideration.

b) *The Parish Council Code of Conduct is changed to include a mandatory requirement that each Councillor is respectful of the right to freedom of speech.*

Members present gave consideration to the request presented by Mr D Kellaway. Members resolved unanimously that an amendment to the Code of Conduct was not required, however, councillors are to be reminded of the Code of Conduct, with the importance of being respectful to each other reiterated. Councillors are also to be reminded of the rules of debate.

8. **Policies & Templates**

i) To receive an update following a review of policies held by the council for the ensuing municipal year

An updated schedule of policies requiring review during the current municipal year was provided. A review of the policies held is to be incorporated within the relevant agendas for consideration.

9. **Administration: Burial Ground**

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

Members present gave consideration to a request presented for a Memorial bench at the Burial Ground. Resolved unanimously to grant permission for the bench. A specification is to be provided with a mutually agreed location.

Due to time constraints, the Burial fees are to be reviewed accordingly by members at the next scheduled meeting.

ii) To receive an update in relation to the schedule of maintenance for St. Mary's Churchyard for the current financial year

Additional visits were scheduled during the main growing season at the existing churchyard to address the overgrowth of vegetation. The schedule has now reverted to once a fortnight with a view to reducing further to once a month for October and November.

10. **Matters for future discussion** - Village hall improvements, Burial fees

11. **To receive items for information only** - None

Conclusion: The Chairman declared the meeting closed 19.45pm