

BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday 27th February 2020 **Time:** 6.30pm

Place: Burghfield village hall committee room

Present: Mr I MacFarlane Mr C Greaves

Mr T Ansell Miss L Sharp

Attending: Clerk to the Parish Council 2 members of the public

Apologies: Mrs C Jackson-Doerge

The meeting commenced at 6.40pm due to members being stuck in traffic.

Mrs Alison May raised a query as to why the agenda item in relation to the formation of a staffing committee was being discussed under an item of a confidential nature. The chairman responded advising that due to the sensitive nature of the item, and its relation to individual staff members, it would be considered in closed session. The chairman closed the open session and proceeded with the meeting, reminding members of the public present they were in attendance in an observational capacity only.

1.02 **Apologies for Absence**

To report, approve and record apologies for absence (and the reasons) from members of the Parish Council

Apologies for absence were received and accepted for Mrs C Jackson-Doerge.

2.02 **Declaration of any personal or financial interests**

In accordance with the requirements of the process for dealing with member's standards matters, to disclose and declare all personal or financial interests including those of a partner/spouse on any Agenda item (as recorded in the Register of Member's Financial and Other Interests form).

Members present did not declare any personal or financial interests

3.02 **Applications for Dispensations**

To consider and grant any applications from members who may have a personal/financial interest in a specific matter under consideration.

No applications were received prior to the meeting by members present.

4.02 **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2019, having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record and signed by the presiding Chairman.

Matters Arising on the Minutes

- i) The precept request, having been approved at full council, was submitted to West Berks Council accordingly.
- ii) Staff appraisals are to be undertaken prior to the financial year end.

5.02 **Clerks update**

All items are being dealt with at the relevant point in the agenda.

6.02 **To deal with any items requiring URGENT attention by the committee**

No items requiring urgent attention by the committee were raised.

7.02 **To give consideration to the co-option of additional members upon the committee following an expression of interest**

Mr I Morrin and Mrs J Ansell both expressed interest in becoming members of the Finance Committee. Members reviewed their relevant experience, noting that both possessed specific skills that would be beneficial to the overall operation of the committee.

Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Ms L Sharp, and **resolved** unanimously to present a **recommendation** to co-opt both Mr I Morrin and Mrs J Ansell to the Finance Committee with immediate effect.

8.02 **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 T Ansell, seconded by Ms L Sharp and **resolved** unanimously to exclude the public and press accordingly.*

9.02 **Staffing**

- i) To give consideration to the formation of a Staffing Committee and determine membership

Further to legal advice, it was recommended to the Finance committee that a separate staffing committee, consisting of three members, was established. The recommendation was for the Chairman of the Parish Council, the Chairman of the Finance committee and one other, to form the committee.

Resolved unanimously to form a separate staffing committee. Proposed by Ms L Sharp, seconded by Mr C Greaves.

Resolved unanimously the following members sit upon the committee: Mr T Ansell, Mr I Macfarlane and Mrs J Ansell due to both their position upon the parish council and commercial expertise. Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Mr T Ansell.

ii) To determine the Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee

Members present gave consideration to the Terms of Reference presented for the operation of the staffing committee.

Resolved unanimously to adopt the terms as presented. Proposed by Mr T Ansell, seconded by Ms L Sharp.

iii) To consider any issues regarding council's employees

Members present gave consideration to the approaching end of financial year performance reviews for all council employed staff, requesting they are undertaken by the newly formed staffing committee in conjunction with the review of salary payments for the new financial year. Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Mr T Ansell and **resolved** unanimously.

Members discussed the locking and unlocking of the Recreation Ground Car Park. A request was presented for the Staffing Committee to undertake a full review of the role. Proposed by Ms L Sharp, seconded by Mr C Greaves and **resolved** unanimously.

iv) To receive a report from the Clerk following Staff appraisals

Staff appraisals are to be completed prior to the financial year end.

v) To request the Staffing Committee review the salary payments for the new financial year commencing 1st April 2020 upon its formation

The performances and employment rates of direct employees are to be evaluated by members of the staffing committee. Resolved that the resultant payments, as approved by the staffing committee, be applied with effect from the 1 April 2020. Proposed by Ms L Sharp, seconded by Mr T Ansell and **resolved** unanimously.

10.02

Accounts

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

Members present gave consideration to the request presented by the Burghfield Autistic Group for a grant of £1,170 to assist with their monthly sessions for local children. Proposed by Mr C Greaves, seconded by Mr T Ansell and **resolved** unanimously to provide an initial donation to cover room hire fees of £450. Further details are to be obtained in relation to the specific number of children from Burghfield benefitting from the group prior to any subsequent donation being considered.

Members present gave consideration to the request presented by the Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau for funding. Members requested that further details are obtained from the group to provide a specific figure being requested.

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

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 2019 to 26th February 2020 were presented, and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 93.1% 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 confirm the arrangements for the Year End Closedown procedures

Proposed by Mr T Ansell, seconded by Mr C Greaves and **resolved** unanimously to instruct DCK Accounting to complete the year end process and prepare the Annual Accounting Statements in preparation for external audit.

iv) To receive and approve the Direct Debit payments schedule for the financial year

A schedule of Direct Debit payments paid to date and scheduled to the financial year end were reviewed and subsequently approved by members accordingly. The scheduled for 2020/21 was provided to members detailing the current figures. Members noted that there would be some movement in the stated figure dues to annual increase by service providers and inflation.

11.02

Governance & Compliance

i) To receive an update in relation to the financing and fund raising required for the Community Hub

Members present received a verbal update in relation to the revised plans for the

Community Hub. The project is estimated at £650,000 for the provision of a community café and additional hireable space for the community.

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

The business plan for the community hub is to be completed to assist in the application for grant funding for the project. Upon completion the Finance committee are to offer assistance to the Community Hub committee in obtaining funds.

- iii) To receive the question presented by Cllr J Ansell in relation to the provision of allotments, rental and water.

Mrs J Ansell presented the following question to members of the finance committee for their consideration:

"With the recent increase in water charges to the allotments at the Common and the Hatch, each allotment rent should be increased to cover the cost of the water being used as an organisation. If the allotment holders are not paying for the water, they are using then they are unlikely to be sparing with it and thus would go against the parish council green initiative agenda.

The proposal for standpipes would likely increase the water usage further increasing the annual deficit of £950 whilst also requiring additional expense to implement. The allotments are a service to a small proportion of the community and should be cost neutral now and in the future. Any proposal to increase water usage from current should include the recovery of the water usage cost or demonstrate how water consumption will decrease.

Any proposal seeking funding from the council should be reviewed on three areas equally - Financial payback, Community impact and Environmental benefits".

Members present determined that a rent review for the allotments was necessary before any further progress could be made in answering the specific questions raised.

12.02

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.

13.02

Administration: Burial Ground

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

Members present acknowledged that further landscaping of the burial ground is to be considered. A design is to be requested from the parish councils approved landscaper for further consideration.

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

Members present gave consideration to the maintenance schedule required at the existing churchyard. A Spring Clean has been organised by the church, with an additional date set for later in the year to assist with the smaller jobs within the church yard and develop a sense of ownership by the local congregation.

10.

Matters for future discussion - village hall improvements.

11.

To receive items for information only - None

Conclusion: The Chairman declared the meeting closed 19.38pm.

Chairman: