

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 18th February 2020 at 7.30 pm in the Parish Council Offices, Thames Avenue, Haydon Wick.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Councillors I Liddon (Chairman), L Brown, S Fateru, R Hailstone, V Manro, S Heyes, A Roupelis and R Venkatesh

OFFICERS: Clerk, Georgina Morgan-Denn
Deputy RFO, Sandra Kelly

PF 121 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors J Fuller, D Rodgers and S Callen (personal commitment).

PF 122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors V Manro declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 11 and R Hailstone a personal interest in Agenda Item 13.

PF 123 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public enquired about the CCTV Policy and if it complies with the Surveillance Camera Code of Principles. The response was it does comply. As well as with the Information Commissioners Office regulations - this includes six different legislations that the nominated officers and personnel have received training in and have passed the security industry recognised qualification required to operate CCTV in public places. There were further questions regarding the security of the system which were answered satisfactorily. A question was raised with regard to expenditure on the play area refurbishment as to date there has been very little spend - the Clerk confirmed these funds were earmarked for the skatepark refurbishment, which had been delayed both in the planning approval and now highways licensing at Swindon Borough Council. Query why the budget includes a separate surfacing repairs budget - confirmed this was a historical setting and will mostly likely be reviewed in future budgets.

PF 124 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

PF 125 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members received and approved the minutes of the Policy & Finance Meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2020.

Proposed: Councillor A Roupelis Seconded: Councillor V Manro

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

PF 126 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Initials: _____

Councillor Hailstone

Flooding at Old Blunsdon Road continues to be a problem. Clerk to forward to team to look into the situation.

PF 127 CLERK'S REPORT

Council tax referendum principles

The government is continuing with no council tax referendum principles for local councils in the next financial year, in response to National Association of Local Council's (NALC) continued lobbying on the issue. More information on the final local [government finance statement 2020-2021](#). NALC wants to draw to member councils' attention that the consultation document also says "*The government remains concerned about the pressure placed on taxpayers by parish and town councils across England and continues to expect them to exercise restraint in 2020-21.*" and that "*The government will keep this matter under active review for future years.*" NALC will continue to engage with the Secretary of State on this matter.

PF 128 GRANTS WORKING PARTY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Grants Working Party met prior to Policy & Finance Committee and presentations we received. Due to the number of grants being considered and a useful exchange of information from those present the Working Party deferred any decisions until next week, prior to the Full Council meeting.

PF 129 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- A) To receive and approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for January 2020.
- B) To receive the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for January 2020.
- C) To approve the payment schedules for January 2020/ February 2020.
- D) To nominate two councillors to attend the office to check and sign the Payment Schedule.

PF 129A Proposed: Councillor V Manro Seconded: Councillor A Roupelis
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
RESOLVED: To approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for January 2020.

PF 129B Proposed: Councillor R Venkatesh Seconded: Councillor S Heyes
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for January 2020.

PF 129C Committee considered the payment schedules for January/February 2020 under purchase daybook references 803-847 and cash book reference 219, totaling £54,772.08.
Proposed: Councillor A Roupelis Seconded: Councillor R Venkatesh
Vote: Agreed unanimously.
RESOLVED: To approve the Payment Schedule for January/February 2020.

Initials: _____

PF 129D Councillor E Baker-Lee and Councillor L Brown were nominated to check and sign the payments.

PF 130 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S INTERIM REPORT

Members noted the Internal Auditor's interim report and actions arising. One of the points raised related to the award of a £23,000 grounds maintenance contract without obtaining quotes from three suppliers as stipulated by Financial Regulations. It was noted there was a well-reasoned argument and agreed by the Council as to why this was the best course of action. However best practice is to formally suspend Financial Regulations. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council to retrospectively suspend Financial Regulation 11.1b which relates to three quotations being required for contracts under £25,000 but over £3,000. All other items were noted.

Proposed: Councillor L Brown Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To note the Internal Auditor's interim report and recommend to Full Council to retrospectively suspend Financial Regulation 11.1b when awarding the £23,000 Grounds Maintenance Contract.

PF 131 SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (SBC) CODES & PROTOCOLS

SBC has asked all Councils for the views on the Codes & Protocols documents. Members received the Clerk's Report outlining the issues and providing the relevant legislation relating to the Codes & Protocols. The report also contained ex councillor, Mr Worman's observations and recommendations. Thanks were expressed to Mr Worman for his time and effort in reviewing the documents. An extension to the deadline has been granted to enable the Parish Council to feedback their comments.

The Clerk's report was discussed and comments made were that dealing with Code of Conduct complaints were expensive, long and drawn out - then if upheld, the sanctions are very limited. It was noted the Swindon Area Committee believe the sanctions need to be harsher. The Clerk confirmed that in this regard, recommendations for local government [Code of Conduct and Standards in Public Life](#) is currently being reviewed at a national level to strengthen the existing framework for local government standards but many of the recommendations require parliamentary legislation and will be subject to Parliamentary timetabling. Other comments were discussed and agreed for Full Council's consideration next week. These included compulsory induction training actioned within 3 to 6 months. Untrained councillors/members should not hold positions such as Chair or mayoral and relevant training should be undertaken by the relevant position holder of the committee.

Proposed: Councillor S Heyes Seconded: Councillor A Roupelis

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council the following recommendations:

To submit the tracked change documents and general comments listed above to SBC for consideration in their review.

Initials: _____

For SBC to provide clearer guidance to the Parish and Town Councils on how Twin and Triple hatted councillors interpret Members' interests eg. twin hatted councillors where their registered interests could conflict for example a councillor sitting on a principle authority planning committee and on the Parish planning committee.

To tighten HWPC media policy to include social media which is easy to understand by the public regarding the do's and don'ts and if a member refers to being a councillor they work within the Code. If a member does not refer to their role as a councillor, their comments could be misinterpreted to that as a councillor.

To put a motion to Swindon Area Committee to consider if all Swindon parishes work together on their own Code of Conduct.

For HWPC to regularly review of all Councillors personal interests and include this as part of the policy review table to ensure they always remain up to date.

PF 132 TRUSTEES UPDATE

Members received a verbal update on the Council's current Trustee responsibilities which are still being investigated by Parish Council's solicitors.

PF 133 SWINDON & CRICKLADE RAILWAY LEASE

Members noted correspondence from SBC that Swindon & Cricklade railway have approached them to renew their lease.

PF 134 EMERGENCY PLAN

Meeting noted the current Working Party comprises: Councillors L Brown, A Roupelis, S Heyes and R Hailstone. Noted ex-councillor Mr P Eagle may wish to continue being a member of the group. Agreed to make an approach, if not successful, Councillor Liddon offered to step in and consider a call out on social media for other interested parties.

PF 135 CCTV OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Meeting reviewed the Operational Guidelines and revised Policy following the recent training and security industry consultants assisting with the documents. Members gave their feedback and these were presented to the group. Agreed for further changes to be made and the documents to be presented at next week's Full Council meeting.

Proposed: Councillor V Manro

Seconded: Councillor S Heyes

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: For the amended documents to be taken to Full Council for approval.

PF 136 UPDATE FROM IT WORKING PARTY

Members received an update from the IT Working Party that took place today. Updated included:

Website: progressing the development and improvement of current website and a specification will be drawn up and sent to a minimum of three providers.

Initials: _____

Paperless meetings: consideration is being given to mod.gov which is a nationwide app used by other Town and Parish Councils with the aim of getting Councils moving to a paperless environment. Haydon Wick Parish Councillors could be provided with mobile devices to help achieve this aim. Budget has been allocated in 2020/21 and proposals will be received by Full Council before any final decisions are made.

Telephony: The telephone contract is due for renewal on 30 March 2020. The Deputy RFO is currently looking into alternative providers so this will be brought to another meeting.

IT Support Contract/Server: Contracts are due for renewal and a meeting with the providers is being organized to get clarity before final costs are presented to a future meeting.

PF 137 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

RESOLVED: In accordance with Standing Order 3 (d) that 'in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted and in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw'. Reason: Commercially Sensitive.

PF 138 INSURANCE MATTERS

The Committee received a verbal update regarding insurance matters.

PF 139 PAYROLL PROVISION

The Committee received a verbal report on the research being carried out by Officers on the provision of payroll services.

PF 140 EXTERNAL SERVICES PRICES

Members received a report on pricing for external contracted services and after discussion agreed to the recommendations.

Proposed: Councillor R Venkatesh Seconded: Councillor V Manro

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

To keep the one contract the same price to building the relationship.

To increase the cost for another to £28.50 to cover the operational costs.

To review both prices again in November 2021.

Charges for any additional works to be considered on a case by case basis.

PF 141 MEETING ROOM AND RECEPTION REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Committee received a report from the Deputy RFO which included an update on the project, a budget breakdown and three furniture quotations. The expenditure to date for refurbishing the Council Offices' downstairs meeting room and reception area was noted. Councillor Manro enquired why painting, decorating and carpets had already been approved but the furniture quotations had come for approval. The Clerk confirmed she has delegated authority to spend up to £2,000 and the costs for the decorators and the carpet /fitting were

Initials: _____

individually under that value. Reassurance was given that three written quotations were sought and the best price/value was negotiated and accepted.

Members gave the Clerk delegated authority to spend up to the remaining budget of £7,881 to fund the furniture. To finalise the project, replacement fixed and mobile notice boards costing approximately £780.00 will be required so a further recommendation is to use available funds to meet this cost from the New Office Equipment and Office Maintenance budget areas.

Proposed: Councillor L Brown

Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To give delegated authority to the Clerk to procure the furniture within the remaining budget of £7,881. To purchase notice boards and display boards up to the value of £780.00 using available funds from New Office Equipment (4600/101) and Office Maintenance (4111/102) if required.

PF 142 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To be passed to the Clerk in advance of the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 21:18

Chairman:

Initials: _____