

## **HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 7.45pm held remotely via Teams.

### **ATTENDANCE**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors S Callen (Chairman), J Fuller, L Brown, L Rhys-Jones, R Venkatesh, R Hailstone, S Fateru, S Heyes and V Manro

**OFFICERS:** P&F Committee Officer and Deputy RFO, Sandra Kelly  
Deputy Clerk, Laura Cutter

### **PF 091 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from A Roupelis (personal commitments) and D Rodgers (personal commitments).

### **PF 092 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PF 093 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one member of the public present. Questions were raised and answered prior to the meeting as follows:

**1) Agenda 12A, item 4.3.** *If the unspent provisions do not meet the criteria indicated, they will return to general reserves.*

**2) Agenda 9...my suggestion is pay back the £20,000. Could the £2,926 deficit be taken from another cost centre.** *Would be taken from general reserves.*

**3) Item 13. A reference to amendments in yellow are mentioned, where are such amendments written?** *The document was missing from the uploads so that has been corrected and therefore the yellow highlights are apparent.*

**4) We have come a long way in openness and transparency where the public are concerned, this is commendable, but I think we need to progress this further.** *Responded that all meetings include working parties will have their minutes/notes published, as stated on the terms of reference, unless the content is commercially sensitive or covering personnel matters.*

**Further question raised at the meeting, regarding the Standing Orders - it would seem that the orange and green dots referencing all committees and sub-committees is missing from page 8, Meetings Generally, point 3(t).** *The Officer will investigate this.*

### **PF 094 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

### **PF 095 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members received and approved the minutes of the Policy & Finance Meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Proposed: Councillor L Rhys-Jones    Seconded: Councillor L Brown**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be agreed and signed as a true record.**

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**PF 096 COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

**Councillor R Hailstone** Following the completion of the work to install broadband fibre in the area, it has been left in a terrible mess by the contractors and with multi-coloured markings remaining on roads and paths making the Parish look unsightly.

**Councillor J Fuller** Reiterates what Councillor Hailstone says about the state of the Parish following the broadband fibre works.

**Councillor S Heyes** Informed that the crossing behind the office had finally been repaired and the flashing beacons are back in place.

**PF 097 CLERK'S REPORT**

**Hard Wire Testing** – we have been informed by the company carrying out the testing that when they began their testing on 4<sup>th</sup> March, they counted 21 circuits - up from the 11 estimated. This will take the total cost up to £312 + vat. Queried this increase on the original quotation with the company but the fact remains there are 21 circuits, so the charge remains. Remaining work will go ahead (25<sup>th</sup> June). *Councillor Manro advised that the charges seemed excessive - Officer to investigate and if possible, cancel the work.*

**Barclaycard** - Refund of £301.64 for the suspected fraudulent charges has been received. Paid March's charges in advance of the direct debit as the limit has been reached again. Trying to get the hire vehicles paid another way to avoid this situation from re-occurring.

**New boiler** - being fitted on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The agreed contractor (our current service provider), having been appointed to carry out the work, decided they could not fulfil the requirement, so we have had to appoint one of the other companies that quoted in the original submissions and who were actually slightly cheaper.

**Skate park de-energising** - SSE cancelled the date for this on 25<sup>th</sup> March. We are awaiting a new date.

**IT outage** - We had an internet failure for most of the day 12<sup>th</sup> April on both of our lines. This meant that we also had no phone connection. Eventually, a temporary fix was found but it was discovered that the second broadband line had been disabled. Investigations as to the cause for the disruption and the disabling of the line are continuing with the Company and we are seeking compensation for the outage and disruption to business.

**PF 098 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

- A) To receive and approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for Month 12, March 2021.
- B) To receive the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for Month 12, March 2021.
- C) To approve the payment schedules for March/April 2021.
- D) To receive the Q4 budget report.
- E) Notification of Hills price review.

**PF 098A Proposed: Councillor S Callen      Seconded: Councillor L Rhys-Jones**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

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**RESOLVED: To approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for March 2021.**

**PF 098B Proposed: Councillor R Venkatesh      Seconded: Councillor S Fateru**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for March 2021.**

**PF 098C** Committee considered the amended payment schedules for March/April 2021 under purchase daybook references \*1442-1476, excel references 10421-300321 and three cash book transactions for £105.53, totaling £57,486.96 and no queries were raised.

**Proposed: Councillor V Manro      Seconded: Councillor S Heyes**  
**Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.**  
**RESOLVED: To approve the Payment Schedule for March/April 2021 under purchase daybook references 1442-1476, excel references 10421-300321 and cash book transactions for £105.53, totaling £57,486.96.**

**PF 099      COVID-19 DISCRETIONARY GRANT OVERPAYMENT**

Members received a report giving the background to an overpayment by Swindon Borough Council to Haydon Wick Parish Council. The Parish Council applied and received a £40,000 discretionary grant from Swindon Borough Council in September 2020. The grant has been used for recouping loss of income, increase expenditure for covid-19 related items and community projects to help the communities recovery from the pandemic. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, SBC stating that the Parish Council should have only been given £20,000 and would we “*be in a position to repay the £20,000*” (being the overpayment). Members were provided with a breakdown of how the £40,000 originally received had been allocated. If the £20,000 were to be returned, this would put the Council into a deficit position for this allocation. Following discussions, Councillor Manro proposed that £10,000 should be returned to SBC. The rationale being that the request to return the monies came so late in the financial year that adjustments to our committed use of the grant could not be made and therefore returning all of the £20,000 would put our budget into a negative situation.

**Proposed: Councillor V Manro      Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To offer to return £10,000 of the overpayment to avoid the Council’s budget going into deficit.**

**PF 100      ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**

Members received and noted a report summarising the requirements of the AGAR and a timetable for the various stages for completion.

**PF 101      ROUND UP OF 2020/2021 COMMITTEE PROJECTS**

A report reviewing what the Policy & Finance Committee have achieved over the past year was submitted for noting. The report covered how Covid-19 was managed; grant awards given; policies reviewed; how finances were managed; ongoing projects; one-off projects and what the committee will be working towards in the coming year.

**PF 102      POLICIES FOR RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL ON 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

Members considered the following policies for recommendation to Full Council

- A) Financial Regulations - updated version submitted for consideration.
- B) Standing Orders – no changes but bringing them to Full Council for annual adoption to fall in line with the start of the new council year and not November as timetabled.
- C) Procurement Policy – amended version submitted for consideration with regards to the limits being set in pounds now rather than euros.

**PF 102A**    **Proposed: Councillor S Callen**                      **Seconded: Councillor L Rhys-Jones**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the Financial Regulations for 2021 be adopted.**

**PF 102B**    **Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone**                      **Seconded: Councillor S Fateru**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the Standing Orders are adopted as required annually and to fall in line with the start of the new council year.**

**PF 102C**    **Proposed: Councillor S Callen**                      **Seconded: Councillor L Rhys-Jones**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the Procurement Policy for 2021 be adopted.**

**PF 103**    **TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
Members considered the amended Terms of Reference for the Policy & Finance Committee. No comments were made.  
**Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone**                      **Seconded: Councillor V Manro**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the Committee's Terms of Reference as presented be adopted.**

**PF 104**    **INVESTMENTS**  
Members received the Officer's report detailing the investment opportunities provided by the Charities, Churches and Local Authorities (CCLA) Local Authorities' Property Fund and giving the background to the organisation, following a meeting with the Fund's Relationship Manager on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The Local Authority's Property Fund should be considered as a long-term investment only (minimum of 5 years). The performance report submitted to members, provided by the CCLA, shows how the fund has performed over the past year. The Council initially invested £200,000 with the CCLA in November 2019 in their Deposit Fund which is a short-term investment fund. This is performing well given the current climate and better than the funds that are currently invested with HSBC. This being the reason for considering further investments. Members also received a report from the CCLA giving an overview of how funds have been performing generally over the past year due to the impact of Covid-19 and also a letter to shareholders of the Public Sector Deposit Fund, providing their view of the potential future direction of interest rates in the UK money market and to advise of changes being made to the fund. After discussion, it was agreed that further information from the Fund Manager would be useful before making a recommendation to Full Council. The Officer

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will invite the Relationship Manager (Mark Davies) to the next P&F meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**PF 105 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR) UPDATE**

There was nothing to report.

**PF 106 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Presentation by CCLA Relationship Manager.

**PF 107 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 108 IT RENEWAL**

Members received a report identifying statistics of support calls logged between 1 May 2020 and 31 March 2021, provided by our current IT support provider, together with a quotation for renewal. The renewal is due on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and is for the same cover that we have currently. The price remains the same, at £2,800pa. The chargeable work identified in the statistics relates to charges for installation and set-up of new laptops. We have extended hours support included in our contract and last year we logged 20 calls outside of standard hours. It was felt that we are getting good service from the company so should continue to renew this year. Councillor Manro asked for charges for setting up the latest new laptop to be queried with the company as they seemed rather high.

**Proposed: Councillor V Manro**

**Seconded: Councillor S Fateru**

**VOTE: Agreed unanimously.**

**RESOLVED: To accept Orchard's quotation of £2,800 for the renewal of the IT contract which remains the same cost and cover as last year.**

**Code to 4024/101.**

**PF 109 INSURANCE UPDATE**

**Accident** involving a member of staff, whilst using their own car to undertake a regular trip for Voluntary Action Swindon on behalf of the Council. The member of staff did have business cover on their car insurance but was not at fault so the claim was dealt with by the other driver's insurance cover. Fortunately, only minor injuries were sustained to our member of staff. From now on, the member of staff has said they are not willing to use their own vehicle for business/volunteering activities.

**Damage to hire vehicle** – on 26<sup>th</sup> March, the wind caught the door of one of our hire vehicles (DU17 JRZ), causing damage to the door. It is our responsibility to arrange for the repair but as it will cost less than the £250 excess on our insurance, this repair is being carried out independently of our insurance Company and the Council will need to meet the costs.

**Subsidence.** This is an ongoing case and the claimant had been informed by our insurance company assessor that the case was closed but the claimant is challenging this decision so we have yet to hear if there will be any further action taken.

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**Damaged wall (1).** Another case brought by the subsidence claimant. This is a claim received on 31 March for damage to a wall claimed to be caused by non-maintained vegetation. Several emails have been sent to the insurance company – the first one on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, then the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April asking how to progress this for the resident but still no reply received. We will continue to pursue.

**Repairs to retaining wall (2).** The Parish Council received a letter from Solicitors on 18<sup>th</sup> March on behalf of their client who is in dispute with Swindon Borough Council (SBC) regarding repairs needed to their retaining wall which is claimed to be the responsibility of the Borough Council. The Parish Council acknowledged receipt of the letter on the 19<sup>th</sup> March and that we were seeking advice on the matter. It is not clear why we have received the letter and copies of correspondence between the claimant and SBC. To date we have received no further correspondence but have received initial legal advice from our insurance company which is provided as part of our policy advising to wait to hear further from the claimant's Solicitors. In the meanwhile, the Parks & Open Spaces Manager has been to view of the wall in question.

**PF 110 ROOM HIRE ENQUIRY**

A room hire enquiry was received from Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 in which they have requested a concessionary rate for NHS bookings to provide Nurse training. This is an initial enquiry and we have not been informed of the date(s) they are wanting to book and have also not received any further communication, following our response to further questions they raised. Our hire conditions state: *“Not for Profit” organisations can also apply for the concessionary rate, this application will be considered by the Policy and Finance committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council at the next Policy and Finance meeting (subject to timescales) after receiving booking form.* Members agreed that the Foundation meets the criteria for a concessionary rate as they are a not for profit organisation so to offer them the rate relevant to the booking they are requesting but to inform them that depending on Covid restrictions at the time, there could possibly be additional costs to take into consideration.

**Proposed: Councillor S Callen**

**Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**RESOLVED: To approve the concessionary rate for any Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust bookings, relating to the date and time of the booking requested.**

The meeting closed at 21:23

**Chairman:**

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