

## **HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.45 pm held remotely via Teams.

### **ATTENDANCE**

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

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

**MEETING ROOM PRESENCE:** Clerk & RFO and Deputy RFO

**PF 037 APOLOGIES**  
There were no apologies.

**PF 038 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
None.

**PF 039 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**  
There was one member of the public present who had sent the following questions in advance to the Clerk.

***Using The precept total for year 20/21 The salary % of the precept= 53.369% and the salary % of the proposed precept year 20/21= 54.76%. Noting the yearly increases will the Parish consider introducing a total salary cap for future years? This would take into account yearly salary increases.***

All staff employed by the Parish Council are recruited on the local government joint councils (NJC) contract of terms and conditions. They are recruited on a salary band which, depending upon performance, may move up the band annually with incremental points. Once a member of staff reaches the top of the band they may be re-evaluated or remain at the top with no further annual increments. In 2020 it was confirmed there was a salary freeze on public sector workers and therefore there has been no additional cost of living award applied to the salary budget for 2021/22.

The resident confirmed at the meeting that they also wished to understand if there is a cap on the number of staff it will be recruiting in the future. The Clerk confirmed this was dependent upon the number of future services the Council wished to deliver to the community.

***Would the Parish please provide the reasons for the £20,000 proposal under section 605, item 178, no4626.***

The £20,000 in this year's budget was for Depot Feasibility and Council agreed in November 2020 to use this to partially fund the new Head of Parks & Open Spaces Team (POST) position which will be responsible for the new depot feasibility and future move. This amount, minus other fees, will be vired

**Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

out of capital projects (605) to POST salaries (307) and an agenda refers later in this meeting.

***Why are the parish allowing £10,000 for tree maintenance? If Borough wishes to transfer maintenance the parish should negotiate transfer fees! Do you not agree.***

Haydon Wick, amongst other parishes, will attempt to negotiate transitional costs on any possible devolvement of tree maintenance from Swindon Borough Council, if when this occurs in the future. In the meantime, and to ensure we have a robust budget, we are allocating funds to help towards future costs.

***The Parish indicated a street cleaning project which would involve a hire or purchase of a suitable vehicle, plus possibly employing a driver? Is this still an aspiration? If so where are the costings?***

The hire of the street cleaning machine is for a trial period of 12 weeks – this will be going to Full Council on the 26<sup>th</sup> January for a final decision on whether to commence a trial later in 2021. The cost of a driver will be met from existing payroll and depending on the success of the trial, a business case for any future expenditure will be discussed at council meetings.

The resident also confirmed they had applied to Swindon Borough Council for a breakdown of total costs of tree maintenance to help inform future budgets and stated that Swindon Borough Council were likely to make a precept recommendation of at least 3.99%. It was suggested that the Parish Council take this into consideration when setting their precept.

Councillor V Manro advised that Swindon Borough Council have increased their budget for tree maintenance next year, but anything under 12 foot remains the responsibility of the Parish.

The Clerk and Deputy RFO offered to meet with the resident to discuss any further queries.

#### **PF 040 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members were reminded of the meeting etiquette during tonight's meeting and asked to raise their hand to speak and that there should be no interruptions. Any non-members of the committee were welcome to attend t but do not have a vote.

#### **PF 041 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Hailstone asked if there had been any further communication from Scrapstore regarding their grant application. Members were informed that Scrapstore had confirmed that since putting in their application, free school meals were once again being provided by the Government, therefore, the grant they were applying for is no longer required. Members noted an amendment to the introduction and approved the minutes of the Policy & Finance Meeting held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. There was no meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee in December 2020.

**Proposed: Councillor S Callen**

**Seconded: Councillor J Fuller**

**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

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**RESOLVED: The Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record.**

**PF 042 COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

**Councillor V Manro** A further email has been received from a previous vexatious resident. Councillors are requested not to respond to any emails and not to publicly make any comments regarding this resident's issues.

**Councillor R Hailstone** Advised that the Swindon Area Committee (SAC) will be reviewing the Parish Charter at their meeting in March. As new parishes are now on stream and all parishes are now taking on more responsibilities, it is important that the Charter is fully reviewed.

**Councillor L Brown** Reiterated what Councillor Manro stated regarding the vexatious resident.

**PF 043 CLERK'S REPORT**

**Community Response** - Clerk has reached out to Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to see if the Parish Council can assist with any community response requests during lockdown #3. A member of staff is currently undertaking a regular medication delivery within their contracted hours. The Parish Council will be required to cover the fuel costs.

**Policies due for renewal** - as this meeting is focusing on budget planning and precept, policies that require reviewing and adopting will be brought to the February meeting. The Parish Charter will also be brought to the February meeting in order for a response to be sent to SAC for their meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**Electricity supply to the skatepark** - a form has now been received, completed and returned, to de-energise the electricity supply to the skatepark. De-energising the supply, rather than disconnecting it, is a far cheaper option and means it would still be possible to re-connect (for a fee) should we want to in the future but in the meanwhile, all standing charges will cease.

**PF 044 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

- A) To receive and approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for Month 9, December 2020.
- B) To receive the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for Month 9, December 2020.
- C) To approve the payment schedules for December 2020/January 2021.
- D) To receive the Q3 Budget Report for October-December 2020
- E) To approve a virement of £20,000 from Capital Projects [605/4626] and split between recruitment [101/4028] and salaries [cost centre 307]
- F) To agree an increase in the spend limit for the credit card from £5,500 to £8,000

**PF 044A Proposed: Councillor S Callen      Seconded: Councillor L Brown  
Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**RESOLVED: To approve the Income & Expenditure Statement for December 2020.**

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- PF 044B** **Proposed: Councillor R Venkatesh    Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for December 2020.**
- PF 044C** Committee considered the payment schedules for December 2020-January 2021 under purchase daybook references 1295-1328 and cash book reference 249, totaling £52,963.13.  
**Proposed: Councillor S Callen                      Seconded: Councillor L Brown**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To approve the Payment Schedule for December 2020-January 2021 under purchase daybook references 1295-1328 and cash book reference 249, totaling £52,963.13.**
- PF 044D** Members received and noted the Q3 Budget Report for October-December 2020.
- PF 044E** Members approved a virement of £20,000 from Capital Projects to recruitment [101/4028] to cover costs incurred in recruiting the Head of Parks & Open Spaces Team [101/4028] with the remainder to being vired to salaries [307].  
**Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone    Seconded: Councillor J Fuller**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To vire the sum of £20,000 from Capital Projects [605/4626] to recruitment [101/4028] and salaries [307 cost centre].**
- PF 044F** The meeting was informed that because of Covid-19 it is necessary to make more online purchases than usual and as the Council now has two contracts for long term hire of vehicles, where payment can only be made by credit card, it is necessary to increase the credit card limit from £5,500 to £8,000. It was noted the Council has robust checks and balances in place.  
**Proposed: Councillor L Brown                      Proposed: Councillor S Callen**  
**Vote: Agreed with one (1) objection.**  
**RESOLVED: To approve increasing the Barclaycard credit card limit from £5,500 to £8,000.**
- PF 045    DRAFT BUDGET 2021-22**  
The meeting considered the draft budget as recommended by the budget working party which had been the result of feedback from councillors during committee meetings and working party meetings since budget setting commenced in October 2020. The budget presented was ambitious and would progress capital projects which had been postponed due to the pandemic - thus releasing unspent funds into the Council's reserves for reallocation in 21/22. The draft budget the working party presented provided an operational budget with a precept calculation figure of £859,382 and an increase of 4.5% - equivalent to an additional £4.19 per household per annum.  
**Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone    Seconded: Councillor V Manro**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council the operational budget with a precept of £859,382, which represents £95.42 per annum for a Band D household.**

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**PF 046 PRECEPT 2021-2022**

The meeting considered the impact of the agreed operational budget on the precept and after discussion Councillor S Callen proposed the 4.5% precept but there was no seconder. No vote was taken.

Councillor V Manro proposed an amendment of a 3.5% precept increase and this was seconded by Councillor D Rodgers. It was noted that £6,000 had been double accounted and could be released to reduce the precept impact but members also wanted to reinstate the footpath project with a budget of £3,000. The vote was then taken and agreed that the budget for Full Council consideration would have to be amended to deliver a capped 3.5% increase in the precept.

The Clerk updated the committee on necessary changes to the governance arrangements for submitting the demand form on Swindon Borough Council (SBC). This form is now updated and agreed by SBC to allow the Parish Council to submit the form with electronic signatures instead of wet signatures. The Clerk considered this was safer for all parties than officers visiting councillors for their signatures and transferring papers copies to each other during current lockdown restrictions.

**Proposed: Councillor V Manro                      Seconded: Councillor D Rodgers**  
**Vote: Agreed with two (2) objections and two (2) abstentions.**  
**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council an operational budget which represents a capped 3.5% increase in the precept. To proceed with a change in governance arrangements for the precept demand form to be submitted with an electronic signature.**

**PF 047 RESERVES POLICY 2021-2022**

This item deferred to Full Council pending changes to the 2021/22 budget.

**PF 048 FORECAST BUDGET**

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

**PF 049 TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

Members noted a verbal update on the transfer of telecommunications from the previous provider to the new provider.

**PF 050 INTERNAL AUDIT WORKING PARTY**

The meeting heard how to further develop the Council's financial system; the Clerk is recommending to the Committee an internal audit working party. It is suggested these will be held quarterly. Any interested members were asked to email the Clerk.

**PF 051 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Suggested items for future meetings

- Parish Charter and Policies
- Background information for land at Tadpole Lane
- Community Bus

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- Governance for Community Engagement Working Party

**PF 052 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 053 INSURANCE MATTERS**

- A) Members received a verbal update on insurance matters.
- B) To receive and approve the vehicle insurance premium.

**PF 053A** Members noted the update on insurance matters.

**PF 053B** The meeting was informed that the vehicle Insurance renewal is due on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Three quotations were received and considered. The best value quotation was submitted by the current insurer (Zurich Municipal) and as this would also place all insurance cover under one company, it was agreed to place the vehicle insurance with them for one year – at of cost of £3,021.04. It is not advisable to commit for longer than a year as premiums vary year on year and a longer-term agreement cannot be guaranteed to remain at the quoted figure.

**Proposed: Councillor S Callen**  
**Vote: Agreed unanimously.**

**Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone**

**RESOLVED: To place the vehicle insurance cover with Zurich Municipal for a period of one year at a cost of £3021.04. Cost to be split between codes for vehicle insurance [307/4507] and community bus insurance [501/4500].**

**PF 054 DEBT WRITE OFF**

Members received a report on the background to an outstanding payment which the Parish Council was in dispute over with a previous security provider. This outstanding payment was carried over from 2019-20 accounts. It is recommended the debt of £3,880 be written off and should the company re-engage with the Parish and an agreement is reached, any payment to be taken from the Council's General Reserves.

**Proposed: Councillor V Manro**  
**VOTE: Agreed unanimously.**

**Seconded: Councillor L Brown**

**RESOLVED: To write off the debt to the value of £3,880, outstanding to the previous security company in the 2019/20 financial year. If the company re-engages in the future any payment agreed to be taken from the Council's General Reserves.**

The meeting closed at 21:37

**Chairman:**

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