

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 19.30 at Parish Council Offices, Thames Avenue, Swindon, SN25 1QQ.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Councillors: V Manro (Chair), A Roupelis (Vice Chair), S Fateru, J Fuller, R Hailstone, S Heyes, J Jackson, O Munagala, B Patrick-Okoh and R Worman

OFFICERS: Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer/Clerk and RFO
Jodie Smart, Finance Officer, Deputy RFO
Julie McMorrow, Meetings Administrator

FP 039 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor A Jimmy (work commitments).
No apologies were received from Cllr O Munagala.

FP 040 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

FP 041 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were none.

FP 042 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Informed the meeting that following Chief Officer's email communications this week our Head of Parks and Open Spaces is retiring. His last working day will be Friday 18th October 2024 and members have been invited to join him for cake on his last day. A card and collection are in circulation.

FP 043 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members reviewed the minutes of Finance and Policy Committee held on Tuesday 16th July 2024 and agreed they were a true record.

Proposed: Councillor A Roupelis Seconded: Councillor B Patrick-Okoh
Vote: Agreed with two (2) Abstentions

RESOLVED: To confirm as a true record the minutes of meetings held on Tuesday 16th July 2024 and the Chairman signed the minutes.

FP 044 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor R Worman – Advised that there had been some issues with a cars parking on curbs and in some cases carrying out repairs to vehicles. Councillors were given the contact number of an Officer at SBC to call in the future. More complaints from residents regarding people racing model cars in the area and they are awaiting a report back from North Central Swindon Parish Council. The roads on and around the estate have been weeded and look good. It was noted that these areas are reported to Thames Water as a 'flood risk' so they are tidied and swept by Thames Water. Penhill Park's line of protected trees – asked if we can find out if there are any plans at SBC (Swindon Borough Council) to them cut back. *Action JM to ask POST to find out.*

Councillor R Hailstone – Attended Swindon Local Councils Forum meeting at SBC. There is a report for Parishes to discuss at the next Forum meeting on the 19th September which is to confirm that parishes should halt negotiations with SBC as no further information has been made available – the Borough Council has offered no clarity on what is required and the cost to be incurred.

Councillor S Heyes – A park on Abbey Meads has had trees cut back quite vigorously by SBC and was left with branches everywhere. It has now been cleared by the Parish Council despite it being left by SBC.

Initials: _____

Cllr V Manro – Advised committee of his attendance at the SBC Peer Review along with the Chief Officer - sadly only two Parishes were in attendance. Asked for more communication to push the Youth Club at Orbital Park where the numbers recently have been lower than expectation. *JM to pass this request to LC.* Confirmed the Deputy Clerk has recently submitted nominations for the Wiltshire & Swindon Community First Awards and the Chief Officer finalised the Councillor's submission for the National Association of Local Councils 'Star Council of the Year' award scheme.

No representation at Parish activities, meetings or events this month:

Councillor S Fateru
Councillor J Fuller
Councillor J Jackson
Councillor B Patrick-Okoh
Councillor A Roupelis

FP 045 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Chief Officer advised that the Chairman had also attended the Super Councils networking meeting online because the Parish Council is now a member of the group due to the size of the precept – note there is no charge for joining these meetings. The meeting heard that there were lots of conversations around revenue generation but not necessarily relevant to Haydon Wick.

FP 046 FINANCIAL REPORTS

FP 046A Members noted the income and expenditure for August 2024. It was noted that there has been a lot of activity through Amazon and so it was suggested to look at any savings using Amazon Prime. *Action: JS to investigate pros and cons of Amazon vs. Amazon Prime.*

FP 046B Members received the Bank Statements and Bank reconciliation for August 2024.

FP 046C Members noted a small amount of interest is due to be paid into the CCLA account to cover 31st August 2024.

FP 046D Members approved expenditure under purchase daybook references 3635 - 3671 and cashbook reference 386. The payments total is £160,261.60.

Proposed: Councillor J Jackson **Seconded: Councillor A Roupelis**
Vote: Unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: To approve expenditure under purchase daybook references 3635-3671 and cashbook reference 386. The payments total is £160,261.60.

FP 046E Members retrospectively approved the payments made using the credit card for payments made in July 2024 totaling £3,863.97 respectively.

Proposed: Councillor S Heyes **Seconded: Councillor J Jackson**
Vote: Unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: To retrospectively approve expenditure using the credit card for payments totaling £3,863.97 in July 2024.

FP 047 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE FACILITY – CASH FLOW UPDATE

Cash flow report was received and noted. Approval at the next meeting in November will require scrutiny in advance of the Public Works Loan draw down. There is a potential Bank of England rate drop but it has not been announced yet, other considerations affecting the loan interest rate will be the budget in October 2024. The Finance Officer confirmed she will prepare a detailed analysis of the impact of the interest rates over the loan period.

FP 048 POLICIES TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

FP 048A **Revised Social Media Policy** - changes to the policy were explained and include a quick-look guide for Councillors.

FP 048B **Freedom of Information Policy.** Amended to include a section on Freedom of Information. *JS to arrange for historic and recent FOI requests to be added the website under the Transparency section.*

Initials: _____

- FP 048C** **NEW Play Area Inspections Policy.** As part of smarter working practices, the Play and Projects Team has taken on more grounds maintenance responsibilities which means their inspections now take place every three-weeks. There was a suggestion to add pictures of play equipment maintenance, detailing what process was taken, with any parts documented etc. It was also noted as the Council continues to work towards being paperless, it is aiming to do the play inspections using a device in the future. *GMD to brief LC to add these developments to Parks & Projects' maintenance recording system.*
Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone Seconded: Councillor B Patrick-Okoh
Vote: Unanimously agreed.
RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council the following policies are adopted: Social Media, Freedom of Information and Play Area Inspections.
- FP 049** **CONTRACTS RENEWALS TABLE**
FP 049A The Committee noted the contract renewals table. The meeting heard there are some legislative changes to business waste arrangements that may affect future charges.
- FP 049B** The Committee considered the new utilities supplier charges and agreed to use EDF for the next thirty-six-months at an estimated cost of £3,964.11 per annum. The estimated average cost reduction is 37.23%. *JS to proceed with confirming the choice and check with the provider if there are any penalties should there be a desire to exit the contract before the end of three years.*
Proposed: Councillor R Worman Seconded: Councillor S Fateru
Vote: Unanimously agreed.
RESOLVED: To approve the change in utility supplier to EDF costing approximately £3,964.11 per annum for next three years.
- FP 050** **HEALTH & SAFETY CONSULTANT**
Recently undertook a contract review exercise to assess the best value of our H&S consultant contract services. Four quotations were received and discussed with the Committee. The Committee agreed to continue using the existing services of ABR Safety at an annual cost of £660 per year. The meeting heard the consultant will be briefed on the new Grounds Maintenance Facility (GMF) and it was noted there will be a lot of safety notices that need to be budgeted for. It was confirmed there is contingency in the GMF budget and a H&S budget for the new Facility.
Proposed: Councillor S Fateru Seconded: Councillor J Jackson
Vote: Unanimously agreed.
RESOLVED: To approve the existing health and safety consultant ABR Safety be appointed for 2025/26 at a cost of £660 per year. Budget code 4102/102.
- FP 051** **ASSET REGISTER/INSURANCE**
New Facility manager will be working with the Finance Officer to review the POST asset register, and a report will be presented to Committee in due course.
- FP 052** **EXTERNAL GRANT APPLICATION**
To note a SSEN Powering Communities to Net Zero Fund (Low Carbon Technology) grant application to fund replacement solar panels and the installation of sensor lighting for the parish council building has been submitted. The grant was only available for community buildings, hence why an application was not submitted for the GMF.
- FP 053** **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**
To advise the Chief Officer.

FP 054 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

There were none.

FP 055 INSURANCE MATTERS

Members noted the report detailing the High Street tree case. Despite the Council's insurers closing the case because no contact had been made by the claimant's insurer, on the 2nd September an email was received threatening legal action if the Council do not remove the tree within 21 days. This has been forwarded to the Council's insurer for direct correspondence between them. It has been stressed that the Council cannot remove a tree that it does not own, nor is it liable for it. It was also reported that the claimant's insurers were unnecessarily rude to members of our team. The Council has closed this case.

FP 056 ACCIDENTS

Members noted the two accidents, one small accident at the Haven café and a member of staff using a hand saw that slipped and hurt their hand. Correctional measures have been implemented.

FP 057 LAND AT TADPOLE

A brief update to confirm Wellers Hedley Solicitors have been instructed and a detailed report will be available at the next Full Council Meeting on 24th September 2024. There appears to be no overage deed in the original purchase paperwork that gives any details on what might trigger a payment to the original landowner.

FP 058 PARKS & OPEN SPACES (POS) DELIVERY COSTS

Members received a report and heard that as winter months approach and the grass cutting service ceases, the two operatives require access to a vehicle to commence the winter programme. This, combined with the agreement to extend the two seasonal operatives until the end of March 2025, will mean that the POS team require an additional vehicle from October '24 to end of March '25. The Committee queried exactly what specification the van will be and whether it was going to be electric or petrol, given the Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions where practicably possible. The exact model was not available to confirm, however the meeting heard that the hire vehicle was likely to be a petrol one because the lead in time to order an electric was longer than petrol. The Committee wanted reassurance the final choice of van was fit for purpose and did not want to see a future request for more budget because the £5,000 being requested this evening was not sufficient.

It is acknowledged that the Council needs to address the future vehicle requirements and to this end the Officers are in the process of getting this ready for budget setting. The Committee agreed to the hire however, clarity of the exact specification is expected to be made available to members. *JS to give DH the green light to arrange the hire vehicle and to have the specification details available at Full Council.*

Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone

Seconded: Councillor J Fuller

Vote: Agreed with two (2) Against and two (2) Abstentions.

RESOLUTION: Committee approved the hire of an additional vehicle for use by the Parks & Open Spaces at a cost of up to £5,000.00 between October 2024 and March 2025. Costs to be met from General Reserves.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Chairman Signed: _____

Initials: _____