

HAYDON WICK PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee of Haydon Wick Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th November 2022 at 8pm at Parish Council Offices, Thames Avenue, Swindon, SN25 1QQ.

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS: Councillors L Rhys-Jones (Chairman), S Heyes, R Hailstone, S Fateru, S Callen, V Manro, A Roupelis, B Patrick-Okoh and J Fuller

OFFICER: Georgina Morgan-Denn, Chief Officer/Clerk & RFO
Jodie Smart, Deputy RFO

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S McDermott

FP 117 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and noted from Councillor R Venkatesh (personal commitments).

FP 118 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors S Callen, J Fuller and R Hailstone declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 15 as they are Bowls Club Members. Councillor V Manro declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 regarding the timing of the precept setting as he is a Swindon Borough Ward Councillor.

FP 119 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One (1) member of the public was present who made various comments regarding the Ear Marked Reserves which were responded to satisfactorily.

FP 120 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Informed members that the resident was recording the meeting.

FP 121 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members approved the minutes of the Finance & Policy Meeting held on Tuesday 18th October 2022 were a true record.

Proposed: Councillor V Manro Seconded: Councillor B Patrick Okoh
Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.

RESOLVED: Members confirmed as a true record the minutes of meetings held on Tuesday 18th October 2022 and the Chairman signed the minutes.

FP 122 COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor S Heyes: Nothing to report.

Councillor L Rhys-Jones: Nothing to report.

Councillor J Fuller: Nothing to report.

Councillor R Hailstone: Nothing to report.

Councillor V Manro: attended a girl guides group earlier and they expressed an interest in attending a council meeting. *Action: Cllr Manro to send further details to the officers to progress the invitation.*

Councillor S Callen: Nothing to report.

Councillor A Roupelis: Nothing to report.

Councillor B Patrick-Okoh: Nothing to report.

Councillor J Fuller: Asked with rising interest rates how does this affect our plans for GMF. Response was the Budget Setting Update – Agenda 13 refers to the rising rates and future discussions will take place at committee meetings.

Initials: _____

Councillor S Fateru: was humbled to represent the Council at the Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph in Swindon recently.

Councillor R Hailstone: attended the recent climate change presentation which was very interactive and informative.

FP 123 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

To be advised there was an error on last month's bank reconciliation which should have been £1,194,102.72. Query last month about the overspend in 4024/101 - this is due to decision made in July 2022 to add a Purchase Order Module to the current Rialtas financial software suite. The overspend in 4024/101 will be met partly by the underspend in Audit 4023/101 and from General Reserves.

Resolved to move Agenda Item 14 – Laptop Budget Aspiration forward.

FP 124 BUDGET ASPIRATIONS

Members discussed and agreed to include a budget aspiration for a new laptop for the Editor role in 23/24. There was a request to check the Asset Register to verify where the laptop was on the replacement cycle.

Proposed: Councillor S Callen Seconded: Councillor S Fateru

Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.

RESOLVED: To allocate a budget aspiration for 2023-34 to fund a new laptop plus configuration costs £1,000.00 – to be purchased after May 2023.

Councillor S McDermott left the meeting 20.30.

FP 125 FINANCIAL REPORTS

FP 125A Members considered and noted the Income & Expenditure Reports for Month 7 – October 2022. There was a request to append a document detailing the reasons for overspends. *Action: Finance Officer to implement for next meeting.*

FP 125B Members considered and noted the Bank Statements and Bank Reconciliations for Month 7 – October 2022.

FP 125C Members discussed and approved October/November 2022 expenditure under purchase daybook references 2494-2545 and cashbook reference 300. The total of payments for approval is £130,406.87.

Proposed: Councillor S Fateru Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Members discussed and approved October/November 2022 expenditure under purchase daybook references 2494-2545 and cashbook reference 300. The total of payments for approval is £130,406.87.

FP 125D Members received and approved the October 2022 payments using the credit card - £708.28 and Petty Cash - £92.68.

Proposer: Councillor S Heyes

Seconder: Councillor A Roupelis

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To approve the October payments using the credit card at £708.28 and Petty Cash at £92.68.

FP 126 COST SAVINGS

Members considered a report on the contract for the franking machine and potential cost considerations by not renewing the contract. After discussion it was agreed to return the franking machine to the hire company and to note the two-year financial impact of the return at -0.03% or -£0.04 on the precept per year.

Initials: _____

Proposed: Councillor R Hailstone

Seconded: Councillor B Patrick-Okoh

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To return the franking machine to the hire company saving £351.32 per annum. To note the two-year financial impact of the return, as presented.

FP 127 CROSS CHARGING IN-HOUSE RESOURCES

Members discussed the pros and cons of cross charging in-house resources such as leisure garden maintenance, memory café room hire venue and community bus hire costs for parish activities. It was noted that there is a direct cost to the Council in running the Leisure Gardens, and the Council funds that cost as they are a service which the Council provides to the community, funded by the precept. It was agreed to report the maintenance costs and back-office time for invoicing and administering the service every year at the plot holders meeting. For other cross charging such as room hire and community bus it was agreed to continue moving the money around the Council's budget lines.

FP 128 COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES 2022-23

Members received the report and agreed to the recommendations. It was noted that in November 2021 Council agreed to reject Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Independent Remuneration Panel's recommended Councillor allowance for the 22-23 because it would have seen the overall allowances budget increase from approximately £16k to over £30k. At the time it was agreed to increase allowances in line with the staff NJC Cost of Living Uplift (minute reference FC 149). As SBC's IRP rates for 23-24 were not yet available, the report quoted an impact on the budget, using usual trend to reject the recommendations and increase allowances in line with staff increases at +5%.

Proposer: Councillor S Callen

Seconder: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed with one (1) objection.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To recommend to Full Council uplifting Councillors' Allowances in 22-23 by 7.67%. This equates to a new rate of £80.72 per month for Councillors (additional £5.75) and £150.09 for the Chairman (additional £10.69). Back pay to be applied since April 2022.**
- 2) To recommend to Full Council a budget aspiration of £19,182 for 23-24 Councillor Allowances. This equates to a 5% increase resulting new rates of £1,017.12 per annum for a Councillor and £1,891.08 for annum for the Chairman.**

FP 129 INTERNAL AUDITORS INTERIM REPORT

Members noted the Internal Auditor's interim report and areas where the Council needs to implement some changes. It was reported that many had already been done.

FP 130 BUDGET SETTING UPDATE

Members reviewed the report. It was acknowledged that the contents would be discussed in more detail at the next Budget Setting Working Party as it had implications for Council to consider when setting next year's budget/precept eg.

- a) Impact of a deficit budget on the Council's General and Ear Marked Reserves levels
- b) Cumulative effect of the Committee's budget aspirations on the future precept

Initials: _____

- c) Preparing for potential SBC devolvement of public services without the guarantee for transitional funding
- d) Public Works Loan to fund the improved Grounds Maintenance Facility and rising interest rates
- e) Example precepts for 23/24 to review
 - 0.00% with a c£290k deficit
 - standstill with a c£113k deficit
 - current budget with no deficit (+32.5%)
 - current budget with £100k subsidy from reserves (+21.3%)
 - +5% with deficit of c£245k
 - +10% with deficit of c£200k
- f) Cautionary note about focusing on percentage increases when actual monetary increases are more realistic
- g) A comparison of Haydon Wick Parish precept compared to others in Swindon - largest at £196.24 – smallest at £57.01
- h) Deprivation statistics in Swindon and noting Haydon Wick and Priory Vale are amongst the least deprived.
- i) A breakdown of services the Parish Council delivers demonstrating good value for the £98.88 per year.
- j) Recognising the current economic situation and current advice in the sector to finalise the precept setting in mid to late February.

Proposer: Councillor S Callen

Seconder: Councillor S Fateru

Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council to postpone the budget and precept setting decision until mid-February 2023 and communicate this to Swindon Borough Council.

FP 131 BOWLS CLUB TRUST & LEASE RENEWAL

Members noted the report and agreed to the recommendations. A recorded vote was requested.

Proposed: Councillor S Fateru

Seconded: Councillor V Manro

Vote: Agreed with three (3) abstentions: Councillors S Callen, R Hailstone and J Fuller.

RESOLVED:

- 1) To note the Bowls Club AGM minutes from the meeting held on 25th October 2022.**
- 2) To note Councillor R Hailstone will continue as the Parish Council's representative on the Bowls Club Trust and to check if Councillor L Brown no longer wishes to continue.**
- 3) To recommend to Full Council the existing lease terms are renewed for a further 25 years, as presented.**

FP 132 LEISURE GARDEN TERMS & CONDITIONS

Members received changes to the existing Leisure Garden Terms & Conditions and agreed to recommend them to Full Council.

Proposed: Councillor S Heyes

Seconded: Councillor R Hailstone

Vote: Agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council the changes to the Leisure Garden Terms & Conditions, as presented.

Councillor S Fateru left the meeting 21.24 and returned at 21.26.

Initials: _____

FP 133 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Members received a Safeguarding Policy. Members had comments to incorporate to do with DBS checks and photography permissions. These were to be incorporated before being presented to Full Council.

Proposed: Councillor S Callen

Seconded: Councillor J Fuller

Vote: Agreed with one (1) abstention.

RESOLVED: To recommend the Safeguarding Policy to Full Council.

FP 134 NEXT FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Members noted there will not be a committee meeting in December. All finance related items will be discussed at the Full Council on the 13th December 2022.

FP 135 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

To be sent to the Chief Officer in advance of the next meeting 17th January 2023.

FP 136 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

To resolve 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: Staffing Matter.

FP 137 ACCIDENT REPORTING

Members noted the accidents which had taken place.

The Meeting closed at 21.32

Chairman Signed:

Initials: _____