

TWYFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Zoom on Tuesday 15th September 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present: - Mr T Winchester (Chairman) from item 7 onwards, Mr J Bowley, Mrs B Ditcham, Mr J Jarvis, Mr R Mantel & Mr C Wickenden.

Minutes: Mrs L Moffatt (Clerk).

Mr C Wickenden (Vice Chairman) opened the meeting.

- 1. Public Questions are invited in advance of the meeting via email, telephone or in writing.** None.
- 2. Apologies.** None.
- 3. Declaration of interest in items on the agenda.** None.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held 21st July 2020** Minutes approved as a true and accurate record. Proposed Mr J Jarvis seconded Mrs B Ditcham motion carried unanimously.
- 5. Matters arising and action points.** None.
- 6. Clerk's Report**
 - 6.1 To receive the September Finance and General Purposes report. The clerk highlighted items 1.4, 1.6 & 1.8. The committee unanimously approved the NALC scalepoint increase of 2.75% and minimum of 22 days holiday for the Clerk / Assistant Clerk roles.
 - 6.2 SLCC conference £25 each (LM & LP) Proposed Mr R Mantel, seconded Mr J Jarvis to approve the 2x £25 conference fee. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 6.3 Edge webinars – Microsoft 365 – the Clerk and Assistant Clerk have registered for a number of free webinars.
 - 6.4 BBOWT webinar £10 – Mrs B Ditcham was unable to attend.
 - 6.5 HALC An Introduction to VAT £30 – unanimously approved that the Clerk attends the HALC VAT course at a cost of £30.
 - 6.6 Review of process for circulating correspondence – some councillors were unable to access the emails saved in the one drive folder. Agreed to review how many councillors have access at the Full Council meeting and to discuss further at the next meeting.
 - 6.7 2021/22 meeting dates – carried forward in order to give councillors time to look at the dates.
 - 6.8 Covid-19 risk assessment dated 13.08.20 – noted.
 - 6.9 Data Protection Regulations update – no report.
 - 6.10 Risk assessment – no report.

Mr T Winchester took over chairing the meeting.

7. Investments

- 7.1 To consider future spending projects – the Council and sports clubs have a desire to proceed with the Stanlake Pavilion extension. Agreed for the clerk to ask Wokingham Borough Council for an update on the progress with the Polehampton Community Hub.
- 7.2 To consider investment in shares – the clerk reported on the CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund which avoids excessive risk and has ethical investments. It provides products for charities, religious organisations and local authorities. There is a £25,000 minimum investment with further investments in increments of £10,000. The clerk will add the information to the one drive folder for Councillors to read before the next meeting.
- 7.3 Annual Parish Meeting figures (to look at any surplus) The APM finance report showed a surplus of £17,141 from 2019-20. £1,470 is ringfenced for 2020/21 hanging baskets and £3,441 is ringfenced for 2020/21 BIG Tree Project. This leaves £12,230. £6,096 will be used to repay the Tennis Court Capital repayment.
- 7.4 To agree capital repayments for the £22,000 taken from reserves for 2020. £6,000 of the remaining surplus will be used to reduce the £22,000 taken from reserves for 2020-21. This leaves £16,000 to be repaid over 4 years of £4,000 per year. Proposed Mr J Jarvis, seconded Mr T Winchester to approve items 7.3 & 7.4. Motion carried unanimously.

- 8. Citizen of the year award** – presentation in absence of Twyford Together awards ceremony. The clerk proposed plans for the presentation in conjunction with Twyford Together. Agreed for the clerk to progress these plans. Mr J Bowley will make the presentation on behalf of the Council.
- 9. Neighbourhood Plan Grant Application** Mr C Wickenden reported. Quotes for Neighbourhood Plan consultancy have been sought. An additional quote is required in keeping with the Councils standing orders. A grant application is being made to fund a visioning exercise with the Neighbourhood Plan working group costing consultants fees of £550 per day (total £1,650). Any councillor comments on the application should be made to Mr C Wickenden by 22nd September. The grant application had been circulated. Proposed Mr T Winchester, seconded Mrs B Ditcham to submit the application. Motion carried unanimously.
- 10. Review of Policies**
- 10.1 Investment policy (JJ) – carried forward.
- 10.2 To review standing orders
- 10.2.1 to add Neighbourhood Plan sub committee terms of reference (TOR)
- 10.2.2 to add applying for grants and funding to Finance & General Purposes Committee TOR
- Proposed Mr T Winchester, seconded Mrs B Ditcham, to make amendments to the standing orders to accommodate 10.2.1 & 10.2.2. Motion carried unanimously. Clerk to circulate an amended copy.
- 11. Grant Requests**
- 11.1 Citizens Advice application for telephones – application for £500 towards two Citizens Advice telephones to be located in Twyford. The committee considered suitable locations accessible to the public such as the Children’s Centre and library. Mr T Winchester proposed a grant of £250. There was no seconder. Mr C Wickenden proposed to **RECOMMEND to Full Council** to reply to Citizens Advice to say that the Council could not think of a suitable location for the telephones. Seconded by Mr J Jarvis. Motion carried unanimously.
- 12. Item from Full Council meeting** – to consider changing the standing orders to limit the length of time a councillor may serve as Chairman or Vice Chairman to the council or committee.
- Mr Jarvis requested an open discussion at Full Council meeting.
- Mr Mantel reminded the committee of the discussion so far including the requests made at the July Full Council meeting. He stated that councillor trainer Kim Bedford had not written in her notes that it was best practise to limit term of office of Chair and Vice Chair positions. He reported that 3 Councils in the Borough limit terms of office and 14 (including Twyford) don’t. If the 3 Councils are to be asked why they made the decision to limit the terms of office then the other 13 should be asked why they don’t. He noted that in the July Finance committee meeting Mr J Jarvis had made the proposal and there was no seconder. Mr Mantel summarised the principle saying that you either have the full range of choice or you limit your choice by one.
- Recommendation to Full Council** – upon reflection the committee feel that the recommendation still stands. Proposed Mr R Mantel, seconded Mr C Wickenden. Motion carried with Mr J Bowley, Mrs B Ditcham, Mr R Mantel, Mr C Wickenden, Mr T Winchester in favour and Mr J Jarvis against.
- [Recommendation to July Full Council - To propose no change to the standing orders and not to limit the term of consecutive office years for Council Chairman and Vice Chairman.]
- 13. Correspondence**
- 13.1 CIL & Infrastructure information sharing between WBC & Parishes 10.08.20 – noted.
- 13.2 Berkshire Pension Fund Employer newsletter - Inscribe - Summer 2020 17.08.20 – noted.
- 13.3 CIL & Infrastructure information sharing between WBC & Parishes 28.08.20 – noted.
- 13.4 Charity Commission Annual Public Meeting Invitation 04.09.20 – noted.
- 14. Items to be considered from other Committees**
- 14.1 Planning and Amenities 01.09.20 – no items.
- 14.2 Parish Lands 08.09.20

Stanlake Meadow highways tree works - recommendation to approve the quote of £4,410. Agreed there are sufficient funds.

15. Staffing Matters (Part 2) Mr Mantel reported that this had been discussed at the July full Council meeting. Time had run out and it was agreed to continue discussions at the next Full Council meeting.

16. Date of next meeting - 20th October 2020

September Finance & General Purposes report

1. Clerk's Report

1.1 Bank balances as at the end of July 2020
Nat West current account £39,805.52, Unity Trust current account £35,934.67, Deposit account £96,958.68, income bonds £37,000, National Savings account £3,128.31 and Twycombe Lodge tenants deposit account £3,019.52.

1.2 VAT return for July 2020 - £703.07.

1.3 Bank balances as at the end of August 2020
Nat West current account £131,757.35, Unity Trust current account £34,587.09, Deposit account £6,960.02, income bonds £37,000, National Savings account £3,128.31 and Twycombe Lodge tenants deposit account £3,019.59.

1.4 VAT return for August 2020 - £475.55

1.5 Income bond deposit of £120,000 – being processed.

1.6 Covid – 19 grant application -receipt of £10,000 grant.

1.7 Notice of conclusion of audit

1.8 NALC 2020-21 pay award

1.9 Henderson investment statement to 30.06.20 £26,181.34 – value of shares

1.10 Filing cabinets – the contents have been moved to the new cabinets at Stanlake Pavilion. The old cabinets have been disposed of. Please note the shortage of space in the electricity room at Stanlake Pavilion as its hard to access the contents of the room.

1.11 Unity Trust Multipay Card – application being processed

2. Website – to report that the site is now WCAG AA compliant. The majority of the work was to ensure that the code used to render the website to users is formed with accessibility in mind for people using screen readers or keyboard navigation. Additional changes are:

2.1 Updated the colour scheme to adhere to colour contrast guidelines, this ensures that people with visual disabilities such as colour blindness can still read and use the content of the website

2.2 Improvements to navigation structure (specifically the “In this section” navigation) to ensure that users can easily browse the website and not reach a dead end

2.3 Updates to the button text where we were using “Read more” to be more descriptive. This ensures that people using screen readers can clearly understand which button they are interacting with, this is quite problematic when a page has 20+ buttons which all say “Read more”.

2.4 Slight design changes to add some visual interest to some of the key pages of the website and made the design more consistent throughout the website in ways of colours, fonts and other visual treatments.

The meeting closed at 21:00 pm.