

TWYFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Zoom on Tuesday 20th October 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present: - Mr T Winchester (Chairman), Mrs B Ditcham, Mr J Jarvis, Mr R Mantel & Mr C Wickenden (from item 5.1 onwards).

In attendance: Mr R Abeywardana (for item 14)

Minutes: Mrs L Moffatt (Clerk).

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 15th September 2020** Minutes approved as a true and accurate record. Approved unanimously.
5. **Matters arising and action points**
 - 5.1 WBC response Community Hub – The WBC executive have agreed to resubmit the planning application for the community hub and are negotiating with Polehampton Trust on a lease for the Old Boys School building. The planning application should be determined in the next month or so.
6. **Clerk's Report**
 - 6.1 To receive the September Finance and General Purposes report:
Bank balances as at the end of September 2020
Nat West current account £133,543.05, Unity Trust current account £75,114.73, Deposit account £6,960.08, income bonds £37,000, National Savings account £3,128.31 and Twycombe Lodge tenants deposit account £3,019.60
VAT return for September 2020 - £1,698.49.
 - 6.2 Budget and capital statement to 30.09.20 – figures examined and noted.
 - 6.3 Lloyds multipay card application – completed.
 - 6.4 NS&I rate reduction notification – noted.
 - 6.5 Review of process for circulating correspondence – the committee **RECOMMEND to Full Council** that correspondence and agendas are saved in the one drive folder and not sent by email. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 6.6 2021/22 meeting dates – the committee **RECOMMEND to Full Council** approval of the 2021/22 meeting dates. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 6.7 To consider purchasing a tablet for risk assessment photos & to take photos when on Parish Lands. Clerk to circulate link to the Samsung Galaxy Tablet - also to check for external storage
 - 6.8 Covid-19 risk assessment – no report
 - 6.9 Staff training
 - 6.9.1 SLCC conference feedback – the Clerk and Assistant Clerk attended over 10 virtual seminars on subjects such as Neighbourhood Plan, ethical investments, communications, unlocking the potential in your high street and the future of Parish Councils. Mrs Ditcham asked that when the Clerk and Assistant clerk attend courses they provide a short paragraph with information and ideas gained from the seminars that will benefit the Council.
 - 6.9.2 HALC An Introduction to VAT feedback – the clerk attended and will report further next month.
 - 6.9.3 COSHH training request SH (£15) – unanimously approved.
 - 6.9.4 Health and Safety request SH (£65) – unanimously approved.
 - 6.9.5 ILCA request LP (£100) – unanimously approved.
 - 6.10 Data Protection Regulations update – no items to report.
 - 6.11 Risk assessments – the risk assessment is complete for the 'Friends of Stanlake Copse' group and progress is being made with the annual risk assessment.
7. **Investments**
 - 7.1 To consider investments (CCLA investments information in one drive folder) – unanimously agreed no change to the investments.

8. **Citizen of the year award** – presentation in absence of Twyford Together awards ceremony. Arrangements are in progress.
9. **Website** – Historical conservation page – the draft page was well received. It contains information on Twyford's conservation areas and an interactive map from Parish Online showing Twyford's listed buildings. The committee agreed to change the website 'Neighbourhood Plan' heading to 'Planning' and then list underneath 'Neighbourhood Plan' and 'Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings'. Changes proposed by Mr C Wickenden, seconded Mrs B Ditcham Motion carried unanimously
10. **Neighbourhood Plan Grant Application update** (CW) A further consultancy quote has been sought. The Planning & Amenities committee will be recommending approval of the O'Neil quote. The clerk asked for copies of the quotes so that they can be kept on file.
11. **Review of Policies**
 11.1 Investment policy – Mr J Jarvis will be circulating a draft policy before the next meeting.
12. **To review draft amended standing orders** (one drive folder)
 [They now include the Neighbourhood Plan sub committee terms of reference and for the Finance committee to applying for grants and funding] The committee **RECOMMEND to Full Council** approval of the amended standing orders. Motion carried unanimously.
13. **Grant Requests**
 13.1 ARC application – Proposed Mrs B Ditcham, seconded Mr J Jarvis to **RECOMMEND to Full Council** a grant of £1,000. Motion carried unanimously.
14. **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 (information in one drive folder). The committee considered the documents from HALC and trainer Kim Bedford. Pros and cons have also been listed and it was agreed to add the disadvantage - 'The choice of candidates is reduced by one'. Mr R Mantel brought information to the attention of the committee that he had sought from HALC. The email stated that any such Standing Order would not be legally enforceable.
 Mr R Abeywardana commented that the HALC statement would be the same for many of the Councils Standing Orders. They are policies of the Council and the Council would have an obligation to follow the policies that they have drafted. He said that the Council need to look at how things can be improved, change and benefit from new thought.
 Mr Winchester asked 'Can we enforce a limit on the number of consecutive terms?'.
 Mr Abeywardana stated that this is not a legal issue, he said it's policies and procedures, it's about what the Council want to do. Mr Abeywardana said this is about instigating change, exciting and fresh ideas, encouraging people to give it a go and have a chance.
 Mrs Ditcham said that the Council should be more overt about the Chairman election process and make councillors aware that they have a responsibility to think seriously about who they are electing. The Chairman is not doing the job by themselves - we have a Council. Mr Abeywardana expressed concerns that its awkward and people feel they are stepping on someones toes. He stated there won't be change without putting this in writing.
 Mr Jarvis said there is an inertia, a tendency for things to remain unchanged.
 Mr Wickenden said that the Council needs to make sure there is a contested election every four years to encourage new blood. He said that change won't happen by changing the standing orders. People are not queuing up to take on these roles!
 Mrs Ditcham reported that the political Councils do change.
 Mr Winchester suggested that the Council have a discussion as had been requested.
 Mr Mantel said that the committee have a duty to make a recommendation to the Full Council. They have the full facts. Mr R Mantel proposed that the committee remain with the recommendation from the July meeting. The decision is with the Full Council -they have the full power of the decision.
 Mr Abeywardana stated that people that are new need to make this decision. The Finance committee is not diverse and does not represent the new councillors that have joined the Council. The Finance committee is formed from senior councillors. It [the standing order] forces change.
 The committee agreed to **RECOMMEND to Full Council** no change to the standing orders and not to limit the term of consecutive office years for Council Chairman and Vice Chairman. Motion carried nem con.

15. Correspondence

- 15.1 Introduction to VAT - Training Course 10.09.20. Noted.
- 15.2 CIL & Infrastructure information sharing between WBC & Parishes 29.09.20. Noted.
- 15.3 CIL & Infrastructure information sharing between WBC & Parishes 01.10.20. Noted.

16. Items to be considered from other Committees

- 16.1 Planning and Amenities 06.10.20
- 16.2 Parish Lands 13.10.20
 - 16.2.1 £400 London Road allotment tree works
 - 16.2.2 £5,312 Green Prescription project
 - 16.2.3 £1,412.46 supply and installation of permanent goals
 - 16.2.4 £1,051 to replace the Stephen Platt memorial bench

The committee agreed there are sufficient funds

17. Staffing Matters

- 17.1 Job evaluation –

The Council agreed that as confidential items were to be discussed the Chairman invoked Standing Order 1C “That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”. Proposed Mr R Mantel, seconded Mr C Wickenden, carried nem con. The public left the meeting.

The Chairman reported that he had consulted with the committee Chairmen before signing the job questionnaire and Council profile which has now been sent off.

The clerk was asked to leave the meeting.

The committee discussed staffing matters under part 2.

18. Date of next meeting - 17th November 2020

The meeting closed at 21:17 pm.