

# BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Methodist Church Hall, Sedgwick Road, Bishopstoke commencing at 7.30pm on 13 November 2012

**Present:** Cllrs Thornton (Chairman), Cossey, (Paras 119 to 126.2), Hansell, Lyon, Roling,  
(Paras 122.2 to 131.1) and Toher

**In Attendance:** Mr P J Storey (Clerk to the Parish Council)  
Mrs C Taylor (Assistant Clerk)

### Public Session

No members of the public were present.

### 119. Apologies

119.1 Cllr Winstanley.

### 120. To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting on 9 October 2012

120.1 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2012 be accepted as a true record.

### 121. Matters Arising from the above Minutes

121.1 Para 109.4 Riverside railings. HCC had indicated it planned to repaint the Riverside railings in August 2013.

121.2 Para 114.1 Jockey Lane boundary query. The Clerk had hand-delivered a letter to the adjacent landowners on 15 October and the matter would now rest for the time being.

### 122. Declarations of Interest

122.1 Cllr Cossey - Community Speedwatch (para 127).

*Cllr Roling arrived at this point*

122.2 The Clerk briefed on the implications when a significant number of councillors had a declarable pecuniary interest (DPI) when, for example, discussing council tax and indicated a practical way forward which had given rise to the later agenda items. The agenda heading for this item would also be amended in future to read 'Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations' enabling compliance with the Localism Act 2011 on this matter at future meetings.

### 123. RFO's Report, Budget Monitoring and Payments

123.1 The Clerk reported he had accepted an insurance quotation on an all-risks except subsidence reinstatement basis of £104.94 pa for the Shears Mill building and would obtain one for the new parish office when final approval was to hand. Existing public liability insurance cover remained sufficient.

123.2 A budget monitoring report had been circulated with the agenda papers. The Clerk drew attention to the apparent overspends on the Shears Mill, insurance and election expenses headings, and recommended consideration be given to viring from reserves to make good the differences, in particular, for Shears Mill where the National Lottery grant had been received and was currently included in 'Miscellaneous receipts'.

- 123.4 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that £22,250 be vired to Shears Mill, £500 to Insurance and £2,709 to Election Expenses from Reserves given good reason existed for each of these overspends.
- 123.5 **Motion for Confidential Business.** As some discussion was necessary on the payments tabled, which included staff payments, it was necessary for the public to leave the room.
- 123.6 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RESOLVED** unanimously that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration it was advisable and in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.
- 123.7 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RESOLVED** unanimously that with minor amendment payments be made as tabled.
- 123.8 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the public be readmitted to the meeting.

#### **124. Travel Token Scheme update**

- 124.1 Cllr Toher, as Chairman of the Travel Token Scheme Working Group reviewed the success of the Scheme over the past year highlighting the increase in the number of tokens issued against a slight fall in the number of recipients from 12 in 2011/12 to 10 in 2012/13. The current budgeted cost was £1,500 but only £444 had been reimbursed to date with a further 481 tokens outstanding, some of which were unlikely to be claimed.
- 124.2 The Working Group had taken note of comments from participants over the high costs of taxis; members also saw a need for more advertising of the scheme but no need to amend the eligibility criteria. It was also confirmed that the HCC travel vouchers value would remain the same at £32 in the next financial year. As a result various recommendations were tabled.
- 124.3 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RECOMMENDED** with two votes for, one against and two abstentions –

that the Travel Token Scheme be advertised more widely  
that no changes to the eligibility criteria be made  
that where an applicant was not in receipt of HCC travel vouchers and travelled without a companion the token value per annum be increased from £48 to £60  
that where an applicant was not in receipt of HCC travel vouchers and travelled with a companion the token value be increased per annum from £60 to £72  
that where an applicant was applying for or in receipt of HCC travel vouchers and travelled without a companion the token value be increased per annum from £16 to £28  
that where an applicant was in receipt of HCC travel tokens and travelled with a companion the token value be increased per annum from £28 to £40  
that £1,000 be budgeted to fund the scheme in 2013/14

#### **125. Income and Expenditure Budget, Burial Board Fees and Allotment Rents and Precept 2013/14**

- 125.1 A draft income and expenditure budget had been circulated with the agenda papers with a recommendation that there be no increase in the current Precept although a transfer from the Borough's special expenses account of £6,000 had been added in recognition of the transfer of ownership of Glebe Meadow. No increases in other fees and charges were thought appropriate for 2013 - 14. Total budgeted expenditure amounted to £160,200 against budgeted the income of £152,350 resulting in a potential drawdown on reserves of £7,850 and Councillors thought this to be reasonable given the state of the economy at this time. Included within the proposals was an extension of the contract with Green Smile Ltd to cover maintenance of the Glebe Meadow open space, funding for a further two bus shelters in line with the earlier decision to install more bus shelters around the Parish, an assumption that the PCSO contribution would remain at £7,000,

maintenance of the Shears Mill building and parish office and an increase in the funding contribution towards the YZone Youth Facility given the withdrawal of HCC's contribution and only a fixed future contribution from EBC.

- 125.2 The Clerk drew councillors' attention, in particular, to the last point regarding the EBC contribution to the YZone as it had not been understood until the last management committee meeting of the YZone management committee that EBC would no longer be sharing one third of the running costs of the Facility, resulting in an increased share of the total costs falling on the two parishes next year and in future years, although EBC would continue to provide day to day management support. The Clerk also drew councillors' attention to the significant changes planned by the Government in relation to the setting of council taxes and that information was still being gathered on how this might affect tax recipients including parishes. A statement would be made on 5 December and the current advice was to consider budgets for 2013/14 around this time as usual but with a 'minded to' decision to be ratified in January when the tax rate values could be calculated. However, it was thought that with the likely changes to the tax base for next year, this Precept, if adopted, could result in a small reduction in council tax payable.
- 125.3 Proposed Cllr Roling, Seconded Cllr Toher, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the Precept for 2013/14 be set at £136,000; that no changes be made to the present charges levied by the Burial Board or to the allotment rents payable; and that an expenditure budget of £160,200 be approved.

## **126. Social Media facilities**

- 126.1 Cllr Toher, on behalf of the Social Media Working Group, presented the Group's thoughts on utilising Twitter and Facebook to further information on the Council's services and to receive feedback. The Group felt it inappropriate to use Twitter but agreed a link from the Parish website to a Facebook page would be of benefit. Facebook could also be used as an information source for other items and organisations mentioned and accessed by a link from the Parish website. Administration could be in the hands of three administrators, for example, two councillors and the assistant clerk, who would provide the interface.
- 126.2 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Cossey, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that two councillors and the assistant clerk administer a Facebook page on behalf of the Parish Council and that they be authorised to set it up, liaise with the Webmaster, as appropriate, for the necessary link and maintain the pages.

*Cllr Cossey left the meeting at this point*

## **127. Community Speedwatch**

- 127.1. The additional information sought from the Police on different types of equipment available had yet to be received. However, Fair Oak and Horton Heath PC had confirmed their content with their equipment. The Chairman thought there to be little to be gained by further debate and proposed the matter be referred back to Full Council for a decision. In the meantime, the Clerk would hasten the police.

**Action: Clerk**

- 127.2 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Roling, **RECOMMENDED** that a decision be made by the Full Council on joining with Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council and share their Community Speedwatch equipment and associated costs.

## **128. Dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011**

- 128.1 The Localism Act Section 31 prescribed the action a councillor was to take if there was a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) in a matter being considered. The Clerk explained the problem, for example, when council tax was being debated as all councillors living within the parish would have a DPI and would be prevented from debating the matter as a result. The recommended action was for the Clerk, a committee or the Council, to invoke Section 33 of the Act if it was considered that without a dispensation the number of councillors participating in the

business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of that business, or the granting of a dispensation was in the interests of persons living in the parish. Any dispensation so granted would remain extant for as maximum of four years. It was also recommended that the ability to grant dispensations be a regular item on a meeting agenda.

**Action: Clerk**

128.2 Proposed Cllr Roling, Seconded Cllr Toher, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the Clerk, if appropriate, or the F&GP Committee, or the full Council, be authorised to grant dispensations when necessary to enable councillors to make determinations when all or a majority of councillors present had a disclosable pecuniary interest.

128.3 It was also proposed by Cllr Roling, Seconded by Cllr Toher and **RECOMMENDED** that a dispensation be granted to enable councillors to determine the annual Precept and Budget and that this dispensation remain extant for four years from the date of its adoption.

**129. Asset Management Report**

129.1. Cemetery. Ten interments had taken place in the Cemetery to date this year. The land adjacent to the tree line remained severely waterlogged precluding any further interments in sequence and two memorial seats were in the process of being installed.

129.2 Allotments. The annual Autumn skip had been provided and had, unfortunately, had rubbish other than garden waste deposited in it.

129.3 Play equipment. A replacement toddlers swing in the Otter Close play area had been installed.

129.4 Asset transfer. Negotiations on the transfer of Glebe Meadow were in hand.

**130. Clerk's Report**

130.1 Shears Mill. Work was nearing completion on Shears Mill, the contractor having lost a week of work through adverse weather. Application had been made for an electricity supply and the Clerk was liaising with the Hampshire Mills Group over historic material for the information boards.

130.2 Bus shelter. An order had been placed for a new bus shelter on the up side of Underwood Road above the Hamilton Road junction with delivery within the next six weeks.

130.3 Core skills training. All noted the postponement of the core skills training originally scheduled for 20 November. The Clerk was instructed to ensure all councillors were made aware of this postponement and that a new date would be advertised shortly.

**Action: Clerk**

130.4 HPFA AGM. The Clerk reported he had attended the AGM of the Hampshire Playing Fields Association.

130.5 Bishopstoke Channel overgrowth. Confirmation had been received from the Environment Agency that they would undertake remedial action, where necessary, on the trees and bush growth from Bishopstoke Channel overhanging Montague Road.

130.6 Clerk's laptop. With Cllr Toher's help, the Clerk had shortlisted an appropriate laptop and software which, after some further debate on docking stations and guarantees, was agreed.

130.7 STAR funding. The Clerk sought an indication from councillors on their likelihood of financial support being given to the 'Start Tackling Alcohol Responsibly' campaign (STAR) because of a cut in funding and found general agreement to making a contribution. A bid had been made by the co-ordinator and, subject to some additional information being received, would be tabled at the next full Parish Council meeting.

**Action: Clerk**

### **131. Date, time and place of next meeting**

- 131.1 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 11 December 2012 at 7.30pm in the Methodist Church Hall, Sedgwick Road, Bishopstoke.

*There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.20pm.*

### **Summary of Recommendations for Consideration by Full Parish Council**

- 123.4 that £22,250 be vired to Shears Mill, £500 to Insurance and £2,709 to Election Expenses from Reserves given good reason existed for each of these overspends.
- 124.3 that -  
the Travel Token Scheme be advertised more widely  
no changes to the eligibility criteria be made  
where an applicant was not in receipt of HCC travel vouchers and travelled without a companion the token value per annum be increased from £48 to £60  
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where an applicant was in receipt of HCC travel tokens and travelled with a companion the token value be increased per annum from £28 to £40  
£1,000 be budgeted to fund the scheme in 2013/14
- 125.3 that the Precept for 2013/14 be set at £136,000; that no changes be made to the present charges levied by the Burial Board or to the allotment rents payable; and that an expenditure budget of £160,200 be approved.
- 126.2 that two councillors and the assistant clerk administer a Facebook page on behalf of the Parish Council and that they be authorised to set it up, liaise with the Webmaster, as appropriate, for the necessary link and maintain the pages.
- 127.2 that a decision be made by the Full Council on joining with Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council and share their Community Speedwatch equipment and associated costs.
- 128.2 that the Clerk, if appropriate, or the F&GP Committee, or the full Council, be authorised to grant dispensations when necessary to enable councillors to make determinations when all or a majority of councillors present had a disclosable pecuniary interest.
- 128.3 that a dispensation be granted to enable councillors to determine the annual Precept and Budget and that this dispensation remain extant for four years from the date of its adoption.

### **Summary of Resolutions Passed to be Noted by the Full Parish Council**

- 120.1 that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2012 be accepted as a true record.
- 123.6 that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration it was advisable and in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.
- 123.7 that with minor amendment payments be made as tabled.

123.8 that the public be readmitted to the meeting.

**Payments in October 2012 in excess of £500  
published in accordance with the Government's transparency directive**

Mr P Storey	Salary and expenses	1529.33
Green Smile Ltd	Grounds maintenance	1843.51
Bruno Construction	Shears Mill	19800.00
Southern Electric	Shears Mill connection	1875.35
N Gunner	Mill structural survey	952.56