

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke
commencing at 7.30pm on 14 January 2020**

Present: Cllrs Tidridge (Chair), Dean, Harris, Parker-Jones, Thornton, Toher and Winstanley

In Attendance: Mr D Wheal (Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)
Mrs S Thorogood (RFO to Bishopstoke Parish Council)

Public Attendance: 0 members of the public was present

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93 Apologies for Absence

93.1 All Committee members were present.

94 To accept as a true record, and sign, the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 10 December 2019

94.1 The Minutes of the above meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting.

94.2 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 10 December 2019 be accepted as a true record.

95 To consider Matters Arising from the above Minutes

95.1 There were no matters arising.

96 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

96.1 There were no declarations or requests.

97 To receive the RFO's Report, and approve Budget Monitoring and Payments Reports for December 2019

97.1 The Budget Monitoring and Payments reports for December 2019 had been circulated with the supporting documents for this meeting.

97.2 The RFO reported that significant items this month were payments for repairs to the ceiling heaters in the Memorial Hall, the external audit fee for the 18-19 accounts, and a large invoice for cemetery water costs. The large water bill may have been caused by a water leak and this is being investigated. All allotment rents cash and cheques are now banked. The claim for the bus shelter on Fair Oak Road is ongoing. The insurance company have requested further details, and these are currently being provided.

97.3 A question was asked about the high costs for plot clearance at Underwood Road and the RFO explained that this was due to the prioritisation of removing plot holders who are not fulfilling their responsibilities. Those plots then need to be cleared down before they can be let out again.

97.4 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Parker-Jones, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Committee approve the Budget Monitoring and Payments reports for December 2019.

98 To amend and recommend approval of the Expenditure Budget for 2020-21

98.1 The Clerk reminded the Committee that the budget had previously been approved in November, with the exception of the addition of £15,000 for Safety, Security and Crime Prevention.

98.2 Cllr Parker-Jones queried the absence of anything specifically linked to the Council declaring a Climate Change Emergency. Cllr Tidridge explained that the working group tasked with producing an action plan is still assessing the Council's current position and any changes could be as much about saving money as spending extra money. Cllr Winstanley also noted that some existing budget heads include potential climate changes measures and gave using the tree budget to plant trees as an example.

98.3 The current difficulties over the transfer of the Brookfield area were also discussed. The Clerk explained the Council's current position which is that sufficient progress needs to be made by October 2020 for it to be included in the budget for 2021-22. Cllrs agreed to repurpose the proposed Brookfield money for the coming year for Environmental Projects.

98.4 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the expenditure budget for 2020-21, as amended in minute 98.3, be approved.

99 To recommend funding for expenditure in 2020-21

99.1 The Clerk went through the funding options outlined in the document pack.

99.2 The Committee wished to record their thanks to the Clerk and RFO for the hard work done on the budget and the clarity of the explanatory notes. After discussion the Committee agreed to recommend a 3% increase in the Council Tax for a band D dwelling, which would lead to an extra £1.90 per year for that dwelling and a total precept of £230,913.43.

99.3 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the expenditure be funded by income from Council activities (anticipated to be £20,700), the Council Tax support grant (£4,500) and Council reserves (£62,495), with the remainder coming from the Precept (£230,913).

100 To discuss, amend if necessary, and adopt the Grant Awarding Policy

100.1 The Grant Awarding Policy, and original Council grant guidance, had been included in the document pack.

100.2 Cllr Parker-Jones indicated that she was still concerned about running costs being included in items that Council grants can be used for. Cllr Thornton noted that without grants for running costs, the Street Pastors would not be able to function as they have no other income. Cllrs noted that other organisations, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau, would be in a similar situation and that was one of the reasons that running costs had been included when Bishopstoke Parish Council had first discussed giving grants.

100.3 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Harris, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council adopt the Grant Awarding Policy.

101 To receive the Clerk's Report, including an update on Parish Council assets

101.1 Actions: The Clerk reported back to the Committee on the following actions from previous meetings:

Initial: _____ Date: _____

90.2 Cllr Parker-Jones asked for the original guidance on grant awarding to be sent round to the Committee for comparison. This was included with the document pack for this meeting.

101.2 Allotments: A decision was taken to carry out the repairs to both the old Ibea mower from UR and the rotovator; these have now been returned to site and invoiced so all equipment at both sites is now serviced and ready for use in the new growing season.

As previously communicated to the Cllrs, there was a break-in to the Warwick Shed overnight Saturday 11th January. Other than the broken window, there is no other damage or items stolen. The handyman will prepare a quote to replace the windowpane and will also quote to install shutters over the windows, as was done to the Shop windows, to bring to a Council meeting in the future.

The shop was shut over the Christmas period and prospective tenants will be invited to visit vacant plots this coming weekend.

Waiting Lists: Jockey Lane – 8; Underwood Road – 5; Sewall Drive – 26; Breach Lane – 19; Breach Lane disabled access – 3

101.3 Burials, Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards: We are expecting a quote from the Borough Council for making the temporary path between Cemetery sites a permanent one, with the work being completed this financial year. At St Mary's we are now waiting for a quote on repairing the grass banks on either side as you walk up the path, and also for repairs to the tarmac path around the church itself. Old St Mary's has had the dying Ash tree removed and the clearance work is being completed this month.

Burials: In December there was 1 new burial, 2 new ashes interments and 2 ashes re-openings. There are currently no planned interments.

101.4 Parish Office: Nothing to report.

101.5 Play Areas: The latest round of inspections has arrived and necessary work determined. A second quote for the work on the gates at Sayers Road has been obtained and a decision will soon be made. Quotes are also being sought for a new skate area in Glebe Meadow. Cllr Toher asked is there is a deadline for the developer money to be spent on the Skate Park and the Clerk was requested to find out.

Action: Clerk

101.6 General: The footpath that runs from the bridge by the Hub south along the river will be closed from 14th January until mid-June (or the work is completed) for works in connection with flooding issues. The notice will go on the website and Facebook tomorrow. We are still awaiting quotes from Fair Oak for the work we requested.

Action: Clerk

102 Date, time, place and agenda items for next meeting

102.1 The next meeting is scheduled to be on Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 7:30pm in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke.

102.2 Agenda items for this meeting should be received by the Clerk no later than Monday 3rd February 2020.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm

Chair's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Clerk's Signature: _____ Date: _____