

BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke commencing at 7.30pm on 8 April 2014

Present: Cllrs Cossey (Chairman), Harris, Roling, Toher and Winstanley; Cllr Thomas was also present

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.

The EBC LAC Co-ordinator, Ms Min Partner, gave a presentation on the finances of the YZone Youth Centre explaining how the withdrawal of County Council funding had left a serious need for alternative sources of funding to be established. Whilst this was still in the early stages as word on the facility and what it could offer spread, she was pleased to report that there had been a significant increase in external hirings bringing in additional funds. Staff changes had also been made to effect savings and the opportunity taken to link like activities where the YZone staff could double as staff for other users. One limiting factor on who could use the facility was the fact that car usage needed to be minimised in deference to local residents given the lack of dedicated car parking spaces but this generally was well understood. New initiatives such as the bicycle repair scheme where members of the YZone acquired old bicycles and renovated them for sale was a good example of new methods to raise additional funds.

Income and running costs were tabled to illustrate how successful the recent action had been and the role of EBC and herself and how this was accounted for was explained. The Clerk had produced a capital asset replacement programme which would feature in the annual budgeting process to enable funds to be ringfenced or charges set at a level which would provide for asset replacement. All agreed that the future was now looking more financially sound for what was the youth flagship facility in the County. In summary, the way forward was one of caution and determination. The Chairman thanked Ms Partner for her presentation.

46. Apologies

46.1 None.

47. To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting on 11 March 2014

47.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Harris, **RESOLVED** with Cllrs Roling, Thomas and Toher abstaining (absent) that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 be accepted as a true record.

48. Matters Arising from the above Minutes

48.1 There were no matters arising not dealt with elsewhere in these minutes.

49. Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

49.1 None declared or sought.

50. RFO's Report, Budget Monitoring and Payments

50.1 The Clerk reported on the completion of the hardstanding to the rear of the Parish Office for wheelchair parking and it was agreed this should be allocated to the Community Projects budget.

50.2 A budget monitoring report had been circulated with the agenda papers and was noted.

50.3 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Harris, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the non-confidential payments tabled for March 2014 and invoices received to date be noted.

51. Statement of Internal control

51.1 A Statement of Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2014 had been circulated with the agenda papers for adoption. A copy is attached to these minutes.

51.2 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Harris, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the Statement of Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2014 be adopted.

52. Grant Aid application

52.1 Victim Support had applied for a grant of £200 to help finance the travel costs of staff providing emotional and practical support to victims and witnesses of crime. The applicant had confirmed that 125 Bishopstoke residents had received help from the organisation during the past year.

52.2 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that £200 be granted to Victim Support to help meet the travel costs of staff.

53. The Co-operative Bank

53.1 The Parish Council banked with the Co-operative Bank which had featured in the press recently as a result of the losses it was making. Advice had been sought from HALC and a letter received from the Bank itself indicated that the banking arm of the Bank, although suffering from the problems of its other activities, did not give rise for serious concern at this time and accordingly it was thought appropriate to remain with the Bank for the foreseeable future. At any one time, the balance with the Bank was unlikely to exceed £20,000; however, a 'watching brief' would be kept on the situation on a quarterly basis.

54. Funding new play equipment

54.1 Members were content that sufficient funds had been budgeted for the play equipment upgrades and no further action needed to be taken on this item.

55. Carnival Working Group terms of reference

55.1 Draft terms of reference for the Carnival Working Group had been circulated with the agenda papers. A couple of small amendments to the draft were agreed.

55.2 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the amended draft terms of reference for the Carnival Working Group be adopted.

56. One Community's Garden Share initiative

56.1 One Community were introducing a Borough wide Garden Share project where those who could not manage their gardens anymore would offer space to those wanting to have ground to garden. They were also looking for a contribution to offset their costs. Members thought it necessary to have more information, especially on the need for CRB checks, and that if funding was to be considered a formal grant aid application should be submitted. The Clerk would action accordingly.

Action: Clerk

57. Capital Assets replacement programme 2015 - 25

57.1 A capital asset replacement programme was tabled for information and was noted. This would in future form part of the annual budget deliberations.

58. Asset Management Report

- 58.1 Cemetery and Churchyards. Thirty two interments had taken place in the year which was the highest number since we assumed responsibility for the Cemetery.
- 58.2 Allotments. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk had held their annual meeting with the allotment tenants at which a number of points had been discussed including the action taken on unkempt plots and tenants' insurance liability. The toilet refurbishment at Manor Farm would be undertaken by volunteer tenants with the Council meeting the material costs.
- 58.3 Play areas. Vitaplay Ltd had completed repairs to the Sayers Road safety surfaces and repaired the trampoline at Otter Close which had been prone to flooding.
- 58.4 The transfer paperwork for Brookfield was still awaited from EBC.

59. Clerk's Report

- 59.1 The plans whereby First Wessex volunteer tenants were to have repainted the Glebe Meadow skate ramp under professional supervision had been postponed because of adverse weather; a new date would be agreed.
- 59.1 A poll had been demanded following the resignation of Mr Hansell and EBC would oversee the arrangements.
- 59.2 An invitation had been received to join a Rural Sounding Board of parish council representatives to gather views and opinions from rural parish councils to help inform wider debates about rural issues. It was thought, given that Bishopstoke was predominantly urban, that no positive benefit would accrue from joining and the Clerk would reply accordingly.

Action: Clerk

- 59.3 EBC had commissioned ORS to produce a robust and objective assessment of the genuine need for traveller accommodation and it was thought appropriate for the Clerk to draft a reply for consideration by all members.

Action: Clerk

60. Date, time and place of next meeting

- 60.1 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke.

61. Motion for Confidential Business

- 61.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Toher, **RESOLVED** unanimously that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.

62. Consideration of approval for payment of staff hours of work, mileage and out of pocket expenses for March 2014 (Confidential Business)

- 62.1 Members noted the report tabled by the RFO which is attached to these minutes.
- 62.2 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Harris, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the March 2014 payments be noted as tabled.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.50.

Summary of Recommendations for consideration by Full Parish Council

- 51.2 that the Statement of Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2014 be adopted.
- 52.2 that £200 be granted to Victim Support to help meet the travel costs of staff.
- 55.2 that the amended draft terms of reference for the Carnival Working Group be adopted.

Summary of Resolutions Passed to be noted by the Full Parish Council

- 47.1 that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 be accepted as a true record.
- 50.3 that the non-confidential payments tabled for March 2014 and invoices received to date be noted
- 61.1 that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.
- 62.2 that the March 2014 payments be noted as tabled.

**Payments in March 2014 in excess of £500
published in accordance with the Government's transparency directive**

Staff	Salaries and expenses	1778.59
Green Smile Ltd	Grounds maintenance	2634.83
Queensbury Shelters	Bus shelter Hamilton Road	4335.29
Bishopstoke PCC	St Mary's boiler grant	1250.00

BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014

1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Bishopstoke Parish Council forms the first tier of local government and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Bishopstoke Parish Council (the Council) is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2 THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control was in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2013 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and, except for any details of significant internal control issues at section 5 of which there were none, accords with proper practice.

3 THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The Council has appointed a Chairman who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its November Finance meeting. The Full Council meeting in November approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council has appointed a Finance Committee of Members who meet ten times a year. Members of the committee monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. The minutes of the meetings of the Finance Committee are reported to the Full Council with recommendations for decision and resolutions to note.

The Full Council meets ten times each year. It monitors progress by receiving relevant reports from the Finance Committee and the Parish Clerk.

The Council carries out periodic reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Staff responsibilities:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's legal advisor and administrator. An Assistant Clerk acts as the Council's Responsible Finance Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two Members of the Council are required to authorise each cheque to limit the risk of fraud. Other payments are made by internet banking and are subject to approval and independent check.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management:

The Council carries out periodic risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its system controls.

Internal Audit:

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk Management
- Reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reported to and reviewed annually by the Council.

4 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- the Full Council;
- the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- the Clerk to the Council and/or the Responsible Finance Officer who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;
- the Council's external auditors who make the final check using the Annual Return and issue an annual audit report;
- the number of significant issues raised during the year.

5 SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

No issues of significant concern were raised during the financial year 2013/14.

(Chairman)

(Clerk)

May 2014

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