



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### **Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held online on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 at 7.30pm.**

#### **Present:**

##### **Councillors:**

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. J. Bull, Cllr. N. Carter (left the meeting at 19.56 and re-joined at 20.15), Cllr. D. Kilshaw, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. D. Morsley.

##### **Officers:**

Mrs. L. Hannawin

##### **Public/Press:**

There were no members of the public and no member of the press in attendance.

#### **Part I**

##### **20/014 Public Questions (for agenda items only)**

None

##### **20/015 To receive any apologies for absence**

None

##### **20/016 To receive any declarations of interest**

Cllr. J. Bull declared an interest generally as he occasionally undertakes work on behalf of the Council.

##### **20/017 Minutes of Last Meeting**

**To resolve to APPROVE the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**RESOLVED** that these minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

##### **20/018 Clerk's Report**

- 1. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and other updates.**

The report was received. In addition, it was noted:

- The Council's eligibility for the Financial Services Compensation has been recorded by Unity Trust Bank.

- Due to recent activity in the local area, the security of the Fairground car park has been reviewed and the decision taken to lock the gate overnight. This was further discussed, and it was agreed that the car park should remain locked for the next 36 hours and subsequently reviewed and locked as the need arises. This will be communicated via Facebook.

## **20/019 Items to be taken into private session**

**To determine which items, if any, of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded**  
None

## **20/020 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports**

### **1. Strategy Working Party**

Cllr. Morsley gave a verbal report and the following noted:

- The results of the CIL consultation have been sent out to members of the public who registered their details. Those people who expressed an interest in becoming Library trustees have been contacted. Information regarding the free format part of the consultation will be made available once the analysis has been finished.
- Further work has been undertaken with regards the public open spaces and it is likely that the recommendation will be to adapt the areas, using benches, wild flower strips etc. as opposed to formally taking over their management.
- 3 project management consultants have been approached with regards to working with the Parish Council to deliver the planned projects. Only one expressed an interest and the information has therefore been shared via social media to establish other potential interested parties. No responses have been received to date.

### **2. Library Working Group**

Cllr. Dennett confirmed that an online meeting had been held between SMPC and West Berkshire Council (WBC) and it was noted:

- WBC are keen for SMPC to take over the management of the Library building, and the WBC Executive have agreed in principle.
- A copy of the Joint User Agreement, used with Hungerford Library, has been received along with contact details of the Hungerford Hub, who will be able to provide information regarding setting up the charity trust.
- WBC will arrange for a condition survey to be undertaken of the library building.
- The aim is to have completed the takeover by the end of the financial year.

## **20/021 Items for Consideration and Resolution**

### **1. Indirect Pecuniary Interests**

**To receive notice in writing of the indirect pecuniary interests of the Clerk and the Assistant to the Clerk.**

Two notices in writing for the Clerk and two notices in writing for the Assistant to the Clerk were received.

### **2. IT Support**

**To receive a report on the potential support requirements and AGREE support option and associated expenditure.**

The Clerk presented a report on the support requirements and proposed support options.

**RESOLVED** unanimously for David Sturt to be engaged to provide 3 hours of support a month with other support requirements commissioned as and when needed.

### **3. Website**

**To consider the specification for the new SMPC website and AGREE for quotes to be sought.**

Cllr. Dennett presented a report and confirmed the requirements of Website Accessibility with regards to the legislation, key dates, and the need to update the Council's website.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to seek quotes from the companies identified on the report, including Vision ICT. The process will be overseen by the Assistant to the Clerk and councillors **ACTION: ASSISTANT TO THE CLERK**

### **4. Mortimer Tennis Club**

- i. **To review the annual fee for 2020/21 and AGREE any adjustments in light of reduced court access due to Covid 19.**

The Clerk presented a report.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to reduce the annual fee for Mortimer Tennis Club 2020/21 to £675.00 to reflect the loss of court use due to Covid-19.

- ii. **To consider the club's request for the additional hire of both courts, Saturday 3-5pm and to take a DECISION accordingly.**

The Clerk presented a report and the available options were discussed.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that the Saturday sessions 3-5pm would remain as a public session until the end of September and then from October 1<sup>st</sup> the tennis club may have the session at their discounted rate. **ACTION: CLERK**

### **5. Councillors' Allowances**

**To consider granting councillors' allowances and AGREE actions to be taken and any associated expenditure.**

It was noted that the allowance has been requested to help cover the cost of consumables.

Cllr. Dennett confirmed the process for providing the councillor's allowance which would involve the WBC's remuneration panel and must be made through payroll to provide for income tax. Other options for covering the costs incurred by councillors were reviewed.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to 1) provide IT support to reduce the councillors need for consumables 2) to meet reasonable requests for paper via the office 3) reimburse reasonable claims for ink cartridges via the expense system 4) clarify additional advice from WBC. **ACTION: CLERK**

### **6. Members Bid**

**To consider the new round of Members' Bids and AGREE required action.**

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the amount and process of the special round of Members' Bids which are to support town and parish projects for Covid-19 related activities. The bids can be for both capital and revenue expenditure and are open to communities alongside parish councils. However, the bids must be made via the parish councils.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to promote the Members' Bid within the village with a submission deadline of the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Bids to be made via the Clerk. **ACTION: CLERK**

### **7. Internal Auditor**

**To APPROVE the engagement of the Internal Auditor for 2020/2021.**

The Clerk confirmed that the fee for the internal audit for 2020/21 will be £500.00.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the engagement of C. Connell as Internal Auditor for 2020/2021, for recommendation to Full Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020. **ACTION: CLERK**

## **8. Risk Register**

**To review and APPROVE the Risk Register for presentation to Full Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

**RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Risk Register for presentation to Full Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020. **ACTION: CLERK**

## **20/022 Items for information only**

- Cllr. Morsley reported that following WBC's conference on recovery and planning for future Covid-19 outbreaks, a new group has been established which is looking to work with WBC's health officer to 1) establish methods that will enable information regarding a local outbreak of Covid-19 to be quickly communicated to individuals, particularly those people who don't have social media 2) looking at helping to promote a greater uptake of flu vaccines.
- Cllr. Bridgman reported that WBC will be sending out a leaflet explaining the outbreak plan. The leaflet could provide the opportunity for SMPC to take further action and promote communication.

## **20/023 Finance**

### **1. Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

**To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Report and the Balance Sheet for presentation to Full Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

**APPROVED** unanimously for presentation to Full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020. **ACTION: CLERK**

## **20/024 Communications**

**To identify items for communicating**

- Members' Bids

## **20/025 Future Agenda Items**

**To identify future agenda items**

None

## **20/026 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**To pass a resolution to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 20/019 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the information being discussed.**

Not required

## **Close**

The meeting closed at 20.56

Date of next meeting – TBC