



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held online on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 7.30pm.

#### Present:

##### Councillors:

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. J. Bull, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. D. Morsley.

##### Officers:

Mrs. L. Hannawin, Ms. B. O'Reilly.

##### Public/Press:

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

#### Part I

##### **20/027 Public Questions (for agenda items only)**

None

##### **20/028 To receive any apologies for absence**

A discussion took place regarding the need to consider apologies given at every meeting and then for them to be approved or not, accordingly. It was agreed that this should be part of the procedure for receiving apologies. It was noted that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, as ex-officio members of committees, should give apologies and a reason for absence if not attending.

Cllr. N. Carter could not attend due to a work commitment.

**RESOLVED** by majority that the apology and reason given be approved.

Cllrs. G. Bridgman and D. Kilshaw did not attend and no apologies were received.

##### **20/029 To receive any declarations of interest**

Cllr. Dennett reminded the committee that the Clerk had an indirect pecuniary interest in agenda item 20/034 6 which was noted at the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

##### **20/030 Minutes of Last Meeting**

**To resolve to APPROVE the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

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

## **20/031 Clerk's Report**

- 1. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 and other updates.**

### **Actions from Last Meeting**

1. The IT support contract is now in place.
2. The annual contract and invoice have been raised for Mortimer Tennis Club.
3. Advice regarding reimbursement of councillor consumables has been sought from West Berkshire Council (WBC). WBC's Independent Remuneration Panel will be meeting on the 23rd and 24th September.
4. The Members Bids for town and parish projects relating to Covid-19 related activities were promoted on the Council's website and Facebook page. One was received via the office and this was forwarded to Cllr. Bridgman.
5. The internal auditor for 2020/21 has been appointed and the interim internal audit will be taking place on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

### **Other Updates**

1. The Notice of Public Rights ended on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September. There were no requests to inspect the accounts.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20 and supporting documents were submitted to PKF Littlejohn on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

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

- Councillors needing IT support can approach David Sturt directly but any major issues that may incur additional expenditure outside of the support contract, will be referred to the Clerk.
- West Berkshire Council's (WBC) Electoral Services have confirmed that at least 10 electors have requested that the current casual vacancy is filled by a poll. Further to the Local Government and Crime Commissioner Regulations 2020 and the Coronavirus Act 2020, elections will not take place until the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

## **20/032 Items to be taken into private session**

**To determine which items, if any, of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded**

Cllr. Dennett proposed that item 20/034 6 Website Supplier, be taken into private session.

Seconded by Cllr. Bull.

**RESOLVED** unanimously.

## **20/033 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports**

### **Strategy Working Party**

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

- The final analysis from the CIL survey is expected shortly and a decision will then be taken on what, if any, information is published.
- A meeting is being held with WBC office Caroline Booth to look at the following public open spaces: tumulus in Stephens Firs; the strip of land that runs behind the houses in Stephens Firs and the triangle of land on the footpath near to the ex-police houses. Consideration will be given to how these areas may be enhanced or managed in the future. It was noted that the strip of land behind the houses on

Stephens Firs was historically a footpath through to St Catherine's Hill and this should be considered when deciding its future management.

- Both footpath projects are waiting for the appointment of a project manager. The appointment of a project manager is progressing.

## **20/034 Items for Consideration and Resolution**

### **1. Budget**

**To AGREE the approach and timetable for the preparation of the 2021/22 budget for presentation to Full Council on 8th October 2020.**

The 2021/22 budget timetable was reviewed. It was noted that costs of the project manager and projects would come out of CIL. If the project manager is used for other routine projects, then this come from the budget under the relevant committee.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to agree the approach and timetable for the budget 2020/21 for presentation to Full Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020. **ACTION: CLERK**

### **2. Review of Policies**

**To AGREE the procedure for reviewing:**

#### **1. Standing Orders**

To be reviewed by Cllr. Dennett and the Clerk.

#### **2. Financial Regulations**

To be reviewed by Cllr. Lewis and the Clerk.

#### **3. Fly Posting and Advertising Policy**

To be reviewed by Cllr. Bull.

#### **4. Committee Terms of Reference**

To be reviewed by Cllr. Morsley.

#### **5. Communications Policy.**

To be reviewed by Cllrs. Carter, Dennett, Lewis and the Clerk as previously identified.

### **3. Newsletter**

**To review the status of the next newsletter and AGREE any actions required accordingly.**

It was agreed 1) to have a copy deadline of the 31<sup>st</sup> October with a view to delivering the newsletter at the end of November 2) Cllr. Dennett to produce a list of proposed topics along with suggested councillors/officers to write and submit each article. **ACTION: CLLR. DENNETT**

### **4. Remote Meetings**

**To review the remote meeting process and AGREE any changes to be made.**

The advantages and disadvantages of both Teams and Zoom were discussed.

**RESOLVED** unanimously to remain with Teams.

### **5. Pillbox**

**To review and AGREE the Heads of Terms and site plan for the pillbox for recommendation to Full Council on the 8th October 2020.**

The following was noted:

- The proposed 3 year lease would be drafted by Englefield meaning no legal costs would be incurred.
- The Council has the amount of public liability required by the Heads of Terms.

- Any other potential costs i.e. rates, will be considered as they became apparent.

**RESOLVED** unanimously that the Heads of Terms should be recommended to Full Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## **6. Website**

**To consider and AGREE the supplier for the new website.**

Minuted under PART II.

### **20/035 Items for information only**

- Cllr. Morsley raised the need for councillors to have access to appropriate technology to enable them to have access to software and documents, to assist them in participating in meetings and undertaking work on behalf the council. It was acknowledged that the council now has support in place to assist with IT technical issues, but consideration may need to be given to hardware requirements. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate what could be done to support councillors in this manner and to send out a brief survey to identify councillor's issues and requirements. **ACTION: CLERK**

### **20/036 Finance**

#### **1. Accounts to 31st August 2020**

**To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Report and the Balance Sheet for presentation to Full Council on the 8th October 2020.**

**APPROVED** unanimously. **ACTION: CLERK**

#### **2. Bank Reconciliation**

**To receive and note the report for the period 1st April 2020 – 30th June 2020.**

The bank reconciliation report was received and noted.

#### **3. Committee Budgets**

**To review spend to date and planned activity and spending for the remainder of the year, compared to the 2020/21 itemised budget.**

The budgets for each committee were reviewed.

### **20/037 Communications**

**To identify items for communicating**

Items will be communicated via the newsletter.

### **20/038 Future Agenda Items**

**To identify future agenda items**

- Councillor IT requirements.
- Discussion item for Full Council: Public availability of councillor attendance records.

### **20/039 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 20/032 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the information being discussed.**

**RESOLVED** unanimously

# The Clerk left at 20.46 and Ms. B. O'Reilly took the minutes for the remainder of the meeting.

## **20/034**

**6. To consider and AGREE the supplier for the new website.**

**AGREED** unanimously to appoint I-Next Limited as the supplier for the new Parish Council website. **ACTION: ASSISTANT CLERK**

## **Close**

The meeting closed at 20.58.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.