



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held online on Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. D. Morsley.

Officers:

Ms. B. O'Reilly.

Public/Press:

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

Part I

20/040 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None

20/041 To receive any apologies for absence

A discussion took place regarding the need to accept or receive apologies given at a meeting which Cllr. Dennett clarified from NALC guidelines.

Apologies were received from Cllr. N. Carter.

Cllrs. J. Bull and D. Kilshaw did not attend and no apologies were received.

20/042 To receive any declarations of interest

None.

20/043 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Council Meeting of the 29th September 2020

RESOLVED that these minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting. Cllr. Bridgman abstained as he was not present.

20/044 Clerk's Report

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

Actions from Last Meeting

1. The approach and timetable for the preparation of 2020/21 budget was presented to Full Council on the 8th October 2020.
2. The writing of the survey regarding councillor's IT issues and requirements is underway.
3. A purchase order has been raised and issued for the new website.

The report was received.

20/045 Items to be taken into private session

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

20/046 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Strategy Working Party

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

- As no response has been forthcoming from Cllr. Carter, the final analysis from the CIL survey has not been provided yet.
- A site meeting was held with WBC officer Caroline Booth to look at the public open spaces. WBC are now investigating whether they can undertake clearing and replanting. If this is completed, SMPC will be asked whether they will fund an information board and a bench. Caroline Booth was also open to our suggestion of making the triangle behind the ex-police houses more wildlife friendly, with some clearing but leaving logs, etc., and was also going to look into this. No solutions on the issue of the strip of land running behind the houses in Stephens Firs were put forward at this meeting.
- The appointment of a project manager is progressing slowly. After an initial meeting to evaluate the different approaches suggested by the shortlisted candidates, it was decided to seek advice on the differing information and costings received. Mr. N. Kiley has been approached for an opinion and Cllr. Lewis offered to assist in looking over the submissions. Cllr. Bridgman was asked if he knew of any relevant expertise and the Working Party would engage with the issue again during November.

2. Newsletter

The proposed date for the next newsletter has slipped but further to discussion on logistics and possible sources to assist with distribution, Cllr. Dennett will contact councillors/officers for articles on identified topics to be submitted as soon as possible with the intention to release a newsletter, both electronically and physically, before Christmas. **ACTION: CLLR. DENNETT/CLERK**

20/047 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Fairground Rent Review

To consider the proposed rent increase and RESOLVE that the Memorandum of Rent Review be signed.

Details of the proposed rent increase were reviewed.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Memorandum of Rent Review be signed. **ACTION: CLERK**

2. Review of Policies

To receive and APPROVE the Fly Posting and Advertising Policy for recommendation to Full Council on the 12th November.

Proposed amendments to the policy document were reviewed.

APPROVED unanimously to recommend amendments to Full Council on 12th November.

ACTION: CLERK

20/048 Items for information only

- Cllr. Morsley asked how questions could be raised at meetings if an item is not on the agenda. Cllr. Dennett advised that an item could be raised in advance with the Clerk who would consider whether it should be placed on an agenda. If no decision was required, information might be included in the Clerk's report.
- Following Cllr. Morsley's enquiry, on the issue of Garth Hall, Cllr. Dennett advised that the British Legion indicated they would not deal with this during Covid and the Parish Council was seeking legal advice before responding.

20/049 Finance

1. Accounts to 30th September 2020

To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Report and the Balance Sheet for presentation to Full Council on the 12th November 2020.

On reviewing the Income and Expenditure Report, a commentary on what the Covid effect has been on income against the budget would be requested from the Clerk at the next meeting. Cllr. Lewis noted that the Clerk's commentary on budget performance was done well.

APPROVED unanimously. **ACTION: CLERK**

2. Internal Control

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

The Internal Financial Control document was not circulated so would be taken to Full Council on 12th November. **ACTION: Cllr. DENNETT/CLERK**

3. Internal Auditor's Mid-Year Report

To receive the report for presentation to Full Council on the 12th November 2020.

Cllr. Dennett advised that an April salary increase on the Custodian's national pay scale was agreed in August and would, therefore, be backdated from April and paid out with the October payroll. Cllr. Bridgman congratulated the Clerk and Assistant to the Clerk for work on getting a positive report from the auditor. **ACTION: CLERK**

20/050 Communications

To identify items for communicating

None.

20/051 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

20/052 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.

Not required.

Close

The meeting closed at 8.21pm.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 1st December 2020.