



## Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

### **Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall on Tuesday 2nd November 2021 at 7.30pm.**

#### **Present:**

##### **Councillors:**

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. C. Lewis, Cllr. D. Morsley.

##### **Officers:**

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

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

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

#### **Part I**

##### **21/027 Public Questions (for agenda items only)**

None.

##### **21/028 To receive any apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr. N. Carter and Cllr. G. Bridgman.  
Cllr. D. Kilshaw was not present, and no apologies were received.

##### **21/029 To receive any declarations of interest**

**To receive from Members at this point or at any point during the meeting, in respect of any items included on the agenda, disclosure of any interests in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and gifts and hospitality in line with Government legislation.**

None.

##### **21/030 Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 1. To resolve to APPROVE the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2021.**

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

## **21/031 Clerk's Report**

**To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 and other updates.**

### **Actions from the meeting held on 02/09/21**

1. Fitness equipment: HALC have confirmed that as one or more contractors have already been approached privately and asked to submit tenders for the fitness equipment, there is no need to advertise the contract on Contracts Finder.
2. Complaints Procedure and Persistent Complainant Procedure: update is in progress.

### **Other Updates**

1. Mid-Term Internal Audit: This was undertaken on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October. No issues were found but the formal report is still awaited.
2. Website Accessibility and Publishing Guidelines: NALC have issued updated website accessibility and publishing guidelines. These have been reviewed with the website provider in line with the compliance of WCAG 2.1. WCAG 2.1 is the standard public bodies are required to meet. Documents are now being published to the website in an accessible format, but this is not possible with all documents e.g. third-party documents which have been supplied in a non-accessible format. Areas where the website/documents are not compliant are stated in the Accessibility Statement [Accessibility Statement | Stratfield-Mortimer Parish Council](#). There are also some sets of minutes, post September 2018, which should have been published in an accessible version which were not. This is being addressed by publishing accessible versions alongside the non-accessible versions. Work is also currently being undertaken to meet the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 [Title \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk).

### **In addition, it was noted:**

1. Neighbourhood Plan (NP) website and accessibility: The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are currently looking at developing the NP website. In considering the requirements for public sector organisations to have accessible websites, the Finances and General Purposes Committee agreed the NP website should be built to meet WCAG 2.1 standards. This will be reported to Full Council and the Steering Group will be informed.
2. Government Design Statement updates (GDS): For accessibility purposes, SMPC's website is built following the GDS. Frequent, small updates are being released to the GDS and the Council should consider the actions to be taken to implement such updates to ensure the website remains up to date with current practices. It was agreed this should be a future agenda item.

## **21/032 Items to be taken into private session**

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

None.

## **21/033 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports**

### **1. Communications Working Party.**

Cllr. Morsley reported that future SMPC newsletters can be delivered via the Mortimer Village Partnership (MVP) system if the schedules are compatible with other deliveries

such that there is no more than one delivery a month. The MVP current numbers of copies required for each road is correct and no additional copies are therefore required.

## **2. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath.**

- Cllr. Morsley reported that three further queries were raised with WBC on the pre-app report specifically about the proposed Eastern path. A response has been received on two. The third query was regards to the route past Five Oaken Cottage and the information is crucial to future decisions. Consideration will be given as to asking Highways to provide an opinion about this part of the route. The next stage will be for the Working party to look at other reports needed and any associated costs.
- Councillors are experiencing issues with managing personal emails. They are also having difficulty saving emails, pertinent to projects and Council initiatives, to relevant folders in SharePoint. It was agreed for the Clerk to seek IT advice accordingly.

## **3. Strategy Working Party.**

No report received.

## **4. The Street Footway Widening.**

Further to the initial cutback of the vegetation, a site visit has been undertaken and WBC are considering the next step.

## **21/034 Items for Consideration and Resolution**

### **1. Personnel Sub-Committee**

#### **To appoint the members of the Personnel Sub Committee.**

As Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllrs. Dennett and Morsley are automatically members of the personnel sub-committee.

Cllr. Hill proposed Cllrs. Bridgman and Lewis as the two additional members of the committee.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

**RESOLVED** Unanimously.

### **2. Terms of Reference**

#### **To consider and review the Terms of Reference for the committees and the Climate and Environment Working Party for recommendation to Full Council for approval on the 11th November 2021:**

##### **a. Committee Terms of Reference.**

##### **b. Climate and Environment Working Party.**

Minor changes were identified for the Committee Terms of Reference.

It was agreed to recommend both sets of Terms of References for approval by Full Council.

### **3. Action Plan 2022/23**

#### **To consider and review the Action Plan for recommendation to Full Council for approval on the 11th of November 2021.**

Some information is still needed which will be added as it becomes available.

It was agreed to recommend the Action Plan for approval by Full Council.

## **21/035 Finance**

### **1. Accounts to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Report to the 30th of September and the Balance Sheet as of that date, for presentation to Full Council on the 11th of November.**

In looking at the bank interest received, the issue of current low interest rates was discussed. The committee felt the Council's money should be maintained within Unity Trust and The Public Sector Deposit Fund as per current practices already agreed. It was not thought to be practical to open up and manage further bank accounts nor to consider restricting access to funds by having a Public Sector Deposit Fund 5 year investment. Cllr. Dennett proposed the accounts to be approved.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley

**APPROVED** unanimously.

### **2. Bank Reconciliation**

**To receive and note the Bank Reconciliation report to the 30th September 2021.**

Cllr. Lewis confirmed the Bank Reconciliation had been completed.

### **3. Internal Control**

**To receive and note the report for the period 1st July 2021 – 30th September 2021.**

Cllr. Dennett confirmed the Internal Control had been completed.

## **21/036 Items for information only**

### **Minor Matters**

- Smart Pension are introducing a £15 + VAT a month "employer charge" to enable them to invest in the Smart Pension platform to improve their service and introduce new features and products. This will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee.

## **21/037 Communications**

**To identify items for communicating**

None.

## **21/038 Future Agenda Items**

**To identify future agenda items**

- Review of the Complaints Procedure and Persistent Complainants Procedure.
- GDS – maintaining the website.

## **21/039 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**To pass a resolution under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 21/032 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.**

Not required.

## **Close**

The meeting closed at 20:53.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021.