



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held online on Tuesday 27th April 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. M. Dennett (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman (arrived at 20.22), Cllr. N. Carter, Cllr. S. Hill, 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

21/001 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

21/002 To receive any apologies for absence

Due to a West Berkshire Council commitment, Cllr. G. Bridgman had given his apologies should he be late or not able to attend.

21/003 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.

21/004 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to APPROVE the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of the 2nd of March 2021

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

21/005 Clerk's Report

- 1. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 2nd of January 2021 and other updates.**

Actions from Last Meeting

1. Allowance Scheme: The recommendation of no councillor allowance was considered and agreed by Full Council at its meeting in March.
2. Review of Policies: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were considered and approved by Full Council at its meeting in March. Updated copies have been added to the website.
3. Service Charges: The revised service charges came took effect as at the 1st April 2021.
4. Council It Survey: D. Sturt would be willing to provide additional IT support for individual councillors as required and would be willing to provide this in person when allowed. Consideration still needs to be given to 1) Office 365 document storage guidelines 2) further actions required from the responses to the IT survey.

Other Updates

1. CIL payment: West Berkshire Council (WBC) have confirmed that the refund of the CIL payment of £38,514.80 for 16/02600/FULEXT Fairwinds and land at Tower House, will be paid as a part of the next round of Parish transfers, set to take place at the end of April. WBC had erroneously requested SMPC to repay the CIL in 2019, believing the CIL should have originally been paid at a rate of 15% and not 25%. However, the NDP was adopted by WBC on the 23rd June 2017 and was therefore in place when planning permission for Fairwinds was granted on the 31st July 2017, meaning the CIL rate should have been at 25%, as originally paid by WBC.

It was agreed that the Clerk should establish who receives repaid CIL funds i.e. WBC or builders and request an adjustment to the 5 year time frame allowed for spending CIL funds, to reflect the two year delay in receiving the full amount for Fairwinds.

21/006 Items to be taken into private session

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

It was agreed that agenda item 21/008 1. Insurance and 21/008 3. Asset Register, should be taken into Part II.

21/007 Committee and Working Party/Group Reports

1. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

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

- Further to recent developments, the status of the reserved land and whether it is free or not, is unclear. Informal legal advice is being sought.
- The school has cancelled the meeting due to be held on May the 5th pending developments but has asked SMPC to provide confirmation on the status of the land. A response has been provided confirming it was understood by the NDP that the land would be free for the purposes of a new school/surgery.

2. Strategy Working Party

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

- The Street Pavement Widening: WBC continue to report on progress being made. They are working on design and expecting some issues with land and 3rd party vegetation clearance. Once the design has been agreed, they will contact SMPC regarding finance.
- Mortimer to Burghfield Footpath and Cycleway: the scoping report has been received and accepted by SMPC. Ridge and Co are preparing materials for the pre-application. Emails/letters have been sent to all landowners – Sovereign Housing, Mowbrays, WBC, Englefield and D. Gardiner - explaining the project and introducing Ridge & Co.
- Tumulus Open Space: the leaflet has been delivered to 20 neighbouring properties; no responses, positive or negative, have been received.
- Allotments – currently on hold until Covid regulations permit face to face meetings.
- Fitness Equipment: Cllrs. Beard and Hill are continuing to investigate the options for the two possible sites.

21/008 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Insurance

To consider the quotes received and APPROVE the Council's insurance provider from the 1st of June 2021.

Moved to Part II

2. Mobile Phone Contract

To consider and APPROVE the contract renewal from the 2nd of June 2021.

The Clerk presented a report and the options were considered.

Cllr. Dennett proposed that the contract should be renewed with EE on a 24-month SIM only basis at a cost of £17.50 (ex VAT) a month.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

APPROVED unanimously. **ACTION: CLERK**

3. Asset Register

To receive and APPROVE the Asset Register for presentation to Full Council on the 6th of May 2021.

Moved to Part II

21/009 Finance

1. Reserves Adjustments

To consider and AGREE the proposed reserves adjustments for the year end 2020/21.

The RFO presented the proposed adjustments which meet the previously agreed transfers for the cemetery extension and tennis court resurfacing; provide additional reserves of £2,500 for election expenses; provide for Fairground works which were agreed in 2020/21 but not yet done; maintain the s106, CIL and Community Projects reserves to fund The Street widening and Mortimer to Burghfield Footpath and Cycleway projects. It was confirmed that the CIL reserves are maintained and tracked separately, depending on the year received, to ensure the money is spent within the allowed time frame.

Cllr. Dennett proposed the recommended reserve adjustments as discussed.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

APPROVED unanimously. **ACTION: CLERK**

2. Accounts to the 31st March 2021

To receive and APPROVE the Income and Expenditure Report for the Financial Year 2020/2021 and the Balance Sheet as of that date, for presentation to Full Council on the 6th May, noting that the year-end adjustments are still to be completed.

The accounts were reviewed, and it was agreed that the pillbox payment of £500 in 4059 – VE Day 75 - and the height barrier charges of 6327 in 4920 – s106 Expenditure – be moved to Fairground 4301. £3500 for the scoping assessment will remain as a budget overspend against 4800 – Community Projects.

Proposed by Cllr. Dennett.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley

APPROVED unanimously.

3. Financial Year End

To receive an update on the process and timetable for the 2020/2021 financial year end and limited assurance review.

The RFO confirmed the agreed reserve adjustments would be made enabling the accounts to be finalised. The internal audit is booked for the 12th May and the report will be received by F&GP and Full Council at their meetings in June when the Annual Governance and Accountability Return will be completed.

4. Statement of Internal Control

To review and APPROVE the Statement of Internal Control.

Cllr. Dennett presented the Statement of Internal Control which was reviewed by the Committee.

Proposed by Cllr. Dennett.

Seconded by Cllr. Lewis.

APPROVED unanimously.

21/010 Items for information only

Minor Matters

- Cllr. Hill reported that further to a meeting with a Trustee of the Fairground, there is a lack of suitable other sites for the table tennis table, but another option may be to relocate it to the Alfred Palmer Memorial Field (APMF). The APMF Trustees have expressed an interest in hosting the table but would need financial assistance to move it.
- CCTV and fitness equipment were highlighted as potential suggestions for the current Members' Bid. The Members' Bid will be added to the Full Council agenda for the 6th May.

21/011 Communications

To identify items for communicating

None.

21/012 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

None.

21/013 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 21/006 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr. Dennett.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley.

RESOLVED unanimously.

21/008 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Insurance

To consider the quotes received and **APPROVE** the Council's insurance provider from the 1st of June 2021.

The insurance options were reviewed.

Cllr. Dennett proposed that the insurance should be renewed with Aviva/ BHIB Ltd on a 3-year Long Term Undertaking, including terrorism cover, at a first year cost of £739.58.

Seconded by Cllr. Lewis

APPROVED unanimously. **ACTION: CLERK**

2. Asset Register

To receive and **APPROVE** the Asset Register for presentation to Full Council on the 6th of May 2021.

The Asset Register was reviewed.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Dennett.

APPROVED unanimously.

Close

The meeting closed at 20.44.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 3rd June.