



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall on Tuesday the 5th of September at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. M. Dennett, Cllr. H. Geary, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Noonan.

Officers:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

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

Part I

23/025 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

23/026 To receive any apologies for absence

Cllr. D. Butler did not attend, and no apologies were received.

23/027 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.

23/028 Minutes of Last Meeting

To resolve to approve the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of the 4th of July 2023.

Cllr. Hill reported that he did send apologies to the meeting on the 4th of July.

Cllr. Bridgman proposed the minutes be amended to include Cllr. Hill's apologies.

Seconded by Cllr. Morsley

RESOLVED with two abstentions that these minutes be amended as above and be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

23/029 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 4th of July 2023 and other updates.

Windmill Common: The Clerk reported that as per the Approved Settlement Agreement, the resident has removed the stone from outside the margin of the track and turning area on Windmill Common and restored the fence on the western boundary to the correct boundary line. It appears that the resident and their visitors have ceased from parking on the Common. This will be reported to full Council on the 14th of September.

23/030 Items to be taken into private session

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

Cllr. Morsley proposed that agenda item 23/032 1a. staff contracts, be taken in Part II.

Seconded by Cllr. Dennett.

Resolved unanimously.

23/031 Working Party Reports

1. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

Cllr Morsley reported that two of Greenham Common Trustees have visited and walked the route and have been given an update. The application for match funding will be considered at the Trust's December meeting. A case officer has now been allocated to the planning application and the determination date is expected to be the end of October. A response has been emailed addressing issues raised by West Berkshire Council's (WBC) Public Rights of Way and Countryside Officers. A site meeting with the case officer and Ridge LLP is planned for the 13th of September.

2. Communications

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the copy deadline for newsletter articles is the 22nd of September. Further articles identified are cemetery extension outline design; the planning process; information on WBC's interactive map; information on the Neighbourhood Action Group; Update on data from the Speed Indicator Device and Automatic Speed Watch Camera; update on Foundry Brook; responsibility of householder and hedge maintenance.

3. Strategy - Planning Day

To be discussed under 23/032 3. Away Day.

4. The Street Footway

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed a meeting is yet to be held.

The Clerk confirmed the overgrown vegetation along The Street had been reported to WBC and will follow-up further. Nuisance hedges will be added to the agenda for the next Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee.

23/032 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Personnel

As recommended by the personnel Committee, to receive and agree the revised:

a. staff contracts of employment for agreeing with relevant staff members.

Minuted at Part II.

b. personnel policies:

Cllr. Morsley thanked Cllrs. Geary and Bridgman for their work in updating the policies. Each policy was considered separately.

i. Dignity at Work.

It was agreed:

- To amend the legislation to the correct version.
- For volunteers to be included under this policy.
- Remove the section highlighted in red under “Responsibilities”.

ii. Disciplinary.

Under “The Disciplinary Meeting”, it was agreed to:

- Remove the lines highlighted in red referring to the Chairman.
- Amend “Chairman” to “Panel Chairman”.

iii. Equal Opportunities.

No amendments identified.

iv. Expenses.

Under “Claiming Expenses”, it was agreed to:

- Update the period for submitting claims from one month to the expense being incurred to three.

v. Grievance.

It was agreed to:

- Amend “Chairman” to “Panel Chairman” where applicable.

vi. Sickness and Absence.

No amendments identified.

A Performance Management Policy and Health and Safety Policy are also in progress and will be circulated to the Personnel Committee and F&GP respectively. All the above policies will be taken to the Council meeting in October.

2. Council Policies

To agree the policies for review and any relevant timetable.

It was agreed for other policies to be reviewed as follows for consideration at November’s meeting:

- Community Award - Cllr. Morsley
- Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Protection – Cllr. Geary
- Tennis Court Safeguarding – Cllr. Geary
- Facebook Usage – Communications Working Party

- Communications – Communications Working Party
- Code of Conduct – Cllr. Bridgman
- Cemetery Regulations – Cllrs. Hill, Morsley and Noonan
- Cemetery Memorials – Cllr. Hill, Morsley and Noonan

3. Away Day

To consider and agree the format and content of the event.

The proposed agenda was discussed. Any further ideas should be sent to Cllrs. Bridgman and Morsley.

4. Budget Process 2024/25

To agree the approach and timetable for the preparation of the 2024/25 budget for recommendation to Full Council on the 14th of September 2023.

The budget timetable was agreed as presented.

5. External Audit

To receive the External Audit Report for 2022/23.

The external audit report was received.

23/033 Finance

1. Accounts to the 31st of July 202

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 31st of July and the Balance Sheet as at that date.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman

The reports were received and approved unanimously.

2. Bank Reconciliation

To receive and note the reconciliation has been undertaken for the period 1st of April 2023 – 30th June 2023.

Cllr. Noonan reported that the bank reconciliation had been thoroughly checked and there were no errors to report. The reconciliation had been signed off.

3. Internal Financial Control (IFC)

To receive and note the IFC Confirmation for the period 1st of April 2023 – 30th June 2023.

Cllr. Bridgman reported the IFC had been undertaken. There was nothing to report.

4. The Public Sector Deposit Fund

To note the return on investment as at 31st June 2023

The return on investment as at the 31st of July 2023 was noted as being 4.94%.

23/034 Items for information only

Minor Matters

- The incidents of anti-social behaviour in the village were discussed. This will be on the agenda at the next Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) on the 27th of September - St John's Hall, 7:30pm.
- Residents continue to experience issues of poor reinstatement of roads and footpaths by Gigaclear following the installation of fibre to the property

infrastructure and a lack of response by Gigaclear to complaints. The Clerk will email WBC's Chief Executive to request assistance.

23/035 Communications

To identify items for communicating

NAG meeting at 7.30pm on the 27th of September at St John's Hall.

23/036 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

- Roads, Footpaths and Commons - hedge monitoring.
- Council – personnel and health and safety policies.
- F&GP – review of policies identified under 23/032 2.

23/037 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 23/030 on the agenda due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Dennett.

Resolved unanimously.

Part II

23/032 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Personnel

As recommended by the personnel Committee, to receive and agree the revised:

a. staff contracts of employment for agreeing with relevant staff members.

The three proposed staff contracts were received. It was agreed to proceed with a period of consultation with the staff regarding the proposed amended contracts once the personnel policies are in place.

The meeting closed at 21:19.

Date of next meeting: Thursday the 2nd of November 2023.