



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council Minutes

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall on Thursday 5 December 2024 at 19:30

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr D Morsley (Chairman), Cllr G Bridgman, Cllr H Geary.

Officers:

Mrs L Hannawin

Public/Press:

Cllr K Strong was in attendance as a member of the public. There were no members of the press in attendance.

Part I

24/027 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

24/028 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr N Carter, Cllr S Hill and Cllr A Richardson.

24/029 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, and gifts and hospitality in line with the Code of Conduct.

None.

24/030 Minutes of Last Meeting

To approve and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 7 November 2024.

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

24/031 Chairman's Remarks

Cllr Morsley:

- Confirmed that more members are needed on all committees and in particular, Finance and General Purposes. This will be addressed at full Council on the 9 January.

- Reminded Members of the Christmas meal and the need for cash tips.
- Along with other councillors, thanked the Clerk very warmly and wished her all the very best for her future.

24/032 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on 7 November 2024 and other updates.

The Clerk's written report was received. In addition, it was noted:

- An email has been sent to West Berkshire Council (WBC) regarding devolved powers and managing overhanging vegetation in the Parish and how SMPC may assist with this.
- The Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) contract for the cemetery extension has been signed. The contractors are liaising with the farmer and shall be undertaking a site visit shortly.

24/033 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 agenda item 24/035 2. Budget 2025/26 be taken in Part II.

Seconded by Cllr Geary.

Resolved unanimously.

24/034 Steering Group and Working Party Reports

1. Communication

The Spring newsletter shall be discussed at the next Finance and General Purposes and full Council meetings.

2. Emergency Planning

The Clerk reported that two volunteers had come forward to join the Emergency Planning Working Party and shall be co-opted at full Council in January.

3. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

Cllr Morsley:

- reported that Ridge are progressing with the package of works needed for WBC Highways and she will confirm with them if this will be submitted before Christmas as planned.
- Confirmed that the landowners had been provided with an update regarding the progress made and leases needed.

24/035 Items for Consideration and Resolution.

1. Policies

To consider any Policies within the ambit of the Committee requiring consideration, amendment, or proposal to full Council.

The Training and Development Policy was reviewed and changes proposed by the Personnel Sub-Committee considered.

Cllr Morsley proposed the changes be accepted and the amended Policy be recommended to full Council.

Seconded by Cllr Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

2. Budget 2025/26

To consider and approve the draft budget for circulation to Council members for comment.

Minuted at Part II.

3. Investment Strategy 2025/26

To review and approve the Investment Strategy for recommendation for approval by full Council.

The Investment Strategy was reviewed and minor changes regarding potential long-term borrowing considered. The revised Investment Strategy will be taken to full Council for approval.

4. War Memorial

To receive an update on the ownership status of the War Memorial and agree any further actions for recommendation to full Council.

From documents found, the War Memorial stands on public highways land and is not, therefore, owned by SMPC. The Clerk shall update the Asset Register and the relevant transparency documents - Land Reports - accordingly.

5. Personnel

To receive an update from the Personnel Committee on the:

a. Management of staff training.

This was covered by the amended Training and Development Policy.

b. Handover to the new Clerk.

Cllr Morsley confirmed the arrangements for the handover period. The outgoing Clerk will be asked to return to undertake additional training with the new Clerk as required. Staff appraisals in this year will be undertaken jointly by the new Clerk and a member of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

24/036 Finance

1. Accounts to 31 October 2024

To receive and consider the Income and draft Expenditure Report to 31 October 2024 and the Balance Sheet as at that date.

The financial reports were received.

2. Training Budget

To note the Training Budget for 2024/25 of £1,500 is overspent by £286.00 as at 31 October 2024.

The overspend, due to the cost of the weekly RoSPA training and the Custodian's chainsaw training, was noted.

24/037 Items for information only

Minor Matters

No matters were raised.

24/038 Communications

To identify items for communicating

- Budget

24/039 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

- Budget
- Spring newsletter

24/040 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 24/033 on the Agenda, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

24/035 Items for Consideration and Resolution.

2. Budget 2025/26

To consider and approve the draft budget for circulation to Council members for comment.

The draft budget and report were received and discussed and changes agreed. The report and updated draft Budget shall be circulated to all councillors for comment.

Close

The meeting closed at 21:35

Date of next meeting: 2 January 2025.