



# Bishopstoke Parish Council

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**Members of the Parish Council are summoned to attend a meeting on  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30pm at Bishopstoke Methodist Church, Sedgwick Road.**

## AGENDA

**PUBLIC SESSION – Residents are invited to give their views and question the parish council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the chair. Members of the public may not take part in the meeting itself.**

1. Apologies for absence
2. To adopt and sign Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024
3. Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations
4. Reports from Committees, Working Groups, Officers and Councillors
5. To approve the following financial items
  - Statement of Internal Control
  - Fixed Asset Register
  - Changes to Financial Regulations
  - Earmarked reserves arrangements
  - Financial Risk Assessment
6. To re-adopt Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
7. To re-adopt Terms of Reference for all Committees
8. To approve the tender process for the next open space contract
9. To review, update if necessary, and adopt the Ethics & Ethical Procurement Policy
10. To agree the Parish Council's response to the Borough Council Biodiversity consultation
11. To agree any arrangements for D Day 80
12. To agree the Parish Council response to the Spring Lane Post Office closure
13. To consider a request for future use of the Stoke Common Cemetery car park
14. To agree the response to the HCC Future Services Consultation
15. To agree future meeting dates
16. To consider content for the next press release
17. To agree the date, time and place for the next meeting
18. Motion for confidential business
19. To agree funding for youth services
20. To agree staffing arrangements
21. To agree staff salary arrangements

***D L Wheal***  
***Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council***  
***6<sup>th</sup> March 2024***

*Members: Cllrs Hillier-Wheal (Chair), Harris (Vice Chair), Candy, Daly, Dean A, Dean R, Francis, Kirby, Lyon, McKeone C, McKeone D, Moore, Thornton, Tidridge and Winstanley*  
FULL\_2324\_A06

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Bishopstoke Parish Council  
held at Bishopstoke Methodist Church  
commencing at 7.30pm on 9 January 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Louise Hillier-Wheal (Chair)  
Councillor Geoff Harris (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Ralph Candy  
Councillor Andrew Daly  
Councillor Dave Francis  
Councillor Martin Lyon (from para 59)  
Councillor Mike Thornton  
Councillor Anne Winstanley

**In Attendance:** Mr David Wheal (Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)  
Mrs Sophie Thorogood (RFO to Bishopstoke Parish Council)

**Public Session** 0 members of the public were present.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/**

**55 Apologies for Absence**

55.1 Apologies were noted from Cllrs A Dean, R Dean, Kirby, C McKeone, D McKeone, Moore and Tidridge.

**56 To adopt and sign Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14 November 2023**

56.1 The minutes of the above meeting had been included in the document pack for this meeting.

56.2 Cllr Hillier-Wheal noted that in Minute 52.2 the sentence should read “either spent OR allocated”, not “of”.

56.3 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** with five in favour and two abstentions due to absence that the amended minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14 November 2023 be adopted as a true record.

**Action: Clerk & Chair – to sign and publish the minutes and document pack**

**57 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

57.1 There were no such declarations or requests.

**58 Reports from Committees, Working Groups, Officers and Councillors**

58.1 The resolutions from Council Committees were noted, as was the Clerk’s report.

*Cllr Lyon arrived at this point.*

**59 To receive a report on the provision of youth services within Bishopstoke and determine the appropriate funding levels for 2023-24**

59.1 The report on youth services provided at the Y Zone had been included with the supporting documents for the meeting.

59.2 Several Councillors raised concerns that this was the second year in which the Council was being asked to pay a bill without being given any detailed justification for the amount. The invoice had been paid in the year 2022-23 on the understanding that a new agreement would be reached between Bishopstoke Parish Council, Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish Council and Eastleigh Borough Council for the funding of both the Y Zone building and the services provided by Youth Options within Bishopstoke but that has not yet happened. Additionally, there have been no figures provided on the running costs of the building for several years. As such Councillors felt there was no way to tell whether value for money is being provided.

59.3 Additional concerns were raised regarding the lack of information regarding the revenue raised by the hiring of the building which was always intended to replace as much of the Parish funding as possible. Councillors sought assurances that this situation is being addressed.

59.4 Councillors supported the provision of youth services within Bishopstoke as a valuable resource for the teenage population and as a means of helping reduce crime and raise awareness, but felt that without concrete information on the costs incurred, revenue raised and target audience reached they could not authorise payment at this time.

59.5 The Clerk was requested to obtain figures for the current and immediate past financial years for the costs associated with running the building, the revenue raised by hiring the building and confirmation of the value of the Youth Options provision in Bishopstoke, as well the numbers of those reached by the services provided. The Clerk was further requested to recommend an appropriate figure for Bishopstoke Parish's contribution both in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and then bring this item back to the agenda at a future meeting.

***Action: Clerk – to obtain detailed figures and information to allow the Council to properly determine the levels of funding needed***

59.6 Proposed Cllr Lyon, Seconded Cllr Francis, **RESOLVED** with seven in favour and one abstention to defer any decision on payment for the Y Zone and Youth Options until detailed information can be obtained.

**60 To decide the youth services budget for 2024-25**

60.1 Proposed Cllr Lyon, Seconded Cllr Francis, **RESOLVED** with seven in favour and one abstention leave the youth services budget for 2024-25 unchanged.

**61 To approve the expenditure budget for 2024-25**

61.1 The draft expenditure budget had been included with the supporting papers for this meeting.

61.2 The Council noted the work put into the budget by Officers and Councillors over the preceding months which had resulted in the budget being considered at the meeting. Councillors were also aware that the country is still suffering from higher inflation and for many families money is tight. Councillors acknowledged that it would be possible to reduce the Bishopstoke portion of Council Tax but only by removing some of the services provided by the Council which had already been examined in detail during the budget process.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

61.3 The Clerk noted that the guidance on proper practices given by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance indicates that Councils should keep a reserve on hand and that this reserve should be between 25% and 100% of net revenue expenditure. In practice Bishopstoke Parish Council has adopted a reserves policy stating that the target is for reserves to be between 25% and 40% of the annual precept at the end of the financial year.

*Clerk's note: The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) is responsible for issuing proper practices about the governance and accounts of smaller authorities. Its membership consists of sector representatives from the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities, together with stakeholder partners representing the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, the National Audit Office, and a representative of the external audit firms appointed to smaller authorities. Bishopstoke Parish Council is a "smaller authority".*

61.4 The Clerk demonstrated that there were a range of possible funding options that would satisfy the reserves target for the 2024-25 financial year, but that opting for a smaller precept rise for that year would lead to problems meeting the reserves target in following years. Additionally, a decreasing curve of precept changes produce a smaller Council Tax burden going forward than a small rise in one year followed by a necessary larger rise the following year.

61.5 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** with six in favour and Cllrs Lyon and Francis abstaining to approve the expenditure budget for 2024-25.

**Action: Clerk – to inform the RFO of the Council's decision**

## **62 To approve funding arrangements for 2024-25, including the precept request**

62.1 Details of how the 2024-25 expenditure budget is proposed to be funded were included with the supporting papers for the meeting.

62.2 The Clerk noted that expected income for 2024-25 is £3,000 from interest received, £20,300 from burial grounds, £6,250 from allotment fees and £2,000 from events run by the Council. In order to facilitate the remaining expenditure as well as the planned transfer of funds into earmarked reserves and to ensure remaining within the reserves target for the medium term the Finance Committee recommended a precept rise of 15% for the year 2024-25. This will raise the Band D Council Tax for Bishopstoke from £94.06 to £108.17 and provide £384,728.24 of funding for the Parish Council.

62.2 Proposed Cllr Harris, Seconded Cllr Candy, **RESOLVED** with seven in favour and Cllr Francis abstaining to fund expenditure as described in 62.2, including a 15% rise in precept bringing the Band D Council Tax to £108.17 which will provide £384,728.24 funding.

**Action: Clerk – inform the RFO of the decision of Council**

## **63 To approve amendments to Financial Regulations regarding purchase orders**

63.1 A memo on the agenda item had been included with the supporting papers for this meeting.

63.2 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously to amend Financial Regulations to require purchase orders be raised for any item of capital expenditure.

**Action: Clerk – amend Financial Regulations and publish updated version**

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**64 To consider content for the next press release**

64.1 The Council agreed that the next press release would include the expenditure budget and precept request, the vacancy for an Allotments Officer, the installation of the Cemetery gates, the date of the next Carnival meeting and the search for a Bishopstoke Champion.

*Action: Clerk – to draft the press release and circulate it to the Communications Group for approval*

**65 To agree the date, time and place for the next meetings**

65.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024. It will take place at 7:30pm at the Bishopstoke Methodist Church. The Clerk requested any agenda items and supporting papers be with him by March 5<sup>th</sup> 2024.

*There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8:40pm.*

DRAFT

Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Full Council – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 Recommendations and Resolutions

### Committee Resolutions – to note

#### Assets

##### 23<sup>rd</sup> January – ASSETS\_2324\_M04

- Item 28.3 That the minutes of the Assets Committee meeting held on 28 November be adopted as a true record.
- Item 32.4 To defer a decision on allowing SANG users to park at Stoke Common Cemetery until the concerns and questions of Cllrs have been answered.
- Item 35.6 Confidential business.

#### Finance

##### 13<sup>th</sup> February – FIN\_2324\_M05

- Item 37.2 That the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 12 December be adopted as a true record.
- Item 39.2 That the Council approve the reports on Council finances.
- Item 40.3 That the Council awards grants of £1,200 to Disability Challengers, £1,475 to MHA Communities Hampshire West and £1,475 to Bishopstoke Methodist Church.
- Item 42.2 That the Council vire £7,500 to the Play Equipment budget and £1,800 to the Allotments Works & Improvements budget.

#### Planning

##### 9<sup>th</sup> January – PLAN\_2324\_M11

- Item 82.2 That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 November be adopted as a true record.
- Item 87.1 Confidential business.

##### 23<sup>rd</sup> January – Meeting Cancelled

##### 13<sup>th</sup> February – PLAN\_2324\_M12

- Item 90.2 That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 9 January be adopted as a true record.
- Item 95.1 Confidential business.

##### 27<sup>th</sup> February – PLAN\_2324\_M13

- Item 98.2 That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 13 February be adopted as a true record.
- Item 100.5 That the responses of the Planning Committee be submitted to the planning authority.
- Item 103.1 Confidential business.

#### People

##### 27<sup>th</sup> February – PPL\_2324\_M02

- Item 10.2 That the minutes of the People Committee meeting held on 27 June be adopted as a true record.
- Item 12.6 To adopt the amended Grievance, Discipline and Complaints policies and flowchart.
- Item 13.5 To adopt the amended Safeguarding Policy
- Item 17.1 Confidential business.

## **Committee Recommendations – to vote upon**

### **Assets**

**23<sup>rd</sup> January – ASSETS\_2324\_M04**

Item 30.2 That the Assets Committee terms of reference be adopted unchanged.

### **Finance**

**13<sup>th</sup> February – FIN\_2324\_M05**

No recommendations

### **Planning**

**14<sup>th</sup> November – Meeting cancelled**

No recommendations

**28<sup>th</sup> November – PLAN\_2324\_M10**

No recommendations

**12<sup>th</sup> December – Meeting cancelled**

No recommendations

### **People**

**27<sup>th</sup> February – PPL\_2324\_M02**

The recommendation on salaries is on the main agenda

## Full Council - Clerk's report 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### Clerk's Report

#### Actions from previous meetings

**FULL\_2223\_M01/Item 11.2** Regarding training on the audit process and financial reports  
Initial training on Council finances in general will be accessed via HALC shortly after the 2024 election, with specific training on Bishopstoke Parish Council reports and processes to be provided before September 2024.

**FULL\_2324\_M04/Item 52.4** Regarding play area funding  
The decision of the Council was passed on to the RFO. When the play area cost analysis is ready it will be brought to the Assets Committee.

**FULL\_2324\_M04/Item 52.7** Regarding the possible use of a Quantity Surveyor  
Cllr Lyon has been contacted and we are discussing how, when and where a presentation on the use and value of Quantity Surveyors might take place.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 56.1** Regarding the minutes  
The minutes were published on the Council website.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 59.5** Regarding Y Zone information  
The Clerk requested the information from the Borough Council and the data provided is being considered on the agenda in the March meeting.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 61.5** Regarding the expenditure budget  
The RFO was informed of the Council's decision.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 62.2** Regarding the precept rise  
The RFO was informed of the Council's decision.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 63.2** Regarding the Financial Regulations  
The amended regulations were published on the Council website.

**FULL\_2324\_M05/Item 64.1** Regarding the media release  
The media release was not circulated to the Communications group but has been published on the website.

#### Communications Report

The latest newsletter has had to be postponed as other tasks have taken priority.

#### Carnival Report

The first Carnival meeting of the year took place on February 6<sup>th</sup> at the Methodist Church. It was agreed that, providing enough volunteers come forward, two events would be held this year. The first, an old style sports day combined with a D Day theme on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June with Carnival taking place



on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September. We welcomed two new volunteers but more are still needed if Carnival is to run this year.

## **Memorial Hall**

Permission for the demolition of the Hall has been granted but has to wait for a final set of reports being provided by the Borough Council, and for the Land Registry to complete their registration of the three portions of land that make up the charity land. Once both those are complete then demolition of the Hall can proceed, as long as there are no nests in the treeline next to the Hall. If there are, we will have to wait until nesting season is over for the building to come down.

## **Other Items**

**Asset Transfers** – Nothing new to report.

**Allotments** – Nothing new to report

**Office** – Nothing new to report.

**Burial Matters** – There were two new burials in February. The total for the year so far is 31.

**Play Areas** – Jet-washing and necessary repairs have taken place over the past two months. The new basket swing has been installed in Blackberry Drive with the existing one from there being moved to Otter Close and the Sayers Road swing has been reinstalled.

**Open Spaces** – Nothing new to report.

One other item to report is that Green Smile have informed me that due to cost savings they have achieved this year they are not intending to apply the rise in price that was built into the contract. This will save the Council over £3,000 in 2024-25.

# **BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

### **1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Bishopstoke Parish Council forms the first tier of local government and is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Bishopstoke Parish Council (the Council) is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

### **2 THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control was in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 and accords with proper practice.

### **3 THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT**

#### **The Council:**

The Council has appointed a Chair who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and drafts expenditure budgets for the following year at its October and December Finance meetings, and also in the November Full Council meeting. The Full Council meeting in January approves both the expenditure budget and the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Council appoints a Finance Committee of five to seven Members who meet six times a year. Members of the committee monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and carry out regular reviews of financial matters. The minutes of the meetings of the Finance Committee are reported to the Full Council with recommendations for decision and resolutions to note.

The Full Council meets six times each year. It monitors progress by receiving relevant reports from the Finance Committee, the Parish Clerk and RFO.

The Council carries out periodic reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

#### **Staff responsibilities:**

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who acts as the Council's legal advisor and administrator. The Council has also appointed a Responsible Finance Officer with responsibility for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to. The RFO is responsible for ensuring that the Council remains compliant with all relevant financial legislation.

#### **Payments:**

All payments are reported to the Council for approval. Two authorised signatories, one of whom is to be a Councillor, are required to authorise each cheque to limit the risk of fraud. Other payments are made by internet banking and are subject to approval and independent check. The Council utilises Debit cards for staff expenses which are monitored by the RFO and reported each month to the Finance Committee.

### **Risk Assessments/Risk Management:**

The Council carries out periodic risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its system controls.

### **Internal Audit:**

The Council has appointed an Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- Records
- Procedures
- Systems
- Internal control
- Regulations
- Risk Management
- Reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit is reported to and reviewed annually by the Council.

## **4 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of:

- the Full Council;
- the Finance Committee;
- the Clerk to the Council / Responsible Finance Officer who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;
- the Council's external auditors who make the final check using the Annual Return and issue an annual audit report;
- the number of significant issues raised during the year.

## **5 SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES**

No issues of significant concern were raised during the financial year 2023/24.

Adopted by Bishopstoke Parish Council on

Minute reference:

## REPORT TO BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL (Full Council)

12<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Item 05

**Report Subject: To approve the changes to the Fixed Asset Register for 2023/24**

In March 2023, the Council purchased upgraded Asset Manager modules from Edge IT Systems, along with Playgrounds Manager and InspectEdge facility across all modules, with a new inspections tablet. Edge also carried out a data upload of all assets and play area equipment to be able to end the 2022/23 financial year with asset figures showing in box 9 of the Annual Return within the Finance module. Having a digital asset register had been a recommendation by the previous Internal Auditor.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the Council officers have reviewed all of the assets, and updated equipment listings. During this review, it was discovered that some play area equipment purchases had been recorded incorrectly, listing removal of old equipment, ROSPA installation inspections, skip hire etc. as assets when this is not actually true. These incorrectly recorded play equipment items need to be removed from the Asset Register.

The office and home working equipment section was also checked through to update for assets that also needed to be disposed, especially in light of staff changes.

Changes have been made across the modules to reflect the review, and the Councillors are asked to approve the changes to the Fixed Asset Register.

As a result of this review, there is no change required to the insurance schedule. Clear Councils class Bishopstoke Parish Council as a large Council based on its population size, and the category listings and maximum insurance amount per category is pre-selected based on this Large Council classification.

If any further assets are purchased before the year end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, a further list will be taken to the Finance Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April for approval.

**RFO Recommendation: To approve the changes on the Fixed Asset Register for 2023/24**

Sophie Thorogood  
RFO to Bishopstoke Parish Council  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Fixed Asset Register changes**  
**Fixed Assets Register as at 31st March 2024**

**Disposals:**

Dispose SR removal old equipment	-£1,058.00
Dispose SR Skips/heras fencing	-£595.00
Dispose SR post installation inspection	-£395.00
Dispose TR removal exisiting stt	-£495.00
Dispose TR fences & skips	-£680.00
Dispose TR inspection	-£395.00
Dispose TRpainting of old equipment	-£1,155.00
Dispose Stoke Common play area - old play panel	-£533.34
Dispose SC Removal of old equipment	-£600.00
Dispose SC post installation inspection	-£395.00
Dispose SC supply of fencing/skips	-£650.00
Dispose BD Supply and install new stretcher bars & tighten loose fittings	-£296.22
Dispose BD Supply & install EPDM edge repairs to flat swings and new seat	-£1,048.70
Dispose BD Supply & install EPDM edge repairs to basket swing	-£898.70
Proxy costs removed	-£29,533.00
Blackberry Drive play area - new bird's nest swing seat	-£1,095.00
Shredder Asst Clerk	-£27.99
Cathedral laminator (Asst Clerk)	-£23.98
Folding tables (4 large & 8 small)	-£867.00
Fan heater	-£20.00
Trolley	-£237.00
Fan heater	-£16.63
Laminator (Cathedral)	-£37.99
New Mobile Phone (CT)	-£149.00
New laptop (CT)	-£549.00
Acer Laptop (JW)	-£545.82
Samsung Mobile (JW)	-£130.83
Laptop bag (JW)	-£18.32
HP Envy printer (CT)	-£62.49
Acer Aspire 5 A515-51G laptop (ST)	-£624.98
iiyama 24" LED monitor (CT)	-£108.32
Microsoft wired keyboard	-£8.77

<b>TOTAL DISPOSALS 2023-24</b>	<b>-£43,251.08</b>
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**Purchases:**

Logitech ergonomic mouse AL	£47.89
Wireless keyboard and mouse ST	£16.66
Seenda ergonomic keyboard AL	£34.49
2 sumup payment machines	£84.70
2 new handsets allotment site reps	£34.99
Cemetery Gates - public art	£9,738.00

<b>TOTAL PURCHASES 2023-24</b>	<b>£9,956.73</b>
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Value Reported on AGAR 2022-23	£367,004.40
Additions 2023-24	£9,956.73
Disposals 2023-24	-£43,251.08

<b>Value to be reported on AGAR 2023-24</b>	<b>£333,710.05</b>
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## Full Council – March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Item 5 – Financial Regulations

Recommendations from the internal auditor

NOTE – New model financial regulations are due to be published later this year and it is anticipated that at that point Bishopstoke’s regulations would be fully updated. Some changes recommended by the internal auditor may be delayed until that happens.

#### **Regulation 2.2**

“At each meeting of the Finance Committee, an appointed member of the Committee shall verify the bank reconciliation statements and sign the reconciliations and bank statements as evidence of verification. At the halfway point of each financial year, this must be completed by the Chair of the Committee, and at the end of the financial year by the Chair of the Parish Council.”

#### **IA Comment**

The regulation is prescriptive as to who must sign the reconciliations throughout the year. Consider updating to the latest NALC version.

#### **Recommendation**

Remove the need for the Chair of Committee to sign. Remove the word “appointed”. Amend to “At the end of the financial year the signed reconciliation will be included with the audit paperwork to be signed by the Chair of the Parish Council”

#### **Reason**

To make the regulation less prescriptive. Any Committee member can offer to scrutinise the reports for the first five meetings of the year. The final report should form part of the audit paperwork and be signed by the Parish Chair.

#### **Regulation 4.1**

“No expenditure may be incurred that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget plus £500 for that class of expenditure except that during the budget year, and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent budget headings and available sums from

reserves may be vired to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve, as appropriate.”

**IA Comment**

Regulations 4, 5 and 6 deal with the authorisation to purchase and pay for goods and services. Day-to-day practice no longer reflects the wording of the regulations and they should be updated. In essence the Council is making payments *before* the Council approves the expenditure. Review regulations in light of current practice and update accordingly.

**Recommendation**

Amend “Council” to “either the Finance Committee or Council”.

Add “The RFO will inform the Finance Committee or Council when a budget heading is nearing its limit and likely to breach it before the end of the financial year.”

**Reason**

To guarantee Council the opportunity to examine all proposed spending beyond budget heading limits and add a layer of control to the spending.

**Regulation 4.2**

“The RFO shall provide the Council with a statement of payments and receipts to date under each budget head, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements will normally be prepared bi-monthly, but must be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter.”

**IA Comment**

As above

**Recommendation**

Amend “Council” to “Finance Committee”

**Reason**

To reflect current practice.

**Regulation 5.2**

“A schedule of the payments required to be authorised, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, shall be prepared by the RFO and be presented to every meeting of the Council. If the schedule is in order it shall be authorised by a resolution of the Council and shall be initialled by the Chair of the meeting. A copy of the schedule will be attached to and form a part of the Minutes of the meeting”

**IA Comment**

As above

**Recommendation**

Amend the opening sentence to read “A schedule of the payments made since the previous schedule, and any payments required to be authorised, shall be prepared by the RFO . . .”

Amend “Council” to “Finance Committee”

**Reason**

To reflect current practice

**Regulation 6.3**

“Following authorisation under section 5 of this Appendix (above), the Council, or Finance Committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk or RFO, shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.”

**IA Comment**

As above

**Recommendation**

No change

**Reason**

By leaving open the possibility in 5.2 that some payments may need to be authorised by Council or Committee before being authorised, there is no longer a requirement to remove 6.3

**Regulation 6.4**

“All payments shall be noted and approved by a resolution of Council or the Finance Committee.”

**IA Comment**

As above

**Recommendation**

Change to “All payments shall be approved if necessary, and noted, by resolutions of Council or the Finance Committee.”

**Reason**

Most payments are simply noted as they are considered pre-approved by the expenditure budget. This allows the Council to maintain timely payment of its bills and therefore good relations with those it buys goods and services from. However, it is also important that payments requiring notification are done so by resolution



## Full Council – March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Item 6 – Standing Orders

Following a change in public procurement regulations, it is recommended that Standing Orders 28.1.5 and 28.2 be amended to show the new threshold of £30,000, not £25,000.

### Item 6 – Financial Regulations

In addition to the changes recommended separately in Item 05 as a result of the internal audit, it is further recommended by regulation 6.5 be amended to add “or Parish debit card” to the approved method of regular payments. This reflects the fact that items such as the email accounts, website hosting and subscriptions for some software are paid for via automatic renewal on Council debit cards.

#### **Current regulation 6.5**

“If thought appropriate by the Council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water), national non-domestic rates and subscription / affiliation fees, or any other regular payment, may be made by variable Direct Debit or Parish debit card provided that the instructions are signed by a Council Officer and authorised by Council. The approval of the use of a variable Direct Debit or Parish debit card shall be renewed by resolution of the Council at least every two years.”

### Item 7 – Terms of Reference

There have been no changes to any Committee’s terms of reference over the past year. It is recommended that they be re-adopted unchanged.

## Full Council – March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Item 8 – Open Space Contract

The current open space grounds maintenance contract runs out on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. It is therefore time for the Council to start the process of awarding the next contract.

The latest thresholds for public contracts procurement (£214,904) are such that if the contract were to be awarded for more than two years the Council would be required to advertise on both Contracts Finder and Find-a-Tender. However, if the contract were limited to two years then advertising would only need to be on Contracts Finder. This is in addition to any other advertising the Council chooses to do.

It would be desirable to have the contract awarded by the early stages of budget discussions for 2025-26 and so the following recommendations are made, which are similar to those followed the last time the contract was awarded:

- 1 Delegate authority to the Assets Committee to approve the Open Space Specification for the tender, with the matter being considered at the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- 2 Subject to approval on March 26<sup>th</sup>, the tender invitation to be published on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If sufficient amendments are required such that approval cannot be given at the March Assets Committee meeting then the amended specification will be presented to the Full Council meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>, with the invitation published on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 3 Deadline for receipt of bids to be set at August 31<sup>st</sup>, giving five (or four if approval is delayed until April) months for bids to be prepared.
- 4 Bids to be opened by a group consisting of Chair, Vice Chair, Chair of Assets, Clerk and RFO at a date and time to be agreed, but no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> September.
- 5 Tender group to make a recommendation to Full Council to be considered at the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September.
- 6 All involved notified of the decision of Council by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

## Full Council – March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Item 9 – Ethics Policy

As no changes have been suggested by Cllrs to the policy, it is recommended that this item be removed from the agenda and the policy be left unchanged.

### Item 10 – Eastleigh Borough Council Biodiversity Strategy

An email containing the links to the consultation has been forwarded to all Councillors.

Additionally, there is a drop in session on 19<sup>th</sup> March between 10am and 4pm at Eastleigh House.

### Item 11 – D Day 80

D Day itself this year falls on a Thursday. Saturday June 8<sup>th</sup> has been chosen by the Carnival Working Group for an event featuring old-style school sports races, as was held last year. It is proposed to have a D Day theme to the event and to invite local artists and craftspeople to have stalls showcasing their products, in addition to offering the chance to local community and charity groups to come along and let people hear about what they do.

### Item 12 – Post Office

Following the closure of the convenience store at Spring Lane, the Post Office based within it has had to be closed. Council is asked to consider responding to the consultation, writing a letter to the Post Office, and giving thought to whether the

Council could step in and, by leasing the space for a Parish Office, enable the Post Office to keep running.

## Item 13 – Stoke Common Cemetery car park

Council has received a request from Hampshire Search & Rescue Dogs for the occasional Wednesday evening (7pm – 10pm) use of the car park for their volunteers to park as they use Stoke Park Woods for training purposes. They are aware that the Council does not yet have control over the car park but would like an agreement in principle.

They are in discussion with the Forestry Commission to renew their permission to use the woods.

We do not allow funerals that late in the evening and so it would not impact any interments. Additionally, the regular use of the car park by an established group, including dogs, may help deter any anti-social behaviour.

**Recommendation: The Council permits use of the car park by Hampshire Search & Rescue Dogs as described, once the car park has been transferred to the Council.**



## Full Council – March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

### Item 14 – HCC Future Services Consultation

No further suggestions have been received from Cllrs therefore the suggested responses are:

That Bishopstoke Parish Council is against the idea of Parish Councils running Household Waste Recycling Centres;

Funding for community transport such as Dial-a-ride and the Travel Concessionary Scheme should be protected and

Bus services should be supported, protected and increased where possible in order to avoid increased pollution and road damage.



## **COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2024 – 2025**

<b>Full Council</b>	Second Tuesday of every other month, beginning in May.  14 May; 9 July; 10 September; 12 November 14 January 2025 and 11 March. Additional meeting to approve end of year accounts on 29 April
<b>Finance</b>	Second Tuesday of every other month beginning in June  11 June; 13 August; 8 October; 10 December; 11 February 2025 and 8 April
<b>Assets</b>	Fourth Tuesday of every other month beginning in May  28 May; 23 July; 24 September; 26 November; 28 January 2025 and 25 March
<b>People</b>	25 June; 25 October and 25 February 2025
<b>Planning</b>	Second and fourth Tuesday of every month except the second Tuesday in May and the fourth Tuesday in December.  28 May; 11 June; 25 June; 9 July; 23 July; 13 August; 27 August 10 September; 24 September; 8 October; 22 October; 12 November 26 November; 10 December; 14 January 2025; 28 January 11 February; 25 February; 11 March; 25 March; 8 April and 22 April
<b>Parish Assembly</b>	Fourth / Fifth Tuesday in April.

Planning Committee meetings start at 7.00pm (doors open 6:45pm for inspection of planning applications when meeting in person).  
The Full Council accounts meeting will start at 7:00pm.  
All other meetings start at 7:30pm.

These details are subject to change.