

BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke commencing at 7.30pm on 12 January 2016

Present: Cllr Cossey (Chairman), Cllrs Mignot, Harris (ex officio) (paras 1 to 6.8),
Parkinson-MacLachlan, Thornton and Toher

In Attendance: Mr D Hillier-Wheal (Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)
Mrs C Taylor (Assistant Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)
Mr P J Storey (immediate past Clerk to the Parish Council)

Public Session No public present.

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Winstanley.

2. To Agree the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2015

2.1 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 be accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising from the above Minutes

3.1 None.

4. Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

4.1 None declared.

5. Carnival Working Group's report

5.1 Councillor Harris reported that the Carnival Working Group had had its initial meeting. Points to note were: changing and enhancing the duck race; no change to the route of the parade; Cllr Harris would approach a volunteer for assistance with the Facebook group; this year there would be a theme (still to be decided).

5.2 The date of this year's carnival (subject to availability of buildings) is the weekend of 10th / 11th September 2016.

5.3 Concerns were raised about the low number of floats in last year's parade. Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan (on behalf of the Carnival Working Group) replied that there would be more and better publicity through Facebook, and it was hoped that some of the classic cars from the Saturday would also be part of the parade. Generally it was agreed that encouragement should be given, earlier, to anyone who might consider creating a float.

6. RFO's Report, Budget Monitoring and Non-Confidential Payments

6.1 The Assistant Clerk reported that the mid-year internal audit had taken place on 7 January 2016 and that there were no issues arising that needed to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

6.2 In order to make the necessary changes to the bank signatories following the appointment of the new Clerk, all those who are currently signatories need to sign new forms. The Assistant Clerk will gather all necessary signatures.

Action: Assistant Clerk

6.3 The grant given to the Memorial Hall for new doors has now been spent. The new doors look good.

6.4 As the roles of Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer are being re-combined it has proven necessary to redraft some of the Standing Orders. This will be ready for Cllrs to discuss at the next F & GP meeting in February.

Action: Assistant Clerk

6.5 Changes have been made to the way payments are recorded. All non-confidential staff expenses (such as stationery costs) have been moved into the non-confidential report.

6.6 A budget monitoring report had been circulated with the agenda papers. It was noted that the invoice for the second half of the year for the PCSO budget has not yet been received.

6.7 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** unanimously that budget report for December 2015 be noted.

6.8 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the non-confidential payments as tabled for be approved.

Councillor Harris left at this point

7. 2016/17 Precept Review

7.1 Following discussions with Eastleigh Borough Council it has become apparent that there are different possible ways of calculating the Precept for the coming year. Cllrs have previously agreed a 1.9% increase to funding for the year 2016/17. This was initially calculated by adding 1.9% to the combined current precept and support grant, giving a final figure for this year of £149,530. However, the spreadsheet provided by EBC calculates the precept and support grant by applying a specific percentage increase to Council Tax Band D. Applying an increasing of 1.9% to the Council Tax Band D charge produces a combined precept and support grant total for this year of £153,407. This higher figure is due to an increase in the overall tax base. This disparity has led to the matter being brought back before council for further discussion.

7.2 Cllrs discussed the various options.

7.3 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Toher that the figures be calculated by applying an increase of 1.9% on Council Tax Band D to give £153,407 as the combined precept and top up for 2016/17;

7.4 Counter-Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Mignot that the precept for 2016/17 be calculated by increasing the current combined precept and top up by 1.9%, giving a figure of £149,530, and the necessary calculation done to work out the Council Tax Band D change;

7.5 Cllr Cossey abstained from both proposal and counter-proposal.

7.6 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the matter of the precept for 2016/17 be referred to the Parish Council meeting on 26th January 2016.

7.7 Proposed Cllr Toher, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that future precepts should only be voted on after receipt of the tax base data from Eastleigh Borough Council, with the presumption that these matters be tabled at the January meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

8. External Audit Process (deferred from last meeting)

8.1 The Clerk briefed that the Sector Led Body dealing with external audits has now been set up. It is to be known as Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The deadline for opting out has been extended to 31st March 2016. The fees charged by the body will not exceed those applicable to the

review of accounts in 2014/15. In light of the extra expense and time it would take to appoint external auditors the Clerk recommended accepting Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd as the external auditors for Bishopstoke Parish Council.

8.2 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Mignot, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the external auditing be left in the hands of the Sector Led Body known as Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

9. Need for a Council / Clerk debit card

9.1 There was general agreement amongst Cllrs about the need for a Council debit card. Some discussions were had regarding the regulations that would apply to its use, with the suggestion being made that it be broadly the same as those for use of cheques. The Clerk was requested to provide initial guidelines for a debit card.

Action: Clerk

9.2 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Mignot, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that, subject to acceptable guidelines being produced, the principle of a debit card for the use of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk be approved.

10. Asset Management Review – to note

10.1 Cemetery. Following a complaint from a resident regarding encroachment on the grass near the ashes plots, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk will visit the Cemetery to investigate and make recommendations.

Action: Clerk and Assistant Clerk

10.2 Allotments. The builder has now been up to the allotments to investigate how to best minimise the risk of flooding. His proposed solution is somewhat different than that preferred by the allotment holders. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will visit the allotments to investigate, and to talk with the plot holders about the best solution.

Action: Clerk and Assistant Clerk

10.3 Play areas. The quarterly inspection of the play areas will take place on February 8th. Following a request from a Cllr, the Clerk has contacted a company called Gametime regarding their Expression Swing – a swing which allows an adult and child to swing together, facing each other. When details are forthcoming they will be brought before Council.

10.4 Brookfield. No change to report. The Clerk briefed that EBC have been chased by the Parish Council's lawyers, and have been invoiced for the lawyers' time. Cllr Cossey offered to speak to Richard Ward, Head of Legal and Democratic Services at Eastleigh Borough Council.

Action: Cllr Cossey

11. Heritage, Identity and Place – to note / comment

11.1 An email has been sent to Rachel Bebb, Hampshire's "Heritage Advisor", inviting her to make contact. No reply has been received yet. The Clerk will send another invitation.

Action: Clerk

12. Eastleigh Borough Council – Issues and Options

12.1 The Clerk briefed that the consultation for "Issues and Options" was now ongoing until February 17th, and that Eastleigh Borough Council would be bringing their roadshow to the Community Centre on Wednesday 20th January from 3pm to 9pm. Two full sets of documents are also available in the Parish Office, for Cllrs and residents to read. It was recognised that there is a great deal of public concern about Option B in particular.

12.2 The recommendation from the Planning Committee that a Community meeting be hosted to allow residents and Cllrs to discuss the various options was noted, along with the proposed date of 2nd

February 2016. Cllrs expressed the view that no official Council response to the consultation would be agreed before this meeting, and that the meeting itself would be primarily to listen to the views of local residents. It was felt important that residents be given a full opportunity to discuss with Cllrs, and to fill in response forms for the consultation. The Clerk will book the Methodist Church Hall for 2nd February.

Action: Clerk

12.3 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the format and layout of the Community meeting be discussed and agreed at the next Council Meeting on 26th January 2016.

13. Electoral boundary review of Eastleigh Borough Council (deferred from last meeting)

13.1 A review of the electoral boundaries in Eastleigh had recommended a reduction in borough councillors for Eastleigh from 44 to 39. It was thought prudent to again defer further comment until the next F&GP Committee meeting as it is soon to be discussed by Eastleigh Borough Council and that should provide further information and enlightenment.

Action: Clerk

14. New Cemetery Design (deferred from last meeting)

14.1 It is believed that there are approximately 2 years' worth of plots left in the existing Cemetery and it is anticipated that the New Cemetery will be available in approximately 18 months' time. It was therefore thought prudent, in light of the spare time this allows, to defer a final decision on the format of the New Cemetery until it is actually handed over to the Council.

15. Street Art – to consider need

15.1 It was agreed that, as money is being provided by developers specifically for Street Art, the Parish Council should investigate the most appropriate use of that money. Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan suggested inviting the local schools to be involved in the design and selection process. Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan also raised the possibility of using the Street Art money to provide path delineators in the New Cemetery. The Clerk briefed that he had invited Jo Calcutt to attend a future meeting. Jo is responsible for Street Art for Eastleigh Borough Council and would be able to brief Cllrs on what is possible and allowable as street art.

15.2 Proposed Cllr Cossey, Seconded Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, **RESOLVED** unanimously to defer further discussion until Jo Calcutt can attend a meeting of F & GP.

Action: Clerk

16. Clerk's Report

16.1 The Clerk briefed that on his first day in the office, he found a dead rat near the Memorial Hall. This shows that the traps laid in nearby grounds are working.

16.2 The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will be attending a meeting held by Eastleigh Borough Council to discuss the budget and precept calculations for 2016/17. The Clerk is also attending a meeting of the Local Area Community Safety Group.

16.3 An online survey has been completed by the previous Clerk regarding the cuts in Hampshire Library Service and noting the Council's concerns. Also, EBC have been asked if online access to the library book catalogue is available.

16.4 The previous Clerk has sent an email indicating the Council's support for the Electoral Review of Hampshire

17. Date, time and place of next meeting

17.1 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th February 2016 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke.

18. Motion for Confidential Business

18.1 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Toher, **RESOLVED** unanimously that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.

19. To approve payment of staff hours of work, mileage and out of pocket expenses for December 2015 (Confidential Business)

19.1 Members noted the report tabled by the RFO which is attached to these minutes.

19.2 Proposed Cllr Parkinson-MacLachlan, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the December 2015 staff payments be noted as tabled.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.15

Resolutions to be noted by the Full Parish Council

- 2.1 that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 be accepted as a true record.
- 6.7 that the budget report for December 2015 be noted.
- 6.8 that the non-confidential payments tabled for December 2015 be approved.
- 15.2 that consideration of street art be deferred until Jo Calcutt can attend an F & GP meeting.
- 18.1 that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.
- 19.2 that the December 2015 staff payments be noted as tabled.

Recommendations for consideration by the Full Parish Council

- 7.6 that the matter of the precept for 2016/17 be referred to the Parish Council meeting on 26th January 2016.
- 7.7 that future precepts should only be voted on after receipt of the tax base data from Eastleigh Borough Council, with the presumption that these matters be tabled at the January meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 8.2 that the external auditing be left in the hands of the Sector Led Body known as Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.
- 9.2 that, subject to acceptable guidelines being produced, the principle of a debit card for the use of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk be approved.
- 12.3 that the format and layout of the Community meeting be discussed and agreed at the next Council Meeting on 26th January 2016.

Payments in December 2015 in excess of £500 published in accordance with the Government's transparency directive

PC World	Laptop and software for Clerk	604.98
J Bruno Construction	Bus Shelter Repairs	971.16
Green Smile Ltd	Grounds maintenance	3195.73
Vita Play Ltd	Otter Close hopscotch	
	Swing repairs Sayers Rd	
	Swing repairs Brookfield	710.40