

**Minutes of the Meeting of
CHURCH CROOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE**

Date and Time: Monday 9th January 2012 – 8.00pm

Place: Willis Hall, Church Crookham

Present:

Councillors: Nick Harris (NH), John Bennison (JB), Helen Butler (HB),
Michael Burford(MJB), Bill Shambrook (BS) (Chairman)

Also: Jayne Hawkins – Clerk
Councillor Pat Lowe (PL)
Councillor Mel Williams (MW)

There were no members of the public

Action

01/12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrea Ong, in Councillors Ongs absence
Councillor Bill Shambrook chaired the meeting.

02/12 To approve minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th November 2011

The meeting minutes were reviewed and were approved and signed as a true reflection
of the meeting.

03/12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

04/12 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman gave the following update on the Precept submission:
The precept to be requested will be £173,530.29 council tax base now 3225.47, last
year was 3226.65. This will keep Band D household precept at £53.80. Forms to be
signed by Councillors Harris, Ong and Butler. It was reported that the precept forms
will be sent off by the Clerk before the end of the January.

05/12 Public Session

There were no comments from the public.

**06/12 To review the actual vs. budget figures from April to December 2011 and the likely
reserves at the end of the year.**

Copies of the actual vs budget figures for April to December with updated forecasts to
the end of the year were circulated and agreed by the Committee.

- Budget expenditure 2011 2012 - £197,376
- Actual to date - £108,948
- Forecast to end of year - £102,586
- Likely out-turn at end of year - £208,571
- Likely total reserves at end of year – 59K

The Chairman outlined the main reasons for differences to the budget:

- Income £11k lower due to reduced grass pitch bookings, no coaching and lower precept due to change in council tax base
- Employment costs 5K higher due to employing deputy clerk (not forecast when budget was set)
- Admin costs 0.8K higher due in part to new website, yearend support and additional BT costs, money saved on promotion
- Peter Driver premises 7K higher due to forecast for repairs to toilets and damp proof course.
- Grounds Maintenance 13K higher due to Contamination investigation work, machine to maintain 3G surface, delay in grounds maintenance contract starting (Sept rather than April)
- Supplies and Services 2.9K lower no sports coaching, Leroy refund requested
- Community Support 13.2 lower due to Harlington Centre contribution not required and call and go less than forecast
- Project Costs – 0 variance – Biggest forecast cost is Azalea Park play equipment 30K might be postponed

The Chairman highlighted that it was important to note that the likely out-turn includes an estimate of the investigation costs for the contamination work at Azalea Park but **not** any provision for remedial work/legal fees. Any work that is needed to make the Park safe will have to come from reserves or be vired from other budget headings.

07/12 To review the effectiveness of internal audit

The effectiveness of internal audit was reviewed as follows:

- **Scope of internal audit** – covers all financial records, Parish Council and Committee Minutes
- **Independence of internal auditor** – totally independent no links to the Parish Council other than for internal audit
- **Competence of internal auditor** – Last years auditor was very well qualified with over 10 years experience of Parish Council internal audits.
- **Relationships** – this years auditor is not related to any member of the Parish Council
- **Audit planning and reporting** – the audit is carried out following the advice originally set out by the Audit Commission. Last year a plan for internal audit was agreed and the Parish Council received an audit report in a timely manner. All paper work was completed in good time. Plan for 2011-2012 to be agreed with internal auditor once appointed.

Following the review It was agreed by all Councillors that the internal audit was effective.

08/12 To conduct a review of internal controls and to decide if the processes and procedures that are in place are adequate

- **Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Risk Assessment.**

The Chairman reported that this review has to be carried out annually and that it was last done in February 2011. Internal controls that are carried out by the Council are recorded in the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Risk Assessment. All Councillors had been sent copies of and had reviewed the following documents.



The following suggested updates were discussed and agreed:

- **Financial Regulations**

- 3.4 Councillor Harris suggested that the clerks emergency budget should increase to £5,000 and caveated with nominated Councillor approval. Following a discussion it was agreed not to change the clerks expenditure levels.
- 6.5 Councillor Harris suggested that petty cash should be deleted as the Parish Council are not currently using it. Following a discussion it was decided to leave the clause in as although petty cash is not currently used there may be a need to do so in the future if the Clerk wasn't prepared to pay upfront and claim back for Parish expenses.
- 11.1 Councillor Harris suggested that this should be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee rather than the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Parish Council. This was agreed by all. The Clerk was asked to update the Financial Regulations. **Clerk**

- **Standing orders**

- Councillor Harris suggested that the Clerk should be appointed as the Proper Officer. The Clerk advised that the Clerk is the Proper Officer unless the Council nominate someone else. Therefore no changes were necessary.
- Recission of previous resolutions – A discussion took place about whether the number of Councillors needed to request that a previous decision was revisited should be proportional to the number of Councillors on the Council. It was agreed that the standing orders should be updated to say at least a third but with a minimum of 3 Councillors.

- **Risk Assessment**

- A long discussion took place about whether the contamination identified at Azalea Park should be included in the risk assessment. It was agreed that the Clerk should add something in but would also speak to Councillor Shambrook about whether it would be more appropriate to add it to a risk register. **Clerk**
- It was agreed to include a quarterly download of key data to the Parish Council Chairman. Clerk to update risk register. **Clerk**

Out of the discussions the following decisions were also made:

- It was agreed that the Parish Council should think about introducing a three year forecast when setting the 213 2014 budget.
- It was agreed to purchase a shredder for the parish office
- It was agreed to look at mapping the information on the website with the publication categories in the freedom of information Act. **Clerk**

The Parish Council decided that with the suggested amendments they were satisfied that the internal controls that are in place and operated by the council were adequate. 4 in favour, 1 abstention.

09/12 To review direct debits

The Chairman reported that the Parish Council only has two Direct Debits currently

- British Telecom
- British Gas

It was reported that the actual payments are reported on the finance report each month and are shown on the bank statements which are signed and checked by Councillors each month. It was agreed that these were appropriate checks.

10/12 To review any outstanding debts from 2010/2011 and write off if not recoverable

It was reported that there were two outstanding debts from 2010. Both of these were paid in as cash to the Hart Leisure Centre in 2010.

- Chris Ivey CC021 16/7/2010 £89he says he paid in at Leisure Centre
- Paul Petley CC058 8/12/2010 letter sent 2/2/2011

It was agreed that these were written off and the Deputy Clerk was asked to write to the football teams and request that all payments are made by cheque or electronic transfer. If any cash has to be paid in it must be handed directly to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk in the Parish Office and a signed copy of the invoice taken as a receipt of payment Payments should not be made to the leisure centre.

**Deputy
Clerk**

11/12 To decide whether to employ Eric Schwimmen as the Parish Councils internal auditor for the financial year 2011 2012.

It was reported that HALC are no longer offering the service. Eric Schwimmen is available and would do the internal audit for the same cost as last year. £385.

It was agreed by all to appoint Eric Schwimmen as the internal auditor. The Clerk was asked to write to Eric Schwimmen to confirm appointment.

Clerk

12/12 To review the following policy documents and decide on necessary updates: Procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of information act and the Press and Media Policy.

Procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of information Act 2000 and the data protection Act 1998 were reviewed and it was agreed that the Chairman would be nominated as a person to receive a copy of the Parish Council electronic files on a quarterly basis. No other changes requested. Clerk to update document

Press and media policy was reviewed and no changes were suggested.

Clerk

13/12 To receive information on the valuation of Parish Council assets and to agree updates to the asset register

The Chairman reported that following last years internal audit report asset valuations had been requested from Cunnigham and Lindsey. An updated asset register was circulated.

Valuation figures Jan 2012, figure in brackets is current asset register figure

- Peter Driver changing rooms: £189,000 (£170,352)
- Five a side pitch: £84,000 (£74,000)
- War Memorial: £45,000 (£65,000)

It was agreed that the Clerk should update the asset register and to update the insurance values when the annual insurance was renewed in April 2012.

Clerk

- 14/12 To decide what accounts to display on the website electronically. i.e. annual return and monthly finance reports. Need to update the finance regulations to reflect any changes in policy.**

It was agreed to display the monthly finance report, the quarterly updates and the annual accounts on the website. It was agreed that the Finance report would be amended to only show the total employment costs rather than individual salaries. The clerk was asked to update the website and the Financial Regulations to reflect the changes.

Deputy
Clerk /
Clerk

- 15/12 To receive an update on the land contamination studies at Azalea Park and to decide what actions to take.**

An update was given on the costs of the Land Contamination checks at Azalea Park
Expenditure to date on checks: £4619
Further recommended tests: £1896
Ground Penetrating radar (whole park) best price - £3100
Remedial work to make safe: Unknown

It was reported that there would be a meeting with Hart EHO's Tuesday 10th at 2.30pm Harlington and a meeting with Toxic Land, Miracle and EHO on Thursday 12th at 5.00pm, Harlington.

The Clerk was asked to take minutes at both these meetings recording any decisions. It was agreed that the Clerk together with Councillors Ong and Butler could approve any further expenditure on contamination studies/testing up to a total cost of £11,120 (to include £4619 spent to date).

Clerk/AO
/HB

- 16/12 To discuss permanent appointment of Deputy Clerk following completion of six month probationary period.**

Following a 6 month probationary period the permanent appointment of Sally du Gay as deputy clerk was discussed. It was agreed by all to make the position permanent from mid February. This was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Shambrook and agreed by all.

- 17/12 Agenda items for the next meeting**

- Review of year end accounts April 2011 – Mar 2010
- Update on audit
- Update on Parish Plan

- 18/12 Date of next meeting**

10th April 2012 There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Signed.....

Date.....