

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

Date and Time: Monday 13th January 2014 – 8pm

Place: Willis Hall, Church Crookham

Present:

Councillors: Nick Harris (NH) (Chair), Jenny Radley (JR) Michael Burford (MB)

Also present: Sally du Gay deputy clerk/RFO

There were no members of the public present

Action

01/14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Shambrook

02/14 To approve minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th October 2013

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

03/14 Dispensations – To receive any written requests for disclosable pecuniary interest dispensations from members.

There were no requests for dispensations.

04/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

05/14 Chairman's Announcements:

- The internal auditor had confirmed with Rod Latham of SLCC that parish councils are not covered by the Financial Services Commission bankers guarantee scheme.
- The internal auditors report has been received and will be brought to the January parish council meeting.
- It has been confirmed that it is not necessary for councillors to sign disclosable pecuniary interest dispensations to set the precept.

06/14 Public Session

There were no members of the public present.

07/14 Actual vs budget

To review the updated actual vs. budget figures for April to Dec 2013

Circulated

It was reported that:

- Income is forecast to be higher than budget due to increased pitch hire and interest received on bank accounts.
- All expenditure costs (except Project costs) are forecast to be on budget.
- Project costs includes the £34K for the tender process, which may be redeemed from £1.1m for the community centre should the council decide to build themselves.
- Clerk will be purchasing a PC with Microsoft license for new member of staff plus a new office printer. Total cost expected to be approx. £1k

08/14 Debtors report

To review an updated debtors report year-to-date

Circulated

The debtors report was reviewed.

It was agreed that the deputy clerk should try contacting long outstanding debtors one more time via email. If no payment is received then the debt should be written off before the year end.

RFO

09/14 2014 2015 budget

To consider whether any amendments are required to the budget for 2014 2015 now that the tax base has been agreed

It was agreed that no amendments were required to the budget.

10/14 Ear marked reserves

To review existing ear marked reserves and general reserves to ensure that they are adequate and not excessive.

To agree to any new ear marked reserved to be created at the end of the year if there are funds available.

To consider whether to move any existing earmarked reserves.

Community Youth Projects – £40K

Peter Driver Improvements – £25K

Play Equipment Replacement – £4K

Replace 3G Surface – £3K

Green Energy Projects – £5K

Community Centre Planning – £17K

Community Centre Running costs – £10K

S106 Sandy Lane Car Park – £20,220

S106 Allotments and SANG and Allotment Car Park - £128,920

It was agreed that no movements of reserves were required

To consider if general reserves are adequate: £50,884

It was agreed that general reserves are adequate for the short term.

It was agreed that the following additions (in priority order) should be made to earmarked reserves at end of year of there is any funding available:

- £3k five a side replacement
- £4K playground replacement
- £5K Green Energy fund

11/14 Tax base & Precept

To receive an update on the tax base for 2014 2015 and to agree a recommendation to be taken to Full Council for the precept request for 2014 2015.

Tax Base: 3367.53

If Precept remained the same at £53.80 per band D household then the precept request would be: £181,173.11

Church Crookham would also receive 2/3rd of the Council Tax support grant = £5280.56.

In 2015/2016 this support grant will drop to: £2640.28 and in 2016/2017 it will be zero.

It was agreed that the precept should remain the same at £181,173.11 (£53.80 per Band D household).

12/14 Financial regulations

It is recommended that the Council adopts the new NALC model Financial Regulations with the following amendments that are specific to Church Crookham Parish Council:

- 1.14 - council must approve all grants and payments
- 3.1 - committees shall formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year only, and not for 3 year forecasts;
- 3.2 - preparation of budget to be completed by January.
- 4.1 - the Clerk may authorise expenditure up to £500 alone, not in conjunction with the Chairman, committees may authorise expenditure according to the limits set by their own terms of reference.
- 4.4 - Salary budgets are to be reviewed in October;
- 5.5 - The Unity Bank current account shall be operated as an imprest account with a minimum balance of £20,000 to be replenished from the HSBC bank account. The RFO shall calculate each month the reimbursement amount, taking into account any income received into the Unity Bank current account and then prepare an inter-bank transfer voucher and an HSBC cheque accordingly, both to be signed by two members.
- 5.6c - fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £20,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council. An exception to this limit will be internal bank funds transfers on the Community Centre accounts where the limit will be £50,000, a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.
- 6.14 - Clerk to be appointed as Service Administrator for banking (on auditors recommendation);
- 6.6 - Cheques may be signed away from meetings but must be reported at next convenient meeting;
- 6.16 - removal of clause relating to non-pre-paid debit cards;
- 6.18 - A pre-paid debit card may be issued to the Clerk with a limit of £500. This limit will be set by the council. The card may only be used for the purchase of:
 - Office stationery;
 - Postage stamps;
 - Items requiring immediate payment and pre-approved by council;
 - Items required in an emergency as per 4.3 above;
 - Grounds maintenance sundries;
 - Council-hosted events sundries;
 - Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council via the monthly bank reconciliation and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council, signed by two members;

Removal of clause relating to trade cards or corporate credit cards.

It was agreed to recommend that the financial regulations go to Full Council for approval after the above changes have been made subject to the following minor changes:

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3.3 – change of words “three year” to “multi-year” and addition of caveat “when



multi-year forecasts exist”

4.1 – addition of “not covered in the points above”

4.8 – removal of “material” variances and their definition.

4.9 – “Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by delegated authority to the Policy & Finance Committee as part of the budgetary control process”

5.7 & 5.8 – Removal of clauses “For each financial year the RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively, Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like) for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council.

5.8 A record of regular payments made under 5.7 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised- thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.”

5.9 – “In respect of grants council shall approve all expenditure”

11.1 (ii) – addition of “and project managers”

18.1 – change of words from “from time to time” to “annually”.

13/14 Standing orders

It is recommended that the Council adopts the new NALC Model standing orders with the following amendments that are specific to Church Crookham Parish Council:

- A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours and on any night all meetings must be finished by 10.30pm.
- A person may choose whether to sit or stand when speaking

Main changes in new Model standing orders:

- A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the council’s statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the council’s area or its residents
- New section on Draft Minutes
- Amendments to code of conduct section resulting from localism act and DPI’s.
- Amendment to code of conduct complaints about councillors resulting from localism act and changes to code of conduct.
- New section on signing of legal deeds

Clerk suggests that the Council should consider setting up a non-standing staff sub-committee in the new financial year to deal with staff issues.

In line with the new Standing Orders these will be reviewed again at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May together with Financial Regs, Data Protection Policy, Complaints Policy, Press and Media Policy.

It was agreed to recommend that the standing orders go to Full Council for approval after the above changes have been made subject to the following minor changes:

1m – “At the chairman’s discretion the mover of the amendment has the right to reply at the end of the debate on it.

1o – “unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak only one on the debate on a motion except:”

3i – “A person shall raise his hand when requesting to speak and may choose whether

RFO

to sit or stand when speaking. “

4dv – insertion of “as soon as possible before the meeting”

13i – insertion of clause “All councillors shall undertake training in the code of conduct within six months of the delivery of their acceptance of office form.”

18 d ii – change of words from “in a local newspaper” to “on the council’s website”

14/14 Investment & Treasury Policy

To review and approve the investment and treasury policy

It was agreed that the internal auditor should be asked to review the draft policy before being agreed by council.

RFO

15/14 Internal audit

To review the effectiveness of internal audit and to agree any changes.

- Scope of internal
- Independence of internal auditor
- Competence of internal auditor.
- Relationships
- Audit planning and reporting

It was agreed that the Parish Council continues to use IAC as the internal auditor.

16/14 Risk assessment

Update risk assessment circulated

Changes:

Investments – reference to Council treasury & Investment policy (to be adopted)

Budgets – proper use of funds granted – checked at internal audit, all applications approved by Full Council, all applicants required to complete an application form.

Standing orders – document control – daily online backups, version control added to all documents.

It was agreed to recommend that the updated risk assessment should go to Full Council for approval.

17/14 Asset register

To review the asses register and agree any changes

Updated Asset Register circulated

Changes:

Council need to sign off any assets that are disposed of

Should only include items above the £500 value

It was agreed to recommend that the updated asset register should go to Full Council for approval.

18/14 Health & Safety policy

To review the health and safety policy and agree any changes

It was agreed that no changes were required to the Health & Safety policy

19/14 Complaints policy

To review the complaints policy and agree any changes.

Change:



“Any complaint concerning matters relating to code of conduct breaches of a member should be dealt with under the Code of Conduct and addressed to the Standards Committee of the District Council – details can be found on the District Council Website”

It was agreed to approve the change to the Complaints Policy.

20/14 Direct debits and standing orders

To review direct debits and standing orders

Direct debits:

- British Telecom – office telephones & broadband
- British Gas – Peter Driver hot water
- HSBC – bank charges

Standing order:

Upper Bridge – website hosting

21/14 Agenda items for next meeting

- discuss and agree officer and Councillor training for 2014 2015
- year end

22/14 Date of next meeting

14th April 2014

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....