

## BURGHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee Meeting

**Date:** Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 **Time:** 7.00pm  
**Place:** Burghfield village hall committee room  
**Present:** Mr M Paterson-Borland Mr P Lawrence  
Mr I MacFarlane Mr C Greaves  
Mr D Godding  
**Attending:** Clerk to the Parish Council  
**Apologies:** Mr N Morse

1. **To receive members apologies for absence and written requests for Disclosable Pecuniary Interest dispensations**

There were no items upon the agenda that necessitated a member to present a written request for dispensation for a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 July 2017, having been circulated, were confirmed a correct record and signed by the presiding Chairman.

3. **Matters Arising on the Minutes**

- i) Instructions have been presented to The App office to commence work on the upgrade of the parish council website
- ii) A temporary administrative assistant has been employed during the summer period to ease the current workload.

4. **To deal with any items requiring URGENT attention by the committee**

Members were updated in relation to the village hall cleaner.

5. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve, pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following items. **Resolved** unanimously by members present to exclude the press and public.

**Staffing**

- i) To determine the terms and conditions for the employment of an assistant clerk.

Members present gave consideration to the documentation prepared for the employment of an assistant clerk. Upon clarification of the details contained within, members present resolved unanimously to proceed with the advertisement and appointment of an assistant to the parish clerk.

- ii) To determine the advertisement of the vacancy for an assistant clerk

Members present gave consideration to the advertisement prepared for the employment of an assistant clerk. Resolved unanimously to advertise the vacancy in the newsletter, the parish website, local noticeboards and the community Facebook page. A closing date has been set at the 7<sup>th</sup> October, with interviews being scheduled for week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

- iii) To nominate members to sit upon the Appointments sub-committee

The Governance & Finance committee as a whole will oversee the applications received for the post. 4 members of the committee will attend the scheduled interviews upon short listing suitable candidates according to their availability.

6. **Accounts**

- i) To consider requests for donations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972

Members present gave consideration to a request presented by the Burghfest organisers for a grant of £500 for the upcoming Beer Festival within the parish. The grant is dependent upon evidence being provided that the funds are utilised for the purchase of additional toilets only, as per last year. Resolved unanimously to donate £500. Proposed by Mr I Macfarlane, seconded by Mr C Greaves and resolved unanimously.

Members present gave consideration to a request presented by the Multiple Sclerosis Centre, for a grant of £650 to assist with the provision of service for residents within the parish. **Resolved** unanimously to donate £650. Proposed by Mr I Macfarlane, seconded by Mr C Greaves and resolved unanimously.

Members present resolved unanimously to present a grant to the Macmillan Coffee morning group to match monies received up to a maximum of £500. Proposed by Mr M Paterson-Borland, seconded by

Mr P Lawrence and resolved unanimously.

- ii) To receive the budget comparison figures for the current financial year.

The budget comparison figures for the period 1 April to 31 August 2017 were presented and the figures noted. The current percentage expenditure of 24.3% was based on the current year's budget and excluded those figures that related to the previous year's commitment but had been paid in the current financial year.

The clerk is to undertake the budget preparations for the upcoming financial year with support and online training being provided by RBS Software solutions.

- iii) To receive the signed off external audit report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017

The Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017 had been signed off and returned by Mazars, the external auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. Confirmation was provided that the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices, relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. Thanks were expressed by members present to the clerk for a successful audit

- iv) To consider any specific projects for inclusion within the revenue and capital estimates for financial year 2018/2019

Committee members are to discuss at their relevant meetings with suggested projects being presented to the Governance & Finance Committee at the next meeting for consideration alongside any potential precept increase being required.

7.

### **Governance & Compliance**

- i) To receive an update in relation to the upgrade of the parish council website

The contract for the upgrade of the parish website has been approved and presented to The App Office for their implementation.

- ii) To consider the effectiveness of the councils Risk Assessment documentation for the current financial year

In accordance with the guidance in the updated Practitioners Guide, members reviewed the councils risk assessment, covering both financial and operational risks. Members were satisfied that the current system was effective in ensuring the council remained up to date with their responsibilities.

Proposed by Mr D Godding, seconded by Mr P Lawrence and **resolved** unanimously to adopt the Risk Assessment for full operation for a further financial year.

- iii) To consider the annual subscription fee payable to BALC and determine its value for money.

Members present gave consideration to the annual subscription fee requested from BALC, determining whether the amount represented 'value for money'. Members felt the amount requested was currently justified due to an increase in services being supplied. A review of its effectiveness is to be undertaken again next year. Proposed by Mr M Paterson-Borland, seconded by Mr I Macfarlane and **resolved** unanimously.

- iv) To give consideration to the annual financial contribution provided by Burghfield, Sulhamstead and Stratfield Mortimer to the Willink Leisure Centre

Members present received an update in relation to the annual contributions presented to West Berks Council from Stratfield Mortimer, Sulhamstead and Burghfield for the continued operation of the Willink Leisure Centre, determining whether the requested funds represented value for money. Consideration was also given as to the implications should one or more of the funding partners withdraw from the agreement. Members requested clarification in relation to ownership of the various assets held on site. A meeting is to be set up between the funding parties to establish a way forward.

8.

### **Policies & Templates**

- i) To receive an update of policies held by the council for the ensuing municipal year

Members gave consideration to the policies currently held. The clerk has undertaken a review of each of the policies determining their implementation date and subsequent review. The policies will be presented on a rolling basis to the relevant committee for their review, depending upon the nature of the policy and expiration of the recommended review period.

9.

### **Administration: Burial Ground**

- i) To receive an update & consider any administrative issues in the daily operation of the burial ground

The existing churchyard rules will be reviewed in conjunction with the parish council's rules for the newly provided burial ground to ensure consistency and avoid any confusion going forward. A meeting with St. Mary's Church wardens and the Reverend has been requested.

A detailed review of the parish council's obligations for the existing churchyard upon transference of the maintenance is to be undertaken. A report is to be presented for further consideration.

- ii) To review the Burial Fees for the ensuing year.

The Burial fees were reviewed accordingly by members present. Proposed by Mr I Macfarlane, proposed by Mr P Lawrence and **resolved** unanimously for the burial fees to remain at their current level for a further year.

- iii) To review the Burial Ground Regulations for the ensuing municipal year.

The Burial Ground Regulations were reviewed by members present. Members resolved unanimously that no amendments were required.

**10. Matters for future discussion** – Projects and precept

**11. To receive items for information only** - None

**Conclusion:** The Chairman declared the meeting closed 20.50pm

**Chairman:**