



Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee Held On Thursday 5th March 2020 at 8pm in the Community Office

Present:

Councillors:

Nicky Smallbone (NS) - Chair
Ian Hill (IH)
Roger Beattie (RB)
Tim Horton (TH)

Officer:

Kristina Tynan (KT)

01/20 Apologies for absence
Matt Reid, Nick Hancock

02/20 Approval of Minutes
Resolved: To approve the Minutes from the Meeting on the 28th November 2019 which were received by Council on 10th December 2019

03/20 Matters Arising

04/20 Declarations of Interest
There were none notified.

05/20 Update on Existing Issues
Rent Review of Sports Field – It was noted that the rent was due for renewal in 2017. We wrote to Carter Jonas to remind them of this as we had no communication from them on this issue. We then appointed Saville's to deal with the rent negotiation on our behalf which they have done and received no comparable figures from Carter Jonas. Saville's did say the rent we pay is a very top of the range figure.

IH gave out the spreadsheet done by the office on prices and sizes of other parish councils' leases of sports fields in Oxfordshire. It was noted that several communications have been sent to Carter Jonas, but no responses have been received.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Jonas Carter giving details of the figures paid by other parish councils and a second letter with a proposal of a rent increase by RPI. IH will ask Saville's for the comparable figures they previously sent to Carter Jonas. IH will draft the letter and circulate it to members before it is posted.

TH stated that we could at some point involve SODC about this issue and who would have the power to intervene if we felt this necessary.

06/20 Grants Requests to be considered
A grant application form has been received from Watlington ArtWeeks for funding for additional materials to support the festival now that the footprint has expanded with 50% of the venues away from the High Street.
After discussion it was:
Resolved: That we allocate £381, the amount requested to Watlington ArtWeeks.

07/20 Budget

Budget 2020/2021

A budget update 1/4/2019 – 31/12/2019 had been sent out to Members which was accepted. It was noted that the West Room income was proportionally less than the previous year albeit with 3 months still to go. KT will have a look at the figures and report back.

Three Year Budget Forecast – NS said that she has been looking at this but is not sure how much this is worthwhile doing but will continue with it for the moment.

08/20 Financial Issues

1. **Bank account review** – On-going

2. **CIL**

Speed Indicator Recommendation from Operations Committee: That WPC purchase one SID and one third of another SID and we ask that the Finance Committee to investigate paying for these with CIL money subject to their clarification and approval.

IH said that the proposal is that we join with three neighbouring parishes which have problems with speeding through traffic, namely Swyncombe, Britwell Salome and Cuxham. The idea is that Britwell Salome and Watlington will each have a dedicated SID for their own use, and Watlington, Cuxham and Swyncombe will share a one between them - each parish having it for a third of the year. The devices are designed to be readily moved from post to post to avoid motorists becoming over familiar with them and so ignoring them. We will need to install a pole at each location we want to use, and each pole will have a solar panel unit permanently attached to it. We have settled on three poles (locations yet to be decided) to provide initial coverage for Watlington but could later extend this by adding further poles and solar panels. The benefit of this joint approach is that the supplier has offered a bulk discount. At the moment the cost to Watlington would be around £3500 to £4000. A final confirmed figure will be available shortly.

The committee discussed this recommendation and felt that as it was for infrastructure this is good project to spend CIL monies on. It was also thought that as Watlington is the biggest parish that we should take the lead on purchasing the equipment.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Watlington take the lead on this project and partner up with our neighbouring parishes to purchase the 3 SID devices and solar panels for the parishes involved and for all parishes involved to send WPC a legally binding letter which confirms their intention to pay their share of the cost of the equipment.

3. **Confidential Item: EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC for Agenda Item 8.4**

Resolved: *That in the view that this item is part of a tender process and as sensitive confidential financial figures will be discussed in the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw for the next item (12)*

Under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as defined in Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

4. **Performance Stage in the Paddock** – To agree that we can have a two partnered contract- TH had sent out a report relating to this issue (held on file in office) which was discussed on confidential session. It was noted that at the present the Operations Committee are not looking for any more money from WPC than that which has already been allocated.

Resolved: That the Finance Committee approve the report and appoint Morris and Blunt and that we authorise the Operations Committee to go forward with this project and that they report to Finance Committee at an appropriate time the source of funding. The Operations Committee to explore funding sources. That the Operation Committee will consult on details of the roofing amendments with SODC Officers.

4. To agree the Statement on Internal Control for the year ending March 2020

Resolved: That the Statement of Internal Control for the year ending March 2020 is agreed.

IH said that he will re-do the Risk Register.

09/20 Review of Policies

1. **Grant Policy Review** – Deferred to the next meeting. RB wishes to compare the policies.

10/20 Staff Issues

1. **Training** – Group Training for all Councillors. KT reported that our last trainer, recommended by OALC is no longer undertaking training. It was agreed that as we are in the second year of Council it is probably not worth doing at this stage. KT reported that a number of Councillors have attended courses on various issues. TH suggested that perhaps Councillors could buddy up with their opposite numbers from other Parish Councils such as Benson for example.

2. **Staff Reviews for 2019/2020** – These have been arranged for Thursday 19th March 2020. NS will email Councillors to advise them that these are taking place.

11/20 Correspondence/Information

There was no correspondence that needed discussion.

12/20 Any Other Business

Hill Road Car Park Business Rates – TH said that he would like to explore this issue again. KT reported that AM had appealed the business rates with the Valuation Office. TH will speak to AM for an update. It was agreed that TH further investigate this issue.

WPC Sinking Fund for Public Assets– TH said he had concerns about some of the sinking funds for our buildings in that they are not adequate enough. This issue will be further discussed at a future meeting.

13/20 Items for the Next Meeting

Financial regulations Review 2019/2020 - IH/NS /KT to review
Draft Financial Review Policy- NS/NH
Draft Investment Strategy NS/NH
Risk Register- IH
Sinking funds.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.28PM