

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 02 October 2018 at 7pm in the Meeting Room at Pinetrees Community Centre.

Present Cllr S Exell (Vice-chair)
Cllr P Baker
Cllr J Ballman
Cllr R Ballman
Cllr D Moffatt

Cllr M Lucas (Non-committee member)

Officers A Reeves (Parish Manager)
H Morgan (Deputy Clerk)
M Szczepanek (Project Manager)

Public None

191 **Apologies**
Cllr K Small (Chair)
Cllr J Rodrigues
Cllr T Smith

192 **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
Cllr S Exell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 4 and asked if someone could take the chair whilst the grant application received from SN Dogs was considered. Cllr R Ballman was nominated to take the chair at agenda item 4. All agreed.

RESOLVED that Cllr R Ballman takes the Chair at agenda item 4.

193 **Minutes of previous meeting**
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing meeting held 4th September 2018 were moved as a correct and accurate record by Cllr D Moffatt, seconded by Cllr J Ballman. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee held on 4th September 2018 be approved.

Cllr R Ballman referred to minute 162 and asked about the status of the Halloween Party. The Parish Manager confirmed that a number of community groups had been asked to host and organise the party, but none were willing.

Cllr D Moffatt referred to minute 160 and confirmed that new chairs had been purchased for 32 The Circle plus additional chairs for John Moulton Hall. The Parish Manager stated that a table was still to be ordered.

194 **Grant Applications**
5th Swindon Guide and Ranger Unit - £500
The Parish Manager introduced the application and confirmed that this was a revised version of the application presented at the September 2018 Finance & Staffing Committee meeting which was for an increased amount as agreed at the previous meeting.
Cllr D Moffatt moved that the application be approved, seconded by Cllr J Ballman. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the grant application received from the 5th Swindon Guide and Ranger Unit be approved and £500 be granted.

Cllr S Exell left the room and Cllr R Ballman took the Chair.

SN Dogs - £900

Cllr R Ballman introduced the application and passed over to two representatives from SN Dogs who gave an overview of their application.

Cllr D Moffatt asked where the group currently operate from. It was confirmed that the group run from a residential address in Pinehurst.

Cllr D Moffatt asked if the dogs the group assist come from across Swindon. It was confirmed that dogs come from Swindon and other locations including abroad. It was confirmed that the group will still take in dogs from abroad, but it was suspected that this would cease as a result of BREXIT.

Cllr P Baker stated that he was aware of the organisation and was supportive of it. He suggested the group write to the BMW Charities' Committee for funding.

Cllr R Ballman raised concerns over the independent examination of the accounts. The representatives stated that they had met with the internal auditor and had come up with processes to overcome the issues and that he was content with progress.

The representatives confirmed that copies of the groups bank account statements had been provided to the Parish.

Cllr R Ballman asked for confirmation of what the requested £900 would be spent on. It was confirmed that approx. £140 would be spent on a microchip reader and the remaining funds would be put towards office costs.

The Parish Manager stated that the Parish Council needed to account for money properly and given that the auditors reported issues with the ways in which the group handled money it was suggested evidence is provided demonstrating how the auditor's issues had been addressed.

Cllr D Moffatt asked if the group had applied for funds from any other organisations. It was confirmed that no other grants had been applied for and the group had applied to the Parish Council due to its proximity to the current registered office.

Cllr D Moffatt encouraged the group to apply to other Parish Councils.

The Parish Manager suggested any funds granted are ringfenced to be used exclusively for the benefit of the parish.

Cllr J Ballman asked whether the group had any thoughts about where they might rent office space. The Parish Manager had suggested that 32 The Circle could be used pending any cleaning and hygiene matters with dogs entering the building.

Cllr J Ballman confirmed that he would be keen to support the application especially if some of the granted funds were to come back to the Parish Council through the hiring of accommodation.

Cllr R Ballman felt that more clarity was needed on the issues identified by the auditor. The Parish Manager suggested it could be agreed to grant an amount and it be paid over once evidence had been received re: the auditors' issues.

Cllr D Moffatt suggested it be agreed that £500 be granted once evidence had been provided re: the auditors issues and a further grant application be submitted for any additional funds needed. Cllr R Ballman confirmed she supported Cllr D Moffatts suggestion.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that £500 be granted to SN Dogs once evidence that the auditors' issues had been addressed had been presented to the Parish Council.

Cllr S Exell re-joined the meeting and took the Chair.

Shine Swindon - £2,500

Cllr D Moffatt stated that he had read through the application and had questions about it.

Cllr R Ballman said she had looked up the organisation and other post-natal depression help groups and had discovered that 2-3 other groups had existed in the past and don't survive very long.

Cllr S Exell felt that additional information needed to be provided by the group's representatives.

Issues with the application included a lack of a charity number and it didn't quantify how many parishioners would benefit from the grant nor did it include any bank account details.

Cllr S Exell asked how this could be best approached at a future meeting; should the Parish Council provide questions they wanted answered or should questions be asked when representatives attend a future meeting to present their application?

Cllr J Ballman stated that he would not be happy to provide money to an organisation which is not yet a registered charity and do not have a bank account.

Cllr S Exell proposed the organisation be asked to provide a charity no. and bank account details prior to the meeting when the application will be presented. Seconded by Cllr D Moffatt. All agreed.

RESOLVED that Shine Swindon be asked to provide a Charity Number and bank account details prior to the meeting when the application will be presented and considered.

195 **YTD Finance & Transaction Logs**

Cllr S Exell confirmed that, in the absence of the chair, the item would be deferred until the next meeting. She added that no transaction logs had been reviewed prior to the meeting due to the closeness of the meeting to the beginning of the month.

196 **Projects Update**

The Projects Manager read through the written report which was circulated prior to the meeting. A copy of the report can be found as Annex A in the Minute Book.

John Moulton Hall (JMH)

The Parish Manager confirmed that the library was being kept open as much as possible as the Parish were sensitive about closing libraries for a period of time but there would be no water on site hence why a portable toilet will be placed on site and portable heaters will be provided.

The Projects Manager confirmed that the only works being completed in the library would be to the lighting and heating. He said that some of the furniture left in the building had been skipped and the TVs and monitors were to be recycled.

The Project Manager asked for confirmation that the Committee were happy for £1,620 to be taken from the contingency fund for the re-varnishing of the ceiling in the hall.

Cllr S Exell asked for the Committee to agree.

All agreed.

RESOLVED that £1,620 be taken from the contingency fund for the refurbishment of JMH to pay for the re-varnishing of the hall ceiling.

The Projects Manager confirmed that the installation of the suspended ceilings would begin one day early, on the 3rd October 2018. A verbal description of the ceilings to be installed in the foyer was given.

Cllr P Baker asked about the lights in the foyer which always remained on. The Projects Manager confirmed that contractors had been unable to locate the light switch, but all the new lighting would work via infrared PIRs.

Churchward Avenue Leisure Garden

Cllr J Ballman enquired about what could be done about the slow worms found at the site. The Projects Manager confirmed that advice of the professionals would be followed.

Cllr S Exell asked the Committee to note the timescales, delays and suggested split of works reported. All agreed.

Even Swindon Community Centre

The Projects Manager confirmed that an asbestos survey would take place Friday 5th October 2018.

The Parish Manager confirmed that the managing association had been informed of planned works.

The Projects Manager stated that the preferred bidder had been contacted and informed that a contract could not be awarded until agreed at October's Full Council meeting and until the result of the application for grant funding is known.

The Parish Manager stated that the Grants Manager was on annual leave until 22nd October 2018.

Cllr D Moffatt stated that the asset needed to be transferred from Swindon Borough Council (SBC) to the Parish Council before any works could take place. The Parish Manager confirmed that this was in process and the terms of the transfer had been agreed in principle.

Cllr S Exell suggested the Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee had been content that works could be paid for as transitional funding had been received and would cover any works agreed to date.

The Parish Manager stated that SBC would not allow any works to take place whilst the Parish Council has no authority to do.

Cllr S Exell asked if a decision could be made by Full Council prior to the asset transfer taking place. The Parish Manager confirmed that a decision could be made with a caveat that no works could take place until the transfer had completed.

The Projects Manager stated that there was a 90 day hold on the quote received from the preferred bidder.

Cllr J Ballman asked if the Parish Council could proceed based on an email received

from Maureen Penny. The Parish Manager advised against this and stated that at least a Tenancy at Will should be in place before any works take place.

Cllr P Baker left the meeting at 7.57pm.

It was confirmed that in theory the managing association hold the lease for Even Swindon Community Centre.

The Project Manager and Parish Manager agreed that it was unlikely any works would begin until the New Year.

Lynmouth Road

The Project Manager confirmed that a sequence of works had been agreed with the Conservation Officer.

Cllr R Ballman asked about ownership of the door and wall. Cllr D Moffatt confirmed that the Parish Council were not responsible for the door or wall.

Cllr R Ballman went on to ask why the Parish Council were suggesting completing works that should be carried out by SBC. It was confirmed that the Parish Council had development funds to complete the works and Cllr S Exell said the Parish Council should be seen to be doing something with the development monies received.

The Parish Manager confirmed that solicitors had advised that the Parish Council could register an interest in the wall and/or door and the land concerned. They had no concerns about the Parish Council making repairs to the door based on H&S.

Cllr R Ballman asked about the cost of the suggested works. The Projects Manager confirmed that these were not currently known.

A discussion was had about the current state of the door and works that may be required.

Cllr D Moffatt moved that the Committee agree to carrying out the 1st stage of suggested works and replacing the door cover with a new board in Parish Green. Cllr J Ballman seconded.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council replace the covering of the door in the wall with a new board in Parish Green.

32 The Circle

The Projects Manager stated that someone had been asked to complete drawings of the existing and a proposed layout, a copy of both were circulated.

A discussion ensued around the drawings and possible refurbishment works that could be carried out within the building.

Cllr S Exell proposed that the Project Manager be asked to look into the cost of completing the refurbishment works discussed and reports back at a future meeting.
Seconded by Cllr R Ballman.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Project Manager looks into the cost of completing the suggested refurbishment works at 32 The Circle and reports back at a future meeting.

CCTV

It was confirmed that the CCTV should be monitored by Waterside 24 hours a day.

Cllr J Ballman suggested the Parish look to obtain armour for the CCTV.

The Projects Manager left the meeting at 8.49pm

197 Ward Allowances

The Parish Manager stated that Cllr S Exell had asked for £1,350 of her Ward Allowance to be paid over to the Even Swindon Community Centre Association to pay for the replacement cooker purchased.

Cllr D Moffatt moved that the spend be approved. Seconded by Cllr J Ballman.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that £1,350 be paid over to the Even Swindon Community Centre Association from Cllr S Exells Ward Allowance to pay for a replacement cooker.

The Parish Manager asked the Committee to note that the quote received for the installation of fencing around the sand pit at St Marks was £5,585.74 which was over the budget initially agreed.

Cllr D Moffatt moved that the additional spend be approved. Seconded by Cllr J Ballman.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that the increase in spend initially agreed for new railings to be installed around the sandpit at St Marks Rec. be approved.

198 Financial implications of recreation grounds

Cllr S Exell suggested that in the absence of the Chair of the Committee the item be deferred until November's meeting.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred until Novembers Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

199 Finance support for a Youth Worker

The Parish Manager stated Full Council had approved in principle the definition of a Youth Worker, but some clarity was needed. He added that the Job Description to be amended and some had concerns over the Parish Council completing statutory duties of others.

The Parish Manager suggested a smaller offer where a Youth Worker would be based in Penhill only to begin with. He confirmed that funds were available to cover the cost of this.

It was confirmed that this would be a part time post and if the recruitment process was started quickly someone could be in post by Christmas 2018.

A discussion took place over the area(s) a Youth Worker would be asked to work in.

All agreed to proceed with the recruitment of a Youth Worker.

RESOLVED that a Youth Worker be employed on a 2 year contract to work in Penhill only in the first instance.

200 Increasing lettable floor space in Pinetrees Community Centre

Cllr J Ballman stated that there was a shortage of lettable floor space at Pinetrees Community Centre and would like to look into the possibility of converting the area

outside the Parish Office into a lettable space and/or installing a mezzanine floor over the library or café area.

Cllr S Exell suggested the Project Manager be asked to investigate the possibility of increasing floor space. Seconded by Cllr J Ballman.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Projects Manager be asked to investigate the possibility of increasing floor space at Pinetrees Community Centre.

201 Lynmouth Road/Redcliffe Street – Door in the wall

It was confirmed that this item was covered under the Projects Update.

202 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 3 (d) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted that the public and press be excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting: Reason – Staffing.

203 Employee Handbook

Cllrs agreed to recommend that Full Council approve and adopt the draft Employee Handbook.

RECOMMENDATION that Full Council approve and adopt the draft Employee Handbook.

204 Hardship Allowance

Cllrs approve the Hardship Allowance application received.

RESOLVED that the Hardship Allowance application received be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.54pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Vice-Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee