

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2018 at 7pm in the Meeting Room at Pinetrees Community Centre.

Present	Cllr K Small	(Chair)
	Cllr S Exell	(Vice-chair)
	Cllr J Ballman	
	Cllr R Ballman	
	Cllr D Moffatt	
	Cllr T Smith	
Officers	A Reeves	(Parish Manager)
	H Morgan	(Deputy Clerk)
	M Szczepanek	(Project Manager)

Public None

235 **Apologies**
Cllr P Baker
Cllr J Rodrigues

236 **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
None

237 **Approve Parish Grant Application**

MHA Swindon

The Parish Manager introduced and passed over to a representative from the applying organisation.

The representative stated that she was the manager for the scheme for which funds were being applied for. She went on to give some background information on the applying organisation; MHA had been running alongside housing for 6 years, based in Old Town, but since May 2018 the organisation had been independent.

The scheme is for people over 55 suffering from isolation. The organisation carries out befriending and arrange activities for people to take part in, which is what the application for funds is for.

At the time of the meeting the organisation had over 100 people signed up for their services.

The group were applying for £3,450 to fund line dancing sessions which had been requested by some of their clients. A one-off session would be held in December and the scheme piloted from January 2019. It was added that a venue for the sessions was needed; possibly Pinetrees Community Centre.

Cllr R Ballman asked where the organisation were based. The representative confirmed that the organisation were based at Fitzwarren House.

The representative confirmed that the line dancing sessions would be for residents at Dr Behr Court only and that 10 people were very interested.

Arts & Craft activities had been held in December 2017, but they weren't very successful.

Cllr R Ballman asked who funded staff wages. The representative confirmed that wages were currently paid by MHA, but the funding would soon run out and there were uncertainties over where funds would come from in the future.

Cllr D Moffatt asked if the group had applied to any other organisations for grant

funding. The representative stated that 1 grant application had been submitted to the Rotary Club for specific activities not linked to the scheme the application submitted to the Parish Council was for.

Cllr J Ballman commented that the grant being applied for was quite large and asked how many people from Dr Behr Court would benefit from the scheme. The Representative confirmed that 10 people from Dr Behr Court wanted to participate in the Line Dancing sessions. People from other locations would be encouraged and invited to attend the trial session in December 2018 and these would be advertised across the parish area.

Cllr R Ballman was unsure whether anybody would come from other areas.

Cllr D Moffatt stated that he would be happy to offer a sum of money for the trial session but did not view the whole application as value for money.

Cllr J Ballman had similar thoughts and did not view the application as being cost effective.

It was asked why Dr Behr Court had been selected for the scheme concerned. The representative confirmed she knew the manager.

It was clarified that the funds being requested were for 3 x 12-week sessions. Cllr K Small agreed with colleagues and stated that the Parish Council were not in a habit of offering grants for such large amounts of money and organisations would usually be asked to match the granted funds. He added that he would be happy to grant some money towards the scheme but not the full amount, and the grant would be offered on the proviso that the organisation would find the remainder of the required funding elsewhere.

Cllr R Ballman suggested the Parish Council grant funds to run 1 x 12-week session and if the sessions were a success an application for further funds would be welcomed.

Cllr K Small commented that the Parish Council would be funding the whole 12-week session with no other contributions and he didn't feel the Parish Council should be wholly funding the sessions.

Cllr J Ballman suggested the applying organisation should approach housing for further funds. Cllr D Moffatt provided the name of someone in housing to contact.

Cllr K Small urged the Committee to decide on an amount to be granted.

Cllr D Moffatt confirmed he was happy to grant £1,000.

Cllr J Ballman proposed £1,000 be granted to MHA for the scheme to run 1 x 12 weeks of line dancing sessions. Seconded by Cllr R Ballman.

All agreed.

Cllrs asked if the organisation would report back to the Parish Council on the success of the line dancing sessions and possibly provide some pictures. The representative agreed.

RESOLVED that £1,000 be granted to MHA for the scheme to run 1 x 12 weeks of line dancing sessions and that the organisation report back to the Parish Council on the success of the funded sessions and provide some pictures.

SHINE Swindon

The Parish Manager confirmed that a representative from the applying organisation

had been in touch and could not attend the meeting. This was not the first time representation had not been sent as planned.

Cllr K Small suggested the committee give the organisation a chance to attend the committee meeting being held in December 2018 and if representation is not made the application would be presented in the organisation's absence.

All agreed.

RESOLVED that SHINE Swindon be given a final opportunity to attend the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting in December 2018.

Cllr K Small asked about the minutes of the previous meeting which had not been included in the agenda. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that an old agenda template had been used and the minutes had been omitted in error and would be included in the agenda for the next meeting.

238 Citizens Advice Bureau Funding

The Parish Manager reported that currently the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) operate an outreach centre for 6 hours a week over 2 days at Pinetrees Community Centre. They operate 1 other outreach centre in Park.

CAB are managed by a trust who decide upon the funding strategy and where funding should be sought. Recently the economy and funding structure had changed. The hours worked at Pinetrees Community Centre are wholly funded by Thames Water, but this funding will cease in May/June 2019. This would not affect the centre in Park South or the main office in Sanford House.

Currently the centre at Pinetrees Community Centre sees approx. 440 unique visitors per year, this doesn't include repeat visitors. The impact of losing the centre at Pinetrees Community Centre would have a significant impact on parishioners. The Sanford House office is very busy and currently struggling to cope with approx. 30 visits per day.

It's not possible to quantify how many of the visitors to Sanford House live in the Parish or how many parishioners would travel to Sanford House if the centre in Pinetrees Community Centre ceased to exist.

The Parish Manager suggested the Parish Council think about whether they should look to fund CAB so they could continue to run from Pinetrees Community Centre. Currently it costs £17,500 per year to run the CAB office at Pinetrees Community Centre; £10,000 for 6 hours staffed time and £7,500 for the office rental.

Cllr R Ballman stated that at Sanford House there is a time limit for interviews and appointments to be held and it seemed unlikely that any service users from Pinehurst would ever get seen at Sanford House.

A discussion was had around what help the Parish Council should offer.

Cllr J Ballman made a comparison between funding the position of a Youth Worker and funding a CAB centre in Pinehurst.

Cllr K Small stated that it was not the job of the Parish Council to pick up everything when it goes wrong. He added that he would be happy to support funding the CAB office rental costs but not keen on funding staffing costs.

Cllr D Moffatt stated a debate over funding had been had at the meeting held with CAB the previous week.

Cllr S Exell said that those reached by a Youth Worker are those that do not have the opportunity to 'come through the door' as CAB users do. She added that she would be against funding staff costs for the CAB due to the type of spending not being

sustainable. With more assets coming on board the Parish Council need to think about impact of spending on budgets.

Cllr K Small suggested if the Parish Council contributed to CAB they should be expected to find additional funding elsewhere and it would be expected that the hours of service would increase. He added that he was open minded about supporting the service as the Parish Council would not want to see the facility close. The first steps should be to look at covering CABs rental costs at Pinetrees Community Centre.

Cllrs J & R Ballman stated they were both keen to support CAB as Swindon Borough Ward Cllrs.

Cllr D Moffatt suggested a further report be presented at the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting taking place in January and an offer to share the CAB office space and charge no rent be considered.

Cllr K Small supported Cllr D Moffatts suggestion and added that a meeting between CAB, the Parish Chair, Vice-chair and the Parish Manager should be held to discuss where CAB could seek future funding.

Cllr D Moffatt confirmed that the Grants Manager had confirmed that CAB had not been in touch regarding funding.

Cllr R Ballman voiced concerns about Universal Credit being rolled out to existing claimants across Swindon which would result in more people needing the services of CAB. She added that she would be happy to offer CAB funding for a year.

Cllr K Small stated that he would be happy for the Parish Council to offer rent as a landlord but the Parish Council needed to understand what CABs views were on gaining funding elsewhere.

Cllr K Small proposed that CAB be offered free rent of their office space in Pinetrees Community Centre in exchange for the Parish Council having use of the space when the CAB is closed.

All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council offer CAB free use of the office space within Pinetrees Community Centre providing the Parish Council can use the space when it is not in use.

239 **Asset Transfers**

The Parish Manager informed Cllrs that Swindon Borough Council (SBC) had confirmed a willingness to allow the transfer of assets as agreed at Full Council previously. The Parish Manager went on to list the assets concerned and stated that assets will be transferred on 25-year leases. He added that the Parish Council would be requesting SBC budgeted funds earmarked for works to be completed at the various buildings be transferred along with the assets.

SBC would be contacting Ward Councillors about the requested asset transfers and responses would be passed to Cabinet for the transfers to be approved.

It's hoped that transfers will be agreed by February 2018 and the Parish Council will look to get Tenancy at Wills initially to get permission to carry out any works already identified and agreed by the Parish Council.

It was pointed out that the Hreod Burna Urban Forest was now included in the list of assets to be transferred.

Cllr D Moffatt asked if St Marks Recreation Ground in its entirety had been included in

the list of assets to be transferred. The Parish Manager confirmed this and stated that the Pavilion was included.

Cllr K Small asked why Rodbourne Recreation Ground had not been included in the list of assets to be transferred. Cllr D Moffatt responded that Ferndale Recreation Ground has also been omitted due to issues around the transfer of play areas. The Parish Manager confirmed that play areas would be transferred to the Parish Council eventually.

A discussion ensued about areas which appeared to be on HRA Land and those included on the SHEELA.

The Parish Manager suggested the Parish Council proceeds with the transfer of the assets currently included in the list discussed and looked those that may be on HRA land at a later date. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council proceeds with the transfer of their assets listed and look into those that may be on HRA land once the transfers are complete.

A report from the Project Manager was circulated, a copy of which can be found as Annex A in the Minute Book.

JMH

The Project Manager stated that the fire doors were to be completed that week and then works on the floor coverings would follow.

Cllr J Ballman asked if works were on scheduled. The Project Manager responded that the works were expected to be completed by Friday 16th November 2018.

Even Swindon Community Centre

A discussion was held around obtaining a Tenancy at Will and the sticking points with leases and their terms and time periods.

Even Swindon Listed Screen Wall Double Doors, Lynmouth Road

The Project Manager confirmed that it looked like the existing door was Pine and the cost of replacing it would be reported at a future Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

Cllrs confirmed that they were happy with the temporary boards and would be happy for these to remain, if an option. It was confirmed that the conservation officer would be keen to have the original doors replaced and these would be Brown and Cream in colour, as per the originals.

32 The Circle

The Project Manager confirmed he was looking at making the proposed kitchen half a bay longer to compensate for the space being lost by making the corridor wider. Professionals had advised that the pipework within the building would need to be replaced.

Cllr K Small asked if bars to be installed on windows could be installed outside the building.

The height of the proposed suspended ceiling was queried and discussed.

The need for technology and electronics was mentioned and the need to ensure there were plenty of electrical points within the building. The Project Manager confirmed the whole building would be re-wired.

Cllr D Moffatt asked about providing parking spaces for the disabled. The Project Manager confirmed this had not been costed at this stage.

Cllr J Ballman asked if Swindon Borough Council (SBC) Planning Department had been contacted and/or involved. The Project Manager confirmed that SBC Planning would be contacted once the scheme had been decided upon.

Cllr K Small stated that he would be supportive of a glass frontage to the building and would be keen to see carpets installed. The Project Manager stated that carpet tiles could be installed which would be more practical than carpets. Cllr J Ballman added that he would be supportive of carpet tiles and felt it would improve the acoustics within the building.

Some points about security and privacy were raised by Cllrs and some comments made regarding the space at the back of the building and its potential uses.

The Project Manager confirmed that a further update would be provided at the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting being held in December 2018.

240 **Allotment Skips**

The Parish Manager reported that the end of season for allotment plot holders was perceived to be October each year and a managerial decision had been made to put a skip on each of the Leisure Garden sites to allow tenants to clear their plots. He went on to suggest that Cllrs agreed that the Parish Council provide a skip for each Leisure Garden site in March/April and September/October of each year, in line with the allotment 'seasons'.

It was confirmed that restrictions would be put in place regarding what tenants could put in skips provided.

Cllr K Small stated he was happy to approve the suggestion and added that the Allotments Working Group should include the provision of skips in their budget for the next financial year.

All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council provide a skip at each of the Leisure Garden sites twice yearly.

241 **Budget/Forecast Working Group**

Cllr K Small confirmed that the Budget Working Group had not yet had a meeting and no budget requests had been received from other Committees.

Cllr T Smith confirmed that the 19/20 Budget was included on the agenda for the Leisure & Amenities Committee meeting being held the following evening.

Cllr D Moffatt raised a point about the library costs. Cllr K Small stated that the Parish Manager had broken down what would be required for the libraries going forward and this was estimated at £50,000 more than originally budgeted for.

The Parish Manager explained that the existing staffing model for libraries was thought to be too library focused and there was a need to employ someone who could manage the Trust including its finances and relationships. The change to the existing staffing model meant that staffing costs had increased and were the highest cost to be incurred by the Trust. He went on to say that the entire library service would be devolved to the Trust who would request a grant from the Parish Council to include and cover all their costs.

The Parish Manager went on to explain the newly suggested staffing structure and

suggested ways in which the proposed costs could be reduced.

The Library Trust would be meeting in the week commencing Monday 12th November 2018 and it would be essential for the Parish Council to help the Trust to create a budget.

Cllr J Ballman referred to staff costs being the highest for the Library Trust and suggested these costs could be whittled down by looking into technologies available for libraries and extended opening.

Cllr S Exell commented that different users take advantage of libraries staffed hours and extended hours.

The Parish Manager suggested there were pros and cons of the technologies available to extend the opening hours of libraries and reduce staff costs.

Cllr K Small added that he had no objection to the technologies available for libraries but when the Parish Council took on the libraries it was with the view that they would be staffed. He suggested he would rather look into finding the £50,000 shortfall from the budget rather than reducing costs.

The Parish Manager stated that there was one other request for budget expenditure to be considered; for the Parish Council to purchase Christmas Trees to put up at the Community Centres within the Parish. As per the previous year, real trees would be purchased, and they would be planted at the Hreod Burna Urban Forest in January 2019.

Some comments were made about trees that didn't survive the previous year.

Cllr K Small suggested the Parish Council contact the Community Centres to offer them trees and find out who was interested. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council ask which Community Centres would like a real Christmas Tree.

242 **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.

243 **Staffing Structure**

The Parish Manager stated that he was asking for the Committees permission to present alternative staffing structures to them, with a view that a lot has changed in the past year and the Parish Councils assets/estate will increase considerably in the year to come. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Parish Manager presents alternative staffing structures at a future Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

244 **Pitstop Café Annual Review**

The Project Manager summarised a report which explained that in November 2018 it was agreed that the Parish Council would underwrite the cost of a café at Pinetrees Community Centre for 1 year and then look to devolve it to a Social Enterprise.

The Parish Pitstop Café was viewed as a success with good reviews, a 5 star food hygiene rating and an approx. income of £400 per week.

The report suggested now was the time to devolve the café to another organisation to free up Officers time spent on the day-to-day running of the café, so they can focus on other activities such as establishing a dementia café.

The Project Manager went on to say that conversations had already been had with

the Olive Tree café who the Parish Council could, by law, provide with a contract to run the café for a 1 year.

Any assets already purchased for the café would be leased to new users.

Some comments and questions on the report and suggestions were made and answered.

Cllr K Small moved that the 1st recommendation of the report is agreed.
All agreed.

RESOLVED that, if agreed by the Olive Tree Café Trustees:

- a) the Parish Pitstop Café enters into a one-year contract with the Olive Tree Café.
- b) That the assets of the Parish Council held in the small kitchen at Pinetrees are leased to the Olive Tree Café during the one-year contract
- c) and the Social Enterprise makes an estimate rental contribution towards electricity costs.

All stock and revenue liabilities would be transferred from the Parish.

The meeting closed at 9.22pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee