

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February at 7pm at 32 The Circle

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

Public None

360 **Apologies**

Cllr P Baker
Cllr R Ballman

361 **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**

None

362 **Minutes of previous meetings**

The minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held 8th January 2019 were approved as a correct and accurate record.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting held 8th January 2019 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

363 **Grant Applications**

Olive Tree Café - £1,000

Cllr T Smith arrived 7.02pm

The Deputy Clerk summarised the application and explained that the Olive Tree Café were applying for £1,000 towards the cost of a new coffee machine they wished to purchase for the café at Pinetrees Community Centre. The total cost of the coffee machine was £2,890.

The Deputy Clerk added that the monies applied for had been ringfenced from Cllr J Ballmans Ward Allowance in March 2018.

All agreed that the application be approved.

RESOLVED that the grant application be approved and £1,000 granted to the Olive Tree Café for the purchase of a new coffee machine.

364 **Ward Allowance Spend**

Cllr D Montaut - £5,000 for HBUF

Cllr J Ballman explained that Cllr D Montaut would like to grant £5,000 from his allocated Ward Allowance to the Hreod Burna Urban Forest (HBUF) which would enable the organisations to meet the requirements of an application for a grant they have submitted for funds to purchase a tractor whereby they needed to have funds available to meet the ongoing costs of running and maintain a tractor for a short period of time.

Cllr K Small confirmed he would be happy to approve the spend request so long as HBUF were aware that this would be a one off payment and would not set a precedent that future ongoing costs would be covered by the Parish Council. All agreed.

RESOLVED that £5,000 be paid over to HBUF from Cllr D Montauts Ward Allowance to support the purchase of a tractor and the ongoing costs on the proviso that it would be made clear that this would be a one off payments and future ongoing costs would not be covered by the Parish Council.

The Deputy Clerk provided an update on Ward Development Allowance spend to date.

Cllr J Ballman questioned the appearance of supporting groups year on year. It was said that he would soon be asked to support the Pinehurst Fun Day and that he would want to, as per the previous year. He asked for confirmation as to whether this would cause any problems.

Cllr K Small confirmed that this would cause no problems, but it should be made clear that the Ward Development Allowances may not be available in future years.

365 YTD Finance & Transaction Logs

Cllr S Exell confirmed that the February logs had been checked and were correct and there were no anomalies to note.

366 Projects Update

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

John Moulton Hall

Cllr S Exell asked about the problems experienced with the heating. The Project Manager confirmed that Swindon Borough Council (SBC) had attended the site and were in the process of repairing the issues(s).

Cllr D Moffatt arrived at 7.08pm

Even Swindon Community Centre, Jennings Street

The Parish Manager confirmed that he was confident that a comfort letter would be received from SBC and the planned works could start.

Cllr S Exell commented that a Cabinet Decision Note had been given so there should be nothing further to wait for. She added that she would not be happy to wait another month. Cllr D Moffatt agreed.

Cllr K Small stated that he would be happy to give approval to progress as soon as possible, when legally allowed to. The Parish Manager confirmed that it would not be legal to proceed with the works at this stage.

Cllr K Small suggested the Parish Manager be given permission to give the Project Manager instruction to issue the Contract Award Letter to the selected contractors as soon as legally able to. All agreed.

RESOLVED that Parish Manager be granted permission to instruct the Project Manager to issue the Contract Award Letter to the selected contractors as soon as legally able to.

Even Swindon Listed Screen Wall Double Doors, Lynmouth Road

The Project Manager confirmed that SBC had stated that no grant money was available for listed buildings. He added that an email had been received suggesting funds could be available from a Heritage Fund.

Cllr K Small commented that it should be SBC seeking funds, not the Parish Council. Cllr S Exell echoed the opinion of Cllr K Small.

Cllr D Moffatt suggested the restoration works could be paid for from the Churchward Fund but agreed with the sentiment that the Parish Council should not be wholly funding the works.

Cllr K Small confirmed the Parish Council would be happy to contribute £2,000, as previously agreed, and added that SBC statutory responsibility for conservation, not the Parish Council and therefore it should be SBC applying for grant funding and that the Parish Council should reiterate this to SBC.

32 The Circle

The Project Manager confirmed 2 quotations had been received on 5th February 2019 and that 1 further quotation was expected to be received the following day.

It was confirmed that the Planning Application submitted for the change of use of the building had been granted and that the Fair Market Price valuation should be received by Monday 11th February 2019.

CCTV Chapel St Public Toilets

The Projects Manager confirmed that works should start and be completed within the week.

Western Community Centre

DM commented that he thought the works should go ahead and that the Parish Council should look at the potential for installing solar panels on the roof and suggested Public Power Solutions be contacted and asked to investigate this.

It was mentioned that if Public Power Solutions were to look into the possibility of installing solar powers at Western Community Centre, then they should be asked to look all Community Centres being transferred to the Parish Council.

Cllr K Small confirmed that Cllr D Moffatt was suggesting works up to the value of £26,000 be completed. Cllr D Moffatt responded that the Parish Council should commit to the works up to £26,000 but not necessarily pay the whole amount.

Cllr J Ballman asked about painting the exterior of the building 'Parish Green'. The Projects Manager confirmed that this was included in the current scope of works but could be added.

It was confirmed that Western Community Centre was ran by a management committee as per Even Swindon, Gorse Hill and other Community Centres.

Cllr S Exell commented that Cllr D Moffatt had previously suggested that Western had resources of their own which were more substantial than those held by other charities the Parish Council help. It was asked what the management committee would be contributing and whether all the suggested works needed to be completed at once. Cllr D Moffatt responded and confirmed that money was being spent at Western Community Centre by the managing committee; redecoration including scaffolding was in progress and a kitchen was to be re-fitted. He added that the roof and floor were beyond the charity's abilities.

The Parish Manager commented that the Parish Council should err against means tested investment as it penalises prudence. Condition Surveys should be used as a bible and if additional works are needed then these should be applied across the board.

The Parish Manager confirmed that he was meeting with the Parish Councils insurers the following day and would speak about the priority of the dilapidation reports. He added that rebranding, redecoration etc. could take place but should do so as a separate project and tenants of community centres should be consulted.

Cllr K Small commented that if the Parish Council own a building they should be able to do work as they see fit and had the right to rebrand assets. He added that a report from the insurers should be presented at a future Finance & Staffing Committee meeting.

Cllr J Ballman commented that the fabric of buildings was the responsibility of the Parish Council and works on such matters should be completed by the Parish Council. Cllr K Small added that there was an opportunity to demonstrate Parish Councils were supporting community centres.

Cllr J Rodrigues asked if the request for works at Western Community Centre had come from the tenants or had been instigated by the Parish Council.

Cllr D Moffatt confirmed that concerns over the deterioration of the roof panels and rust had come to light approx. 5 years. He added that the building was approx. 35 years old.

Cllr K Small suggested the maximum spend of £26,000 be agreed for the proposed works.

Cllr D Moffatt moved that a maximum spend of £26,000 be committed for the works at Western Community Centre. Seconded by Cllr J Ballman. All agreed.

RESOLVED that a maximum of £26,000 be spent on the proposed works at Western Community Centre.

The Parish Manager suggested a report be presented to the Leisure & Amenities Committee re: solar panels, roof exploitation and potential returns etc.

Cllr K Small requested that the bottom line figures be reported to the Finance & Staffing Committee.

Cllr M Lucas said that FiT Payments would be ceasing in 2019 and that battery storage may be a better option to explore.

Cllr J Ballman asked why Public Power Solutions had been mentioned and whether these would be the preferred supplier. Cllr D Moffatt responded to suggest that Public Power Solutions would be a loss leader.

Cllr J Ballman suggested someone from Public Power Solutions be invited to come and talk with the Parish Council.

Cllr K Small stated that the topic of Solar Panels should be dealt with by the Leisure & Amenities Committee, but figures should be presented to the Finance & Staffing Committee. All agreed.

RESOLVED that the Leisure & Amenities Committee investigate the possibility of installing solar panels on community centre roofs and figures should be presented to the Finance & Staffing Committee.

Cllr K Small went on to say that any revenue from solar panels should benefit the community centres and not the Parish Council but there could be an option for the Parish Council to create a community centre fund from revenues.

It was confirmed that 32 The Circle should be included when looking at the possibility of installing solar panels at parish assets.

Rodbourne Farm Allotments (Barnfield Close)

Cllr K Small suggested the Parish Council contact the tenant of plot no. 2 at the site re: the proposed parking and offer to compensate for the loss of plot space and/or move to a different Leisure Garden site.

Cllr D Moffatt stated that S106 funds from the development at Barnfield Close be

used to pay for the installation of parking.

Cllr K Small proposed that the suggested works go ahead and be funded by S106 funds from the development. All agreed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Parish Council contact the tenant of plot no. 2 at the Rodbourne Farm Leisure Garden site re: the proposed parking and offer to compensation for the loss of plot space and/or offer an allotment plot as a different Leisure Garden site
- 2) Proposed works go ahead and be paid for from S106 funds from the development at Barnfield Close.

367 CAB Funding

The Parish Manager referred to notes circulated from meeting with CAB and recapped the current position.

It was said that there was funding available to continue offering the CAB service at Pinetrees Community Centre until June 2020 for 1 day per week, which was a reduction from the 2 days currently offered.

A grant application had been submitted to Nationwide and if successful the granted funds would provide funding for a 2nd day.

£15,000 would be required to open CAB for a 2nd day for a year; £9,000 for a supervisor and £5,000 rent.

The disproportionate number of enquiries CAB received re: Universal Credit (UC) meant there was an opportunity to look at non-traditional methods of delivering a similar service, i.e. from the library where computers are available.

There were no statistics specifically for the Parish area but figures available suggested that most UC queries come from the SN2 area.

Statistics looked at by the Social Cohesion Working Group suggested 75% of those in receipt of UC were in rent arrears which creates additional problems.

The CAB were looking for Parish Council support; grant aid of £5,000 for their rent for office space at Pinetrees Community Centre and for £9,000 for a supervisor to be underwritten.

It is unprecedented for a Parish Council to provide and/or fund CAB services and the Parish Council should be cautious about providing funding in the long term. Funding could be looked into by the Library & Leisure Trust.

Cllr J Ballman reiterated figures from a report presented previously re: CAB and said that there was no need for the Parish Council to make any commitments at this stage and the result of the grant application should be awaited. Cllr D Moffatt agreed.

Cllr J Rodrigues commented that the Parish Council should not send out signals that it is an easy source for funding and sources of funding were limited. He added that there were other places funding could be sourced from and groups should be asked to exhaust all avenues of funding before approaching the Parish Council.

Cllr J Ballman stated that grants were usually available for specific activities and it was difficult to obtain funding for day-to-day running.

The supporting comments and concerns re: funding of the CAB were noted.

368 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that in accordance with Standing Order 3d) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw; the reason being Staffing.

369 Community Centre Manager

The Parish Manager explained that the Assets Manager had resigned and due to their personal circumstances it had been agreed with the Chair of the Council that they would be put on gardening leave.

Cllr K Small, Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee, had agreed to advertise for a Community Centre Manager earlier than planned and this post was now being advertised.

Cllr K Small noted the verbal report and it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Assets Manager thanking them for their service and wishing them well for the future.

The meeting closed at 8.04pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee