

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held virtually via Zoom on 1st September 2020 at 7.00pm

Present Cllr Stephen Henderson (NC)
Cllr Mick Lucas (Vice Chair)
Cllr Kevin Small (Chair)
Cllr Paul Exell
Cllr Steph Exell
Cllr John Ballman
Cllr Ray Ballman
Cllr James Yeowell (NC)

Officers Andy Reeves (Parish Clerk)
Andrew Briggs (Estates Manager)

Public None

147 **Apologies**
None

148 **Declarations of Interest & Applications for Dispensation**
Cllr John Ballman declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Hreod Burna Urban Forest.

149 **Minutes from the Previous Meeting**
No issues were raised in relation to the previous minutes of 4th August 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record.

150 **Transaction Logs**
Cllr Steph Exell confirmed the GPC transactions for July 2020 were checked.

RESOLVED that the GPC transaction logs for July 2020 are confirmed.

151 **Grant Application**
The Clerk presented two Grant applications.

One application from MHA shown as **Appendix A** for £1,500 towards a Befriending Service.

RESOLVED: To support the pro-rata proportion of North Central residents who are to directly benefit on the following calculation:

Total project cost: £2,500 / 104 SU x 16 CSNPC SU= £384.62 rounded to £400.

The second application is from RVS for a Community Tennis initiative for 12 vulnerable users shown as **Appendix B**. The application is for £1,000 towards £800 of Coaching & £1,040 in refreshments.

RESOLVED That the Clerk confirms if the service will be utilising St Marks and

ascertain the exact number of CSNPC resident beneficiaries and report back to the next meeting.

152 Moredon Sports Hub Update

The Clerk presented visual slides of the draft Track Estimate shown in **Appendix C**, Initial Site Proposal shown in **Appendix D**, Capital Options Calculations shown in **Appendix E** & Press & Starkey Track Estimate Capital Costs shown as **Appendix F**.

Councillors reviewed the documents and advised the Clerk to present the following back to the project commissioner, Swindon Borough Council.

1. That a suitable Haul road be included for access to emergency vehicles across the entire track length from pavilion to school boundary.
2. That flood attenuation works are not curtailed and remain on the previous draft specification from May 2020.
3. That soft inter-track landscaping is included in the specification.
4. That capital costs for a pavilion first floor are provided to the Parish Council as quickly as possible.
5. That the track width remains a minimum of 5-6m.

RESOLVED That the Clerk presents the comments back to SBC and presents a project update to October Full Council on 21st October 2020.

153 Marketing & Press Officer

The Parish Clerk presented a Draft job description for a Marketing & Press Officer shown as **Appendix G**. The Clerk described the rationale behind the position of promoting the Councils work, connecting partners and promoting areas of the Council impacted by the CV19 outbreak.

Cllr S Exell advised that the timing of this intervention, particularly in relation to promoting our community outreach programmes is right; and that early intervention work needs to start as soon as possible, working with Sue Wald at SBC with the Live Well Swindon Hub who will outline her work at the next Full Council on September 16th 2020.

Cllr P Exell concurred that he felt greater awareness of the output of the Community Wellbeing Committees output was key to supporting those who will be affected particularly by isolation & loneliness.

Cllr J Ballman reminded Councillors that he felt the best form of marketing remains putting literature through peoples doors and that while he raises no objections to the position, the timing is felt to be premature and requires further thought.

Cllr K Small raised concerns over ensuring the right balance of promoting activities; citing South Swindon Cllr Small explained that the media operates rightly on its own terms and Councillors should be wary that not all of our initiatives will be universally received.

Cllr K Small supported the role on a casual contract due to the flexible nature of the role but held concerns over the benefits of promoting services that the public would generally expect the Council to deliver anyway.

Cllr R Ballman concurred with Cllr Small and Cllr J Ballman that the timing of the role is premature; Cllr R Ballman cited concern for an incoming CV19 second wave combined with Flu over the incoming winter months, the potential interest in our facilities and services, at this stage with seasons against us, was felt to be an unnecessary challenge to face.

Cllr S Exell advised that the Council had to find a way to work alongside the virus as part of our everyday lives; we should be pragmatic with our decision making and think of ways we can continue to develop initiatives; but be flexible in how we do this.

Cllr S Exell went on to explain the huge amount of unpromoted work that has been achieved by the Council and how Councillors will need to help develop their own personal stories when it comes to a potential election in May 2021. Cllr S Exell asked that we look to a new future with greater parishioner involvement.

Cllr S Exell proposed that the Council appoint the position as outlined in the specification in **Appendix G**.

Cllr S Henderson concurred with Cllr S Exell. Cllr S Henderson criticised the Governments messaging to the crisis and that it has become increasingly challenging to make coherent decisions based on projecting a future trajectory of social restrictions.

Cllr Henderson felt the contractual arrangements of the post has such flexibility to adapt to whatever social restrictions are imposed on parishioners over the coming Winter, citing Cllr R Ballmans comments. For example, if facilities and services are suspended, then so too is the role and financial impact.

Cllr J Rodrigues as a guest was ambivalent about the post and felt that existing Officers should have their own marketing responsibilities rather than relying on additional resource. Cllr J Rodrigues raised concerns over the impact of using casual employment contracts.

Cllr M Lucas felt that the press releases that have been completed by the Clerk, Library Manager and Officers had to date been sufficient. Cllr Lucas again said that he was particularly happy with the marketing work he has received from existing officers and that the time for a new role was not now.

Cllr J Ballman felt the decision should be made later; when more time can be given to considering the post and that Councillors should not decry traditional forms of media such as leafleting and this still holds the same weight of impact as it did before modern Social Media. Cllr Ballman went on to say that event organising could be a key part of the role but this could only play a part post CV-19.

RESOLVED: That Cllr S Exell's proposal to appoint a Marketing & Press Officer is deferred to October FGP for further consideration under Cllr J Ballmans substantive amendment.

Cllr R Ballman abstained.

154 **Grounds & Handyperson**

The Parish Clerk advised Councillors that he had previously presented this report to August FGP, shown as **Appendix H**; but was asked to return to September FGP to consider amendments under the context of concurrent duties with the existing Allotment Officer, appointed in 2018.

The Clerk cited Section 8 & Section 10 as comparable so Councillors should consider what changes they wish to make.

Cllr R Ballman wished for the role to be a qualified. Cllr K Small advised this was discussed but not agreed.

Cllr J Ballman wished to see a post which holds specialist qualifications and that it is too similar to the role of Allotment Officer which holds rudimentary responsibilities.

The Clerk advised that the two roles were entirely different and that the Council has never specified that the Allotment Officer should be a horticultural specialist or hold equivalent qualifications.

The Clerk went on to explain the areas not covered by the IDV contract and the basic nature of the role. The Clerk felt that with the specification requested by Councillors previously the role did not warrant formal qualifications and the associated salary increase when the position is re-evaluated.

Cllr M Lucas said the role of Landscaping, Handyperson cannot be conflated and that they are two very distinct jobs. If the Council are seeking qualified applicants for both roles, this is unlikely to be fulfilled.

The Clerk explained that he had investigated different qualifications, Level 2 in Horticulture and Amenities and Level 3 with Diploma in the same. Both would require a salary uplift of between 15-30% respectively. The Clerk again reminded Councillors of the original request which was basic maintenance of municipal grounds within Community Centres.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk revises the role to include skilled vocational qualifications and bring this back for consideration. The Clerk advised he will be able to complete this for November 2020 FGP.

155 **Play Areas CIP**

The Estates Manager reminded Councillors of the Play Area site visits taking place on 8th September 2020.

The Estates Manager explained the programme schedule and that Councillors should consider priorities based on safety risk and this is highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED: That Estates Manager will report back to the next FGP Meeting with a report of play area improvements after the site visits on September 8th 2020.

156 **Tractor**

Cllr M Lucas presented a request to purchase additional attachments for the tractor. This item was not on the agenda but agreed by the Committee Chair to consider due to the timeframe imposed on the Council by the Football

Foundation.

Cllr K Small reminded Cllr M Lucas that currently a maximum of £4,000 had been agreed toward the tractor and that he should consider where the additional money, around £6,000 would be found from. Cllr Small tasked Cllr Lucas to look into this.

Cllr K Small offered a brief meeting to Cllr Lucas to assist if requested.

Cllr P Exell raised an objection to an item being raised without being on the agenda and no accompanying report from the Councillor. Cllr P Exell wanted clarity that we have spoken to the FA that they are content that the tractor may not exclusively be used for Football purposes.

Cllr K Small advised that it is unfortunate the item was brought up at late notice he was sympathetic to the pressures placed on us to move with this externally funded item and that as no formal decision was being asked of Councillors it felt sensible to allow the discussion to take place.

Cllr K Small and the Parish Clerk confirmed that Mark Young confirmed that there are no issues in relation to mixed use of the tractor when not used for Football Pitch maintenance.

Cllr S Exell raised an objection to the item being presented without notice or report. Cllr S Exell raised the point that as the Parish Council is part funding the tractor and that if there are to be third parties using the asset; a correct governance document should be presented outlining the terms of such use.

Cllr J Ballman declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he is a member of HBUF, an interested Charity who may have use for the tractor.

The Clerk again confirmed the income split of £24,000 from the FA, £10,000 from HBUF and up to £4,000 from the Parish Council and that decision was made in June 2019.

The Tractor will be owned by the Parish Council and held at the IDV Secure Depot.

RESOLVED: Request for an additional £6,000 toward tractor attachments cannot be made at this meeting. Cllr Small has asked Cllr M Lucas to investigate where the funding could be sourced, and which activities may have to be curtailed.

The meeting closed at 9.21pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of Finance & General Purposes