

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held virtually via Zoom on 6 October 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present Cllr K Small (Chair)
Cllr M Lucas (Vice-chair)
Cllr J Ballman
Cllr R Ballman

Officers J Smart (Head of Finance & Governance)
A Briggs (Estates Manager)

Also Present Cllr J Yeowell
Cllr S Henderson

Public None

203 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr P Exell and Cllr S Exell. No apologies were received from Cllr J Rodrigues nor Cllr T Smith.

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

None

205 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 2 September 2020 were reviewed and approved as a correct record of the meeting.

206 **Transaction Logs**

Members noted that the most recent Transaction Logs had been checked by Cllr S Exell and there were no anomalies to be raised.

207 **Payment Schedule – September 2020**

Members retrospectively **APPROVED** the payment schedule for September 2020, a copy of which appears as Appendix A in the Minute Book.

Cllr J Ballman entered the meeting at 7.04pm.

208 **Budget Review**

Members noted the report of the Head of Finance & Governance (HoF&G) regarding the income and expenditure to the end of August 2020 against budget, a copy of which appears as Appendix B in the Minute Book.

209 **2021-22 Budget Timetable**

Members considered the report of the HoF&G regarding the timetable for the approval of the 2021-22 budget and precept demand, a copy of which appears as Appendix C in the Minute Book.

The Chair advised Members that the Committees will be required to forward plan to enable formal budget setting, that any unexpected expenditure will be considered on individual merits and may warrant the use of capital reserves.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the timetable as set out in Appendix C noting that

there may be the need for an extraordinary Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting in January 2021.

Action – Head of Finance & Governance to include the Planning & Environment Committee in the budget timetable.

210 Cash Handling Procedure

Members noted the cash handling procedure, a copy of which appears as Appendix D.

211 Marketing & Press Officer

Members considered the proposal for a Marketing & Press Officer.

Discussion was had about the decision by the Community Wellbeing Committee to contract a Temporary Communications Officer for six weeks.

Cllr J Ballman stated that he would like it noted that using public funds to employ a member of staff is supposed to be decided by this committee.

Cllr S Henderson responded that the case had not been thoroughly researched.

Members **RESOLVED** to defer the decision on employing a part time Press & Marketing Officer until the budget setting decision process, with a view to commence employment (if approved) in the next financial year.

The committee notes the decision of the Community Wellbeing Committee to engage a Temporary Communications Officer for a six-week contract to carry out Covid-19 communications, whilst this committee was deliberating the post, which is in its remit to do so.

212 Green Flag Awards

Members noted the report of the Clerk (presented by the Estates Manager), regarding potential Green Flag Awards for St Marks Park and Pickards Field Allotments, a copy of which appears as Appendix E.

The Chair requested that the presentation at the AGM be given by the Chair of the Leisure & Recreation Committee.

Cllr R Ballman stated that she was willing for the costs to be met from her Ward Allowance.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the expenditure of £3090.00 to progress the Green Flag Award applications for St Marks Park and Pickards Field Allotments as detailed in Appendix E, to be funded from Cllr R Ballman's Ward Allowance. The ongoing costs to support the award to be included in the Leisure & Recreation Committee budget preparation for 2021/22.

Members **RESOLVED** to permit the Clerk to prepare a management plan for St Marks Park and Pickards Field Allotments.

213 Bulb Planting – Ward Allowance Expenditure

Members considered a proposal from Cllr M Lucas to spend £500.00 from each Members ward allowance on parish wide bulb planting machinery.

Members debated the use of ward allowances for bulb planting.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of up to £7,800.00 on bulb planting throughout the parish for this autumn. Costs to be met from capital reserves. If any

Councillor wishes to use their allowance to add to the bulb planting in their ward, they have approval to spend up to £1,000.00 as part of their ward allowance.

Action: Estates Manager to email all members on Wednesday 7 October 2020 to advise them of this resolution and request that they respond to him by midday on Friday 9 October 2020 to confirm whether they wish to spend their ward allowance and stipulate the additional area for planting.

214 Tractor Attachments

Members considered a request from Cllr M Lucas to approve expenditure of up to £6,500.00 for tractor attachments.

Members **RESOLVED** to purchase additional tractor attachments for up to £6,500.00. Costs to be met from the ground's maintenance contract underspend.

215 Play Areas

Members considered the verbal update from the Estates Manager regarding the recent play area inspections and necessary funding for repairs.

The Estates Manager shared a spreadsheet of at-risk items which will be circulated to members. The Estates Manager stated that he was awaiting full costings. All high-risk items are fairly easy to rectify for around £8-10,000.00. This excludes the Barnum Court Play Area which is a large-scale project.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of up to £10,000.00 from the Play Areas capital budget.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee