

CENTRAL SWINDON NORTH PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th April 2021 7.00pm via Zoom Link.

Present Cllr K Small
Cllr S. Exell
Cllr D. Patey
Cllr J. Ballman
Cllr R. Ballman
Cllr S. Henderson
Cllr J Yeowell
Cllr M Lucas (via phone audio)

Officers A Reeves (Parish Clerk)
A Briggs
G Barr

T Martin (American Storm)

Public Questions

None Received.

526 **Apologies**

None Received

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

Cllr J Ballman declared an interest in being a member of HBUF and the RSPB.

Cllr R Ballman asked if the meeting is being recorded and why are meetings recorded.

The Clerk advised that the meeting was not recorded by the Parish Council. The Clerk demonstrated how Councillors can tell if the meeting is recorded by a red circle flashing in the top left hand side. All agreed they understood the flashing red circle.

Cllr K Small advised that external software could be used by anyone to record the meeting so just because the Council are not recording it, does not mean it is not being recorded somewhere.

Cllr S Exell asked for clarity on the £60 spend for unlocking the Allotment Officers telephone in February 2021. The Clerk confirmed he had found the receipt from the former Finance Admin Officer and it was so the handset purchased in 2018 could be used by the Councils new provider EE from Vodafone.

528 **Minutes of the previous meeting.**

RESOLVED: The Minutes for the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the 2nd March 2021 are approved as an accurate record.

529 **Grant Application.**

The Clerk presented the Grant Application from Swindon Storm to support the recommencement of American Football once Covid restrictions have been lifted in June 2021.

The Clerk advised that the applicant funds could be returned if a start up application with Sport England is approved. The Clerk passed to Tony Martin from Swindon Storm to present the application.

Cllr S Henderson sought assurance everyone could take part in American Football, no matter what their financial means, this assurance was provided, and that support is available for the use of equipment and kit. Tony Martin recognised that the average kit cost is £350 and for Under 18's this can be provided and loaned without cost.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the start-up Grant payment to Swindon Storm if the grant application made by Sport England is not approved by April 2021.

530 **Transaction Log**

Cllr S Exell advised there were no issues from the transaction log but is awaiting one receipt.

RESOLVED: To note the remarks of Cllr S Exell in relation to the March 2021 GPC Transaction Log.

531 **Budget Report- February 2021**

The Clerk presented the Year-to-Date Summary and Cash Book Summary.

RESOLVED: To note the Clerks report.

532 **Payments List**

The Clerk presented the Payments list.

Cllr K Small reiterated that he felt this administrative item should be validated outside the auspices of a formal committee.

RESOLVED: To note the Payments List

533 **Ward Allowance**

Cllr J Yeowell presented a grant request for £742 for enhanced traffic management in Kiln Lane for the installation of a bus shelter. This is for a three-way set of traffic lights.

Cllr S Exell and Cllr S Henderson asked that for the next election cycle, consideration should be made to ensure pre agreed ward spend could not be bought forward or spent in lieu of the following councillor to be elected.

Cllr K Small agreed late election year spend should be refined, but as the election is not until 2024 this should be deferred to a later date.

Cllr J Ballman made the point that incoming members are usually bound by the incumbent budget, having been set five months prior to an election.

Cllr Henderson asked the Clerk for suggestions on how this could be implemented.

The Clerk suggested there could be a range of measures but one is a six-week pre-election 'new spend freeze' which could be part of a range of measures for the FRP WG to consider.

RESOLVED: To approve the payment of £742 towards bus shelter enhanced traffic management measures. To consider new spend restrictions prior to the next election year in 2024.

534 **Financial Regulations & Procedures Working Group**

The Clerk presented the report. The Clerk asked that membership is agreed in addition to the meeting cycle.

Cllr K Small confirmed the request from Cllr S Exell, that all Councillors can be invited. Councillor Small also advised that a meeting should take place in June 2021 and March 2022.

The Clerk reconfirmed that the adoption of the regulations would normally take place at the AGM for this year.

RESOLVED: To include the WG membership option to all Councillors AGM Matrix in May 2021.

535 **Write Off Income**

The Clerk advised that an amount of £173.50 was identified to be written off as part of a concluded investigation on 23rd February 2021.

RESOLVED: To write off the £173.50 identified by the auditor.

536 **Flagpole**

The Clerk presented guidance from the Secretary of State in relation to the flying of a Union Flag from Municipal Buildings. The Clerk outlined the dates which the flag should be flown in England, and proposed options for locations and costs.

The Clerk proposed that only one flagpole is used, rather than all of the Councils sites, and this should be located at the Council Offices at the Pinetrees Community Centre.

Cllr K Small asked that a flag flying policy is drafted by the Clerk and presented to FGP in June 2021. Particularly focussing on when the Union flag flies, periods of memorial, the Parish Flag and the flag of St George.

Cllr J Ballman agreed that a policy should be drawn up as flags can be sensitive, citing SBC. Cllr Ballman also made the point of practicalities, Cllr J Ballman did not want flagpoles attached to buildings due to the risk of compromising building integrity. All Cllrs agreed that a stand-alone flagpole is a safer idea.

Cllr S Exell advised a preference to ensuring just the Union flag to avoid excluding or prioritising certain groups above others.

Cllr S Henderson advised he would vote against as he was unhappy with divisions within society and topics like this can create division.

Cllr Small felt that the Parish Council should be proud of the Union Flag. Cllr Small felt that elements of society who choose to exploit the Union flag for their own gains; should not preclude others from celebrating being proud to live in the United Kingdom.

The Clerk advised that the flagpole should be kept within the Pinetrees compound to ensure that unauthorised flags cannot be flown

RESOLVED: To purchase a flagpole. To permit around £500 for erection costs and to include £250 annual revenue cleaning costs. That the Clerk compiles a Flag Policy for FGP to review and then recommend to Full Council adoption as soon as possible.

537 **Press & Marketing Officer:**

The Clerk presented the written and verbal report outlining a proposal for a pan-Council part time Press & Marketing Officer. Ten hours fixed term for 12 months position funded from the Finance Administration position amendment.

Cllr S Exell expressed support for the post as there was overall support from Full Council at the previous meeting. The focus on Community Centre activity and promotion is critical.

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendation in the report to appoint a part time Press & Marketing Officer for 10 Hours over 12 Months from June 2021-June 2022.

538 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

To **RESOLVE** that in accordance with the provision of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items on the basis of **Staffing Matters**.

539 **Finance & Administration Assistant**

The Clerk presented a revised job description with two-fold changes, focussing on banking, purchase ledger and invoicing. Removing budgeting, auditing and policy recommendation analysis. The hours have been reduced to 30 hours and the salary revised to match the new responsibilities.

Cllr Small asked if hours could be increased to full time 37 hours in time. The Clerk advised he felt the budget available would be marginally over budget for this intent (£1,000) but until Moredon Sports Hub is approved we do not anticipate an increase in finance volumes.

Cllr Exell agreed an increase in hours should only be considered when volume evidence requires the Council to do so. Cllr Small advised this was what was being asked in preparation for futureproofing the role. Not for consideration at the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of a Part Time Finance & Administration Assistant as outlined in the Clerks report with a commencement date of June 2021.

The Meeting closed at 21:28