

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
19:30, 16th October 2017, Jubilee Pavilion

Present:-

Ms S Hardingham

Mr M Harris

Mr P Jackson

Mr R Sterland

Miss M Uppington

Absent:-

Mr C Cave

Mrs B Mackwood

Mr N Moorcroft

Mrs J Pullin

Mr A Wilkinson

In attendance: the Clerk, Dr J Turp, and Mrs V Lacey (minutes).

Before the meeting started, two representatives from Light Up Long Ashton (LULA) spoke to the committee about LULA's plans for this year's Christmas lights. The PC has agreed funding of £2,500 for the display.

F17.87 - Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cave, Mrs Mackwood, Moorcroft, Mrs Pullin and Wilkinson. Cllr Hardingham will ask at the next Council meeting for the terms of reference of the committee to be changed so that two additional councillors can be appointed.

F17.88 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

Interests to be declared during the meeting and no dispensations were requested.

F17.89 - Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2017, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Miss Uppington, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

F17.90 - Exclusion of the press and public

It was RESOLVED that members of the press and public would be excluded from the item discussing the recruitment of a new village orderly as it is a confidential staff matter. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

F17.91 - Matters arising

a. F17.55a - Local Council Award Scheme. The PC has been awarded the Foundation Award and will discuss whether to apply for the next level in due course.

b. F17.55b - Purchase of anti-virus software. Ongoing.

c. F17.70 - Issues around solo working. Long Ashton Community Association (LACA) is currently drawing up its own lone working guidance for staff based at the community centre site and the PC will consider its own guidance in light of this when completed.

F17.92 - Payment of accounts and Payments to Council

A list of payments and receipts was presented to the meeting. It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £37,980.76 and note receipts of £78,197 for the months of August and September 2017. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour.

F17.93 - Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation to the end of September 2017 was presented. The total amount in all accounts is £575,768.45. It was RESOLVED to approve the bi-monthly statement and bank reconciliation. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.

F17.94 - Review of Expenditure against Budget

Noted. At half way through the financial year the expenditure against budget is 47.4%.

F17.95 - Finance items

- a. HMRC are removing Transcash as a means to pay Tax & NI and it was agreed that the Clerk will investigate whether HMRC will accept direct debit payments from the PC.
- b. Reinvestment of Hampshire Trust Bank Bond. This bond will mature in November 2017. It was RESOLVED to reinvest the funds with Hampshire Trust Bank in a one year bond, as long as the interest rate offered is no less than that of the existing bond. Proposed by Cllr Sterland, seconded by Cllr Hardingham. All in favour.
- c. Wreath for Remembrance Day. It was RESOLVED to spend £30 on a wreath for Remembrance Day. Proposed by Cllr Miss Uppington, seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.
- d. It was RESOLVED to vire £200 from the Burial Ground contingency budget to overheads/expenses to cover a shortfall caused by the consecration costs. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.
- e. To consider amount in current account. It was RESOLVED to transfer £50,000 from the HSBC current account to the HSBC Money Manager account. Proposed by Cllr Sterland, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour.
- f. New photocopier. A new photocopier is required as parts and consumables are no longer available for the current copier. Three quotes for a Toshiba 2505 copier were obtained and considered and it was agreed to accept the lowest priced quote for purchase and maintenance which was from Prolific a South Gloucestershire company who has provided a copier to a local PC who is happy with the service they receive. It was RESOLVED to buy a Toshiba 2505 photocopier from Prolific for £2,537 with a support contract at a per copy cost of 0.28p mono and 2.8p colour. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour. There will be a £50 trade in for the old machine.

F17.96 - Accounts for the year 2016/17

The external auditor has completed its intermediate audit of the PC's accounts, and has approved them with no comment. The audit will cost the PC £800 because of increased income last year due to a long term investment maturing.

F17.97 - To review the following (circulated)

- a. Health and Safety and Risk assessment - post related risk assessments. The committee reviewed the Health and Safety Risk assessment in February 2017 when it was agreed that post related assessments should be considered. A risk assessment covering the PC office was discussed and approved. Other post related assessments will be drafted for consideration at a future F&GP meeting.
- b. Grant Policy. The PC's small grant policy was reviewed and approved following amendment to reflect that "Applications WILL NOT be considered from: Organisations intending to support or oppose any particular political party or to discriminate on the grounds of race or religion *or which otherwise contravene the PC's equality policy.*"
- c. Clerk's job description. The Clerk and RFO job descriptions were reviewed without change. It is not yet clear whether the Data Protection Officer (DPO) role, which will be mandatory under the new General Data Protection Regulations, from May 2018 is able to be taken on by a clerk so this will be considered when guidance is received. It was felt that it might be helpful if North Somerset Council (NSC) provided a DPO service for parish councils.
- d. Freedom of Information. The PC's available information guide was reviewed and no changes made. It was agreed that the Clerk will compile a list of the PC's current contracts.
- e. Complaints Policy. The PC's complaints policy was reviewed and no changes made. Additionally, it was agreed that when residents arrange to attend a committee meeting to speak about a specific matter, they will be asked if they would like the relevant agenda item to be discussed as soon as possible during the meeting.

f. Policy on residents identified as generating an unreasonably large volume of correspondence with the Parish Council. This policy reviewed and approved without change.

F17.98 - Budgeting process

The timetable to set the budget for 2018/19 was discussed and noted.

F17.99 - Taylor Wimpey Areas

- a. Transfer of the Taylor Wimpey areas and lease to LACA. There has been no contact on this matter from Taylor Wimpey.
- b. Public Art. There has been no progress on this matter, which would ideally be finalised by the end of the financial year. However, Taylor Wimpey is not intending to give the PC the money for the public works of art on the Chancellor's Park and Kings Croft estates until the section 106 agreement is finalised which involves the arrangements for the footpath through Peel Park.
- c. Hedge at back of Paulman Gdns. The Clerk will write to residents in this area to ask their opinion on the PC's intention to have the hedge here reduced to a height of 2-3 metres.
- d. Repair of equipment at Chancellors Park and annual safety reports. The annual safety reports covering the PC's play areas have been received. The only identified with a greater than low risk has already been repaired. There has been further failure of two ropes on the rope bridge on the Chancellor's Park play area so a contractor has been asked to replace all the remaining original ropes as this will be cheaper than replacing the ropes one at a time. Given the closeness of half term and the difficulties encountered in keeping the area taped off, the cost of £711 had been approved by the Chair as an emergency.
- e. To agree to work to provide protection to trees from strimmer and/or vehicle damage. It was RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Clerk to spend up to £300 having small circular sections of grass cut from around trees on Chancellor's Park, to prevent strimmer damage to their trunks. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour. The Clerk will also write to certain residents on Chancellor's Park to ask them not to manoeuvre their cars on the grass, as vehicles are damaging the roots of a mature tree.

F17.100 - Parish Council office working group report and to agree expenditure on furniture for the committee room

The Clerk will discuss the removal of the few remaining items of furniture from the small committee room with the Community Association manager. It was RESOLVED to delegate to the clerk obtaining new furniture for the room subject to maximum expenditure of £800. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour. The furniture will include cupboards, filing cabinet and desk.

F17.101 - Hearing Loop for council meetings

A local company has given the Clerk an indicative cost for microphones to link to the Jubilee Pavilion's hearing loop. The microphones would be used during council meetings, making the meetings more accessible to councillors and residents with hearing aids. The Clerk will obtain written quotes to bring to the next F&GP meeting.

F17.102 - Community Grant

Various options for next year's community grant were discussed. It was agreed that if the grant were to be offered next year that an amendment should be made to the rules so that the PC reserves the right not to award the grant if there was just one application. The matter will be discussed at the next council meeting.

F17.103 - The 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement consultation

Part of this consultation refers to possibility that the Government will extend the referendum requirement to local councils so that Parish Councils would have to hold a referendum if they wished to increase precepts by more than 2%. The Avon Local Councils Association

(ALCA) has responded to the consultation and the PC will do the same - pointing out that it is not only taking on new responsibilities every year, which all impact on staff resources and therefore costs, but also that growing communities have growing needs. The PC feels that mandatory referenda would interfere with the right of local councils to determine the funds needed in their unique areas. The cost of such referenda would also wipe out the benefit of any precept increase of more than 2%. The Clerk and the Chair will draft a response to the consultation including these and other relevant arguments.

F17.104 - The new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Clerk will join a webinar on this subject in January 2018, to ensure that the PC is aware of the full effect of the new regulations being introduced in May 2018. The matter will be discussed at the next F&GP meeting on 18th December.

F17.105 - LACA

- a. Draft new constitution. The PC will ask for two changes to be made to LACA's draft constitution: i) that the PC appoints three LACA trustees and ii) that if LACA were to be dissolved or wound up, the remaining assets must be applied for charitable purposes the same as or similar to those of the CIO, or to a registered charity, as determined by Long Ashton Parish Council.
- b. To agree if any changes need to be made to the current lease before transfer to the CIO. LACA appears have concerns so further information is needed but it was agreed that, at present, the PC does not need any changes to be made to the lease before its transfer to the reconstituted body.
- c. To discuss future funding arrangements and delegation for discussions with LACA. The PC considers that, in order to help budgeting for LACA and the PC, that the next grant to LACA to be based around a three year settlement, and for LACA to establish its expenditure on this basis. It was RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for further discussions with LACA on this subject to Cllrs Hardingham, Sterland and Wilkinson, and the Clerk. Proposed by Cllr Jackson, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour.
- d. Letter from Bowling Club re pavilion. The Committee saw no benefits from allowing the bowling club to lease or buy the pavilion and it was agreed that the Clerk would reply to the bowling club to that effect after first ascertaining LACA's view.

F17.106 - Theynes Croft car park

The lease between NSC and the PC has been finalised and is dated 5th September 2017. The Clerk will ask NSC for details of its maintenance schedule for the area and will then get quotes for maintenance and new signage and bring them to the next F&GP meeting.

F17.107 - Correspondence

- a. From CCLA re return from Local Authorities Property Fund. Noted.
- b. From ALCA re the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement consultation. Noted.
- c. From ALCA re GDPR. Noted
- d. From Cllr Thomas about Volksfest donation to LULA. The Clerk will ask Cllr Thomas to keep Cllr Wilkinson updated about the handover of the cheque from Volksfest to LULA.

F17.108 - Matters for information

It was noted that the PC's preferred option is that this year's Youth Provision grant request is prepared on the basis of a three year settlement, in a similar way to the grant for LACA.

F17.109 - Village Orderly

The Clerk and Miss Uppington will interview for the post on Thursday 19th October.

Date of next meeting: Monday 18th December 20178

Meeting closed: 21:50