

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
7.30 PM on 11 JANUARY 2017
FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD, BERKSHIRE

PRESENT: Cllr Woof, Chair. Cllr Markham, Vice Chair.
Cllrs Bromley, Cornish, Rampton, Veitch.

Mrs Dagnall, Clerk.

14/2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cundy and May.

15/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Veitch declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Wokingham District Veteran Trees Association.

16/2017 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016 were agreed as a true record.

17/2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

386/2016 EMERGENCY PLANNING / BUSINESS CONTINUITY

There has been no further progress with the Business Continuity Plan itself but some related work has been undertaken in relation to document management, procedures and system backups. Some recent policy reviews and updates are also relevant.

Cllr Bromley advised that the purchase of a further Cloud Station Drive to be based off site would cover the eventuality of loss of the office equipment. After initial setting up / trial there may be an opportunity to locate the unit in another Parish Council's Office, with a reciprocal agreement over backing up data.

It was agreed that a further Drive should be purchased, to a maximum of £300.

The Finchampstead Emergency Response Working Group met on 19 December 2016 and a meeting for Early Responders and Refuge representatives has been arranged for 26 January 2017.

391/2016 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Further to discussion at the previous meeting a number of policies have been reviewed. An updated version of the Code of Conduct will be circulated to all Cllrs and will be recommended for adoption at the Main Council meeting on 19 January 2017. Updated versions of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will be recommended for adoption at the Main Council meeting on 15 February 2017.

Cllr Woof has reviewed the Grants Policy. Some changes are required and it was agreed that this would be considered at a future meeting in March or June 2017.

A draft Training Policy was circulated prior to the meeting. Various points were discussed and Cllr Woof and the Clerk will produce a further draft for consideration.

393/2016 FORUM / ASSET REVIEW

While at one time the Parish Council leased the land around the FBC Centre and on which the building now stands, the land has always been owned by Wokingham

Borough Council (WBC). The Parish Council gave up its lease to allow the building of the FBC Centre.

Cllr Cundy and the Clerk are liaising with WBC Officers regarding the WBC Asset Review but this is progressing very slowly, however, as reported at Main Council WBC has issued draft heads of terms for a new 30 year lease for the Allotment site.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

18/2017 I&E REVIEW

An income and expenditure report was circulated showing the current position. It was noted that further expenditure on Roads & Road Safety Committee projects is likely before the end of the financial year.

Two grant applications were considered:

An application had been received from a local resident on benefits who is in urgent need of a new gas cooker. It was agreed that a sum of up to £450 would be awarded from the Parish Hardship Fund, dependent on the cost of the item and its connection.

The Wokingham United Charities has significant funds to provide grants for those in need, and is appointing a grants officer to co-ordinate grant applications and awards. In view of this it was agreed that subject to approval from Main Council, the Council's annual Parish Hardship Fund should be transferred to the Wokingham United Charities each year.

The Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association (WDTVA) is preparing a report on the trees in Finchampstead and other Parishes to celebrate its 10th anniversary and has requested a grant of £50 towards the project. The grant was agreed subject to approval by Main Council.

19/2017 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

As reported at Main Council, following receipt of CIL funds of some £29,000 in September 2016 WBC suggested 3 projects the Council could consider contributing the funds to. The CIL Working Group met on 3 November 2016 to discuss this and the recommendations were agreed at November Main Council.

The Council has agreed to contribute £5000 to improvements at the FBC Playing fields play area. It has also agreed in principle to contribute to a Green Ways project, subject to further information being provided, but declined to contribute to the Nine Mile Ride cycle way / footway improvements.

The CIL funds are held in separate Ear Marked Reserve accounts. The Clerk is seeking advice on how to manage the CIL funds in terms of the end of year accounts. The Clerk will also be submitting the required monitoring report to WBC and will publish this on the Council's website.

It was noted that the agreements over the Marino Family Trust land forming part of the Arborfield Strategic Development Location have recently been signed. CIL funds will come forward when development on the land commences.

20/2017 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Working Group met on 14 December 2016 and agreed that a household consultation should take place in 2017, based around priorities for projects to be funded by CIL receipts.

The Council's 2016/17 Report will be circulated at and following the Annual Gathering on 8 March 2017. The Committee agreed that subject to cost this could be distributed to all households, with a consultation to follow later in the year. .

The Clerk will discuss the timing of the next meeting with Cllr Cundy, Chair of the Working Group. A meeting to discuss arrangements for the Annual Gathering may be helpful.

21/2017 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2017/18

The draft budget for 2017/18 incorporating Committee proposals was circulated prior to the meeting. The Human Resources (HR) Sub Committee had met to discuss staff related costs.

A budget of £137,275 was agreed, with a precept demand of £126,944 equating to a Band D figure of £22.17. This is a 2.5% increase on the 2016/17 precept. It was agreed that this budget would be recommended for approval by Main Council at its meeting on 19 January 2017.

Reserves to carry forward at the end of 2016/17 are expected to be around £70,000 including a total of £17,300 held in Ear Marked Reserves for Parish Elections; California Country Park Projects; Allotment maintenance; Warren Wood and the Avery Car Park / California Crossroads. This leaves available reserves of around £53,000.

This excludes the CIL receipts of some £30,000 referred to under 19/2017 above.

22/2017 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

Information on the Award Scheme was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs Cundy and Woof and the Clerk had met to discuss this and felt that with some work the Foundation Award was achievable.

The Training policy and log discussed above are relevant to this, and Cllr Bromley and the Clerk have started to make changes to the website to accommodate additional information required by the Scheme.

The Committee agreed that the Council should apply for a Foundation Award during 2017.

23/2017 CORRESPONDENCE

- WBC has contacted all the Local Councils about its arrangements following the death of Queen Elizabeth II. WBC has also asked if the Local Councils have or expect to have any plans to hold events. The Clerk will advise WBC that no specific events are planned.

24/2017 FORUM

- The Clerk advised that a local resident has expressed interest in any future vacancies on the Council.
- Cllr Cornish stated that he would like to join the Committee and was welcomed a member/

25/2017 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29 March 2017.

These minutes are subject to final approval at the next meeting of the Committee