

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
7.30 PM on 26 APRIL 2017
FBC CENTRE, GORSE RIDE NORTH, FINCHAMPSTEAD, BERKSHIRE

PRESENT: Cllr Woof, Chair. Cllr Bromley, Vice Chair.
Cllr Rampton.

Mrs Dagnall, Clerk.

168/2017 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cornish, Cundy, May and Veitch.

169/2017 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

170/2017 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017 were agreed as a true record.

171/2017 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

17/2017 ASSET REVIEW

Cllr Cundy and the Clerk are liaising with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Officers regarding the WBC Asset Review but this is progressing very slowly, as is the new 30 year lease for the Allotment site.

22/2017 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

Following the decision not to renew membership of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils and therefore of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the Council has joined the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC). HALC does not currently promote the Local Council Award Scheme, and it is understood that NALC is reviewing the Scheme due to the fairly low level of take up.

The criteria for the Scheme can still be used for self-assessment and improvement and the Council will continue to work towards meeting all the criteria.

23/2017 LONDON BRIDGE

As noted at Main Council on 12 April 2017 WBC is encouraging all Local Councils to put arrangements in place for the death of a senior member of the Royal Family. The Clerk will be purchasing books of condolence and a statement from the Chair of the Council will be prepared.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

172/2017 ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN FOR 2016/17

The unaudited Financial Statements for 2016/17 were circulated prior to the meeting. These and the Annual Return including the Annual Governance Statement will be presented to Main Council at its meeting on 25 May 2017.

The interim report from the Internal Auditor has been circulated. The final visit has now been made and all matters are in order.

Ear Marked Reserves

The Council has a number of ear marked reserves (EMR's) relating to potential projects and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts. There is also an EMR to cover election expenses.

In connection with the forthcoming election it is now clear the current EMR would not cover a full Parish Council election as the figure provided is based on the largest ward. The current EMR is for £6800 and the estimated cost for a full election is £14,500. It was agreed that the EMR should continue to be based on one ward, but that in election year provision for a full election should be made. The next election year is 2020/21.

Current balance

The current balance including CIL receipts is around £40,000 and a further 40% of the precept is due shortly. It was agreed that £30,000 should be moved to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account.

Financial regulations and procedures

Financial regulation 2.2 requires that a Councillor should verify bank reconciliations produced by the Clerk for all accounts at least once a quarter and at each financial year end, and that the outcome should be reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

It was agreed that this should take place quarterly and that Cllr Cundy would undertake this at his regular meetings with the Clerk, with other Cllrs undertaking the task occasionally.

173/2017 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The second draft of the Training Policy was circulated. Minor amendments are required including to references to NALC and BALC. It was agreed that the policy should be renamed the Training and Development Policy. Cllr Woof and the Clerk will produce a further version for approval.

The Grants Policy has been reviewed and the wording on whether or not the Council would accept an application from an individual is unclear. It was agreed that each application should be considered on its own merits and that Cllr Woof and the Clerk would review the wording to reflect this.

174/2017 DONATIONS TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

For a number of years donations have been made to local schools to allow extra-curricular activities to take place, and to provide support for children who would otherwise not be able to go on school trips or participate in other activities.

Donations in 2016/17 were £6563, based on £7.50 per pupil, with the exception of Finchampstead Village School. The budgeted figure for 2017/18 is £8000.

The three schools have now all written letters of thanks and have outlined how the donations made in 2016/17 have been utilised.

It was agreed that the donations should continue and should continue to be directed to extra-curricular activities rather than capital items. This could be reinforced at the appropriate time by those Cllrs acting as School Governors. Donations for 2017/18 will be discussed and agreed at the October meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that the Arborfield Development will bring a further primary school to Finchampstead, subject to decisions on future Local Governance.

175/2017 FUNDING FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES

For a number of years funds have been provided to support youth activities run through or by the FBC Centre staff. There was a short presentation about the activities to the Council at its December 2016 meeting, and also at the 2017 Annual Gathering.

The budget has been increased for 2017/18 as it was suggested that further activities were planned. The Clerk will follow this up.

176/2017 FORWARD PLAN 2013-18

The Council has a forward plan for the period from 2013-18. The Clerk has updated this with progress against actions but the plan is not routinely referred to and is not a useful working document.

It was agreed that the document would be reformatted and should include an annual action plan for each Committee. Each Committee will be asked to review its objectives and to create an annual action plan with progress to be reviewed at the end of the year.

177/2017 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Risk Policy and Risk Register have been reviewed and will be looked at again when further progress has been made with the Business Continuity Plan (see 179/2017 below).

Cllr Woof advised that the 2017/18 asset inspection is well underway and should be completed by mid-May 2017. The Clerk will inspect certain items.

178/2017 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

The Council currently has around £29,000 in CIL funds and has committed £5000 to improvements at the FBC Centre playing fields play area, and £20,000 in principle to the Green Way planned for Commonfield Lane to Gorse Ride. A meeting was held with WBC on 21 April 2017 and the Green Way plans are progressing well – the Clerk will ask WBC for details of the final approved route and subject to this the funds will be released.

The CIL funds are held in separate Ear Marked Reserve accounts, and this appears to be the best way to manage receipts at present. The Clerk has published the required monitoring report for the funds received in 2015/16.

WBC provides monthly CIL reports and further funds are expected in October 2017.

179/2017 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The house to house distribution of the 2016/17 Annual Report is taking place this week. Feedback has been positive with enquiries, requests to join the newsletter distribution list and additional Facebook likes.

A household consultation is planned for autumn 2017, based around priorities for projects to be funded by CIL receipts.

It was agreed that one or two public events would be helpful during the consultation period, with Cllrs available to discuss the consultation and answer queries.

It was also agreed that regular Cllr 'surgeries' were not necessary or appropriate for the Council.

A visual (powerpoint) presentation on the Council and its work has been suggested, with a separate version aimed at children. This could be presented to schools and various groups. A video could also be considered. It was agreed this should be referred to the Communications and Consultation Working Group.

The Communications and Consultation Working Group has discussed branded promotional items to give away at public events and an informal consultation on preferred items took place at the 2017 Annual Gathering. The Clerk will develop a proposal for approval with a view to purchasing items ready for summer events.

180/2017 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 and policies and procedures. Cllr Woof will look at the main potential issues and develop a basic action plan for discussion with Cllr Bromley and the Clerk.

Cllr Bromley will purchase a further Cloud Station Drive to be based off site to cover the eventuality of loss of the office equipment.

A meeting for Finchampstead Emergency Response Emergency Responders and Refuge representatives took place on 26 January 2016. Thames Valley Police and WBC representatives also attended. The Clerk will contact Cllrs Pearce, Pittock and Weeks regarding the follow up actions.

181/2017 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

182/2017 FORUM

- It was suggested that the Committee be renamed the Finance & General Management Committee and this will be raised at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2017.

183/2017 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The planned date for the next meeting is 28 June 2017 but it was agreed this would be changed to Tuesday 27 June 2017.

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