

# BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 8.01pm ON THURSDAY 10 September 2020 VIA ZOOM

### **PRESENT**

Cllrs: Miss G Reynolds (Chairman)  
Mr S Neville  
Mrs S Patel  
Mr N Wright

In attendance: Mrs K Lumb (RFO/Deputy Clerk)  
Mrs E Petyt-Start (Clerk)

Press: Mr D Jackman

### **010/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from: Cllr S Watson.

### **011/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members in any item on the agenda.

### **012/20 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 June 2020, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

### **013/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no representations from the member of the public.

### **014/20 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications to report.

### **015/20 FINANCE**

1 A report of the Council's financial position as at 31 July 2020, circulated, was accepted following the update from the RFO:

Work has continued throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period, with new ways of working being introduced where necessary. Some key highlights:

Halls – extra cleaning supplies were purchased to support with latest requirements and the Caretakers undertook extensive cleaning ahead of the Halls re-opening.

Playgrounds – were cleaned ahead of their re-opening and safety signage purchased / displayed.

Planters – were re-planted for summer adding a spectrum of colour around Buckhurst hill, and our open spaces kept in good order.

Office – working remotely was established and a new laptop purchased to enable the office to work seamlessly. Zoom video conferencing was introduced for Council meetings. Both the Clerk and Deputy/Clerk have now completed and passed their CiLCA qualifications.

Allotments – some boundary work has been completed, and the allotment agreement has been approved and in place.

It was noted that the Committee congratulated both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk / RFO on their achievement.

A discussion took place around the short fall / loss of income.

2 The Bank Reconciliations and Trial Balance as at 31 July 2020, circulated, were noted.

3 Payments and Receipts for 1 April 2020 to 31 July 2020, circulated, were noted and received the following update from the RFO:  
The list of payments includes some single Hall Hirers, who needed to be refunded due to COVID-19 restrictions.

4 Estimated income for the Halls for the second quarter, July 2020 – September 2020, circulated, were noted and received the following update from the RFO:  
Regular Hall hirers have started to return to their meetings, with estimated fees bringing in almost half of the anticipated income for the period. The other half being lost due to lockdown / hirers being unable to meet current risk restrictions / requirements. The information circulated also shows a comparison year on year. Income loss for July – September is almost a third of that seen in the previous three months (April – June). The reasons for this are that our income is returning and also many of our hirers take a break over the summer holiday period.

The Chairman thanked the RFO for the comprehensive report and also thanked the Clerk and Office for their work in helping our hirers in returning to their meetings.

*(Cllr Wright joined the meeting during this item)*

5 It was noted the End of Year Return and M99 Reconciliation for the Essex Pension Fund was completed with no issues.

**016/20 SALARIES**

Receipt of the National Joint Council 2020-21 updated payscales, were noted. The RFO advised these will be applied to staff accordingly, backdated to 1 April 2020, which supports the contractual agreements in place.

**017/20 INVESTMENT**

i) It was noted with the Bank of England base rate still being 0.1%, there are no significant changes to interest rates currently.

ii) The RFO provided a verbal update on the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limits/exclusions, which were noted.

“The FSCS does not protect deposits made by a public authority (including a Parish Council), unless it is a small local authority with an annual budget of up to EUR500,000.” The Council falls below this exclusion criteria.

Current protection is up to £85,000 per banking licence, with the Council’s bankers being members of the FSCS scheme.

The RFO provided her opinion that whilst we are most certainly in unprecedented times with the current coronavirus situation, as a major financial institution, should the Council’s main bank fail and go under, the national economy would potentially be in a similar situation, which whilst of course could always be a possibility, hence the scheme, she believes remains unlikely.

**018/20 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERNS**

- (a) There were no items of concern.
- (b) There were no items for the next agenda.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....