

# BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 8.01pm ON THURSDAY 05 November 2020 VIA ZOOM

### **PRESENT**

Cllrs: Miss G Reynolds (Chairman)  
Mr N Wright (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr S Clark  
Mr S Neville  
Mrs S Patel  
Miss S Watson

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

Press: Mr D Jackman

### **019/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **020/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr S Clark declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8.3 – Allotments.

### **021/20 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 September 2020, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

### **022/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no representations from the member of the public.

### **023/20 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications to report.

### **024/20 FINANCE**

1 A report of the Council's financial position as at 30 September 2020, circulated, was accepted following the update from the RFO:

The Woollard Centre – The disabled toilets have been decorated and new flooring laid in the gents, ladies, and disabled toilets.

Roding Valley Hall – Repairs were also carried out to the toilets and some repairs to the guttering and front light. During the summer repairs to the car park lamp post was also carried out.

Cleaning – Extra cleaning materials have been purchased to continue to adhere to COVID-19 requirements, and new hygiene bins purchased to replace the old ones.

Annual PAT (portable appliance testing) has also been carried out on both Halls and Office equipment. Annual alarms contracts for the Halls have also been renewed.

The Council funded 3 "Play in the Park" sessions, which took place during the summer holiday period.

The deposit was also paid for the new toddler slide in Kings Place Playground. A resident's survey was undertaken to help select this piece of equipment to enhance the park. A further deep clean of the playground equipment in both parks has been undertaken, and new health and safety banners purchased and displayed.

The archiving of documents project has been completed, with cabinets storing

historic information all now stored together in one place.

**2** The Bank Reconciliations and Trial Balance as at 30 September 2020, circulated, were noted.

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

**3** Payments and Receipts for 1 August 2020 to 30 September 2020, circulated, were noted, and received the following update from the RFO:  
The second instalment of the precept has been received from District, and income from some of our regular hirers who have returned to the Halls, has also been received.

**4** Estimated income for the Halls for the third quarter, October 2020 – December 2020, circulated, were noted, and received the following update from the RFO:  
At the time of producing these reports, many of our regular Hirers had returned to their sessions and the current lockdown measure starting today, had not been communicated. The Hire fee income for the period will be reduced by approximately one third, as in the main our Hirers will not be using the Halls now before the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

**025/20** **AUDIT**

**1 External Audit** - It was noted that there was a clean audit of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/2020 and all statutory notices have been published.

Councillors thanked the Office for their work in completing this.

**2 Internal Audit** – It was noted that the year- end Internal Audit had taken place, with the two recommendations made in the process of being addressed.

**026/20** **REVIEW OF CHARGES**

**1 Community Halls Hire Charges**

a) The current charges for the hire of the community Halls had been circulated. Following discussions it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that there would be no change to current charges until the end of February 2021. They would be reviewed again by the Committee at this time.

b) Hall hire charges during the COVID-19 pandemic – Following discussion it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED not to reduce the current Hall hire charges at this time.

Councillors requested that the Clerk follow up on any Grant award applications that may have been requested, to enable these to be considered at the next Full Council meeting on the 19 November 2020.

**2 Parish Magazine Rate Card**

Following discussion it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED there would be no change to the current rate card charges until the end of February 2021. They would be reviewed again by the Committee at this time.

**3 Allotments**

a) The Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens 2019/2020 annual accounts were noted.  
b) The information on allotment rents have not yet been received from Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens, so will be included on the Recreation and Community Agenda for the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020, for their review.

**027/20** **RISK REGISTER**

**1 Committee's Risk Register**

The Committee's draft Risk Register had been circulated and was

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED as written.

**2 Council's Risk Register**

The Council's draft Risk Register had been circulated. The Council's Risk Register includes all risks for the Council, together with recommendations from this Committee and the Recreation & Community Committee. It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to recommend the Council's Risk Register to Full Council.

**028/20 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021/2022**

**1 Budget**

The draft budget 2021/2022 had been circulated. The draft budget was discussed and it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to recommend a net budget of £860,047 to Full Council, making one change as below:

Reduce the 2021/2022 budget line for the Neighbourhood Plan by £5,000 and transfer this (£5,000) to a new budget line required under Central Funds for Climate Emergency

**2 Precept**

It was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED to recommend to Full Council the level of Precept for 2021/2022 as £362,092 (based on current calculations, using 2020/2021 tax base) with no increase to band D which would remain at £68.89.

**029/20 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN**

a) The following items of concern were noted:

Councillors discussed current interest rates and the possibility of negative interest rates being introduced. A further update on any changes on savings interest rates was requested for the next meeting. It was also requested that the RFO check with the Council's main banker their client status.

Cllr Patel advised the Committee that Cllr Nagpal was not a member of the Finance & Establishment Committee for 2020/2021.

Following discussions on limits and powers the Clerk has to resolve emergency situations quickly, it was requested to review these in the Financial Regulations at the next Finance & Establishment Committee.

b) Items for the next agenda:

A further update on any changes on savings interest rates

A review of the Financial Regulations limits and powers for resolving emergency situations promptly.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....