

# BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 pm ON THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022 AT BUCKHURST HILL LIBRARY, 165 QUEENS ROAD

### PRESENT

Cllrs: Mr M Vance (Chair)  
Mr D Saunders  
Mr A Weinberg  
Mr R Kaul

In attendance: Mrs C Carroll (Locum RFO)  
Mrs E Petyt-Start (Clerk)

### 01/22 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Vance requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Cllr A. Weinberg proposed Cllr D Saunders and this was seconded by Cllr R. Kaul.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

02/22 Cllr S Heap & Cllr G Chambers-Bagshaw

### 03/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 04/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 November 21, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

### 05/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

### 06/22 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

- The RFO communicated to the Committee that the first half of the precept had been received.
- The expenditure currently this financial year showed no areas for concern.
- The costs for the Platinum Jubilee Event were the biggest expense this month but this expenditure will be off-set by the Community Fund Grant provided to the Council from the National Lottery.
- It is likely that we will be under the agreed budget for the PSCO this financial year as currently we do not have a PSCO in place. See 11/22 below
- Also, the cost of producing the magazine will also be under budget due to the reduction of the magazine to two copies per annum.

### 07/22 FINANCE

1 To receive and consider a report of the Council's financial position as at 31 May 2022 circulated. Cllr Vance requested that the members scrutinised the finances by cost centre from the Income & Expenditure account. Members made the following observations:-

- *Elections:* Cllr Raul requested the costs be known for the recent uncontested election, the Clerk confirmed this will be in the region of £2,500.
- *Establishment:* No issues on the Establishment Budget
- *Loans:* The only loan we have is a PWLB for the Woollard centre and the

first half year payment of £9900 has now been made.

- *Personnel*: Cllr Vance asked that expenses under the Personnel cost centre be directed to the Personnel Committee for scrutiny at it was not appropriate at this meeting to look through this cost centre. We ask the personnel committee to feed back any issues they may have to this committee.
- *Parish Office*: With Regard to the Parish Office Account
- i) Cllr Saunders asked if there was any progress on the Parish Office moving from the current location at Warwick House. The Chair informed the meeting that there is a working group set up to investigate options and come back with any recommendations. The Clerk advised that no Working Party meeting has yet been arranged. The working groups had been reconstituted at the Annual Council and the Clerk advised members to meet in their working groups to discuss the options available.
- ii) Cllr Vance noted the high cost of IT. The RFO and Clerk explained the costs included support, licences and software which are all covered under the IT cost centre.
- *Woolard Centre*: produced an income of £9,000 to date with the rifle club producing a fixed income. To date the centre is profitable, the clerk noted that this did not take into account the salary.
- *Roding Valley Hall*: We note that due to the subsidence and other aspects the hall is not profitable at this time.
- *Recreation & Communities*: we receive a small income from this cost centre however it was noted that the Platinum Jubilee event funded by the National Lottery was a great success and the chair thanked the Clerk and her team for all of her hard work in making this event a success.
- Members agreed there were no further comments on the reports and these were approved.

**2** Payments and receipts for 1 April 2022 – 31 May 2022, were noted and approved. At this point Cllr Saunders asked for clarification on what PWL are. A discussion took place and it was noted that the repayment percentage would be around 3%. The clerk also noted that we should our auditors to determine what VAT would be payable on new builds. The RFO also noted that the obligation placed on the residents via any precept changes in the future.

**3** i) Estimated income for the Halls for the first quarter, April – June 2022 was noted.  
ii) To discuss and agree the suitability of the halls report going forward. Members agreed that the report was useful as it highlighted who hired the halls and the income generated. Cllr Saunders commented that he felt this was a very useful report. Following discussions it was agreed that the report should continue to be produced as produced but the invoice number column should be removed as it was felt not necessary. It was also agreed that a comparison trend report can be produced.

## **08/22 BANK ACCOUNTS**

To update the Council on the bank accounts, mandate and online banking proposal. The RFO advised members that the process was taking longer than expected this was due to a member not responding within the time frame set to respond. The RFO was now on her third attempt to bring this to a conclusion. It was agreed that a new application would be made again and Cllrs would be called or asked to visit the Parish Office to action the email immediately. It is noted that it is not possible to progress with the opening of the Unity Trust account until the bank mandate for NatWest is complete as these are used in the transfer of the account, so it is imperative this is actioned as soon as possible, and members are asked to be vigilant in completion the mandate request as received.

## **09/22 SALARIES**

The contractual SCP (Spinal Column Points) increases have been applied to staff salaries as from April 22 were noted. Members asked for clarification on how the salaries are agreed, the RFO / Clerk informed the committee that these changes are

automatically applied as per the staff contract of employment. The Clerk also made the committee aware that the Unions are still in negotiations with NALC and there is a possibility that the spinal columns may change again and that the salaries may yet increase again and the budget may change.

**10/22 BARCLAYCARD OR CREDIT CARD FACILITY**

To discuss and approve a proposal for a Barclaycard or similar credit card for use by the Parish Office.

Members' referred to the proposal previously circulated by the RFO outlining the request for a credit card to enable the Clerk and Caretakers to purchase items that were not able to be invoiced for. Currently the Clerk and Caretakers use their own funds and claim through a disbursement cheque which can be a lengthy process.

After discussion and concern the members voted on the proposal with 3 members voting against and one member voting for the proposal. It was noted that the Clerk should look to setting up an online account which could supply small goods Cllr Saunders suggested Arco.

**11/22 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER**

To review arrangements for the employment of a PSCO and Special Constable. Members' were in receipt of a report for the PSCO and it was noted that the budgeted £41,000 would be salary only. Tax and National Insurance and all other costs associated with employment are covered by Essex Police. It was confirmed that the PSCO is in the control of the Chief Constable and the Parish Office do not dictate any duties.

It was recommended that the report including job description is forwarded to the Personnel committee for review and comment.

**12/22 REVIEW OF THE MAINTENANCE COSTS OF RODING VALLEY**

To review the costs from EFDC associated with the grounds maintenance. It was agreed that the Parish Council will need to investigate further the arrangement with EFDC with regards to the cutting of the grass at the recreation ground and allotments. The Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting (including Cllr Vance & Cllr Williamson) with the Grounds Maintenance team at EFDC to negotiate this arrangement.

**13/22 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN**

- (a) There were no items of concern. Cllr Vance thanked the RFO for her hard work since October following her decision to leave the Council in the summer.
- (b) Items requested for inclusion in the next F&E agenda:  
Update on the review of the maintenance costs of Roding Valley Grounds Maintenance.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 20.48

Date .....

Chairman .....