

# BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 8.00 pm ON THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2022 AT BUCKHURST HILL LIBRARY, 165 QUEENS ROAD

### **PRESENT**

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

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

### **14/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr S Heap & Cllr G Chambers-Bagshaw. Committee sends Cllr Heap their best wishes.

### **15/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **16/22 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23 June 2022, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

### **17/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

### **18/22 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications.

### **19/22 FINANCE**

1. To receive and consider a report of the Council's financial position as at 31 October 2022. Chairman highlighted to committee the importance of raising any concerns under this committee to allow transparency at the Full Council meeting next week. RFO highlighted two areas which are going to be over budget - IT Services and Playground Maintenance. Members reviewed budget lines and accepted current reports provided with no concerns raised.
2. To note payments and receipts for 1 June – 31 October 2022, circulated. Noted no concerns. The Chairman expressed the need for a breakdown of coding within the budget to allow members to see more detail. This will be deferred to be considered at the end of the current financial year.
3. To note estimated income for the Halls for Q3 – September – December 2022. Noted with no concerns.

### **20/22 BANK ACCOUNTS**

To update the Council on the bank accounts, mandate and online banking proposal. The RFO advised members that the process is near completion and the documents will need further signatures which will be arranged. The new online account should therefore be in place shortly.

## **22/22** **AUDIT**

### **1 External Audit**

To note that there was a clean audit of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2021/2022 and all statutory notices have been published

### **2 Internal Audit**

To note that following the interim Internal Audit on Monday 14 November, the Chairman confirmed receipt of report and thanked the RFO, Clerk and the Finance Assistant for their work. The Council received a clean interim audit with no recommendations. It was discussed and agreed that the Council should consider changing the Auditor to ensure we are meeting necessary requirements. The Clerk confirmed that the current rotation of auditors available through Auditing Solutions allows for rotation every 3 years. It was agreed to ensure we have this rotation in place following the year-end Audit.

## **23/22** **REVIEW OF CHARGES**

### **1 COMMUNITY HALLS HIRE CHARGES**

To review charges for the hire of Community Halls, current charges circulated. There was a discussion amongst members whether the charges for the halls should be increased but following concerns on rising costs it was unanimously agreed that these should remain as they are for now. However, the contingency deposit required for each hirer was thought needed further consideration and this will be brought to discussion at the next F&E meeting.

### **2 PARISH MAGAZINE RATE CARD**

To review charges for advertisements in the Parish Magazine, current rate card circulated. No changes were proposed, it was agreed to continue with the current fee structure.

### **3 ALLOTMENTS**

- a) To note the Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens 2021/2022 annual accounts. Noted and accepted.
- b) To review the rents for allotments as charged by Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens. The rent review will be considered at the next F&E meeting.

Council were informed by the Clerk details of the maintenance agreement the Council has with Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens and the responsibilities of the council within this agreement. It was discussed and approved that the budget allocated to BHLG should remain at £7,500.

## **24/22**

### **RISK REGISTER**

#### **1 Committee's Risk Register**

To consider and agree the draft risk register for this committee, circulated.

**Approved**

#### **2 Council's Risk Register**

To consider and agree the Council's draft Risk Register for recommendation to Full Council, circulated.

**Approved**

Summary of the Risk Register to be approved at the Full Council meeting on 24 November.

**25/22 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/2024**

**1 Budget**

To consider the budget for 2023/2024, draft circulated, for recommendation to Full Council. Members were asked to review the budget for 23/24. The budget as it stands shows a deficit of £50,946 for the 23/24 financial year. There are some areas in which savings could be made. However, members agreed to retain large budget items – (PCSO) following the commitment the Council has made to residents. Currently, a PSCO is not in place and hasn't been for some months. Chairman and Clerk will meet with EFDC to discuss Grounds Maintenance Agreement.

It was discussed and agreed that the budget for hall repairs (£6,000 per hall) should be included in the budget and not taken from an EMR. This will therefore increase the deficit to £62,946 but it was agreed by members that the repairs are ongoing and should therefore be an item in the budget.

EMRs were discussed by members (to note the EMRs are not formally agreed until the end of the financial year), however, it was proposed by this committee the following:-

- COVID Memorial will be reduced to £2,000 from £10,000
- Street Lighting will be reduced to £0 from £4,000
- Climate Emergency should be changed to "EV Charging and other"
- Playground EMR and whether a new playground should be installed at the Hornbeam Road site should be discussed at the next R&C meeting.

**2 Precept**

To recommend the level of Precept for 2023/2024 to Full Council. It was unanimously agreed that the level of precept requested in January for this Council should be increase of 1% on 2022 and that this should be proposed by the F&E Committee at the November full council meeting.

**26/22**

**FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN**

- (a) There were no items of concern.
- (b) Items requested for inclusion in the next F&E agenda:

- Update on the review of the maintenance costs of Roding Valley Grounds Maintenance.
- Review of the Allotment rents
- To review the Hall hire contingency deposit

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 22.00

Date .....

Chairman .....