

BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 8.00 pm ON THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023 AT BUCKHURST HILL LIBRARY, 165 QUEENS ROAD

PRESENT

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

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

27/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None but Cllr Vance informed the committee that Cllr Church had sent late apologies during the previous meeting that evening.

28/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

29/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 November 2022, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

30/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

31/23 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

32/23 FINANCE

I. To receive and consider a report of the Council's financial position as of 3 March 2023. Noted and the RFO made the following observations:-

- Community Safety - £41,000 remains unspent
- Investment income increased significantly against due to interest rate rises
- Salaries are under budget – budget was based on full time RFO / Deputy. In turn, pension contributions are under below budget.
- Woollard centre halls income up by £5K and Roding Valley by £3,500.
- Spend on halls is over budget on building repairs and maintenance but this was taken from the EMR allocated for such works. As we agreed in the last meeting we now have a budget allocated for hall repairs each year.
- Majority of the budget allocated for the Magazine remains unspent.

Cllr Vance brought to members that current use of the Clerk's personal mobile and car for work purposes and whether the Council

should consider an office mobile phone for business use and to ensure the Clerk is claiming mileage for work related journeys and has the appropriate insurance, the Clerk confirmed this was the case but the caretakers who also use their own vehicles would need to be confirmed. It was also requested that the RFO look into the Council's NatWest Savings account to consider whether a better rate of interest could be achieved either with NatWest or by moving to another provider.

It was also discussed that the final EMRs for the next Council financial year would be brought to the May meeting for approval once the end of year audit was complete. Cllr Vance stressed as a Council we need to be considering projects in which to progress with. The Clerk informed the Council that approval in principle for the new playground would be put to Full Council by the R&C committee but agreement would be needed on what is required at the site in order to tender for the works appropriately.

It was confirmed that any spend for the Coronation of the King would need to be taken from the existing general events and Christmas events budgets where we have £10K allocated for the next financial year. The Clerk informed the committee that a grant application had to the National Lottery Community Fund been submitted requesting funding similar to the grant received for the Platinum Jubilee event.

- II. To note payments and receipts for 1 November – 31 January 2023. Noted.
- III. To note estimated income for the Halls for the fourth quarter, January – March 2023, circulated. Noted.
- IV. To note the bank reconciliation reports for 1 April 2022 – 31 January 2023. Noted.

33/23 ONLINE BANKING - BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

To finalise the signatories for the Councils bank accounts following the current account transfer to the unity trust account.

It was agreed that the Council would look to ensure all chairs of committees are signatories on the bank accounts. However, the current signatories would remain until the Annual Meeting in May when the new committee chairs were confirmed.

34/23 TO REVIEW THE COUNCILS FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To review the current financial regulations proposal and adoption at the next full council meeting. The suggestions made by the RFO and Clerk including incorporating the online banking requirements as well as additional small amendments would be recommended by the committee to Full Council in March with another review in 6 months. Cllr Kaul noted that the amendment to review the internal auditor every 3 years should be reviewed and not rotated without review.

35/23 UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF THE MAINTENANCE COSTS OF RODING VALLEY GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

To provide update on discussions regarding the Grounds Maintenance arrangements. Cllr Vance provided an update to the committee on the grounds maintenance agreement the Council has with EFDC. The committee agreed for the Clerk to provide a breakdown of the schedule of works under the agreement to be presented to Full Council in March with a proposal that a letter is drafted to EFDC to

understand the future of this agreement an annual payment structure.

36/23 TO REVIEW THE INSURANCE QUOTE

To consider the current insurance renewal following the 3 year completion of the policy to expire on 1 April 23. To also consider the comparison quote obtained. It was unanimously agreed to continue with our current insurers for another 3 year period.

37/23 REVIEW OF THE ALLOTMENT RENTS

To review the rents for allotments as charged by Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens. Brought to this meeting from the November F&E meeting. Noted and approved.

38/23 ASSET VALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY HALLS

To discuss and agree a way forward for the valuation for the two halls. Cllr Vance requested that the Council instruct a commercial surveyor to value both the Roding Valley Hall and the Woollard Centre for review of land, current valuation for commercial and for residential and alternative use. The valuation costs would be taken from the Halls development EMR. Clerk would instruct a suitable surveyor and report back to the committee in May.

39/23 TO REVIEW THE HALL HIRE CONTINGENCY DEPOSIT

To review the current level of deposit the council requires for the hiring of the halls and review the neighbouring halls comparable rates. It was discussed and agreed that the current level of deposit required for hall hirers was too high. Therefore Council unanimously agreed to reduce the hall deposit required to £100 for any hirer – resident or non-resident.

40/23 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN

- (a) There were no items of concern.
- (b) Items requested for inclusion in the next F&E agenda:
Items for Full Council:-
 - Update on the Roding Valley Maintenance agreement and break down of costs
 - Financial Regulations for approval

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.44 pm

Date

Chairman