

BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 8.00 pm ON THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2023 AT BUCKHURST HILL LIBRARY, 165 QUEENS ROAD

PRESENT

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

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

27/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr A Weinberg

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 14 September 23, 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 from the Chairman, the RFO advised that the internal auditor has started the internal audit this week and the report will be circulated in due course.

32/23 FINANCE

1.To receive and consider a report of the Council's financial position to date.
Received, to note the following points:

- Cllr Saunders asked for clarification on the spend under the Chairman's Allowance. Clerk confirmed this would be looked into. Since writing these minutes the expenditure has been confirmed for the purchase of flowers for a councillor who was recently unwell.
- Cllr Vance confirmed he had been sent the original PCSO contract from the Clerk which detailed the annual salary and costs associated with a PCSO and can confirm that the allocated costs for the current budget and looking ahead to 24/25 are correct.
- Cllr Saunders wanted to note the repair work to the RVH following the subsidence claim and where the funds for this work would be taken from. The Clerk reminded members that this work will fall in the current financial year and the £12,000 that the Council will pay the insurer will be taken from general reserves.

2.To note list of payments for 1 June 23 – 31 August 23. Noted, with no additional comments made

3.To note estimated income for the Halls for the 2nd quarter, October – December 2024. Noted with no additional comments made.

4.To note the bank reconciliation reports for 1 August – 30 September 23. Noted with no additional comments made.

33/23 TO APPROVE A CREDIT CARD FOR USE BY THE PARISH OFFICE

With reference to financial regulations 6.2 the use of personal credit and debit cards are not permitted. Therefore, to ensure the Council are working to best practice, there is a requirement for a credit card to enable such purchases within agreed budget. Unanimously approved. The RFO asked to make the initial application enquiries to NatWest for a maximum credit limit of £1,000.

34/23 TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE PROPOSAL FOR AN UPGRADE TO THE IT SYSTEMS

Following the Council's decision to move the Parish Office to the Woollard centre, an upgrade to a cloud-based system is necessary to ensure the office IT requirements are fully functional in the new premises. Approved but as per financial regulations the RFO will obtain 3 quotes to be presented to Council at the next appropriate meeting.

35/23 TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To review the current financial regulations proposal and adoption at the next full council meeting. To note, NALC are in the process of updating the regulations and the consultation is still open. The regulations will therefore need to be agreed and adopted again once the standard NALC version has been approved. Members agreed to defer the approval of the Financial Regulations to the March Finance and Establishment meeting. It was noted that the regulations should make clear reference to the claiming of expenses by members.

36/23 REVIEW OF CHARGES

1 COMMUNITY HALLS HIRE CHARGES

To review charges for the hire of Community Halls, current charges circulated. It was agreed the fees would remain the same.

2 PARISH MAGAZINE RATE CARD

To review charges for advertisements in the Parish Magazine, current rate card circulated. It was agreed that the fees would remain the same.

3 ALLOTMENTS

- a) To note the Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens 2022/2023 annual accounts. Noted
- b) To review the rents for allotments as charged by Buckhurst Hill Leisure Gardens. Noted and reviewed.

37/23 RISK MANAGEMENT

1 Committee's Risk Register

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

2 To review the sections of the Council's Risk Register pertinent to the R & C Committee

To agree any amendments for recommendation to Full Council. Members agreed to refer this back to the R&C to review before recommendation.

3 Council's Risk Register

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

The Council's Risk Register includes all risks for the Council, including the Recreation & Community Committee, together with recommendations from this committee. The Council Risk register as document will not be approved until the R&C section is complete and therefore will be deferred to the next appropriate meeting.

38/23 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024/2025

1 Budget

To consider the (R & C) Committee's budget for the next financial year 2024/2025. The budget was approved by this committee but noted that the R&C committee has not recommended due to the past meetings being inquorate.

To consider the draft budget for 2024/2025, draft circulated, for recommendation to Full Council. The 24/25 budget was reviewed by members and noted there will be a deficit of £18,549 which will be taken from General Reserves.

2 Precept

To recommend the level of Precept for 2024/2025 to Full Council. The level of precept suggested was a 2% increase – the requested precept would therefore be £360,403.74. This was unanimously approved by all members.

3 EMRs

To agree the two new EMRs for 24/25 and the transfer of existing EMR funds to these new projects. It was noted that two EMRs had been created for two new projects. An amount of £4,000 for a new bus shelter and £40,000 for the office relocation from Warwick House to the Roebuck Room at the Woollard Centre. However, members agreed that this should be reduced to £15,000 following initial discussions from the working party.

39/23 TO AGREE THE OUTRIGHT PURCHASE OF A MOBILE PHONE

Following the approval of a mobile phone for the Parish Office; to agree the purchase of a pay as you go device up to the value of £700.00. Councillors were in agreement that the cost was too high for a device that would only be used for occasional events. Cllr Saunders suggested the Clerk obtain a legal note from our solicitor to consider the position on using a personal mobile device for work purposes and we would then revisit this item once that had been received.

The meeting came to a close at 10.00 pm due to our standing orders stating no meeting is permitted to finish later than 10.00 pm. The Clerk therefore brought the meeting to a close and the last item was not noted.

40/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT FOR 2023

To note, agreement has been reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2023 (covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024) and will be implemented to staff accordingly.

41/23 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN

- (a) Items requested for inclusion in the next F&E agenda:
None.

Date

Chairman