

BUCKHURST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT 7.00 pm ON THURSDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2024 AT BUCKHURST HILL LIBRARY, 165 QUEENS ROAD

PRESENT

Cllrs: Mr M Vance (Chair)
Mr H Berlin
Mr R Church
Mr A Weinberg

In attendance: Mrs E Petyt-Start (Clerk)

42/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was apologies of absence received from Councillors Kaul and Saunders.
There was also apologies received from the Locum RFO, Mrs Carroll.

43/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Church declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6 (2) as supplier of goods and services through Connaught Farm Nursery

44/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 16 November 23, circulated, were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them.

45/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

46/23 CHAIRMAN'S AND CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications from the Chairman or Clerk.

47/23 FINANCE

1. A report of the Council's financial position to date was received and considered.
Annual budget by centre, detailed income and expenditure, balance sheet and the Ear Marked Reserves reports were all received and noted

The Clerk provided a brief overview of the current financial position identifying the projected year end deficit position would be improved by approximately £23,000.

Clarification questions were raised by members and responded by the Clerk.

2. The list of payments for 1 November 23– 31 January 24 was noted.
A request was made to refine the detail description on the payments list for the PCSO costs.
A request was made to provide the percentage rate of the PWLB loan (for the Woollard centre) to members.
3. The estimated income for the Halls for the 4th quarter, January 24 – March 24 was noted.

A discussion on the report took place. Members AGREED to continue to receive both the Rialtas and detailed quarter comparison reports for both halls.

4. The bank reconciliation reports for the previous month end, 31 January 24 were noted.

The bank statements for all accounts were received for review and noted.

48/23 TO APPROVE AN UPGRADE TO THE PARISH OFFICE IT SYSTEM TO THE CLOUD

The reports and quotes for the upgrade to the Parish office IT system was received. Consideration of the quotes and upgrade summary along with the merits and benefits of each took place.

Following their discussion, Members AGREED to appoint GMS It Solutions.

49/23 TO APPROVE AN UPGRADE TO THE PARISH OFFICE PHONE SYSTEM

The quotes for the upgrade to the Parish Office phone system to digital was received.

Consideration of the quotes and phone system upgrade summary ensued.

Following a discussion Members AGREED to upgrade the system with the current supplier Cloud and Cable.

It was noted the band with speed information should be advised to members (outside of the meeting); there will likely be a cancellation of the current broadband at the Woollard Centre.

50/23 TO REVIEW THE COUNCILS FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The current financial regulations was reviewed. Members AGREED to propose the reviewed regulations for adoption at the next full council meeting.

51/23 INSURANCE RENEWAL SCHEDULE

The insurance renewal documents were noted. It was further noted the Council are still in a 3 year contract. The annual premium for 2024/25 has risen by approximately £400.

52/23 FINANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT ITEMS OF CONCERN

- a) There was no items of concern from Members.

The Clerk requested to raise a concern, granted by the Chair. A brief statement was provided by the Clerk:

"Following on from my email to all councillors on 24th February regarding the commencement of staff consultations, I'm very concerned for the reputation of BHPC.

I fear the council may be taken to task by its employees by unlawfully commencing the consultations, putting them at risk of redundancy and of changing roles.

There has been a failure to follow the decision making process of this parish council and uphold the duty of care to them.

As Proper Office I'm very concerned my advice around these matters and the law has been ignored.

I'm aware, it would appear Members have acted in breach of the Code of Conduct. I urge members to come together and seek to recover this damaging situation urgently.

On a personal note, having been employed by this council for over five years, I wish to share how upsetting and destabilising the action taken has been. I'm quite upset by the dishonesty, disrespect shown to me by members surrounding these actions and find it quite unfathomable, not least because I come to you as you know, with 30 years of senior HR management experience.

It's now over a week since I was informed my role would be changing and yet I know

nothing more. Similarly, for the staff who've been told their jobs will go, they don't know anything more. I wonder if members feel this is fair and proper way to treat its employees"

The Chair responded thanking the Clerk for her statement and responded on behalf of the members; the statement was noted, and it was suggested that given the Chair (of Council) is currently in consultation with the Clerk, it would not be inappropriate to discuss further but for the Clerk to deal with the Chair and Croner.

- b) Items requested for inclusion in the next F&E agenda:
Internal Audit recommendations

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.59PM

Chairman

Date