

## **HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Meeting of the **Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee**  
held on **Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020** at **7:00 pm** via Zoom Conferencing.

**Present:** Cllrs A Donoghue (Chairman), M Eastwood, G Perry and J Jones.

**In attendance:** Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager).

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Cllrs E Goodyear and N Stevens.

#### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2020**

Approved, to be signed at a later date. The closed session minutes were also approved.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING**

a) Clerk to Circulate the New Disciplinary Procedure to All Staff.

This has now been circulated to all staff and added to the 'staff handbook' electronic folder.

b) Amendment to Financial Regulations. Cllr Eastwood to Report

Cllr Eastwood has amended the financial regulations to include the £300 spending limit for the Clerk.

c) Update of Grievance Policy.

Cllr Jones has made the agreed amendments and it has been added to the 'staff handbook' electronic folder.

**Action Point: The Clerk to circulate the Grievance Policy to all staff members.**

*The Chairman adjourned the meeting.*

#### **OPEN FORUM**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

*The Chairman reconvened the meeting.*

#### **5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) National Joint Council for Local Government Services – Increase to Salary Pay Scales.

Pay negotiations have now been concluded and a 2.75% pay increase agreed with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. Parish Council staff received an increase of 2% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, so an additional 0.75% is now due to staff, under Henfield Parish Council's agreement to link salary increases to those of local Government. The increase will also need to be backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The Chairman commented that the pay increase only applies to members of staff that are linked to the Local Government Scheme, so therefore does not apply to litter pickers. Any backdated increases should apply to salaries paid in those backdated months and not on any increased salaries paid in September.

b) Parish Office Reopening.

The Parish Office will reopen from Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October. Members of the public will no longer be able to 'drop in,' but will need to make a booking to meet with a member of staff on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays only, between 10am and 2pm. Only two councillors will be permitted in the parish office at any one time and they will need to call ahead before coming in to check whether any other councillors are already in the office.

Cllr Jones asked whether it would be possible to permit one councillor in the office and one in the outer reception area. **It was agreed** that this would be possible, as long as social distancing guidelines are adhered to.

The Chairman then asked the committee for their views on employing a cleaner to do a thorough weekly clean of the Parish Office, rather than relying on office staff to fit it into their normal working day. Following brief discussion, **it was resolved** to go ahead and ask all existing staff (including the staff member carrying out additional cleaning of the public conveniences on a temporary contract) whether they would like the opportunity to carry out x 1 hour cleaning once a week, at a time suitable for the office staff.

**Action Point: All Councillors to remember to phone ahead if they wish to visit the Parish Office.**

**Action Point: The Clerk to contact all existing staff to ask whether they would be interested in x 1 hour per week cleaning in the Parish Office, at a time to be decided by the Clerk.**

c) Committee Meeting Schedule.

Cllrs Jones and Perry both confirmed that the existing schedule of bi-monthly meetings for Village Amenities and Recreation and Open Spaces is working well, particularly as there is the ability to hold an extraordinary meeting or to take decisions via email if necessary. The committee also acknowledged that the Parish Office is currently training a new staff member and has a large cemetery software project to implement. Therefore, **it was agreed** that meetings would continue bi-monthly and be reviewed again in January.

**Action Point: The Clerk to include the Committee meeting schedule on the agenda for this committee's meeting in January.**

d) Consider Whether to Continue With Zoom Conferencing for Committee Meetings.

The Chairman confirmed that NALC guidelines have been reviewed again in light of the new 'Rule fo Six' implemented on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, and state that meetings should continue remotely unless it is absolutely necessary to hold a meeting in person. Therefore **it was agreed** that all meetings will continue on Zoom conferencing until NALC guidance states otherwise.

Cllr Eastwood confirmed that the Standing Orders already reflect that remote meetings are permitted as they were updated in July 2020, which was following the new regulations. He also commented that there may be a possibility of introducing hybrid meetings in future, which would enable a mixture of meeting in person with allowing remote participants. The committee agreed that going forward this could enable increased public participation and therefore could be seen as an overall long term improvement and possible permanent solution.

The Chairman then queried the position on the AGM. It had been agreed to hold the AGM in the month after meetings resumed to their normal schedule, ie in October. However regulations do permit AGM's to roll over to May next year. **It was resolved** to take the matter to Full Council, giving councillors the option to either hold the AGM via Zoom, or to wait until May 2021.

**Action Point: The Clerk to include scheduling of the AGM as an agenda item on the October meeting of Full Council, with motions included for conducting it remotely via Zoom and for rolling forward to May 2021.**

## **6. COUNCIL COMMITTEES – KEY ISSUES**

Cllr Jones reported from the Village Amenities committee that there had been a recent meeting of representatives from the Henfield Community Partnership (HCP) and several interested traders in order to consider several ideas to increase footfall in the High Street. One of the ideas discussed was for a regular Sunday market, and Horsham District Council (HDC) had been approached for funding. However it appears that funding is only available for specific Covid related projects that will be complete by the end of March 2021. Alternative sources of funding are being looked into, and a further meeting is scheduled for later this month.

Cllr Jones also confirmed a cemetery working group meeting is taking place tomorrow in order to finalise path layout in the cemetery extension. Costs will remain within the agreed budget. There will also be some discussion on the digitisation of cemetery records, which will incur an additional cost that will need to be funded from reserves.

Cllr Perry confirmed that despite there not having been a meeting since July, there is plenty of activity taking place. There has been an additional cost incurred to reseed the Memorial Field, but this is within budget. She also confirmed that the tree warden is carrying out inspections on trees and thanked the Parish Council for the loan of litter picking equipment which is being used as part of the Keep Britain Tidy Great British September Clean event this month.

The Chairman confirmed that the Museum is looking into an electronic payment system. The Friends of Henfield Museum (FoHM) are in favour of this proposal and will be setting up a paypal account. The intention is that monies will be taken by FoHM with relevant donations forwarded to the Parish Council periodically.

The Chairman also reported from the Plans Advisory Committee that Taylor Wimpey have been asked to delay their attendance at this week's meeting until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, as neither the committee's Chairman or Vice Chairman, or Chairman of Council are able to attend.

Cllr Eastwood reported that the Local Plan response has been sent, with positive feedback received. SSALC commented that it was the first response from any Parish Council in Sussex. The response has also been shared with CPRE and elements of it were used by local MP Andrew Griffith in his recent speech to Parliament. He also reported that an article for the Safe Routes proposal has been sent for publishing to BN5 and that there will also be an article and front page featuring the Trails. There are also two meetings scheduled in October to discuss community facilities.

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY RISK REGISTERS – REVIEW OF ANY CURRENT ISSUES**

The Chairman confirmed that there are no particular issues to report. Risk assessments for the reopening of the Parish Office and the museum have both been completed and added to the Parish Council website.

## **8. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN – FUNDING AVAILABLE AND EXPIRY DATES**

An updated schedule was circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Eastwood commented that most funding has an expiry date of 2027/28 but that there are a couple of smaller amounts that have now expired that may still be accessible. He drew the committee's attention to the following items, which are projects that are due to complete in the next two years and therefore need to be prioritised;

- Portable Speed indicators, funding allocated to transport could be available.
- Henfield Trails, a rolling project with an annual spend allocated of £5,000
- Tennis Club, this is self funded but a lease extension is required.
- Village Square, there is 5 years remaining on the lease, the budget has been reduced to £5,000
- River Adur, this project is currently in the hands of CPRH.

**Action Point: The Operations Manager to include portable speed indicators on the agenda for the next Village Amenities meeting.**

**Action Point: Cllr Eastwood to enquire on the progress of the River Adur project with CPRH.**

## 9. ADDITIONAL PARISH COUNCIL PERSONNEL DOCUMENTS

The Chairman confirmed that Cllr Goodyear has produced a Personnel Policies schedule and this was circulated with the agenda. She commented that she had noticed that some items were missing; a Recruitment and Selection Policy, a Performance Management Policy, Personal Development and Training Policy and an Absence, Sickness and Family Leave policy. Cllr Perry had circulated an Equality and Diversity policy that she had drawn up some time ago. Following discussion **it was agreed** that use of a NALC model could be appropriate, and it would then be advisable for a personnel consultant to then look over all four policies prior to taking to Full Council for adoption. Progress is to be reported at the next meeting of this committee in October.

**Action Point: Cllr Jones to draw up a Recruitment and Selection Policy.**

**Action Point: The Chairman to draw up a Performance Management, Personal Development and Training Policy.**

**Action Point: Cllr Jones to ask Cllr Shaw to draw up an Absence, Sickness and Family Leave policy.**

**Action Point: Cllr Perry to look again at the Equality and Diversity policy to ensure no changes are needed.**

Cllr Eastwood then asked members whether they felt an further action or review was needed following the recent grievance. Following a brief discussion, **it was agreed** that the committee was happy with the outcome, felt that lessons had been learned and action taken by implementation of new and updated policies. However it was felt that the opinion of others involved in the process also ought to be sought.

**Action Point: Cllr Eastwood to write to Cllrs Kendall, Shaw and Jemmett to ask whether they would like to have a review discussion on the recent grievance.**

## 10. FINANCE

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (August).

The Chairman confirmed that she had signed the bank reconciliations and bank statements but that a second signature is required. She asked for a volunteer to attend the office to complete this and Cllr Perry agreed.

**Action Point: Cllr Perry to contact the Clerk to arrange a suitable time to attend the Parish Office to sign the bank reconciliations and statements.**

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – Stonepit Nurseries Ltd (£2,281.50), Teknomek (£672.00) and Legal & General (£410.24).

As above, the Chairman confirmed that a second signature is still required, Cllr Perry agreed to also sign the documentation for the internal controls.

**Action Point: Cllr Perry to contact the Clerk to arrange a suitable time to attend the parish office to sign the internal controls.**

b) Progress Report 2020/21.

The Chairman reported that expenditure in August was £14,565.51, which is the equivalent of 42.6% of budget. Council is 41.7% of the way through the financial year. This is skewed by the fact that we spent £24,500 on the Leisure Centre car park resurfacing and this will be offset by reserves at the end of the year. In terms of income, cemetery queries have been increasing and income is now back in line with expectations for this time of year.

c) Remove and Replace Individuals on the HSBC and Nat West Bank Mandates.

**Nat West Business Reserve Mandate**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to replace the two former councillors Mr R Osgood and Mr A Agarwal with Cllr E Goodyear and Rebecca Grantham. Cllrs Stevens, Eastwood and the Clerk will remain on the mandate.

**HSBC Mandate**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Perry, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to replace former councillor Mr R Osgood with Cllr M Eastwood. Cllrs M Morgan, N Stevens and the Clerk will remain on the mandate.

11. **ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

None

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7pm via Zoom conferencing.

**Meeting Closed at 8.04pm**