

NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE ABOVE-NAMED PARISH HELD ON TUESDAY, 9th October, 2012 AT NEWICK SPORTS PAVILION ALLINGTON ROAD COMMENCING AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Cllr. C. Jago (Chairman for this committee)
Cllr. R. Houghton
Cllr. J. Lucas
Cllr. Mrs. M. Thew
Mrs. L. M. Farmer Clerk for the Council

1. **APOLOGIES:** None
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were no Declarations of Interest.
3. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:** No members of the public were present.
4. **CHAIRMAN:** It was resolved that Cllr. C. Jago be Chairman.
VICE-CHAIRMAN: It was resolved that Cllr. J. Lucas be Vice-Chairman
5. **REVIEW OF OUTTURN AND BANK BALANCE AS AT END OF SEPTEMBER, 2012:**

Copies of the Outturn and Bank Balance had been circulated to the Committee for its approval before recommending adoption to the Council.
The Bank Balances were noted and agreed for signing.
The Committee resolved to recommend to the Council that £10,000 of the £12,316 transferred to the General Maintenance Fund at the end of 2011/12 year be re-allocated to a new General Reserve Fund which would allow more flexibility.
It was noted that some funding would probably be required to produce the Neighbourhood Development Plan for next year.
6. **LDC – New Standards Regime – New Code of Conduct from Councillors & Register of Members Interest**

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Government had disbanded the Standards Board and because of this the Council need to adopt a New Code of Conduct. The Committee had been circulated draft copies over the past few months to review. The Chairman recommended that the Committee ask the Council to approve the draft produced by NALC. This recommendation was supported by the Committee.
The Committee further supported the recommendation that Council accept the draft Register of Members' Interests as produced by LDC. The Clerk would be the Monitoring Officer for the Parish Council, informing the Monitoring Officer at Lewes District Council and forwarding completed Register of Members' Interests which had to be published on the LDC Website, with a link from the Newick Community Website.
The Clerk would send a letter and the Register of Interests with the next Parish Council Agenda as they had to be returned within 28 days of the Code of Conduct being approved by Council.

a) Department for Communities and Local Government – Openness and transparency on personal interests – Cllr. Jago reported on this new guide for Councillors which was in line with how the Council currently conducts its affairs.
7. **Contract for new Clerk –** The Committee recommended the draft Contract for the Clerk (Sue Berry) be approved subject to some minor corrections. Cllr. John Lucas, Chairman of the Council, would speak to Mrs. Sue Berry on Tuesday, 16th October to finalize the Contract.
The Clerk reported on the East Sussex County Council Superannuation Scheme which the Chairman (Cllr. Lucas) would discuss with Mrs. Berry.
Review of equipment for new Clerk – The Committee recommended that the Council purchase a new laptop plus the appropriate software and new printer.
Arrangements for retiring Clerk from 31st December. The Committee recommended that the Council agree to the retiring Clerk keeping the existing laptop and printer so that she could continue to help with the Neighbourhood Development Plan over the next year to 18 months. The retiring Clerk was also asked to keep a running total of the number of hours she spent on undertaking the work associated with the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

8. **Councils' Powers to Discharge their functions – NALC Legal Topic Notes** – The Chairman reported that this had been a legal documentation highlighting that Delegated Powers could be given to Committees or Sub-Committees but not to individual Councillors. However Delegated Powers can be given to the Clerk. The Chairman also discussed the Terms of Reference for the Committees stating that there must be a minimum of three Councillors.

The Chairman also stated that it was not necessary for Chairman & Vice-Chairman to be elected every year on Committees or Sub-Committee but was not sure about the situation relating to the Council which would be clarified.

9. **Financial Regulations:**

Councillors and Employees Expenses – It was noted that the Council had no policy on this as such but would propose that this be included with the Financial Regulations detailing what were considered to be expenses. A draft amendment would be circulated to members with a view to full Council being asked to accept this change. The Chairman (Cllr. Lucas) would speak to Mrs. Berry about the provision of Petty Cash.

10. **Press, Media, Bloggers – Department of Communities and Local Government** – A legal advice note from SALC' s solicitors had been circulated to the Committee for information. It was proposed that something about the use of mobile phones at meetings be incorporated within the Standing Orders. Cllr. Allen would be asked to draft a suitable proposed amendment.

11. **Preparations for Budget for 2013/2014** – The Clerk was asked to send an email to all Councillors and Chairmen of Committees requesting bids for the budget to be sent to the Clerk by the end of the month. It was suggested that the precept be kept at a 0% increase subject to the additional housing in Alexander Mead and Allington Gardens and taking into account the decision relating to the change to the rules for Council Tax Benefit.

12. **DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: It was agreed that a meeting to look at the Draft Budget would be held on Tuesday, 13th November, 2012 commencing at 5.45 p.m.**

13. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING: None identified**

Meeting Closed at 6.30 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Dated:

The Clerk Mrs. Linda M. Farmer, 7 Oldaker Road, Newick, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4LN
Tel: 01825 722061 e-mail: newickpc@btinternet.com