

NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Newick Parish Council Finance and General Purposes Committee held at the Sports Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Allington Road on Tuesday, 14th October 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors: R. Houghton, C. Jago (Chairman for this committee), J. Lucas, and Mrs M Thew
In Attendance: Mrs. S. Berry (Clerk)
Cllr. Mrs J. Smerdon (for part of the meeting)
Two members of the public

- 1. Apologies for Absence and to consider whether to approve reasons given** – No apologies had been received.
- 2. Disclosure by Members of personal interest in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct** – No disclosures were made
- 3. Questions or Statements by Members of the Public** – In respect of agenda item 10, Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee meetings, Mr Thomas asked whether this included video recording. The Chairman confirmed that it did. Mr Thomas stated that in his opinion the protocol should make clear that filming and recording should be restricted to static equipment and that the equipment should be set up prior to the meeting and not moved until after the meeting had ended.

It was agreed that in order to assist Cllr. Mrs Smerdon, who had attended the meeting in her role as the Parish Council's Flag Officer, agenda item 11 should be brought forward.

11. Review of Flag Policy

It was noted that the newsletter article regarding the flag poles on The Green had elicited 56 responses from parishioners, 43 of whom were in favour of maintaining the current policy of continuing to erect the six smaller flag poles on The Green during the summer months, and 13 were against. Cllr. Lucas had made some proposed amendments to the Council's Flag Policy document, however, as the committee had not had sight of these amendments it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter to the F&GP committee meeting in January 2015.

Cllr. Mrs Smerdon reported that the Newick Branch of the Royal British Legion had asked permission to fly its Poppy Appeal flag on the main flag pole for a week prior to Remembrance Sunday. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that permission should be granted.

Cllr. Mrs Smerdon left the meeting at 7.05 p.m.

- 4. Latest Financial Position** – The statement of performance against budget as at the end of September 2014 had been distributed in advance of the meeting and was noted. It was agreed to recommend to the Council that the budget should be constructed assuming a total receipt of £54,400 from Lewes District Council (the same as for 2014/15). At the time of the meeting it was unclear as to how this amount would be split between 'precept' and 'grant'.
- 5. Budget Preparation** – The first draft of the proposed budget for 2015/16 had been prepared by the Clerk and was circulated at the meeting. Committee members were asked to submit any comments or bids for funds before 20th October so that they could be included in the draft document to be circulated to councillors with the agenda for the Parish Council meeting on 28th October.

- 6. Risk and Management Controls** – It was reported that the Chairman had checked the quarterly bank reconciliation on 9th October 2014. He had also checked the calculation of the Clerk's salary, the calculation of pension contributions sent to the East Sussex Pension Fund, and the computer back-up at the same time. Copies of the signed bank reconciliation and salary calculation were circulated at the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that inspections of the Parish Council's play equipment had been carried out by Lewes District Council every month and by the village handy person each week. Hard copies of the inspection reports were produced at the meeting.

The Chairman advised that he had undertaken a review of the Parish Council's asset register and uprated the insurance value of assets by 3% to bring them in line with the values shown on the recently renewed insurance policy.

A draft copy of the updated Risk Assessment Policy had been circulated in advance of the meeting and it was agreed to recommend this to the Council for approval.

- 7. Review of Standing Orders** – A first draft of proposed new Standing Orders based on Model Standing Orders (National Association of Local Councils-2013) had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The committee considered the proposed amendments to existing Standing Orders and suggested some further amendments. It was agreed that a further draft, taking into consideration these amendments, should be submitted to the Council and recommended for adoption.
- 8. Review of Financial Regulations** – It was reported that work had not yet commenced on the annual review of the Council's Financial Regulations. It was agreed that Cllr. Allen should be asked carry out a comparison of the recently produced Model Financial Regulations with the Parish Council's current Financial Regulations and highlight the differences. It was anticipated that this would result in a minor modification of the current Financial Regulations. It was agreed that the matter would be considered in further detail at the next F&GP meeting in January 2015.
- 9. Annual Return** – It was noted that the external auditor had commented that, as the Parish Council was the owner of the Sports Pavilion and it was not held in trust, the cash balances and other assets of the Pavilion should be included in the Parish Council's Annual Report. It was unclear as to what extent the two sets of accounts would need to be amalgamated and it was agreed that further advice should be sought from the internal auditor at the time of the interim review in December 2014. Cllr. Mrs Thew agreed to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Sports Pavilion Management Committee.
- 10. Protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee Meetings** – The protocol on the recording and filming of Council and Committee meetings produced by Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils had been distributed in advance of the meeting. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that, subject to some minor amendments, the protocol should be adopted and that copies should be brought to every meeting and handed to members of the press or public who might wish to make audio and/or visual recordings of the meeting.
- 11. Review of Flag Policy** – This matter had been brought forward and dealt with earlier in the meeting.

12. Proposal to dispose of Parish Council assets – A proposal to dispose of the Parish Council's Dell Inspiron laptop (purchased in 2009) and Brother laser printer (purchased in 2011) had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The equipment was currently being used by the former Clerk in her role as Admin Assistant to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, however, once this work was complete the equipment would be surplus to requirements and of very little commercial value. It was agreed to propose to the Parish Council that the former Clerk should be allowed to purchase the equipment for a nominal sum on the condition that, once the laptop was at the end of its useful life or no longer needed, it should be returned to the Parish Council for disposal.

13. Items for the next agenda – It was agreed that the following items should be included in the agenda of the next meeting:-

- Review of Financial Regulations in accordance with new model financial regulations
- Review of Flag Policy

The Meeting Closed at 8.20 p.m.

Signed.....Dated.....