

NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Newick Parish Council Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee held at the Sports Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Allington Road on Tuesday 12th January 2016 at 7.08 p.m.

Present: Councillors: C. Jago (Chairman of this Committee),
B. Horsfall, and M. Thew
In Attendance: Mrs. S. Berry (Clerk)
One member of the public was present

An audio recording was made of the meeting

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies had been received from Cllrs. C. Armitage and R. Houghton
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** –
Mr Thomas spoke in connection with agenda items 6 and 7 (Policies and procedures to be reviewed and Draft policies and procedures for consideration). He had been provided with a draft copy of the draft procedure for dealing with enquiries prior to the meeting and commented that there was an incorrect date shown in that document. He suggested that dates should not be quoted but instead reference made to the ‘current approved’ procedure to avoid such a problem.
Mr Thomas suggested that the procedure for dealing with enquiries should be incorporated into the procedure for dealing with correspondence and commented on the detail of what should be included in the correspondence list. He also commented that there was no reference to the Freedom of Information policy or guidance for the Clerk regarding FOI enquiries. Finally, Mr Thomas noted that the Council’s Freedom of Information Scheme does not cover the publication of draft minutes or the audio recordings of meetings. The Chairman confirmed to Mr Thomas that his comments had been noted.
4. **Review of Statement of Performance against budget (Outturn) as at end of December 2015** – The statement of performance against budget as at the end of December 2015 had been distributed in advance of the meeting and was noted. It was noted that funds would be transferred from the maintenance reserve to cover the cost of drainage works at the Sports Pavilion which had now been completed.
5. **Risk and Management Controls** – A copy of the updated Risk and Management Control document had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted.

It was reported that the Chairman of the Council had carried out the quarterly checks of bank balances, IT controls and the calculation of the Clerk’s salary and pension contributions on 8th January 2016.

It was noted that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were due for review. A number of minor updates were required to both documents. It was agreed that the Clerk would work on these and produce and updated drafts for the Parish Council meeting in February.

It was noted that the Clerk's Job Description still needed to be reviewed, and that there appeared to be some anomalies. It was agreed to defer this matter to the next F&GP meeting in April when a recommendation would be made that the Job Description should be changed to show that it should be reviewed four yearly rather than annually.

6. Policies and procedures to be reviewed

Copies of policy documents due for review had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the following actions were agreed:-

Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Scheme (last reviewed 27/01/15) – It was noted that requests for copy emails were not covered in the Freedom of Information Scheme. It was agreed that the Clerk would look into updating the Scheme to cover emails and submit a new draft document to the Parish Council in February.

Health and Safety Policy (last reviewed 31/01/12) – the existing policy had been amended to include the Scout Hut it was agreed to recommend approval by the Parish Council. It was agreed that enquiries should be made about the maintenance of and responsibility for the defibrillators that had been installed at various locations in the village.

Policy for Access over Parish Council Land (Last reviewed 31/01/12) – It was agreed to recommend that this policy should remain unchanged.

Travel Plan (31/01/12) – It was noted that this document was out of date and not particularly relevant. It was agreed to recommend that it should be withdrawn.

Memorial Seats Policy (Last reviewed 31/01/12) – It was agreed to recommend to that the Council should adopt an updated and amended version of this policy. The Risk and Management Controls document should also be updated to include an annual review of the inventory of seats and benches.

Severe Weather Policy (Last reviewed 31/01/12) – It was agreed to recommend that this policy should remain unchanged.

Grievance Policy – This policy was discussed along with the Draft Disciplinary Policy under agenda item 7 below.

Policy for Portable Appliance Testing (last reviewed 31/01/12) – It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt the updated version of this policy.

Policy for child protection and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults (last reviewed 31/01/12) – It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt the amended and updated version of this policy and that it should be reviewed every four years.

Protocol for Hearings by Appeals Committee – It was agreed to recommend that this protocol should be withdrawn and the arrangements for any appeal incorporated in the disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Flag Policy (last reviewed 27/01/15) – It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt the updated version of this policy.

7. **Draft policies and procedures for consideration** – The following draft documents were considered and recommendations made:-
- 8.
- Draft Process Manual** – It was agreed to recommend that this manual should be adopted and updated as and when necessary.
- Draft Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures** – It was agreed that more work was required to finalise these draft documents and that they would be considered again at the next F&GP committee meeting in April.
- Draft procedure for dealing with Consultation Requests** - It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt this draft procedure subject to the amendment of the retention of records (item 3.7) from 12 months to 5 years.
- Draft procedure for dealing with enquiries** – It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt this draft procedure subject to the dates being checked and corrected if necessary. It was agreed to amend the draft procedure to show the information which should appear on the correspondence list (item 4) and that the lists should be retained for three years.
- Draft procedure for registering of interests, gifts and hospitality** – It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should adopt this draft procedure.
9. **2016/17 Budget** – It was noted that there had been no changes to the draft budget agreed by the Parish Council on 24th November 2015 and that the precept request had been sent to Lewes District Council.
10. **Audit Procurement** – Details of the future of audit procurement and the new Sector Led Body had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that it should not opt out of the new audit procurement arrangements.
11. **Items for the next agenda** –
 Review of Clerk’s Job Description
 Draft Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
 Recording of responsibility for maintenance of defibrillators

The Meeting Closed at 7.55 p.m.

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

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