

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 Thursday 20th October 2016 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors: C. Armitage, N. Berryman, B. Horsfall,
C. Jago (Chairman of this committee) 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** – 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. Exclusion of the press and public** – It was agreed that in view of the confidential nature of the matter to be considered, members of the press and public would be excluded from the meeting during agenda item 13 (Review of Clerk's contract of employment). Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 S.1 (2) – confidential employment matter.
- 4. Questions or Statements by Members of the Public**

Mr Thomas had indicated that he wished to speak in connection with agenda item 10, Parish Office, and an email from Mr Thomas on this subject had been circulated to members of the committee prior to the meeting. The Chairman reminded Mr Thomas that the agenda item in question was an update on the progress of the Parish Office, not a review of the decision that had already been made to set up a Parish Office, and that members of the public were only entitled to speak on items which were on the agenda. Mr Thomas stated that, in that case, he could not speak, but he believed that the decision had not been properly made.
- 5. Review of Statement of Performance against budget as at end September 2016** – The statement of performance against budget up to the end of September 2016 had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. It was noted that National Insurance costs were likely to be approximately £45 higher than had been budgeted for. It was also noted that expenditure on Administration would be likely to be approximately £1000 below the budgeted amount. It was proposed that a new budget line should be entered to show any expenditure incurred on the setting up of the Parish Office. It was noted that, to date, no payments had been made in connection with the website, however, it was anticipated that total expenditure for the year would be in the region of £925. It was noted that the budget for Village Maintenance would be underspent because the Village Handy Person had been absent through ill health for a period of time earlier in the year. The CCTV repair/maintenance budget was overspent by £251 because three replacement cameras had been fitted. It was noted that grounds maintenance and mowing budgets were showing an underspend but that this was because the expected invoices had not yet been received from the contractor. It was noted that the budget for grants was showing a large underspend, although an application from the Football Club would be considered at the next Parish Council meeting and the Clerk advised that it was likely that Newick Amateur Dramatic Society would also be resubmitting an application. The Clerk was asked to transfer the £1,000 set aside for elections into the election reserve. **Action Clerk**

- 6. Preparation of budget for 2017/18** – The first draft of the budget for 2017/18 was distributed at the meeting and was noted. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that there should be an increase of approximately 1% in the precept (plus grant) requested from Lewes District Council. The timetable for agreeing the budget was considered and it was agreed that an extra Finance & General Purposes committee meeting should be arranged for Tuesday 6th December in order to finalise the budget and an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Tuesday 13th December in order to agree the precept request. **Action Chairman of the Parish Council to call extraordinary meeting**
- 7. 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 F&GP committee had carried out the quarterly checks of bank balances, IT controls and the calculation of the Clerk's salary and pension contributions on 19th October 2016.

The Clerk confirmed that the quarterly VAT reclaim application had been submitted to HMRC.

The Risk and Management Controls document was reviewed and found to be up to date.

8. 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:-

Risk Assessment Policy and Risk Assessment Record (last reviewed 27th October 2015)

It was agreed to recommend that the Parish Council should approve the existing document with no amendments.

Statement of Policy for Newick Green (last reviewed 26/07/16) – Following a proposal made at the Parish Council meeting held 30th August 2016, it was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that the policy should be amended to require a minimum of six months notice for any event which would make use of The Green for more than twenty four hours.

Review of IT Back-up Procedures (last reviewed 29/10/11) – It was agreed to recommend that Parish Council should approve the existing document, but that further investigation should be made into use of other methods of back-up such as 'the cloud'. **Action Clerk**

Proposal for policy on vexatious communications – Cllr. Berryman reported that he had contacted SSALC to request a template or advice on formulating a policy for dealing with vexatious communications, however, he had not yet received this information. It was agreed that he would produce a draft policy for consideration at the F&GP Committee meeting in January 2017. **Action Cllr. Berryman**

- 9. Review of Training Register** – A copy of the Council's Training Register for 2016 had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that all members of the Planning Committee should attend a relevant training course. Cllr. Armitage agreed to investigate the opportunities for providing a bespoke course which all members of the Parish Council could attend. **Action Cllr. Armitage**
It was also noted that the Clerk would like to attend a course on VAT.

- 10. Parish Office** – The Clerk and Cllr. Thew gave a verbal update on the progress made towards setting up a Parish Office at the Community Centre. It was noted that the target for the opening of the Parish Office was January 2017, but that this would be dependent on when

the room could be cleared and made available. It was agreed that the times when the office would be open to the public would be included in the next edition of the Parish Council newsletter.

11. Internal Audit – It was noted that an appointment had been made for the Council’s Internal Auditor to carry out an interim audit in early November 2016. The Internal Auditor had previously produced a comprehensive list of items that he would cover during his audit and it was agreed that there were no other items that he should be asked to look at.

12. Review of cash deposits – It was noted that the interest rate for the Parish Council’s deposit account with Barclays currently paid interest at the rate of 1.34% but that this was being reduced to nil with effect from the beginning of December. The Parish Council also held a 95 day notice account with Cambridge & Counties Bank which paid interest at 1.75% (reducing to 1.5% in December). It was agreed to recommend that cash from Barclays should be transferred to Cambridge & Counties to bring the level of the Cambridge & Counties account just below the £75,000 FSA protection threshold. The Clerk was asked to check to see if there was another interest bearing account that might be of interest to the Parish Council.

Action Clerk

At 7.22 p.m., in accordance with the resolution made under agenda item 3 above, the member of the public present at the meeting left the room whilst discussion took place on a confidential employment matter.

13. Review of Clerk’s Contract of Employment and arrangements for annual appraisal - Copies of the Clerk’s contract of employment had been circulated prior to the meeting and were returned to the Clerk to be destroyed after the meeting. It was noted that changes had previously been agreed in connection with paragraphs 9.1 (salary) and 13 (hours of work) of the contract and that changes would shortly be required to paragraphs 8 (place of work), 10.4 (expenses), and 11 (Working at home – insurance). It was agreed to recommend that the Chairman of the Parish Council should write to the Clerk to agree these changes to the contract. It was noted that arrangements were in place for the Clerk’s Annual Appraisal to take place prior to the next Parish Council meeting. **Action Chairman of Parish Council**

14. Items for the next agenda – It was agreed that the following item would be included on the agenda for the next meeting:-
Policy for dealing with vexatious communications

The Meeting Closed at 7.28 p.m.

Signed.....**Dated**.....

The Clerk: Mrs SE Berry, 18 Newlands Park Way, Newick, BN8 4PG
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