

PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee was held at Pulborough Social Centre on Thursday 15 January 2004 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Mr I Kiverstein (Chairman) Mrs H Black
Mrs J Botting Mrs N Hompstead
Mr N Ryan Mr B Vincent

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr M Foster

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Vincent declared an interest in Pulborough Sports & Social Club of which he was the Treasurer. Mrs Black, Mr Ryan and Mr Vincent declared interests in Pulborough Social Centre of which Mrs Black was the Chairman and Mr Ryan and Mr Vincent Trustees.

3 MINUTES

ACTION

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2003 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

(i) Vacancy for Parish Councillor

It was agreed to advertise the current vacancy on the electronic information sign for one or two weeks. If there was no response, a letter should be sent to all Councillors inviting them to suggest suitable candidates. In the meantime, Mr Vincent undertook to approach Mr Boulton to ascertain his interest in the vacancy and Mrs Botting undertook to approach Mr Jolliffe. Mr Vincent also undertook to speak to Mr Barclay about his non attendance at meetings and Mrs Botting undertook to speak to Mr Lee.

Clerk

Clerk

JB/BV

JB/BV

(ii) Expenditure against Budget 2003/04

Members noted a paper on expenditure against budget to 31 December 2003, a bank reconciliation statement showing a current balance of £59,938.62 and a cash flow forecast to the year end.

The forecast indicated that there were sufficient funds in the Parish Council's Business Reserve to cover projected expenditure. However, Members agreed that funds should be transferred from the Council's earmarked reserves in respect of the purchase of a slide for the playground and a contribution to water heaters for the showers.

Mr Kiverstein proposed that the following amounts should be transferred from earmarked reserves to the Parish Council's current account:

Clerk

- £2,600 from the earmarked reserve for play areas leaving a balance of £2,400
- £4,500 from the earmarked reserve for sports facilities leaving a balance of £3,626.41

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Mrs Black seconded and the proposal was agreed unanimously. **ACTION**

Members noted that this decision involved the transfer of £7,100 to the current account leaving total reserves at £12,709.87. It was agreed to review the Parish Council's reserves at the Committee's next meeting. **Clerk**

Mr Vincent reported that urgent repairs were needed to the pavilion roof and that Pulborough Sports & Social Club was obtaining quotations. The cost was expected to be about £3,000. Members noted that the budget for 2003/04 included £2,500 for repairs to the roof. Any additional cost would have to be funded from reserves.

Mr Vincent reported that, with the agreement of the Parish Council, Pulborough Sports & Social Club had commissioned outline plans for an extension and improvements to the pavilion at a likely cost of £200,000. He hoped that these plans would be available for the next meeting of the Recreation & Open Spaces Committee.

(iii) Revised Risk Assessment

Mr Kiverstein thanked Mrs Black for restructuring the risk assessment. Members pronounced the new format excellent. The Clerk was asked to arrange for relevant items to be included on the Agendas for Committees. It was agreed to review the Parish Council's Financial Regulations at the Committee's next meeting and to review the risk register in June each year. **Clerk**

(iv) Insurance

It was reported that cover had been arranged from 12 January for Officials Indemnity and Libel and Slander. A quotation of £95.76 per annum had been obtained for the four village signs. Mrs Botting proposed that the quotation should be accepted and that the signs should be included under the Parish Council's insurance policy. Mrs Black seconded and the proposal was agreed unanimously. **Clerk**

Members noted that the electronic information sign had been insured for £3,500 on the advice of Horsham District Council at a cost of £41.27 per annum.

(v) Grants

It was reported that the agreed grants had been paid. Mrs Botting said that she had received adverse comments about the size of the grant to the Parochial Church Council. It was reaffirmed that the grants agreed for this year would in no way create a precedent for the future.

4 INTERNAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN

Members were very pleased to note that the Internal Auditor had made only seven recommendations following his recent visit. It was agreed to respond as follows:

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- R1 The Financial Regulations had been adopted in February 2003 and would be reviewed in February 2004 **ACTION**
- R2 All payments processed would be reported to Council in future
- R3 The Council did examine its insurance cover annually. The Fidelity Guarantee had been increased recently on the instruction of the external auditor that it should cover the end year balance plus ½ the Precept
- R4 The Recreation & Open Spaces Committee would be asked to review sports and other club rentals
- R5 There was no rent outstanding from the Cricket and Men's Clubs. The apparently outstanding rent had been waived for various reasons. This was recorded in the minutes but should perhaps have been recorded in the accounts
- R6 A new file had been opened for allotments, which should provide a clearer audit trail. There was no rent outstanding for 2003. One tenant had been reminded that rent for 2004 was overdue
- R7 The value of assets was updated annually to reflect the insurance schedule but would be checked again. Items recorded at cost were those not insured **Clerk**

5 PENSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CLERK

Mr Kiverstein reminded Members that the Parish Council had resolved to join the Local Government Pension Scheme so that individual staff could be nominated to join the Scheme. It had been decided that only the Clerk should be admitted to the Scheme at this time. Mr Kiverstein undertook to inform the County Council of the decision and to take any necessary steps to admit the Parish Council to the Scheme. **IK**

Mr Kiverstein said that the Clerk's contribution would be 6% of salary and that the Parish Council would need to contribute 15%. This Committee had been asked to make recommendations on arrangements for backdating the Clerk's pension.

It was reported that the County Council had said that they would accept two years' contributions on receipt of a letter explaining that the Parish Council had reached the decision to contribute in 2002/03. The cost to the Parish Council would be £4,466.93. Mr Kiverstein proposed that the Parish Council should contribute for two years – 2002/03 and 2003/04 – immediately. **Council**

Mr Kiverstein said that due to income tax regulations, it was only possible to contribute a maximum of 9% and 22.5% for the employee and employer respectively in any one year. He proposed in respect of the additional backlog of contributions that the Parish Council should contribute two maximum years' contributions during the following two years, thus making up one year's backlog, provided the Clerk undertook not to enter a claim for pension entitlement for the other two years of her employment. Mrs Botting seconded and the proposal was

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agreed unanimously. It was agreed to recommend this course of action to the next meeting of full Council.

**ACTION
Council**

6 EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Members considered draft employment contracts for three of the Parish Council's five staff. It was reported that the other two contracts had not yet been drafted because revised job descriptions were needed.

Mr Kiverstein said that ideally all employees should be on standard terms. He asked the Clerk to consider whether she would be prepared to consider changes to her contract. It was agreed that this matter should be discussed outside the meeting.

Clerk

Mr Ryan said that the draft contract covered only the legal minimum. He gave Mr Kiverstein a checklist so that he could review the need for other terms to be included. Mr Kiverstein also undertook to check the legal position in relation to normal retirement age.

IK/Clerk

IK

It was agreed that all job descriptions should include the following additional items:

- 1) To undertake other appropriate activities as agreed with the Parish Clerk
- 2) To comply with all relevant Health & Safety requirements

Members agreed that the aim should be to refine all five contracts in time for the Committee's next meeting.

IK/Clerk

7 JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CLERK

It was agreed to amend the draft job description as follows:

- 1) To insert 'papers' under item 3 after 'To prepare, in consultation with appropriate members'
- 2) To add an item requiring the Clerk to undertake other appropriate activities as required by the Parish Council

It was agreed that the final version of the job description should be considered at the Committee's next meeting.

Clerk

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Members considered a draft Health & Safety Policy for the Parish Council, which had been circulated previously. Mr Kiverstein proposed that the Parish Council should adopt the draft Policy on an interim basis pending further refinement. Mr Ryan seconded and the proposal was agreed unanimously.

Clerk

Mr Ryan proposed that the Parish Council should subscribe to Zurich Municipal's Local Council Advisory Service (LCAS) at an initial cost of £245 and a Year 2 cost of £135. Mrs Botting seconded and the proposal was agreed unanimously.

Clerk

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ACTION

Members considered a draft Health and Safety risk assessment. It was agreed to ask each Committee to consider those areas which fell within their areas of responsibility. It was also agreed to ask the LCAS Helpline (when available) for advice on the Parish Council's responsibility in respect the risks associated with land which did not belong to the Parish Council. In the meantime, Mr Kiverstein undertook to conduct a risk assessment of Nutbourne Common.

Clerk

9 COMMUNICATIONS

Mr Vincent reported that the Communications Group had not met recently but that various members were considering the content of the website. He suggested that the new Parish Council should reaffirm the Communications Strategy adopted earlier.

F&P

Members received copies of Steyning and Washington Parish Councils' newsletters and considered a proposal from Wests Printing Works Limited for a similar newsletter for Pulborough. The proposed publication would be at no cost to the Parish Council because advertising would cover the printing and distribution costs. It was proposed that the newsletter would be published approximately quarterly in March, mid May, mid July and early November. It was reported that Wests Printing also published newsletters for Ashurst and Wiston and Lancing Parish Councils and had approached Billingshurst and Storrington Parish Councils.

There were two alternatives for distribution in Pulborough. Other Parish Council newsletters were distributed by postcode area. However, this method would result in Pulborough Parish Council's newsletter being delivered to Bury, Coldwaltham, Fittleworth and West Chiltington as well as to Pulborough. Alternatively, the newsletter could be posted to households in Pulborough if the Parish Council was able to provide address labels. Members agreed that address labels would be more appropriate.

Mrs Botting proposed that the Committee should recommend to full Council that the Parish Council should accept the proposal from Wests Printing Works Limited to publish a newsletter for Pulborough. Mrs Black seconded and the proposal was agreed unanimously.

Council

It was suggested and agreed that the Committee should consider the Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting at its next meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting was provisionally scheduled for Thursday 6 May but would need to be moved to a Friday if the Committee decided to invite a speaker who would attract a large attendance. Members suggested that the South Downs National Park, the Local Plan Review, Highways or the Tesco's development might be suitable for inclusion.

F&P

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ACTION

10	PAYMENTS		£
	SEEBOARD	Street lighting maintenance	102.01
	HDC	Village Sweeping	342.71
	SLCC	Annual Subscription	90.00
	December Wages and Salaries		
	H M Barrett	Assistant Clerk	619.86
	J C Jupp	MSF	176.63
	M J Leadbeatter	Groundsman	307.70
	G Martin	Caretaker	285.68
	B Tee	Village Warden	411.45
	Inland Revenue	Tax and NI	<u>595.54</u>
	Total		2,396.86

11 **CORRESPONDENCE**
There was no correspondence.

12 **URGENT MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**
1) Parish Council Office
Mrs Black said that Pulborough Social Centre had been able to earmark an area for a separate Parish Council office. The Rector had been approached concerning part of the area. In the absence of a response, Mrs Black had written to inform the Rector that, since he had raised no objections, she would be inviting quotations for the necessary work. Members noted the position.

The meeting closed at 10.10 pm.

..... Chairman

..... Date