

Brinsworth Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2021

Those present :

Chair : Cllr C L Jones

Vice-Chair : Cllr K L Hollis

Councillors : Cllr A Buckley, Cllr J T Chatwyn, Cllr J R Gelder, Cllr P Gregory, Cllr T Hannan, Cllr A Nocton, Cllr S Ridge, Cllr M Rollinson, Cllr J Watson

Officers : Mrs G Blank, Mrs J Huddleston

2514F Public Question Time (20 minutes)

A member of the public was in attendance who posed the following question to the Parish Council.

Does the Parish Council condemn the disgraceful actions of some candidates and tellers intimidating voters and collecting voters elector numbers, plus a number of other breaches of the electoral commissions code of conduct? And will the Council assist the Police in any investigation into electoral fraud?

The Clerk informed the resident that the question would be discussed on a future Parish Council agenda and a formal response would be given after said discussion.

2515F Apologies

There were no apologies received.

2516F Declaration of Members' Interests

The Chair asked members to express any declarations of interest either now or prior to the relevant agenda item being discussed.

2517F Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on :-

- 29th April 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th April 2021 are approved as a true and accurate record.

2518F To Receive Information on Ongoing Issues and Decide Further Action Where Necessary

2512F - Hanging Baskets - The Clerk had emailed Councillors prior to the meeting informing them that due to problems getting new basket liners and the season for bedding plants coming to an end, unfortunately there would be no hanging baskets this year. Councillors were advised that this would be a £2,500 budget saving.

2519F Emergency Action

- To remove the Emergency scheme of delegation put in place at the Ordinary meeting held on the 29th April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the emergency scheme of delegation is no longer in place and the decision making process returned to full Council.

2520F Financial Report

a) To receive the up to date bank balance

The Clerk did not have the bank balance to hand and informed Councillors that she would circulate the figure the following day.

b) To receive and approve the bank reconciliations for April 2021 and May 2021

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliations prior to the meeting and explained to the new Councillors how the checking process worked. The bank reconciliation was checked against the bank statements and the total amounts of income and expenditure were checked against the value of the receipts and payments documents.

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for April 2021 and May 2021 are reconciled and approved.

2521F Receipts & Payments

a) To risk assess the receipts and payments for April 2021 and May 2021

A list of receipts and payments for April 2021 and May 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting and Councillors asked the Clerk to explain any items that they needed clarifying.

RESOLVED: That the receipts and payments for April 2021 and May 2021 are checked, risk assessed and approved.

b) To risk assess the petty cash reimbursement

The Clerk explained the petty cash process to new Councillors and the Chair checked that the total amount of petty cash reconciled matched the amount on the bank statement.

The Clerk gave examples of the what the petty cash is used for, showed the Chair the completed petty cash form and the attached receipts.

The Clerk also told Councillors that it is best practice for a Councillor to periodically check the petty cash when they call into the office. The Chair and Vice Chair agree that they would periodically do so.

RESOLVED: That the petty cash reimbursement is risk assessed and approved and that going forward the Chair and Vice Chair would periodically call to the office to do the necessary checks.

c) To approve the list of outstanding invoices for payment.

The Clerk read out the outstanding invoices for payment.

RESOLVED: That the list of outstanding invoices for payment are approved.

2522F Audit

- To receive and approve the Internal Audit report for 2020/2021.

The internal audit report for 2020/2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk informed Councillors that the internal auditor had no significant issues to raise but had noted a few minor issues that needed to be addressed. The Clerk went through each point:-

- Petty Cash - although the process of claiming and reimbursing petty cash was approved the value of cash held by the Council needs to be noted separately on the Council's year end statement. The Clerk informed Councillors that this had now been addressed.

- Insurance - the Clerk informed Councillors that the auditor felt that the fidelity guarantee amount was on the low side and recommended that this be increased. The Clerk has increased this amount at an additional cost of £137.39 to the Council.

- Precept - The auditor recommended that the value of the precept should be minuted in future.
- Reserves - The auditor felt the level of reserves was on the low side, although the Clerk feels the Parish Council has an appropriate level for an average year of expenditure, but it would not hurt for the Council to consider increasing them.

2523F Approval of the Annual Governance Statement

- To receive and approve the Annual Governance Statement of 2020/2021.

The Clerk explained the purpose of the annual governance statement and the process of approval.

Councillors read each statement and each was confirmed.

RESOLVED: The Annual Governance Statement of 2020/2021 is approved.

2524F Approval of Annual Return

- To receive and approve the Accounting Statement for 2020/2021.

The Clerk had circulated the accounting statement for 2020/2021 prior to the meeting. The Clerk went through the figures for Councillors and informed them that if they wished to go through them in more detail they could arrange to do so with her at a later date.

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Statement for 2020/2021 is approved.

2525F Financial Regulations

- To consider and approve reducing the delegated spend limit of the Clerk.

The Chair explained to Councillors that she would like to request that the Clerk's current spending limit of £1,000 is reduced to £200 until a good working relationship is established. This would give the Chair and Clerk time to build up a level of trust. The Chair and Clerk had already discussed the suggestion and although the Clerk was a little disappointed she understood the reason.

Cllr Buckley and Gregory did not feel this was necessary as the Clerk had already proved her capability and trustworthiness during her 4 years with the Council.

Cllr Gelder asked on how many occasions that Clerk needed to order emergency works and was informed that on very rare occasions. The Clerk currently contacts the Chair or waits until a Parish Council meeting if the amount exceeds £500.

The Clerk confirmed that she was happy for the amendment to be in place as she fully understood the Chair's reasons and asked that if, for any reason, the Chair was unavailable could she contact the Vice Chair for approval.

Cllr Chatwyn suggested that a timescale of 3 months be applied to the proposal and then the item be reviewed again. Cllr Buckley agreed that this was a good compromise.

Councillors voted on the amendment.

RESOLVED: That the level of authorised spend of the Clerk is reduced to £200 for a 3 month period and reviewed at the relevant Finance meeting.

2526F Change of signatories on Councils bank account

- To consider and approve the authorised signatories on the Parish Council bank accounts.

The Clerk explained that the Parish Council currently has 2 bank accounts, one for the day to day running expenses and the other to limit the Council's financial risk.

Both accounts currently have 5 Council signatories as well as the Clerk and all purchases need to be approved by 2 Councillors and the Clerk.

Two of the current signatories on the account are no longer Councillors and the Clerk was in the process of removing them from the accounts. The Clerk suggested that the current Chair and Vice Chair are added as replacement signatories.

Once the signatories are in place the Council can then move to online banking instead of the current process of signing cheques.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs Jones and Hollis are added to the list of authorised signatories for the Parish Council bank accounts.

2527F Brinsworth Community Trust

- To formally resolve that the £145,000 previously loaned to Brinsworth Community Trust is written off and changed to a contribution towards running costs.

The Clerk and Chair explained that the Parish Council had previously loaned an amount each year to Brinsworth Community Trust to help with their finances until the trust got itself established. Due to The Centre's closure during Covid the Parish Council accepted that this was going to take longer than anticipated and agreed at the Finance meeting on the 26th November 2020, minute number 2461F, that the loan be converted to a contribution.

This proposal was discussed at the Trust meeting on the 3rd December 2020, minute number 66, and that it was gratefully accepted.

The final agreement to formally minute that this was approved never took place so the purpose of this agenda item was to formally minute that this is the case.

Cllr Buckley agreed that this step had been missed by the previous Parish Council and needed to be formalised.

The Clerk informed Councillors that there was no reason that this could not be done and that there was no financial impact of either organisations. The intention was for any repayment to be put into reserves to spend on community projects. When the Trust becomes profitable they will be able to contribute any profits to community projects directly.

RESOLVED: That the £145,000 previously loaned to Brinsworth Community Trust is written off and changed to a contribution towards running costs.

MEETING CLOSED 19:30