

Brinsworth Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2022

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 M Rollinson, Cllr J Watson

Officers : Mrs G Blank

2601F Public Question Time (20 minutes)

There were three members of the public in attendance, two informed the Chair that they were just there to observe and the third had a question for the Council.

The question was 'Is the Council aware that under the Local Government Act 1972 press and public should be excluded from meetings for agenda items not in the interest of the public?'. The Chair thanked them for their question and the Clerk confirmed that the Council were aware and that agenda point 9 was a resolution to exclude the press and public from the next agenda items.

2602F Apologies

Apologies have been received from Cllr S Ridge and the reason given was approved.

2603F Declaration of Members' Interests

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

2604F Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on :-

27th January 2022

The Chair asked Councillors if they had any comments to make on the agenda. Cllr Buckley informed the Chair that this agenda item was to approve the minutes and not discuss them. The Chair asked when comments should be made. The Clerk confirmed that Cllr Buckley was correct and that if Councillors wished to make comment or request amendments that this should be done prior to the meeting and this was the reason minutes were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chair requested that in future such detailed minutes should not be recorded and kept brief. The Clerk informed the Chair that the minutes of the meeting were the Clerk's/Deputy Clerk's record of the meeting and Councillors should only comment on accuracy and not the content.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

2605F To Receive Information on Ongoing Issues and Decide Further Action Where Necessary

There were no ongoing issues to discuss

2606F Budget

a) To receive a statement from the RFO on the 2022/2023 budget

The Clerk/RFO for the Parish Council read out a statement with reference to the Parish Council's setting of the 2022/2023 budget without her presence and advice despite being

granted a deadline extension from the Local Authority.

The RFO expressed her concern that budgets had been set lower than the contract cost that the Parish Council are tied into. Budgets had not been included for projects the Clerk was being asked to look into such as planters, play equipment, decorating etc.

The budget for Active Regen is half the minimum amount required which may result in the provision being totally withdrawn.

The budget for the Fireworks display has been cut even though Councillors were advised the costs will be increasing. The Clerk will provide a report so that Councillors can make a decision on the display's future.

Reduction of financial support to The Centre even though it has still not recovered from the effects of Covid without any other contingency in place is risky as the Community will expect the Parish Council to support it.

The Clerk asked if Cllr Gelder had any workings out to support his budget adjustments and informed the Council that if there are any unforeseen expenses it will not be able to call on the current reserve levels as these are still slightly short of the required minimum and will have to declare an overspend.

For all these reasons the RFO wanted it minuted that she did not support the budget agreed at the meeting on the 27th January 2022 and would not be held accountable for any questions raised.

In response Cllr Gelder commented that the budget had been put forward and agreed and there was little that could now be done.

Cllr Buckley said he agreed and supported the statement read out by the RFO and once again asked why the budget submitted for approval had been created by individuals outside of the Parish Council. The Chair said she was unsure what Cllr Buckley wanted to happen and moved on.

The Chair read out her own statement on how the Council will continue to look at efficiencies throughout the year.

b) To receive the 3rd quarter budget monitoring report for 2021/2022

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated the budget report the 3rd quarter.

The Chair asked why there were staffing savings from not watering the hanging baskets. The Clerk explained that an extra body was brought in to assist with the watering for health and safety reasons. The Chair questioned whether this was essential and asked the Clerk for clarification at a future meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the cost of the Parish Council elections was £7,676.78 slightly more than she had estimated.

Councillors had no other comments to make.

2607F Financial Report

- a) To receive the up to date bank balance

The Clerk reported that the bank balance at 24th February 2022 is £231,450.08

- b) To receive and approve the bank reconciliation for December 2021 and January 2022

The bank reconciliations for both periods had been circulated prior to the meeting and these were checked against the bank statement. Councillors confirmed that they agreed.

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for December 2021 and January 2022 are checked and approved.

2608F Receipts & Payments

- a) To risk assess and approve the receipts and payments for January 2022

The list of receipts and payments for January 2022 had been circulated prior to the meeting and Councillors were asked for any comments.

Cllr Chatwyn thanked the Clerk for making the descriptions more detailed.

RESOLVED: That the receipts and payments for January 2022 are risk assessed and approved.

- b) To approve the list of outstanding invoices for payment

The Clerk read out the list of outstanding invoices for payment.

RESOLVED: That the list of outstanding invoices for payment is approved and that Cllr Hollis will authorise the payments on line.

2609F Exclusion of the Press and Public

- To resolve to exclude members of the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, due to the nature of the following business to be transacted being prejudicial to the public interest

RESOLVED: That the press and public are excluded from the meeting.

2610F Staffing Issues

- To receive an update on Staffing

The Clerk informed Councillors that one of the part time Attendants, who had worked for the Parish Council for over 17 years, was due to retire at the end of March but due to annual leave entitlement he had finished this week. The Clerk said that she would arrange a staffing sub-committee meeting to discuss the options.

Cllr Nocton said he had a few more points for the agenda regarding the Centre. The Clerk explained that in future there will need to be separate meetings for the Parish and The Centre staffing to keep both the organisations separate.

It was agreed that a staffing sub-committee meeting is arranged.

2611F Items Requested by Councillors

- To consider appointing an external HR company to look at staffing structures - Cllr Jones

Cllr Jones asked the Clerk to get three quotes for an HR company to come in and review the structure of the Parish Council and The Centre.

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the business for the Parish Council and Trust must be conducted independently, both organisations have to be seen to be independent of each other.

The Clerk also asked why a HR company was required for 14 members of staff who are predominantly part time and are on Local Government contracts of employment. The Council also has access to free employment advice from YLCA and there is free and paid advice available from ACAS.

Cllr Buckley and Cllr Gregory both asked where the funding for this would come from as from past experience this is a very costly exercise.

It was agreed that the Clerk would look for three quotes and bring back to a future council meeting, in two months, for further discussion.

MEETING CLOSED: 19:30