

**DOWNEND AND BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES SUB COMMITTEE**

MEETING HELD AT

Parish Office, Downend Library, Buckingham Gardens, Downend, Bristol BS16 5TW
7 March 2019, 9.30am

Present:

Committee members:- Councillors Janet Biggin, Ben Burton and Martyn Poole.

Officer:- Angela Hocking

Please Note - All items detailed below are recommendations from the Finance & General Purposes Sub Committee, for authorisation by a meeting of Full Council.

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Cllr Sheila Ottewell. Cllr James Griffiths was not present.

2. Requests for Dispensations

None received.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held 8 February 2019

The Minutes were unanimously **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

Clerk provided updates from Downend & Bromley Heath in Bloom:-

- In Bloom are in conversation with the owners of Downend House with regard to the front garden. **Noted.**
- An independent audit of the In Bloom accounts is underway. Once completed, the accounts will be forwarded to the Parish Council, together with the funding application, for the new Council to deliberate at its Finance meeting in May. **Noted.**
- Floral displays by the Welcome to Downend signs - In Bloom were disappointed to hear that D&BH PC will be postponing a decision until the new Council. In Bloom have now found a sponsor who will fund the venture and, as such, they want to complete the project in readiness for the summer. In Bloom ask the Parish Council for their approval and request this item is brought forward for agreement at the March Council meeting.

AGREED - Clerk will make contact with SGC about the specified sites and seek clarification on whether or not Licences will be acceptable.

- Containers - suggestion put forward to attach 'run of the mill' wood cladding although there could be an opportunity to design and implement something more enhanced to complement the new pavilion. Although aware of costs, with the right approach and agreed budget they

believe this is very achievable. Input is requested from the Parish Council and a meeting is requested to discuss further. Clerk has confirmed availability for a meeting and has sent photos of the Bromley Heath pavilion, for their information. **Noted.**

- CCTV - SGC await figures in respect of the line rental cost. Sainsbury's have been approached to install an aerial on the top of the building and the relevant permissions are being sought from the owners of the building. If permission is not granted, then a post housing an aerial is another option. Streetcare will be installing a cabinet outside Sainsbury's to house all the equipment. On 19 March, a meeting will be held to seek a quotation for the installation of posts along the High Street to house 3 cameras, all of which will of course require power. More detailed costings should be received over the course of the next few weeks. **Noted.**

5. Insurance Renewal Invitation

Came & Company have submitted the renewal invitation to the Parish Council. Renewal is due on 1 April and the quotation is based on the sums insured (index-linked by 4%). Renewal premium is £3,904.91 including insurance premium tax, plus an administration fee of £50, giving a total annual premium of £3,954.91. This takes into consideration the Council's long-term agreement which expires on 31 March 2021.

RESOLVED to renew the Parish Council's insurance with Hiscox, total payable £3,954.91, as detailed.

6. Banking arrangements

Clerk reported on information received from Deborah White, ALCA, as follows:-

Following a reminder from the NALC Finance Adviser please can I reiterate previous advice that Clerks / council staff must not have the ability to make payments. Only councillors (at least two) make payments having been instructed to do so at a meeting. Clerks/staff should not have a bank mandate, either to sign cheques with a councillor or make electronic bank payments, regardless of how many pre and post payment checks are made by the council.

A Clerks' delegation to spend between meetings in exceptional circumstances must have other arrangements, such as a prepaid debit card with a fixed limit.

This advice has now been clarified further by NALC:-

It is not necessarily wrong for a clerk (or an RFO) to be a bank signatory, although many Clerks prefer not to take on the liability and many councils prefer payment authorisation to be the responsibility of Councillors only. What is wrong is that any one person (clerk, RFO, councillor) should be capable of authorisation and sole signatory on any form of payment on the council's main account.

The repeal of S150 required that council's put in (its) place "robust and effective systems of control" over expenditure. This, by definition, requires a system of division of responsibility and cross checking by a minimum of two people before a payment can be made.

The only exception is where a council resolves to permit an officer (or officers) to operate an Imprest (petty cash system) account which is subject to sensible Monetary Limits. In this case it is the reimbursement of the Imprest accounts that will

be subject to the over-reaching system of Internal Control from the council's main bank account.

Council have considered ALCA advice and comment as follows:-

- Council at present approve payments in line with Standing Orders, no. 45
- All payments are drafted then approved at the next available Council meeting PRIOR to payments being physically made
- Draft payments are signed by 2 councillors as part of the approval process
- Small Councils (as part of the external audit process) can self certify themselves as EXEMPT from external scrutiny
- Medium and large Councils (as in DBHPC) have to undergo a rigorous external audit process
- This Council also undertakes an internal audit review of procedures and working practices on a quarterly basis to ensure the robustness of internal controls
- As of May 2019 ALL councillors will have 'read only' access to Xero giving them the ability to monitor ALL council financial transactions 24 hours per day
- A bank reconciliation is carried out and all bank transactions are uploaded to Xero software - again giving councillors almost immediate view and scrutiny of ALL available transactions

In conclusion, Council feel this advice is more suited to the smaller tier of parish councils, who's internal and external processes are not as rigorous as in a medium/large parish.

This Council feel their internal checks and balances of financial transactions demonstrate the robustness of their own 'good practice'.

The forthcoming introduction of 'smart working' by Council will only enhance this process.

RESOLVED that at each and every monthly Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, members will have the opportunity to view the Council's bank accounts online at the parish office.

7. Analysis of Reserves

Clerk confirmed Reserves held as follows, which were **NOTED**:-

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| ● Election Expenses | £21,983.79 |
| ● Sports Pitches | £337,812.00 |
| ● Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) | £11,664.16 |
| ● Disaster Recovery Fund | <u>£79,702.93</u> |
| | £451,162.88 |

8. Parish Council uniform

Clerk requested that additional shirts are purchased.

AGREED to purchase new shirts for the Clerk.

9. Localism / Sports Pitches

- a) **VAT** - Clerk has written to HMRC about VAT implications in relation to the pavilion project. Acknowledgement received on 15 February. Formal response still awaited.

- b) **Sporting grants** - Having mentioned to the Internal Auditor about the VAT impact on some of the smaller user groups of the playing fields, discussions took place about the possibility of the Parish Council starting a scheme for 'Sporting Grants'. **NOTED.**

Clerk confirmed that, in accordance with the Internal Auditor's requirements, all user groups have been invoiced up to the end of February, for receipt by the financial year end. **NOTED.**

- c) **Lining works** - Clerk has been contacted by South West Works, a company who specialise in all types of road repairs, drainage and road markings and have recently been appointed to implement road marking throughout the area. They were asked to change the colour of the paint in their machinery for red line marking and, as such, have a reasonable amount of white and yellow paint which needs to be used up prior to the colour change. Workers noticed whilst having a break at Bromley Heath Playing Fields that the basketball court lines were faded. They have subsequently offered to do some work for the Parish Council using the surplus paint; there would be no labour charge and the paint would be classified as 'recycled' therefore costing £1 per linear foot.

As such, Clerk requested that the two hatched areas were painted in front of the gates and bollards at the two pavilion sites (as already agreed by Council: Minute 171.7, January 2019 refers), in addition to remarking the disabled bays at the Sutherland Avenue pavilion car park which had disappeared. If there was sufficient paint left, then the basketball court was also suggested. In accordance with the authority to spend up to £500 (Financial Regulations 4.1), the timescales for implementing the work and as mentioned to Prestige Grounds, Chairman, Cllr Biggin and Cllr Poole, the work was agreed and Landlords Consent received.

The tennis courts were relined in 2017 at a cost of £380. Therefore, when the invoice for the work was received at £1970, Clerk immediately queried the extortionate cost of this work. The company explained that they use 'thermoplastic' which is completely different to that used on the tennis courts which is a spray chlorinated rubber marking. Clerk explained that this was not specified when the offer of work was put forward and would therefore not have been accepted. After long conversations, South West Works have suggested that the invoice is split by 50% and asked the Parish Council to accept a revised cost of £985.

RESOLVED to accept the revised quotation in the sum of £985.

- d) **Quotation for continued Sports Pitch improvements** - Prestige Grounds have submitted a quotation for the continued pitch improvement programme. Due to the dry summer, grass seed levels are really low, hence the price has risen (each bag gone up by at least £10 per bag, which may increase further dependent upon stock levels). It is suggested that the renovations at Bromley Heath could be left for this year. The topdressing on pitch 1 would be advantageous but of course subject to the budgets available. Members were circulated with the quotation at £13,135 in total.

AGREED to ascertain from Brad at Prestige the essential works needed at each site. Members are mindful not to commit the new Parish Council to expenditure if not warranted.

10. Bromley Heath Park

- a) **Skate Park fencing repairs** - Downend Men in Sheds do not wish to quote for this work. C&R Fencing have not responded following a request for a quotation. Three further quotes received:
- South Glos Council £355.09
 - D&N Contractors £350-£450
 - Prestige Grounds £300

AGREED to appoint Prestige Grounds to implement the works required.

- b) **Road sweep of car park** - Clerk has obtained a quotation from South Gloucestershire Council for the road sweep. There is a minimum charge of four hours equating to £140 exc. Vat.

AGREED to proceed with the road sweep of the Bromley Heath car park.

- c) **Quotations received for footpath options** - South Glos Council have finally provided options for footpath works across Bromley Heath Playing Fields, as follows:-
- Option 1 - Footpath across the playing field underneath the tree canopy using a cellweb geogrid system and a stone dust finish with timber edgings, approx. 60m long;
£17,097.77 exc. VAT.
 - Option 2 - Footpath across the playing field incorporating a 'dog leg' design, but avoiding tree canopy and incorporating a stone dust finish with timber edgings, approx. 62m long; **£14,329.20 exc. VAT.**
 - Option 3 - Works to regrade and repair footpath using type 1 and stone dust located between playing fields and lane at rear of Bury Hill Lane, approx. 260m long;
£18,866.23 exc. VAT.

AGREED to obtain two further quotations in line with the above specification.

AGREED to mention to the Friends Group about the possible need for a seat at the play area in Bromley Heath Park. This could be factored into the Group's Business Plan.

11. Applications for funding

- a) **Downend Men in Sheds** - DMIS hope to proceed with electrical works at the container and request a grant to fulfill this project. Three quotations have been received as follows:-
- (i) Gary Smart Electrical £611
 - (ii) Foord Electrical Ltd £702
 - (iii) Ron Clark Electrical & Sons £761

AGREED that funds are in the budgets and to take forward at full Council for ratification.

- b) **Friends of The Leap Valley** - The Friends often use their own tools when working in the Leap Valley. As such, a grant is requested to purchase a number of hand tools, totalling £200.

AGREED that funds are available and to take forward at full Council.

- c) **C in the Park** will be held at King George V Playing Fields on 23 June 2019. The group is asking for a donation of £400 and budget costs were scrutinised by members.

AGREED to support the event at King George V and to take this request forward at full Council for ratification.

12. Payments for authorisation

Clerk listed the payments received to date, which were authorised and **AGREED**. All payments will be circulated to members at the full Council meeting on 21 March.

13. Any other business

- Email from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) following the Clerk's presence at a webinar. Due to the considerable demand for the course, this is now being offered for a fee of £30 + VAT. As D&BH PC had already paid the higher amount for the course, a £30 refund will be made. **NOTED.**
- Notification received from G Suite that their prices will be increasing from £4.14 per user/month to £4.60. **NOTED.**
- Clerk has received a visit from the Secretary of the Downend Folk House Association asking if the Parish Council would be in agreement to having a defibrillator installed at Lincombe Barn. Clerk has explained the Parish Council's objectives within the Business Plan and assured the Secretary that the matter would be brought forward to members.

AGREED to ask Gary Smart for his recommendations on distances between defibrillators, the nearest one to DFHA being Cleeve Wood.

- Clerk advised that the PAT testing within the office and at the pavilions was initially done in November 2017.

AGREED that the PAT testing should be implemented once again.

- Naming a small road off Cleeve Hill - Clerk showed members a site plan for the small development off Cleeve Hill. A name for the site is requested and as this is needed back by return F&GP discussed options.

AGREED to put forward the name of Cleeve Mews.

- Cllr Biggin stated that the water fountain was up and running at Page Park. The date for the next meeting of Business in South Glos group was also confirmed.

14. Date and time of next meeting

Friday 5 April 2019, 9.30am in the Parish Office.

Chairman:

Date: