

**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
30 August 2019, 9.30am

Present:

Committee members:- Councillors Janet Biggin, Colin Ogden, Sheila Ottewell, Matt Pitts and Raj Sood.

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 - None received.

2. Request for Dispensations

Cllr Ogden left the room in relation to item 19, D&BH in Bloom.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held 12 July 2019

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

4. Matters Arising

Page 1 – The new office chair has been received, together with the associated invoice for payment. It is understood that a donation will be made from Ergochair towards the cost of another defibrillator.

Page 2 - Review of Terms of Reference - It is stipulated that the next review will be carried out in 12 months time, ie, July 2020.

Page 2 – The quotation from South Glos Council for footpath works at King George V has been approved and work will commence in the coming weeks.

Page 4 - Pavilion water rates were discussed. Usage is significantly more at Badminton Road/King George V as the pavilion is used for showers etc by all the user groups.

Page 5 – During the process of adding Cllr Colin Ogden as a cheque signatory, it transpires that Lloyds have made an error with regard to adding both Cllr Burton and Cllr Herniman. This is now being resolved with Lloyds but additional forms will need to be signed to process the mandate.

5. External Audit 2018/19

Report and Certificate received from the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, confirming that on the basis of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the information is in accordance with proper practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern. **NOTED.**

6. Verification of bank reconciliation for all on-line bank accounts

Cllr Ottewell has carried out a review of the bank accounts. **Noted.**

7. Insurance premium adjustment; Came & Company

Due to the number of defibrillators the Parish Council has now purchased, the sum insured under the Hiscox policy has been increased. The annual additional premium due is £25.99 including Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) which has increased the future annual premium payable to £3,930.90 including IPT. No pro rata additional premium is due until the next renewal date of 1 April 2020. **NOTED.**

8. Christmas Singalong event costs / budget

The first meeting of the working group has now been held and initial thoughts around costings suggest a budget not to exceed £2000, which would include stage hire, lighting, first aid etc. As soon as full details of the event are known, Clerk can apply for a Temporary Event Notice which costs £21.

AGREED to sanction a budget of £2000 for the event.

9. Christmas Lighting:

- (i) **Removal of power cables from High Street lamp columns** – SGC report that planning permission is not required for the Christmas lighting. The fact remains that the cables from the lighting columns to the trees are, in South Glos Council's opinion, not suitable to be in place throughout the year. The cost to remove them by Blachere Illuminations is quoted at £1485.

Cllr Burton, in his capacity as a South Gloucestershire Councillor, has spoken to SGC Electrical Department and it is hoped that the matter can be resolved amicably. SGC are stunned at the quote provided by Blachere and confirm that they will be in touch in the next few weeks after they have had some time to reflect on the best way to move this forward.

F&GP recommend to full Council that, after Christmas 2019, the power cables and cat wires should be removed and placed securely in the trees and left in a way that they will be easy to install again.

- (ii) **Quotation for lighting: Blachere Illuminations** – Quotation amounting to £4,477.87 received to test the lighting in the living trees, install and remove lights to the real tree and remove looms from trees to the lamp columns at the end of January.

RESOLVED to await further news from SGC about removal/installation of the cables in the live trees, as the quotation may have to be readjusted so as not to include removal of the looms.

- (iii) **Quotation for lighting: South Gloucestershire Council** – Quotation amounting to £695 received to install, remove and store 3 motifs at Cleeve Wood. Also setting timers, switching on the Christmas tree lighting and ad-hoc maintenance cover over the Christmas period.

RESOLVED to accept the quotation, as detailed, totalling £695.

- (iv) **Quotation for lighting: Plantscape Limited** – Quotation amounting to £5,290 received to provide the solar Christmas trees for posts throughout Downend High Street, including carriage, delivery, installation and collection.

RESOLVED to accept the quotation, as detailed, totalling £5,290. (Not to be placed on the pole at the junction of Badminton Road / Cleeve Lodge Road as this pole is shorter than the others and caused various issues in 2018.

10. Localism / Sports Pitches

- (i) **VAT advice re. new pavilion project** – Clerk has sought advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) in connection with VAT applicable on the pavilion project. They state that from the information provided, approximately 18% of the sports income is VAT exempt and the remainder is taxable. Assuming the pavilion is entirely used for paid sports, if we apply the 82% / 18% ratio to the estimated build cost of, say, £600,000, then approximately £109,000 of the cost (and therefore up to £21,600 of VAT) relates to VAT exempt business activities.

A council can only recover VAT in relation to exempt business activities if the amount of VAT is below £7,500 per annum, which clearly will not be the case in the year of construction. However, where it is a one-off breach of the £7,500 threshold, HMRC allow a council to look at the average over 7 years (Section 8.5 of VAT Notice 749). Depending on what other VAT exempt activities the council has, we may be able to squeeze under the threshold in this way. If over the £7,500 threshold on average, then looking at an option to tax, or alternative management arrangements for the pavilion are other options to consider. The council could also look at stopping block and long term bookings and simply charge per game, so that all supplies are taxable and 100% of the VAT can be recovered.

All of these approaches have long-term implications and for such a project perhaps taking specific, insured advice for these particular circumstances would be the best course of action.

AGREED to seek advice from the Internal Auditor and ALCA as to a recommended company that may be approached to seek guidance, and obtain a quotation.

- (ii) **Badminton Road S106 pavilion project** – Clerk reminded members that in March 2018, SGC approved S106 funding of £57,708.74 capital and £22,434.73 revenue in respect of the pavilion at Badminton Road / King George V Playing Fields. In order to access this funding, the Council needs to create a project management plan (PMP) that will set out the execution of the project. It may be that the ongoing Football Foundation application can assist in this regard.

AGREED to bring this matter forward at each F&GP Committee meeting for updates.

- (iii) **Water Fountain** - Enquiries have been made of Frampton Cotterell Parish Council about their water fountains. Clerk explained the background and the price points ranging from £1,700 to £4,200. The model used by Frampton was £3,895 with the water fountain, bottle filling station and dog drinker.

AGREED to defer this matter until drawings have been finalised for the pavilion.

- (iv) **Health & Safety** – The recent Health & Safety course run by South Gloucestershire Council and attended by Downend Men in Sheds (DMIS) has brought to light the need for the Parish Council to ensure that it satisfies its obligations at the two pavilions.

AGREED to await further information from DMIS.

- (v) **Recovery of Business Rates** - As requested, Clerk contacted ALCA for advice. ALCA are unable to comment on commercial services but feel there is no legal reason why a parish council cannot use this service. Clearly the experience of other parish councils is reassuring. ALCA will be asking the regional network if there is additional experience that can be called upon. F&GP has mixed feelings about this service.

AGREED to take a report to Full Council so all members may vote on whether or not to proceed along this path.

- (vi) **Litter Bins** - Many of the bins removed from the playing fields are still held by SGC. Clerk has requested that three litter bins are replaced in Downend High Street using the better ones that were removed from the parks. SGC advise the cost for removal and replacement would be £85 per bin, ie, totalling £255.

AGREED to proceed with the replacement of the bins at £255.

11. Planter and Poppies for Tommy silhouette

As Tommy has now been installed, Clerk has looked online at suitable troughs and poppies. Information was circulated to members.

AGREED to order trough and poppies from Amazon, total price £61.50 to complete the project.

12. Stubber Plates for recycling bins

Stainless steel stubber plates for the Gemini bins can be purchased at £28.68 each + VAT. There are three recycling bins and two plates are needed for each, ie, 6 in total, £172.08.

AGREED to proceed with the purchase of stubber plates.

13. Printing of handbooks

Three quotations for printing Standing Orders/Financial Regulations, Pubic handbook and Employee/Councillor handbook have been received. However, Clerk brought to the attention of members that further guidance on the Model Financial Regulations had been received. The changes from the original version are very minor, namely:

1. *Restriction added to Regulation 11.1.a.ii
Clarifying disapplication of contract regulations to legal professionals limited to those **acting in disputes** only – not general legal work.*

2. *Update to limits under Public Contract Regulations – footnote to Regulation 11.1.b*
3. *Minor change to heading Regulation 12*

After discussion,

AGREED to accept the quotation from ER&B Print in the sum of £90.

AGREED to consider and review the Financial Regulations at the annual policy review in 2020.

14. Google Drive

Clerk reported that Google Drive states 28.5GB of 30GB is being used and an upgrade is recommended. The Business Edition of G Suite costs £9.20 per user per month, ie, £1435.20 per year. This includes unlimited Cloud storage.

AGREED that Cllr Pitts will make investigations as to running the Business Edition solely for the Clerk with other users on the normal plan, which may make a notable saving.

15. Grant applications:

(i) Knit and Natter – Application received for £275 to hire a minibus for members of Knit and Natter to go to the opening of the new scout headquarters in the Forest of Dean, where the group have been knitting to raise funds for the centre.

AGREED to cover the cost of the minibus for Knit & Natter at £275.

(ii) Downend & Staple Hill Allotments - Application received for £1500 for a new entrance gate. Over the last few years, many acts of vandalism have occurred, including arson and the security of the area needs to be improved. The current gate is only one meter high.

AGREED to provide a donation of £1500 to this one-off community project.

(iii) Cleeve Wood Road Shops - Christmas at Cleeve Wood Road Shops will once again be taking place on 1 December and a financial contribution from the Parish Council is requested. D&BH PC is also invited to hold a stall on the day.

AGREED to provide a donation of £1000 towards this Christmas event.

16. Risk Management Review

The External Auditors require copies of the relevant minutes and agenda papers from full Council meetings at which the annual review of Risk Management arrangements is discussed. As such, Clerk felt it important that an in-depth review is carried out. A general schedule was circulated to members which has been updated since 2018.

AGREED to defer until the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting

17. Training

Re. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 - Parish and Town Councils have until 23 September 2020 to either comply with these new regulations OR having done an accessibility assessment and concluded that this would be a disproportionate burden on the council, explain why in an Accessibility Statement and provide alternative arrangements. Clerk has been unsuccessful in contacting our website provider to ensure compliance of our website, which appears to be the same at other councils. The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) is now providing webinars about how to prepare to meet these web accessibility guidelines. Cost £60 exc. VAT.

AGREED to pay the training fee of £60.

Planning Committee will be having 'in house' training by ALCA on 21 October, cost £200.

NOTED AND AGREED.

18. Payment of Accounts

A list of payments made during August was provided to members. Clerk reported an invoice from South Glos Council, being Localism charges for July-September. Unfortunately, this has not been calculated having regard to the dual bins now being emptied at the Parish Council's expense at the playing fields. SGC have been asked to recalculate which brings a total credit to our account of £476. Going forward, it is **noted** that dog waste/litter bin emptying is charged on a sliding scale to reflect the economies of scale within the individual parish areas. With 31 dog waste bins, D&BH PC were afforded the lower rate for more than 25 bins at £2.93 each week, whereas we now fall into the middle band charged at £4.19 each week. From October the monthly charge for dog waste bins will reduce from £378.46 to £351.96.

AGREED AND NOTED.

19. Any other business

- Due to the urgency, and rather than waiting until Full Council, Clerk showed members pictures of the containers being used by D&BH in Bloom and the modifications that have been made without prior consent from the Parish Council or South Gloucestershire Council.

AGREED that the Clerk contact In Bloom to request the newly added structure is removed without delay.

- Cllr Biggin advised the Page Park has been voted as the best park in the south west.

20. Date and time of next F&GP Committee meeting

Friday 27 September, 1pm in the Parish Office.

Chairman:

Date: