

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, 29th July 2020 commencing at 7.00pm.

Following the passing of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) Councils are unable to meet in person during the COVID emergency. This meeting was therefore held via a Zoom link, with Councillors connecting remotely. The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr J Roberts (Chairman) Cllr Mrs P Godwin (Vice-Chairman)
 Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr E Phennah (From Min Ref *FIN/47/20)
 Cllr G Shelton Cllr Mrs S Terry
 Cllr S Ward

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council

FIN/43/20 **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

FIN/44/20 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest, as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 1st July 2012 (Minute Ref C/159/12), including paragraph 12(2), were made.

FIN/45/20 **Minutes of the Previous Committee**

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting that took place on 27th May 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr MacTiernan Cllr Godwin
 Cllr Roberts Cllr Terry
 Cllr Ward

ABSTENSIONS: Cllr Shelton

FIN/46/20 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

FIN/36/20 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR – The Clerk reported that the AGAR had been sent to the External Auditors PFK Littlejohn and the Exercise of Electors Rights would be running until 16th August 2020.

FIN/36/20ii Internal Audit – Mr Rose, the Internal Auditor had requested that a signed copy of the Year End Bank Reconciliation was forwarded to him as soon as this could be done in a Covid-19 secure way. The Clerk reported that Cllr Roberts had now signed the Reconciliation and a copy had been forwarded as requested.

FIN/37/20 Webpage – A new web page provider ‘Utopia’ had now been contracted to design a new web page which complied with the Website Accessibility Regulations.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/47/20 **Parish Council's Accounts up to 31st March 2020**

- a. **Review of Statements/Invoices** – As Members were unable to meet physically the review of statements/invoices was deferred although it was noted that the Accountant undertook a check each month as well as the Clerk. Members also considered whether a Councillor should attend the office to undertake a visual check. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that this should not be resumed until the Council were meeting physically. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- b) **Bank Reconciliation and Balance Sheet** – Members went through the Reconciliation and agreed it reconciled to the Bank Statement. Signing of the Bank Reconciliation would be deferred until physical meetings were permitted.

Cllr MacTiernan enquired what the £1,000.00 payment from Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) related to it on the statement and it was confirmed that this was the Covid-19 Grant she had applied for on behalf of the Council. She also enquired whether, during Lockdown, the leaseholders of the Village Hall and Changing Room were still paying their bills. The Clerk confirmed that they were.

Members reviewed the Balance Sheet and no queries were raised.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval of the Bank Reconciliation and Balance Sheet.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

*7.08 pm Cllr Phennah joined the meeting.

- c) **Budget Statement** – Members received the Budget Statement (Detailed Income & Expenditure). The Clerk pointed out an error in one of the headings that stated 09/10/2018 as the report date, she tabled a revised copy with the correct date on it. It was expected that a lot of budgets would be at approximately 25% expenditure at this time. No queries were raised, and Cllr Terry PROPOSED its approval. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/48/20 **Internet Banking**

The Clerk had made further investigations into Internet Banking. It was noted that HSBC, the Councils' bankers, seemed to be the least user friendly of the main banks for allowing secondary authorisation and a lot of Parish Council Clerks rated Unity Bank.

The Clerk had looked at several other Parish Councils who had policies for online banking to see if they would be helpful. Virtually all of them referred to the Clerk inputting the payments online, following approval at Full Council, and these would then be checked and authorised by two Councillors, who would be set up as 'authorisers' with the Bank. A condition of this was that the Council and those signatories using computers for the council's internet banking had to ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security was used.

The Clerk had also contacted a Clerks' Community Group Forum she was part of to see if there was any further advice there, again most of them seemed to have the two signatories with an

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/48/20 Internet Banking (Continued)

authorisation key that would allow them to log onto the Councils bank account and authorise the payments once the Clerk had uploaded the details. One Clerk had reported that her Council also banked with HSBC and they allowed her to make the payments 'solo' once they had been approved by Full Council. These would then be checked at the following months meetings so any errors would soon be picked up.

The Clerk also tabled another Parish Council policy which would also suggest that the Clerk was able to make the payments following Full Council approval but without further authorisation from two Councillors. The Clerk felt that this method provided little protection for her.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Clerk should write to HSBC to say that they appeared to be unable to offer a service like the other main banks and as a result the Parish Council would struggle to safely use internet banking and that, unless they were able to offer a solution to this, the Council would have to consider moving banks.

Cllr Roberts also requested that investigating Unity Bank was also considered as part of the proposal. Cllr MacTiernan accepted the addition to the proposal. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr MacTiernan added that she would be happy to act as an authoriser and if the Council used the same bank as she uses it may make that transition easier.

FIN/49/20 Village Hall

The Clerk tabled a Non-Domestic Rate Reminder Notice that had been received from Tewkesbury Borough Council stating that a figure of £234.96 was owed. The Clerk had spoken with Tewkesbury Borough Council and they did not provide a definitive answer, but TBC did amend their records to show that the Trustees of the Youth Club leased the building. The Clerk added that since the building had been owned by Northway Parish Council it had always received £0.00 rates bill. Cllr Godwin, as a Member of that Committee, was asked if she had managed to find out any further information about it. She had been told it was because of the Council having two buildings and it had come to light during the pandemic as business rates were looked at in regard to business grants.

Members still felt the response was confusing and it was AGREED that the Clerk should make further enquiries.

FIN/50/20 Changing Room Lease

- i. **Length of Lease** – The Clerk informed Members that Tewkesbury Town Football Club (TTFC) were happy for the new lease to run for six years with a 3-year break clause (Min FIN/39/20 refers).
- ii. **One Legal** – The Clerk said that the last communication she had from One Legal was on 16th June 2020 but she had sent a reminder and was awaiting a response.

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/51/20 DCK Accounting Solutions

The Clerk tabled a letter that had been received from DCK Accounting Solutions, which was a standard letter sent every year enquiring whether the Parish Council wished them to undertake a VAT Partial Exemption Calculation. The Council had previously accepted this but each time it had come back with no breach. Last year the Council had asked whether DCK believed this was necessary and although they could not respond without undertaking the calculation, they felt it was unlikely that there would be a breach for 2018/19. Cllr Roberts, therefore, PROPOSED that the calculation was not undertaken for the 2019/20 financial year.

FIN/51/20 Direct Debits / Standing Orders

Direct Debit / Standing Order Policy – Members reviewed the current policy and did not raise any queries or concerns (copy attached to Agenda).

Schedule of Direct Debits and Standing Orders – Members reviewed the current schedule of direct debits and standing orders (Copy attached to Agenda).

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED approval of the policy and the schedule. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/52/20 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office

i. **Web Cams** – Cllr Ward PROPOSED approval of the purchase of two web cams at a cost of £33.32 each which were necessary for Zoom meetings. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

ii. **Solar Panels** – The Clerk was able to report the Generation Payments had now gone 'live' and that the Council were being forwarded a cheque in the sum of £721.34. Future payments would be made direct to the Councils Bank Account.

iii. **General** –

a) **Hirer's Risk Assessments** - The Committee were informed that the Council were hoping to open the building to some hirers in September. This would be conditional on them providing a suitable risk assessment. It was noted that any forthcoming risk assessments would be reviewed at the Council Meeting in September. The Clerk mentioned that Slimming World were hoping to start during the first week of September. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Working Party be given authority to approve any Risk Assessments for groups that may want to start before the next Full Council Meeting.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

b) **Sign** – The Clerk reported that the Caretaker had struggled to gain entry to the car park, particularly at weekends, as the gates were obstructed by cars. The Clerk tabled a temporary sign she had made asking people not to park in front of the gates and

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/52/20 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office (Continued)

asked whether the Council would like a permanent one made. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that a permanent sign was made. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- c) **Track and Trace Forms** – The Clerk informed Members that she had spoken to the Manager at the Wheatpieces Community Centre and he had forwarded a copy of the track and trace forms he had made to use. He provided one of these to each hirer requesting that they use it to keep records of who attended the meeting and also provide a duplicate copy for himself. It was AGREED that the same procedure should be used at the Community Hub.

FIN/53/20 Correspondence for Action

PC Rescue – The IT maintenance Plan came up for renewal in June and the Clerk had to sign to accept this at the same price as the previous year i.e. £83.33 per month. Cllr Terry PROPOSED ratification of this. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

For: UNANIMOUS

FIN/54/20 Correspondence for Information

- i. **Information Commissioner's Office (CICO)** – Newsletter 2020
- ii. **Cascade** – Agreement Update (portal used for payment of Microsoft package)
- iii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council** – Confirmation had been received that Section 106 monies in the sum of £8751.50 had been paid into the Councils' Bank Account to repay the cost of benches, picnic benches, concreting around the Changing Room, Facia Boards, Guttering, Grass markers, aerator and pressure washer.
- iv. **Zoom** – Members received notification that from July 19th Zoom required all meetings to have a Passcode or a waiting room enabled.
- v. **Rialtas** – Customer Connection Newsletter – June 2020.
- vi. **HSBC** – Members received notice that the Council's Safeguard review had now been completed.
- vii. **Total Gas & Power** – A number of communications relating to business supply during Coronavirus were tabled.

FIN/55/20 Correspondence received after 23rd July 2020

- i. **Caring for Communities and People (CCP)** – This group were hosting a 'Tewkesbury Know Your Patch Network' and wished to invite the Council to join and keep up to date on local

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/55/20 **Correspondence received after 23rd July 2020** (Continued)

agencies, groups and services offered in the Tewkesbury locality. Cllr Ward PROPOSED joining the group. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Tewkesbury Christmas Lights** - A request had been received for a donation to help towards the Christmas Lights in Tewkesbury. The Clerk had received four favourable responses from Councillors, but this was not on the Agenda and could not be considered until it was. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED it was considered at Full Council.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iii. **Tewkesbury Borough Council Press Release** - £883,000 of grant funding paid to local business.
- iv. **United Kingdom Debt Management Office** (previously Public Works Loan Board PWLB)- £883,000 of grant fund paid to local business. – The latest loan repayment due and repayment date had been received.
- v. **Information Commissioners Office** – Notice that the annual subscription in the sum of £40.00 was due for collection by direct debit on the 6th August 2020 (previously approved).
- vi. **Northway Village Hall** – The Clerk had received a response from Tewkesbury Borough Council Planning Department regarding the necessity or not for planning permission if erecting a shed behind the Village hall. The Analysis of the Proposal was as follows:--

'Class 12 Part A of the GPDO 2015 sets out operations which may be carried out by local authorities without a requirement for formal planning permission. Part A sets out that a small ancillary building may be constructed or constructed which is required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land.

As such, a small building be it temporary or permanent would be permitted under this clause provided that the building would be ancillary.

Unfortunately, a very limited amount of information had been provided at application stage however if, for example the Parish required the structure for an office, or additional storage in association with the village hall, this would be acceptable. However, if the structure were proposed to be used for storing materials which are not ancillary to that unit (for example, storing a lawnmower to mow a field in a different location) this would be an ancillary use and as such planning permission would be required.

In the event, where the Parish Council believe that the structure would fall within the parameters of Part 12 of the GPDO and no application would be required; if those conditions are not met and a formal application is required, in any event the Parish Council would be encouraged to carefully consider the design and layout of the structure, having regard to visual and residential amenity as well as impact upon highway safety'.

Members were happy that a metal shed was ancillary for the building and Cllr Ward PROPOSED that this was progressed. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR UNANIMOUS

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

FIN/55/20 **Correspondence received after 23rd July 2020** (Continued)

vii. **Crime & Disorder** – The Clerk informed the Committee that Cllr Godwin had notified her that day that the previous Thursday she had witnessed a group of young people on the roof of the Changing Rooms. It had been ascertained that as a result a down pipe had been damaged, a roof tile lifted and the vent on the roof damaged. Cllr Ward enquired whether Cllr Godwin had called the Police to which she responded that she had not as the youths would be gone before the Police turned up. Cllr Roberts reiterated the importance of calling the Police even if it was just to get an incident number to show a true reflection of what was taking place in Northway.

The Clerk had now reported this and at the same time she reported youths making fires on a piece of play equipment in the play park (photos were also provided) and a damage base to a waste bin in Kingston Road next to the Perspex shelter. Incident numbers had been provided for all the events.

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 7.40 p.m.