

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, 28th July 2021, commencing at 7.25p.m., held in the Main Hall at Northway Community Hub directly following an Extraordinary Council Meeting.

Present: Cllr S Terry (Chairman) Cllr J Roberts (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr C Blackmore Cllr P Godwin (until Min Ref: FIN/72/21)
Cllr E MacTiernan Cllr G Shelton
Cllr T Treacy

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

FIN/60/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Ward had tendered his apologies. No further apologies for absence were received.

FIN/61/21 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Godwin declared an interest in item number 13 iii and 13 iv relating to the Trustees of Northway Youth Club and Youth Provision in the Parish. No further 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/62/21 **Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

28th April 2021 - Cllr Godwin PROPOSED approval of the Minutes of the Meeting that took place on 28th April 2021. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

2nd June 2021 – Cllr Shelton PROPOSED approval of the Minutes of the Meeting that took place on 2nd June 2021. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/63/21 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes**

FIN/54/21 – FIN/58/21 Annual Governance and Accountability – Finance Committee recommendations were passed to Full Council for approval and subsequently forwarded to the external auditor.

FIN/41/21 Insurance – The insurance policy had been renewed with Zurich.

FIN/42/21 Health & Safety – The initial assessment had been undertaken by NFU Mutual which was awaiting being reviewed by the Staffing Committee.

FIN/44/21 Staff Wages – New and amended Standing Orders for the payment of wages had been set up with the Bank.

FIN/45/21 Electricity Supply – The new supply for the Hub had been set up with SSE Green Protect from 30th September 2021.

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FIN/64/21 Parish Council's Accounts up to 30th June 2021

- a. **Review of Statements/Invoices** – Cllr Roberts undertook a review of the statements and invoices to ensure there were no discrepancies as part of the Council's Risk Management Programme, he confirmed that all was in order. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval. Cllr Terry SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- b. **Bank Reconciliation and Balance Sheet** – Members had been provided with copies of the bank reconciliation and balance sheet with their agendas. Cllr Shelton enquired why there were two un-presented cheques payable to Waterplus and the Clerk explained that this was because there was one invoice for the Community Hub and one for the Village Hall, no other queries were raised, Cllr Godwin PROPOSED approval. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- c. **Budget Statement** – Members had been circulated a copy of the Budget Statement (detailed income and expenditure). The Clerk explained that, in the first quarter, it would be expected that budget expenditure would be at approximately 25%, however, there were a few variations such as Insurances and Subscriptions. Stationery/Printing was also high at 45.6% which the Clerk put down to a recent order. Cllr Godwin PROPOSED approval of the Budget Statement. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/65/21 Internal Auditor

Members reviewed the services of the firm used to provide an internal Audit (Auditing Solutions) and it was noted that this arrangement had worked very well. The Clerk was asked how she felt, and she said she had been impressed with the approachability of the firm and the service received. The Clerk informed Members that the firm had quoted £900 for the first year (£450 daily) but if they were engaged for a second year they would expect the cost to drop to £675 unless anything significant was found that would take more time. If the Council did not wish to proceed with Auditing Solutions, it needed to cancel before September. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that Auditing Solutions were contracted to undertake the current year's internal audit being independent and meeting the criteria for undertaking such an audit. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/66/21 VAT Partial Exemption Calculation 2020-21

The Clerk tabled an offer from DCK Accounting Solutions for them to undertake the VAT Partial Exemption Calculation for 2020-2021 at a cost of £205.00. This had previously been undertaken by this firm although was not done last year. It was noted that in one of the summaries on the Annual Governance Return a reference was made to this calculation and, therefore, Cllr Terry PROPOSED that this was accepted.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/67/21 Direct Debits / Standing Orders

- i. Members were asked to ratify the set-up of two new direct debits: -
- a) **Pitney Bowes Purchase Power** – There had been a change made by Pitney Bowes in the way that the topping up of franking machines was administered, currently a top up to a maximum of

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FIN/67/21 Direct Debits / Standing Orders (Continued)

£200.00 was allowed but going forward this would be increased to £500.00. The other option would have been for Pitney Bowes to look at the previous few months' spending and set a maximum. This may not have allowed for periods of time when the Council had more post i.e. consultations etc.

- b) **SSE** – This was for the new contract that had been agreed to start in September for the SSE Green Protect.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED ratification of the two new direct debits. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. Members had a copy of the current Direct Debit / Standing Order Policy and schedule of current direct debits and standing orders attached to their agendas for review. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED approval of them. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/68/21 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office

- i. **Car Park and Entrance** – The Clerk reported that there had been a significant increase in children playing in the car park. They were frequently asked to leave and informed that they were not allowed to play in this area. The main reason for concern was that they would often be out of view of drivers entering or exiting the car park and there was a risk of injury. As well as playing in the Hub car park they also played in the entrance off Fairway (owned by Bromford Housing Association) and would leave bikes, scooters, skate boards etc. in this area making it difficult for visitors to the Hub to gain entry.

Members debated various ways of dealing with this and Cllr MacTiernan suggested a sign with something like 'This is a car park in constant use, it is not a playground for children to use'. Although this would not be for the benefit of the children, who would not read it, it would act as a point of reference.

Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that a letter was written to Bromford Housing asking them to help with this problem, including the erection of a sign on their site. The Council should also purchase a suitable sign for the car park. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Electrical Work (Min Ref FIN/28/21 and FIN/37/21 refers)** – The Clerk informed Members that a replacement fan had been installed in the staff toilet and one new bollard lamp at the front of the building. A second lamp was being awaiting and would be installed once available.
- iii. **Hirings** – The Clerk reported that more hirers were returning to the building although some were still nervous about Covid-19 and were not yet ready to return.

It was previously agreed that only one person would be allowed to use the kitchen at a time apart from Luncheon Club where there would be a number of cooks in a confined space together. Members talked about the necessity of wearing face masks in this situation. It was felt that this could not be enforced, and Cllr Blackmore felt that the wearing of masks (or not) should be covered in the Luncheon Club's own Risk Assessment.

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FIN/68/21 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office (Continued)

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that a recommendation was made to Luncheon Club that they wear face masks whilst working together in the kitchen for the next couple of months.

FOR: Cllr Terry Cllr Godwin
 Cllr Roberts Cllr Shelton
 Cllr Treacy

ABSTENSIONS: Cllr Blackmore Cllr MacTiernan

- iv. **Waterplus** – The 'lost' water meter had at last been located at the side of the building after a two-year search (Min Ref: C/78/21 refers). A contractor (N South) had been asked to do whatever was needed to unearth the meter and, following a significant search, he advised he had a contact at Severn Trent who could possibly help. The Severn Trent representative visited the Hub and, after a lengthy search, located the meter and read it. The Clerk contacted Waterplus with this news and gave them the reading which would result in a refund of £1,565.08.

Members were pleased that this had now reached a conclusion and Cllr MacTiernan enquired whether the credit would be refunded, the Clerk said she had been told that this would be the case. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that a letter of thanks should be forwarded to the contractor who had gone to great lengths to find the meter and had then arranged for a Severn Trent Water representative to attend the site whom the Parish Council would otherwise not have been able to source. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- v. **IT Maintenance Support Plan Renewal** – The annual renewal had fallen due between meetings, so the Clerk had authorised it, this was at a cost of £83.33 per month. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED ratification of this action. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/69/21 Changing Room

- i. **Lighting / Locks** – The Clerk informed Members that she had now received quotations for the lighting but still awaited a quotation for the installation of locks. Once this had been received it would be forwarded to Tewkesbury Borough Council for approval to release the Section 106 monies.
- ii. **Health & Safety** – The Clerk informed Members that, following advice received from the NFU Mutual Health & Safety representative, the Football Club were advised to empty the Andrews Water Heater following lack of use during Covid-19 to ensure that there was no risk of legionnaires.
- iii. **Gloucestershire Target 2030 Severn Wye** – The Clerk had met with Severn Wye the day before at the Changing Rooms (and Village Hall) for them to undertake an assessment that may enable the Council to put a plan together to reduce its carbon footprint. The report would be forwarded in the next few weeks.
- iv. **Outside Plug Socket** – Members considered the benefits/disadvantages of installing an outside plug socket on the Changing Rooms in a strong, lockable box. There would be benefits to the Council when it came to using the pump for the trampoline but it would also be beneficial for the visit of the Digibus early next year. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that a quotation for the work was obtained, subject to the Football Club being in agreement, and the Clerk was authorised to progress up to a maximum of £250.00. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/69/21 Changing Room (Continued)

- v. **Petrol Can** – Members were reminded of a recent incident when a plastic petrol can in the mower store had not been placed in the protected metal store and had leaked. This resulted in fumes filtering into the Village Hall and the Youth Club having to hold its session outside. Cllr Ward had purchased two new cans and the Football Club had been reminded that the fuel must always be placed in the metal container. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED ratification of this expenditure. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was further AGREED to ensure that the storage of fuel was covered within the Parish Councils insurance policy.

FIN/70/21 Defibrillators

- i. **National Defibrillator Sites** – The Clerk reminded Members that the Council's defibrillators were now registered with 'The Circuit', this was following a move over for privately owned defibrillators from South West Ambulance Service Trust. The system of reporting was working well. There were a number of other sites / phone apps that held information relating to defibrillator sites in the country and Northway's machines were not showing on some of them. Upon investigation, it appeared that to get machines registered on these other sites meant that the whole reporting process would be duplicated with all the other individual apps which would be very time consuming. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that no further action was taken and the Council remained only with 'The Circuit'.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **The Circuit** – The Clerk informed Members that 'The Circuit' had been in touch to say that the machine placed at The Northway Centre was deployed in May 2021. Upon receipt of this information, Cllr Treacy undertook a thorough check of the equipment.

FIN/71/21 CCTV

- i. **Broadband** – The Clerk advised that she had no further updates relating to the possible installation of Broadband at the Store Room, which she would 'chase' again.
- ii. **Other Issues** – There was nothing further to report regarding the CCTV system.

FIN/72/21 Northway Village Hall

- i. **Gloucestershire Target 2030 Severn Wye** – This had already been covered under Minute Reference: FIN/69/21 (iii).
- ii. **Attempted Break-In** – It was reported that someone had tried to gain access to the Village Hall. They had lifted the shutter on the kitchen window, removed beading from one of the windows and pushed the metal gates in but had been unsuccessful and the incident was reported to the Police. The timeline provided was too great to be able to review the CCTV footage. The Police had visited a resident who had noticed the outside light at the Village Hall coming on in the early hours of the morning.
- iii. **Use of Toilets by Youth Organisation** – The Parish Council had requested use of the Village Hall toilets to allow Young Gloucestershire to provide some youth provision during the summer holidays. Access to the toilets would have been supervised and the building would not have been left open or

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FIN/72/21 Northway Village Hall

unattended at any time. Following the request, a response was received from the Trustees 'At the meeting on Thursday last the subject was raised about toilets for the summer camp and it was decided not to allow Young Glos access owing that there is very expensive stuff that could get damaged'.

Members were very disappointed by this response which could impact youth provision in the parish. As it happened, on this occasion, Young Gloucestershire were not going to need access to the toilets after all (although arrangements had been made with the Football Club).

The Council was not aware of what expensive equipment was stored in the Village Hall and Cllr Godwin (who was also a Trustee for Northway Youth Club) explained that it belonged to the dance teacher who used the Hall.

Cllr Terry suggested that the debate stopped at this point as it would be covered under an upcoming agenda item.

Cllr Terry also advised that she was going to bring agenda item 13 v. forward.

- v. **Donation of Tables / Trolley** – Although no-one had asked for a donation, it was mentioned by the Youth Leader, when they had attended a previous meeting, that any funds raised at the forthcoming fete would be used to purchase mats for the Village Hall floor (for the dance group) and light weight tables for the Youth Club.

The Clerk had received an email from Cllr Ward which suggested that a donation towards new tables would be acceptable but only in the event that the Trustees of Northway Youth Club provided funds towards them too.

Following further debate, Cllr Terry PROPOSED that no donation was made until there was a better understanding of the youth provision in the parish and the funds that were available.

FOR: Cllr Terry Cllr Blackmore
 Cllr MacTiernan Cllr Shelton
 Cllr Treacy

ABSTENSIONS: Cllr Godwin

- iv. **Youth Provision in the Parish** – Cllr Terry PROPOSED that in view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e relating to the Youth club lease, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded, and they were instructed to withdrawn.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

8.35 p.m. – Cllr Godwin declared an interest and left the meeting.

EXCLUSION ITEMS – Under exclusion it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Youth Club Trustees stating the Council's disappointment regarding their refusal to allow use of the toilets for youth work in the parish and also requesting a meeting with them to discuss provision of youth work and the lease. Initial enquiries would also be made regarding the interpretation of the current lease. **(Confidential Report held on file).**

FIN/73/21 Correspondence for Information

- i. **United Kingdom Debt Management Office** (previously PWLC) – Details that the next Loan repayment was due on 16th August 2021.

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FIN/73/21 **Correspondence for Information** (Continued)

- ii. **Information Commissioner** – Advice that the direct debit payment would be taken on or before 6th August 2021.
- iii. **British Telecommunications** – Information relating to the UK's PSTN network switch off in 2025 when all phones would be fully digital.
- iv. **Clemas & Co Ltd** – Advertising of industrial cleaning equipment.

FIN/74/21 **Correspondence received after 22nd July 2021**

- i. **Total Energies (previously Total Power)** – A letter requesting the Parish Council consider paying by direct debit. It was AGREED to put this on a later agenda for consideration.

As there was no further business the meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.