

SOUTH BRENT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 16 June 2014 at 8.00 p.m. in The Old School Centre, Totnes Road, South Brent.

Open Forum: Nothing was raised.

FC 1-6-14 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Cllr Donald Wiseman was proposed for the office of Chairman of the finance Committee by Cllr Peter Kelly, seconded by Cllr Mark Copleston and resolved by the Committee.

Cllr Cathie Pannell was proposed for Vice Chairman by Cllr Peter Kelly, seconded by Cllr Greg Wall and resolved by the Committee.

FC 2-6-14 Record of members present

Cllr Donald Wiseman (Chairman), Cllrs Mark Copleston, Peter Kelly, Cathie Pannell, Glyn Richards and Greg Wall were present; Julia Willoughby clerk to the Council was in attendance.

FC 3-6-14 Apologies for absence

None.

FC 4-6-14 Declarations of a pecuniary interest (and nature) with regard to items on the agenda

None.

FC 5-6-14 Consider the granting of dispensations

No applications.

FC 6-6-14 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda

None.

FC 7-6-14 Confirm the minutes of the last meeting, and report on any matters arising – for information only

The minutes were confirmed and signed.

FC 8-6-14 Review the Committee terms of reference

A recommendation will be made to the Parish Council that **an addition is required to the terms of reference:**

5 g Dignity at work policy.

FC 9-6-14 Consider whether funds could be transferred to Earmarked Reserves and review the sum held to include interest accrued

As nothing was spent in 2013-14 from the election costs budget line, the full amount of **£225 should be transferred to the earmarked reserves account towards election costs.**

The clerk had prepared an updated spreadsheet on the total held in earmarked reserves including interest; it is recommended that **the revised spreadsheet showing the total held in earmarked reserves including interest accrued over the years is adopted by the Council.**

FC 10-6-14 Consider an investment strategy and policy

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A recent article in 'The Clerk' magazine recommends that Councils should not hold investments but should spend funds for the benefit of their community. The Committee agreed that if the right opportunity arises an investment strategy will be considered.

FC 11-6-14 Asset register: the Village Hall needs to be added following examination of the deeds dated 21.9.1970.

This matter was flagged up by Cllr Glyn Richards and it would seem that the Parish Council owns the freehold site and buildings; it was agreed that Windeatts Solicitors will be contacted for a definitive opinion.

If proved to be the case the Council could act as the accountable body for improvement projects. (Depending on the scale of the project this could push audit costs up; third party insurance would need to be considered and there must be a representative of the Parish Council on the Village Hall Management Committee.)

FC 12-6-14 Report of the independent auditor on the accounts for the year ended 31.3.14 There were no matters to bring to the attention of the Council.

FC 13-6-14 Discuss with other parish funders whether a co-ordinated approach is possible, to benefit the community

This item has been included on the agenda following the suggestion of Mr E Chapman at the Annual Parish Meeting. A list of funders in the parish has been included in the Community Benefit Fund guidelines; however, it is understood that there could be potential to co-ordinate funding in this community.

It was noted that funders have clear criteria for funding requests so the Council should be aware of these and the possibility of all funders working together on large village projects when they arise.

FC 14-6-14 Review the Health & Safety policy

There has been no new guidance issued so **the Health & Safety policy needs no changes.**

FC 15-6-14 Review office equipment and supplies (particularly broadband)

The clerk advised that since 10 May 2014 she has had no broadband access following a power surge; since February 2014 unlimited 21cn broadband has been available for the Parish Council at the home of the clerk.

As a result of a capacity issue at the local exchange, BT has stated that broadband would not be available until August. 20cn is available at the moment but this will be discontinued at the exchange on 20 June, so Entanet have said broadband cannot be provided at this time. As there is no other choice, the Committee recommends that **the Parish Council pays £760.88 for the installation of satellite broadband and the ongoing cost of the service in order that the clerk to the Council may carry out her work.**

FC 16-6-14 The local government pension scheme requires employers to formulate a Discretions Policy (by 1 July 2014)

The sample policy from Peninsula Pensions was examined by the Committee and a response to each item was given. Due to the timescale the clerk will try to find a policy from another local council which could help to formulate the responses; this item will be included on the Parish Council agenda for 23 June. The Committee recommends that **the Pension Discretions Policy available at the next Parish Council meeting is adopted.**

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FC 17-6-14 Training courses attended and future training for Councillors and staff

During May Cllr John Rawlinson attended the Chairmanship course and the clerk attended a DALC conference.

The new Councillor training in South Brent on 18 June is over-subscribed and another course will be scheduled for the autumn. Further enquiries will be made about training for planning in the National Park.

FC 18-6-14 Any other relevant matters, including items for the next agenda and date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 29 September 2014.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

DRAFT