

SWINESHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH OFFICE

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CHAIRMAN: Councillor Carl Gibbard

TEMPORARY CLERK: Natalie Grant

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE SWINESHEAD PARISH COUNCIL

held on

Monday 13th December 2021

Present: C Carl Gibbard, C Roy Hilton, C Sean Trafford, C Chelcei Trafford, C Georges Cornah

Also Present: Clerk, Natalie Grant

21/021 To receive apologies for absence and reasons given

No apologies.

21/022 To receive any declarations of interest in accordance with the Localism Act 2011

No declarations.

21/023 Update on current financial situation

The clerk informed the members of the committee that they all had their own log in details for complete read-only access to all areas of Scribe to view the finances whenever they like. The clerk advised committee members that an end of quarter report would be made available to all Councillors in January for the period October – December.

Regarding the outcomes of the internal audit for Quarters 1 and 2, the clerk presented councillors with the report attached, and made the following observations:

Recommendations 1 and 2: Having investigated the issue, BBC have moved the online location of the Councillor's Register of Interests without informing parishes, therefore the links on our parish site needed to be updated. This has already been carried out.

Recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 6: The Financial Regulations and Standing Orders had not been updated on the website as requested to the webmaster due to a misunderstanding. This is now rectified.

Recommendation 7: The clerk understands that the minutes should be posted as soon as possible after a meeting, however as they are not minutes until after the subsequent meeting, this is already in hand. If Councillors see fit, the clerk could post the notes of the meeting prior to them being accepted as minutes, but this would be by resolution of the full council.

Recommendation 8: Going forward the Clerk will include herself as in attendance at the meeting.

Recommendation 9: The Terms of Reference for the Community Hub Committee are currently under review and will be posted as soon as they are resolved by full council.

Recommendation 10: Allotments contracts (lease agreements) are already in use and are up to date.

Cllr CG commented that having undergone a very thorough internal audit, most of the recommendations were things that were resolved within an hour of receiving the report. The only things that need to be resolved going forward are: a decision on whether to publish meeting notes before they are minutes; and the clerk needs to include herself as being in attendance at meetings. Cllr CG felt that this audit had been very worthwhile and was a positive experience for the council.

21/024 Notes of meeting held on 1st November 2021 to be confirmed and signed as minutes

Cllr CG checked that the Councillors present had read and checked the notes. Cllr ST proposed that the notes presented were an accurate and true reflection of the proceedings and should be accepted as minutes. This was seconded by Cllr RH and it was resolved. Cllr CG signed the minutes.

ACTION: CLERK TO POST NOVEMBER MINUTES TO WEBSITE

21/025 To discuss and recommend the role of handyman/gardener for 2022/23

The clerk informed Councillors that the recommendations for the role would go directly to the Full Council meeting rather than repeating the same information twice. She went on to explain that this was due to the working group who had dealt with the matter was better represented at Full Council. Councillors agreed that this was a good idea.

Cllr CT proposed that "Groundskeeper" might be a more relevant title for the role rather than handyman / Gardner. Cllr CG seconded this proposal and it was resolved. The clerk was asked to make relevant changes to the paperwork before presenting to Councillors at Full Council meeting.

ACTION: CLERK TO CHANGE JOB TITLE ON TENDER PAPERWORK

21/026 To discuss and recommend the number of weekly hours and the pay scale for the employment of a new Parish Clerk

Cllr RH asked the Clerk for her thoughts on the number of hours required to fulfil the role of Clerk. The Clerk responded that she is currently doing approximately 12-15 hours per week, but this includes a lot of remedial work with the accounts, policies and procedures, tenders, etc. which are time consuming and simply haven't been kept on top of for a number of years. She added that the introduction of Scribe and the webmaster will save the clerk a lot of time now they are in full practice.

Cllr CG commented that he thought that given the clerk's response, the position should be advertised for 12 hours per week initially and reviewed during the year depending on new council activities which might require more hours from the clerk. Regarding the pay scale, Cllr CG felt that experience and qualifications played too big a part to be able to advertise a specific pay point.

Cllr CG proposed that committee should recommend that the post should be advertised for 12 hours, but not specify a pay scale. This proposal was seconded by Cllr ST and resolved.

21/027 To discuss spending requirements for 2022/23 and propose a draft budget

The clerk used the projector to display the current year budget and expenditure against each cost centre. The members of the committee suggested various minor alterations to the 2021/22 budget according to this year's costs. Major changes were proposed for the following costs:

Audit and Accounting: from £300 to £700 to cover 2 x internal audits per year rather than one, and the addition of Scribe.

Capital Spending: from £550 to £5000 to cover the cost of 2 additional speed cameras for the village in 2022/23.

Clerk's Office: from £240 to £5000 to cover the cost of the new office for the clerk and a possible community space.

Defibrillator and Contingency Funds: no budgets necessary as the use of earmarked funds have been maximised.

Gardening and Grass Cutting: from a combined £11,500 to £16,000 to cover increased cutting, and more attention to the maintenance of the village and the play area (in particular).

Telephone and Broadband: from £200 to £600 to accommodate a new line in the clerk's office instead of piggy-backing from another office tenant.

Training: from £150 to £500 to cover potential training for councillors and the new clerk.

Clerk Wages: from £9700 to £12000 to cover a cross-over period for the new clerk and also potential increase in hours if required.

Cllr CG asked the clerk to take away the suggestions and work them into a new budget proposal ready to propose to the full council in January so that the precept can be resolved.

ACTION: CLERK TO BEGIN WORK ON BUDGET PREPARATION

Meeting concluded at 19:30