

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRAPPENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, BELLHOUSE LANE ON THURSDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2017

Present: Councillors R Bate (Chair), L Fernyhough, I Fountain, D Hockenhull, Ms W Johnson, H Kazi, J McQuillan, P Warner, Mrs E Welborn, G Welborn, P Wenlock and C Worsley.

In Attendance: Susan Brooks, Clerk to the Council.

217. Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved that** apologies and reasons for absence from Councillors A Bennett, M Biggin, R Fisher and C Taylor would be accepted.

218. Dispensation Requests

No dispensation requests were received.

219. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

220. Minutes

Action

Resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 19th January 2017 and Planning Committee held on 2nd February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

221. Update on Local Policing Issues by PCSO Lauren Copeland

PCSO Lauren Copeland presented an overview of local policing issues as follows:

Incidents:	Burglary	Shoplifting	ASB	Criminal Damage	Traffic Accidents	Theft
Previous 28 days	2	4	8	1	2	1

Complaints about parking outside Thelwall Infant and Junior schools and this was being monitored. PCSO Jordan Calder had been issuing parking tickets and advisory notices at St Wilfrid's Primary School. Advisory notices given would be recorded and repeat offenders would be issued with a parking ticket.

PCSO Jordan Calder had arranged to see the Head Teacher of St Wilfrid's to discuss meeting with the children and getting the children involved with parking issues. PCSO Lauren Copeland would be doing the same at Thelwall Primary Schools.

222. Phil Chadwick, Education and Promotion Officer, WBC, Recycling Presentation

Phil Chadwick, Education and Promotion Officer for Warrington Borough Council, presented an update on the blue bin recycling process. Warrington's recycling rate was 52% which was very good and it was envisaged that this could be further improved if residents had a more detailed understanding of the recycling service and the problems posed by contamination. Over 700 visits to schools had been made to educate children and encourage residents to participate in the blue bin service and 8 out of 10 recycle.

145,344 tons of waste had been collected in the blue bins since the scheme started and the cost of disposing of this, if it were put into black bins, would far outweigh the cost of recycling the materials.

The level of contamination in the blue bins was 8.8% which was considered too high. A figure of 5% would be considered more acceptable and so the presentation was developed to educate the community on what materials can be recycled and what to avoid putting in the blue bin. There is a cost implication to sorting out and removing contamination, and also a potential hazard to handlers who carry out the work.

A programme of door knocking had been carried out to share information and some reduction in contamination had been seen as a result of this. Local children were asked to design educational leaflets and these were circulated. If the amount of waste could be reduced in the first place this would also help and residents were encouraged to consider the packaging materials used for goods that they purchased.

Examples of contaminants include the following, and these should not be put in the blue bin:

- nappies, which are a really big problem,
- plastic bags (including carrier bags, black bin bags, jiffy bags/postal bags and food bags),
- Crisp packets, polystyrene and bubble wrap,
- hard plastics (such as toys and washing up bowls),
- electrical items,
- sharps/needles,
- knives,
- scrap metal,
- wood,
- clothes and shoes,
- food.

Councillors asked about the payment of £30.00 per annum now required for green bins and thought that this would encourage residents to use black bins for garden waste. Phil Chadwick pointed out that garden waste was not permitted in black bins and if found then staff could refuse to empty the bin. Councillors thanked Mr Chadwick for the informative presentation.

223. Correspondence Miscellaneous

The following correspondence had been received from a variety of sources and copies were available from the Clerk:

- a) Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service – E-Newsletter, January 2017.
- b) SLCC – News Bulletin, January 2017.
- c) A letter from The Walton Lea Partnership regarding the volunteer work that they carried out for Parish Councils such as path clearance, building and filling planters, tidying and replanting cenotaphs.

224. Information for Noting

- a) The Cheshire Pension Fund Employer contribution rate would increase from 1st April 2017 from 20.3% to 20.8%. There would be a further increase to 21.3% in April 2018 and 21.8% in April 2019.
- b) The UK Living Wage increase (£8.25 per hour to £8.45 per hour) for the Park Wardens would be implemented from 1st April.
- c) The National Joint Council had increased all pay scales by 1%, effective from 1st April.
- d) The Parish Warden had noted that the bins at Grappenhall Sports Club were overflowing and had suggested that he could offer to empty the bins, when he had the van, for a monthly fee. It was **resolved that** the Parish Warden would approach the cricket club to offer this service and would calculate an appropriate fee based on the time taken to carry out the service. **MS**
- e) Quotes for the plaques for the oak trees were awaited.

225. Updated Financial Regulations

It was **resolved that** the updated Financial Regulations would be adopted subject to some minor amendments. See attached.

226. Updated Investment Strategy

It was **resolved that** the updated Investment Strategy would be adopted subject to some minor amendments. See attached.

227. Audit Training

The RFO had requested permission to attend half day Audit course on 13th March in Middlewich run by ChALC, at a cost of £45. It was **resolved that** permission would be granted.

228. Police Service and PCSO's

A presentation was made at the January Parish Council meeting by Chief Superintendent Andy Southcott and Inspector Neil Drum. Feedback was requested in response to the new proposals presented for an 'enhanced service'. Parish Councils would be allocated a named PCSO for their area at no charge, but if more PCSO's were required then an additional, fully funded, PCSO would cost £34,000.00 per annum. The Chief Superintendent asked what Parish Councillors would expect to see, over and above the standard service currently provided (including PCSO's visible in the community, holding drop-in surgeries, attending meetings, responding to enquiries, dealing with local issues and 'hot spots' and providing feedback and information updates), for this additional 'enhanced service'. The cost of the second PCSO could be shared between other Parish Councils if required or additional funding from local businesses could be sought and the police service would be willing to assist in this process if required.

A discussion took place and Councillors felt that a new model contract would be required with financial penalties if the expected service was not delivered. It was noted that the service had improved recently but there was concern that it could not be guaranteed that PCSO's would always be working in our area and could be called away if required. The cost of £34,000 for an extra PCSO was considered to be too high.

Councillor Louise Fernyhough agreed to contact other Police Forces to find out what other Constabularies were doing and whether or not other Parish Councils were finding successful funding solutions. **LKF**

It was **resolved that** the Clerk would contact NALC to seek further information and would also set up another meeting with Appleton, Stockton Heath and Lymm Parish Councils. This meeting would be attended by Councillors D Hockenhull, Mrs E Welborn, G Welborn and M Biggin. It was also **resolved that** a Working Group would be set up so that further discussions could take place. Members of the Working Group would include Councillors C Worsley, Mrs L Fernyhough, J McQuillian, D Hockenhull, Mrs E Welborn, G Welborn and M Biggin. **SB**

229. Parish Council Communications

The Clerk presented information relating to the creation of new websites for the Parish Council and Walled Garden. The requirements for new websites were discussed and Councillors were keen that a generic contact form should be included so that residents can report issues quickly and easily. Information relating to the Neighbourhood Plan and from PCSO's could also be included.

Further quotes were awaited and the Clerk would report back to Council once further information was available. Information relating to websites had been circulated by the Clerk so that the format used by other Parish Councils could be reviewed by Councillors along with examples of websites produced by the local designers who had been invited to quote. **SB**

It was **resolved that** the approved Parish Council Business card would ordered as soon as possible.

230. New Colour Printer for the Parish Council Office

Following a discussion and consideration of possible options for a replacement printer for the Parish Council office it was **resolved that** a Canon Colour C1325if A4 printer would be leased at a cost of £45.65 per quarter (a total cost of £913.00). **SB**

231. Requests for Financial Assistance

- a) Thelwall Rose Queen Committee – It was **resolved that** a donation of £250.00 would be made towards the 2017 Thelwall Rose Queen event.
- b) North West Air Ambulance – It was **resolved that** a donation of £400.00 would be made support the work of the North West Air Ambulance charity.

232. Accounts for Payment

It was **resolved that** accounts for payment totalling £14,186.55 be approved.

233. Consideration of Planning Applications

The recent planning applications were considered (see attached report).

GRAPPENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
(Approved on 16th February 2017)



1 GENERAL

- 1.1 These financial regulations govern the conduct of the financial transactions of the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.
- 1.2 The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) under the policy direction of the Parish Council shall be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- 1.3 The RFO shall be responsible for the production of financial management information.

2 ANNUAL ESTIMATES

- 2.1 Detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the year shall be prepared each year by the RFO, and shall submit them for consideration and approval by the Council in accordance with the budget timetable agreed by the Council and in line with Warrington Borough Council precept requirements timescales.
- 2.2 The Council shall determine the precept to be levied for the ensuing financial year. The RFO shall supply each member with a copy of the approved estimates.
- 2.3 The annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

3 BUDGETARY CONTROL

- 3.1 No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the appropriate revenue budget unless approved by the Council.
- 3.2 The RFO shall periodically (usually quarterly) provide the Council with a statement of income and expenditure to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure against that planned.
- 3.3 The Clerk may incur expenditure within approved budgets for office, administrative and routine maintenance purposes,
- 3.4 The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £2,500. The Clerk shall report the action to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 3.5 Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year, unless specifically approved by the Council, but will remain in Parish Council 'balances'.
- 3.6 No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.
- 3.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.

4 ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT

- 4.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and any subsequent amendments thereto.

- 4.2 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the annual financial statements of the Council as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and shall submit them and report thereon to the Council.
- 4.3 The RFO shall be responsible for completing the Accounts of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as supplied by the External Auditor appointed by the Audit Commission) and for submitting the Annual Return for approval and authorisation by the Council within the time scales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and any subsequent amendments thereto and the External Auditor.
- 4.4 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting, financial and other operations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and any subsequent amendments thereto . Any Officer or Member of the Council shall, if the RFO or Internal Auditor requires, make available such documents of the Council which appear to the RFO or Internal Auditor to be necessary for the purpose of the internal audit and shall supply the RFO or Internal Auditor with such information and explanation as the RFO or Internal Auditor considers necessary for that purpose.
- 4.5 The Internal Auditor shall carry out the work required by the RFO, or by the Council, with a view to satisfactory completion of the Internal Auditor's Report section of the Annual Return. The Internal Auditor, who shall be competent and independent of the Council, shall report to the Council in writing on the accounts for each year, and at other times as required by the RFO or the Council.
- 4.6 The RFO shall make arrangements for the opportunity for inspection of the accounts, books and vouchers required by the law, Internal Auditor and External Auditor.
- 4.7 The RFO shall, as soon as practicable, report to the Council any significant matters raised by the Internal or External Auditor.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND CHEQUES

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council.
- 5.2 A schedule of invoices and other vouchers for payments shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to the Council, or to a Committee authorised to approve them. The schedule of payments approved by resolution of the Council shall be signed by the Chairman of the Meeting.
- 5.3 Cheques drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule referred to in paragraph 5.2 or in accordance with paragraph 6.4 shall be signed by any 2 of the authorised signatories.
- 5.4 Debit card payments or bank transfers will also require 2 authorised signatories on the relevant completed authorisation forms.

6 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 6.1 All payments shall be effected by cheque or other order drawn on the Council's bankers.
- 6.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Clerk. The Clerk shall satisfy herself that the work, goods or services, to which the invoice relates, shall have been received, carried out, examined and approved.
- 6.3 The RFO shall examine invoices in relation to arithmetical accuracy and shall analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading.
- 6.4 If payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 2013, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of the Council, where the Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, the Clerk may take all steps necessary to settle all such invoices provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate Meeting of the Council.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND WAGES

- 7.1 The payment of all salaries and wages shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance, and salaries and wages shall be as agreed by the Council.
- 7.2 Payment of salaries and wages and payment of deductions from salaries and wages such as may be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, may be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates, provided that each payment is reported to and ratified by the next available Council Meeting.
- 7.3 Payment of staff salaries will be made monthly, usually between the 10th and the 15th of the month.

8 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council, and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with Council policy.
- 8.2 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.3 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by the Council as to terms and purpose.
- 8.4 All investment certificates and documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.

9 INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed by the Council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges annually.
- 9.4 Any irrecoverable sums and any bad debts shall be reported to the Council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. Receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due shall be made at least annually, coinciding with the financial year-end, or made quarterly in line with VAT requirements.
- 9.9 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control, such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders issued shall be maintained.
- 10.2 Order books shall be controlled by the RFO and no member of the Council shall place any order for work, goods or services, without the prior authorisation of the RFO.
- 10.3 All Members and Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An Officer issuing, an official order is to ensure, as far as reasonable and practicable, that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each

transaction

- 10.4 The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the Council.

11 CONTRACTS

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- (a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i.) to (vi) below:
- (i.) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services.
 - (ii.) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.
 - (iii.) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant.
 - (iv.) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council.
 - (v.) for additional audit work of the External Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum, the clerk and the RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Council).
 - (vi.) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- (b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £10000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall invite tenders from at least three suitable firms
- (c) All contracts must be agreed in writing.
- (d) When it is considered appropriate to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (e) Invitations to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk to the Council. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- (f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of the Council.
- (g) If less than three tenders are received for contracts valued above £10000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (h) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall contain a statement to the effect of the Standing Orders.
- (i) When it is to enter into a contract less than £10000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall, where possible, obtain 3 quotations, and shall in any event use his/her best endeavours to obtain value for money
- (j) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.

12 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architects or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any

case, where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more, a report shall be submitted to the Council.

- 12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and notified by the Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1 The Clerk to the Council shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment.
- 13.2 Delivery notes must be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3 Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4 The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

14 PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 14.1 The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds of properties owned by the Council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and any subsequent amendments thereto.
- 14.2 No property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £50.

15 INSURANCE

- 15.1 Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.
- 15.2 The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the Council at the next available Meeting.
- 15.5 All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the risk exposure as determined by the Council.

16 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 16.1 The Clerk with the RFO shall prepare and promote risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council.
- 16.2 When considering any new activity, the Clerk and RFO shall prepare a draft risk management policy and shall bring a draft, addressing the legal and financial liabilities and risk management issues that arise, to the Council for consideration and, if thought appropriate, for adoption.

17 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1 The Council shall review its Financial Regulations at least every 5 years.

