

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ
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Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17th February 2015 at 7.30pm in Benson Parish Hall Lounge

Present: Cllr J. Fowler (Chairman)
Cllr D. Rushton (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr P. Baylis
Cllr R. Jordan
Cllr P. Peers

Proper Officer: Peter Eldridge

1. **Apologies.** There were no apologies as all members were present.
2. **Declarations of interest.** There were no declarations of interest.
3. **To meet the temporary RFO and agree her appointment.** Mrs T Ingham joined the meeting and answered questions related to the position of Temporary RFO. At the end of the question and answer session Mrs Ingham left the meeting room and members of the committee discussed and agreed that she was very suitable for the temporary RFO position. Mrs Ingham re-joined the meeting and Cllr J Fowler asked if Mrs Ingham would take the position subject to contract. Mrs Ingham confirmed that she would be happy to take on the temporary RFO post.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting.** The minutes of the finance committee meeting held on Tuesday 20th January 2015 were approved and signed at the meeting of the full council held on Thursday 22nd January 2015.
5. **RFO vacancy discuss options and review any submitted CV's.** The committee reviewed 3 applications for the RFO post and it was agreed that the committee would interview all 3 applicants.
Action: Clerk to arrange interviews for the Monday/Tuesday 9th/10th March 2015.
6. **To agree advertising the RFO position with OALC.** It was agreed that members would interview the current applicants before deciding on any more advertising for the RFO post.
7. **Projects:**
 - a. Parish Hall extension business plan: Cllr P Baylis reported that Mr G Cassell had responded with some good comments on the current draft business plan. She continued that she was currently working to update the document and would then recirculate a new draft to councillors and Mr Cassell.
8. **Insurance cover for play equipment and Sunnyside fence.** Cllr D Rushton noted that he had made a brief report to members of the Recreation and Lands committee at the meeting on the 12th February 2015. This had not thrown up any strong views on how to proceed with the insuring of play equipment other than a question by Cllr M Winton on the excess on any claim. Cllr R Jordan commented that the council could end up over insured and minor claims could result in the loss of no claims bonus. He continued that he felt the council should take some risk with the play area equipment. Cllr Rushton commented that, for similar reasons, it had been decided not to insure fencing as it would be easy to replace individual panels. Cllr Fowler ended the discussion by saying he agreed that council should take some risk and that, for the time being, Council should keep the insurance as it currently stands. Members agreed not to put a recommendation to full council to implement any changes for the time being.
9. **Budget monitoring.** Due to the lack of finance budget report this was held over for a future meeting.
10. **VAT amendments.** Cllr P Baylis reported that:

a. She had been reviewing all the VAT information passed to her by the outgoing RFO. This showed that registering the council for VAT could mean a VAT claim of up to £70k on the costs of the hall extension project. Cllr Baylis continued that once VAT registered VAT charging would be compulsory on council transactions such as hall hire which would mean either hire fees go up or the council would receive less income. Once registered the minimum period before the council could reverse the registration is 20 years. Cllr Baylis completed her report by noting that if the current hall extension plan did not go ahead there was no need to implement a VAT registration. Cllr P Peers noted that there might be other projects such as a new youth centre which could generate a large VAT rebate.

b. That the previous RFO had, in conjunction with the VAT consultant engaged by the council, processed a VAT claim which would need to be finalised and submitted once a new RFO was in place.

11. **Funds Transfer.** To agree to transfer £208 from the unrequired budget heading non-reclaimable input VAT to cover overspend of the Grant budget:

Recommendation to full council that £208 be transferred from the unrequired budget heading non-reclaimable input VAT fund to cover overspend of the grant budget.

12. **To discuss and agree the draft Grant Policy.** Members agreed to make a recommendation to full council:

Recommendation to full council that the draft Grant Policy be accepted and taken into use.

13. **Appoint Internal Auditor.** Members reviewed the 3 quotes and made the following recommendation:

Recommendation to full council that Mr Stuart Wilbur be engaged to carry out the Benson Parish Council Internal Audit at a cost not to exceed £335 + VAT per day.

14. **Purchase of IT software and hardware.** To discuss the purchase of computer software and a small amount of hardware to provide an interim backup system of council computers while the Technology Committee review quotes for a longer term solution. Members agreed to make a recommendation to full council to purchase backup and recovery software and hardware:

Recommendation to full council that backup and recovery software and hardware is purchased for use with parish office IT equipment at a cost not to exceed £700 + VAT.

15. **Any other items to note or for next agenda.**

a. Clerk noted that a minor amendment was required to the Benson parish council finance regulations to enable the use of the council procurement card.
Action: Cllr J Fowler and clerk to process amendment to finance regulations.

16. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 17th March 2015



Peter Eldridge
Parish Clerk
19th February 2015

Annex A
Actions for Finance Meeting as at 17th February 2015

Serial No	Action	Assigned To
1.	Clerk to arrange interviews for the Monday/Tuesday 9th/10th March 2015. Finance Minutes Dated 17 th Feb 2015 (5.). <i>In progress.</i>	Clerk
2.	Cllr J Fowler and clerk to process amendment to finance regulations. Finance Minutes Dated 17 th Feb 2015 (15.a.). <i>In progress.</i>	Cllr J Fowler Clerk