

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17th March 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: Trish Ingham
Parish Clerk: P Eldridge

1. **Apologies.** None
2. **Declarations of Interest** – There were no declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting.** The minutes of the finance committee meeting held on Tuesday 17th February 2015 were approved and signed at the meeting of the full council held on Thursday 26th February 2015

4. **RFO Position:**

- a. To receive a report on the progress of the temporary RFO:
 - i. Trish Ingham, the temporary RFO, gave a report on progress since her appointment. Apologies were expressed for not producing the budget monitoring sheet but data had not been inputted into this report since September and there had not been enough time to get this completely up to date. However it is being worked on to get it up to date.
 - ii. Trish Ingham noted that she now feels she is reasonably capable in using sage accounting and can press on with some of the urgent tasks. Some work has been progressed at her home but generally speaking she has been present in the office on a Wednesday.
 - iii. Trish Ingham expressed her thanks to all the help and support she has received from staff at Benson Parish Council and especially the Clerk, P Eldridge, the outgoing RFO, E Lemaire and the Halls Manager, T Ellis.
- b. To receive a report on the results of interviews with potential candidates: Cllr J Fowler reported that two people were interviewed last week and the Chair was pleased to report that one of the candidates was eminently suitable and they would like to offer her the position. This will; be subject to full Council approval at the next Council meeting on 26th March 2015. Cllr Fowler continued that she is available as soon as possible and it is expected that after approval from Benson Parish Council she will take up the post in early April. The temporary RFO has agreed that she can stay to perform a handover over a suitable time.

Recommendation to full council that Benson Parish Council appoints Mrs A Field as Responsible Finance Officer from April 2015.

5. **Projects:**

- a. Parish Hall Extension Business Plan. Councillor Baylis gave a report on the progress of the business plan noting that this was discussed in the Halls Committee where Councillor Baylis agreed to look again at the usage figures she had calculated, as these were done in hours used and it was

thought that a better conclusion would be reached by having session usage. Discussion will continue on the Hall Extension at the next Halls Committee meeting.

b. Mill Street Toilets. Councillor Rushton reported that now he has obtained the budget figures for the toilets (income and expenditure) he would like to finalise the spend on this project. As there is £5000 left in the budget Councillor Rushton proposes that just under £2000 of this be spent on a timed locking system. This consists of a modular system which will allow up to four doors to be operated.

6. Allocation of Grant Funding for Financial Year 2015/2016.

a. The budget for 2015/2016 for grant funding is £6,000. However the spend for the financial year 2014/2015 on grants was £6753 and the financial committee wanted to look at the allocation and see where it was possible to reduce some grant funding for some organisations. Basically £700 needed to be cut. After much discussion it was agreed that the following organisations would not be funded in 2015/2016:

- i. Samaritans.
- ii. Ryder Cheshire Volunteers.
- iii. Chiltern Conservation Board.
- iv. Air Ambulance.
- v. Wallingford Well Being.

b. It was also agreed that the following organisations would have their grant allocation reduced by £100 each:

- i. Friends of Benson Library (FOBL).
- ii. Millstream Day Centre.

c. The temporary Finance Officer reminded the Council that S137 money is only to be used to the benefit of the parish. She also agreed to email a copy of an example of a grant application form to the chair.

d. The donations to the scouts were discussed and two payments will be due to them. They will receive an amount for distributing the newsletters and (if they apply) a grant payment.

Action: Cllr Fowler to update the Grant allocation spreadsheet and circulate to members of finance for final agreement before circulation to all Councillors.

7. Budget Monitoring. No budget monitoring this months for the reason's noted above.

8. Report on VAT. Councillor Baylis gave a resume on actions still needed to resolve this claim. The VAT specialist, Mr A Marsden, will report on what exactly needs to be done and this then will be reviewed and actioned (Halls Committee and the new RFO). Mr Marsden will then write to HMRC to claim the refund.

9. **.Any other items to note for the next agenda.**

a. Income and Expenditure report for the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council. This will be done by the temporary and new RFO working together to get it done on time.

b. Staff Training. Brushcutter and chainsaw training arranged for as soon as possible to get it into this financial year's budget. £156 for brushcutter training and £246 for chainsaw training. This was approved by the Finance Committee.

c. The cost of the glazing for the Pavilion is £172.24. Approved by the Finance Committee.

d. Councillor Baylis asked if "VAT status of Council" could always be added to the finance committee's agenda until the issue is completely resolved. Agreed by the Finance committee.

Action: RFO to ensure that an item on VAT Status be added to finance agenda.

e. It was reported that when people had received their council tax demands they had noted that it stated that Benson Parish Council had increased their part of the precept by 4.1%. This figure should be a 2% increase and this needs querying with SODC. The temporary Responsible Finance Officer agreed to do this when she is next in the office.

Action: RFO to query Benson part of precept percentage with SODC.

10. **To confirm the date of the next meeting.** Tuesday 19th May 2015.

Trish Ingham
Responsible Financial Officer
20th Mar 2015

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

Serial No	Action	Assigned To
1.	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
2.	Cllr Fowler to update the Grant allocation spreadsheet and circulate to members of Finance for final agreement before circulation to all Councillors. Finance Minutes Dated 17 th Mar 2015 (6.d.). <i>In progress.</i>	Cllr J Fowler
3.	RFO to ensure that an item on VAT Status be added to finance agenda. Finance Minutes Dated 17th Mar 2015 (9.d.). <i>In progress.</i>	RFO
4.	RFO to query Benson part of precept percentage with SODC. Finance Minutes Dated 17th Mar 2015 (9.e.). <i>In progress.</i>	Temp RFO