

BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ

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Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee held on On Tuesday 19th September 2017 at 7:30PM in the Lounge

Present: Cllr J. Fowler (JF)
Cllr P. Baylis (PB)
Cllr McTeague (TM)

Also Present: Cllr Workman (RM)

Proper Officer: Anna Field (RFO)

1. **Apologies** – Cllr Peers
2. **Declarations of Interest** – None declared
3. **Public Session** – There were three members of the public present TM
 - i George Verdon representing FOBL addressed the committee about ongoing grant funding for the library. He acknowledged the Councils inability to commit to an open ended grant funding period and confirmed the funding cycle is 3 years. Therefore the Council could commit for a 3 year period with a review at the end of each cycle. TMHallMan

Further more the funding required would be reduced each year by grants from other Parishes whose populations use the library

The 2017/18 grant funding has already been agreed by the Council so FOBL are seeking an initial commitment for 2018/19 and 2019/20
 - ii A member of the public raised the following points;
 - a that the cups and saucers at the Parish Hall are replaced as they are old, stained and worn.
Action: Cllr McTeague to discuss with Halls Committee
 - b that the piano wheels need repairing
Action: Cllr MTeague to discuss with Halls Committee
 - c the microphone was not working at the last Evergreens meeting and needs to be checked
Action: Halls manager to check
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** – The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 24th July will be signed on 28th September 2017
5. **Updates on actions from last meeting:**
 - i. Green Close Registration – no progress, RFO to phone Gloucester Land Registry and chase RFO
 - ii. Millbrook Mead – RFO met with Mr Burles and will prepare Heads of Terms for a new agreement RFO

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| iii. | Cheque Signatories – RFO to circulate signatory pages to all Councillors | RFO |
| iv. | Castle Square Resurfacing – Cllr Fowler confirmed that this cannot proceed as the expenditure would put BPC over the S137 limit. JF will discuss alternatives with Mark Gray | JF |
| v. | WW1 event – a working group has been formed and a grant application needs to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Cllr Lovesey will action. | CllrLovesey |
| vi. | Oxfordshire Together – The contractor quote has been received but exceeds the funds available to BPC from OCC. Referred back to R&L Committee. JF to speak to Mark Gray. | JF |
| vii. | Millstream Car Park – JF to chase SODC about the commercial vehicle problems. JF to reapproach SODC about the car park purchase in due course | JF |
| viii. | Backups – Clerk to discuss backup procedures at the next Technology Committee Meeting | Clk |
| ix. | Bertie West Forest School – RFO to send draft agreement to the school and request copy of their ‘off-site activities’ insurance | RFO |
| x. | St Helens Play Equipment – Cllr Bayliss to put expenditure proposal to Full Council and organise residents consultation on location of equipment items | PB |
| xi. | Defibrillators – RFO to chase BCA about their application for a grant for a defibrillator | RFO |
| xii. | VAT on Hall extension – RFO to set up meeting with PB and Andrew Marsden | RFO |
| xiii. | Hall Extension – RFO to prepare loans and grant summary for Halls Committee | RFO |
| xiv. | Online Banking – RFO to process Unity Bank account application including Councillor signatories and the account opening balance cheque | RFO |
| xv. | Allotment Rates – PB to prepare proposal for Full Council re allotment rates for 2018/19 as any rise will need to be conveyed to the allotment holders by 1 October 2017 | PB |

6. External Audit:

RFO reported that the outstanding issues raised by BDO had been addressed as follows;

- i The Building Society book has been updated, all total bank balances adjusted and resubmitted to BDO
- ii The detailed breakdown of the increase in receipts has been submitted to BDO
- iii The asset value for 2015/16 has been amended in the Annual Return as per BDOs request to reduce the sudden increase in asset value as a result of the large scale review of the asset register by the RFO

All items were submitted to BDO by the deadline of 31st August 2017

7. **Millstream Toilets Rating Appeal:**

The RFO had noticed that the 2017 revaluation for the Millstream Toilets was wrong in both description and value. A 'Check' form has been submitted to the Valuation Office identifying the errors and a response is awaited.

8. **Risk Assessments:**

Came and Company have suggested that our current high level risk assessments need to be expanded to include all business areas, assets and activities. They will send through formats that can be adjusted for most areas. They also suggested that maintenance policies should be prepared for all assets. It was agreed that this is an onerous task

Action: RFO to ask OALC if there are any companies that can do this on behalf of a Parish Council

RFO

9. **Grants Budget:**

The 2017/18 grants budget has been exceeded.

Action: RFO to look at 2017/18 budgets and identify where the shortfall could come from

RFO

10. **Benson Library:**

Cllrs agreed that they would not wish the Parish Council to take on responsibility for fund raising for the Library nor to directly make funding payments to OCLS. However they do agree that the Library is an important asset and should be funded and would be content to help FoBL with grant payments

Recommendation to Full Council:

That Benson Parish Council agrees to provide a grant to FOBL for 2018/19 and 2019/20 for a sum not to exceed £3898.18 per annum

11. **Membership of Finance Committee:**

Due to the ongoing absence of Cllr Peers, the Finance Committee struggles to stay quorate. Cllr Workman has volunteered to join the Finance Committee and resign from the Planning Committee

TM suggested more than one new member should be sought. However this would bring the Finance Committee up to 6 members and the other members of Finance considered this was too many.

RFO

Action: RFO to confirm voting procedure with OALC in time for the next Full Council meeting

12. **Date of next meeting 17th October 2017**

13. **Items to Note or for next agenda**

i The items on the email dated 18th September from RFO to Committee Chairs concerning the Came and Company insurance review are to be addressed at the next Finance Committee meeting

RFO

ii **Action:** PB and RFO to investigate cost of a virtual card terminal and any Financial Regulations relating to card payments in this way. RFO/PB

iii TM reported that the unwired area on the Millbrook Mead boardwalk is a hazard.

Action: PB to raise at R&L

PB

iv PB will be meeting with the Hogweed eradication company to discuss their unauthorised treatment of the plants other than hogweed and the replacement of the same

Anna Field Responsible Finance Officer 21/09/2017