

## BENSON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford. OX10 6LZ  
Tel: 01491 825038 e-mail: [bensonparish.council@virgin.net](mailto:bensonparish.council@virgin.net)

### Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee held on On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7:30PM in the Parish Hall Lounge

Present:	Cllr P. Peers (Chairman) (PP) Cllr J. Fowler (JF) Cllr P. Baylis (PB) Cllr R. Jordan (RJ) Cllr M. Winton (MW)	
Proper Officer:	Anna Field (RFO) Peter Eldridge (CLK)	
There were two members of the public present Rev John Burrell and Barry Cowlard. Also Cllr T.Stevenson		
<b>1. To elect Chairman of the Finance Committee</b> Cllr Peers was nominated as chairman. Proposed by Cllr Baylis and seconded by Cllr Jordan. The proposal was unanimously carried.		
<b>2. Declarations of Interest – None</b>		
<b>3. Public Session</b> Rev John Burrell explained that in the financial year 2014/15 the Council assisted St Helens Church maintenance costs with a grant of £680 for the new churchyard and £200 for the old churchyard. In the current financial year they anticipate the new churchyard costs will be similar but there have been major tree works required in the old churchyard with £1000 already spent and another £1000 required on top of the regular maintenance costs. They have therefore sought a grant from the Council and have received a response requesting 3 quotations. Their reason for attending the meeting was to seek clarification on what quotations are required. Cllr Peers clarified; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Old Churchyard maintenance – no quotations required</li><li>ii. 3 quotations required for the new churchyard maintenance (including Azalea Landscaping as a suggestion)</li><li>iii. 3 quotations required for the tree works in the old churchyard with a suggestion that NH Payne from Swyncombe would be worth approaching as one of them. The Clerk to provide contact details to Rev Burrell.</li></ul> <p>Cllr Peers suggested to Rev Burrell that the Benson Bulletin might also be approached for a grant.</p> <p>Rev Burrell reported that there are just two plots left in the new churchyard and around 50 available at the back of the old churchyard. With an average of 8 burials per year, there would be future land issues.</p>		CLK
<b>4. To Discuss the 2015 – 2016 Grants Budget.</b> RFO circulated a number of versions of the 2014/15 grants and requested		

<p>clarification on which was correct. The summary appearing in the draft Year End Financial Statements was agreed as being correct with a small overspend. There had previously been Council agreement to use the VAT reclaim to offset this overspend. RFO to investigate the status of the reclaim</p> <p>The 2015 – 2016 grants budget was confirmed as £6000</p> <p>Discussion of the impact of the St Helens grant request together with the FOBL grant request was deferred to the next Finance meeting</p> <p>Cllr Baylis asked for clarification on the grant being paid to the Youth Club. This is shown as a grant but takes the form of a waiver of hall charges so no money physically changes hands.</p> <p>Cllr Fowler asked for feedback on the new Grant Application Form. This was accepted as a big improvement and can now be sent to all Cllrs with a recommendation for adoption at the next full Council meeting. In the future it will be emailed, along with a copy of the Grants Policy to those applying for Council grants</p>	<p>RFO</p> <p>JF</p>
<p>5. <b>To Review the Grant to St Helens Church for Maintenance.</b></p> <p>Awaiting quotations from the church. Deferred to next Finance meeting</p>	
<p>6. <b>Staffing - To review the contract for the new RFO.</b></p> <p>The Clerk explained that all staff require a contract for the internal audit. The proposed RFO one is based on the previous RFO one and is also an OALC standard. It was recommended for acceptance with a deeper review of contracts in due course. Agreed. Clerk to sign on behalf of the Council and file</p>	<p>CLK</p>
<p>7. <b>Government Procurement Card:</b></p> <p>a. Card Charges.</p> <p>b. To note that the card is now in use.</p> <p>The RFO reported the card is in use and to note the £78 annual charge. Cllr Peers clarified that it has a £3500 credit limit with a cap of £1000 on a single transaction. RFO does not recall seeing any monthly statements and will make enquiries.</p>	<p>RFO</p>
<p>8. <b>To Review VAT Status.</b></p> <p>Cllr Baylis reported that the outgoing RFO had worked with VAT consultant, Andrew Marsden to clarify the VAT status. However, with a VAT return now due, it would be beneficial to have another consultation with Mr Marsden to ensure this return is prepared correctly and the VAT situation going forward is clear. It was agreed that this did not need to go to the full Council and the Finance Committee approved a further consultation session to take place with Mr Marsden, the RFO and Cllr Bayliss . RFO to organise.</p>	<p>RFO</p>
<p>9. <b>Banking and Investments.</b></p> <p>At the full Council meeting, Cllr McTeague had queried the Councils investment strategy, in particular in relation to the Bloomfield bequest. The nature of her queries is unclear. Clerk to await her emails.</p>	<p>CLK</p>
<p>10. <b>Investment Strategy Review.</b></p> <p>As above</p>	

<p><b>11. Risk Register Review.</b></p> <p>Cllr Peers circulated the current risk register. This is to be reviewed annually in October. RFO to send a copy of the risk register to Finance Committee</p>	RFO
<p><b>12. Internal Audit.</b></p> <p>The internal audit is due w/c 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015. By then the RFO will have completed the draft Annual Return figures. The Governance statements will be reviewed and completed by RFO and the Clerk.</p>	RFO CLK
<p><b>13. Draft financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.</b></p> <p>These will be completed this week and will be taken to the next Full Council meeting. Clerk to add to next agenda</p>	CLK
<p><b>14. Training courses for RFO</b></p> <p>Cllr Peers suggested that the Council consider enrolling the RFO on a Cilca course at an approximate cost of £300. It would mean the Council would become a Quality Council and the RFO would be able to properly deputise for the Clerk. The Committee requested more information on the course costs.</p> <p>The RFO requested approval to attend Introduction to Local Government Finance in September at a cost of £65 plus Vat. Approved</p> <p>The Clerk suggested there may be other relevant courses too and will collect information on these</p>	CLK    CLK
<p><b>15. Any Other Items to Note or for the Next Agenda.</b></p> <p>a. The Clerk circulated a colour palette for the paddling pool tiles. The order needs to be put in now so agreement was sought on colours. WK-143 (Dark Blue) with an anti slip surface on the base tiles was agreed</p> <p>b. There was a discussion about the process for co-opting a new Cllr. Clerk to set the process in motion</p> <p>c. Cllr Stevenson asked for clarification on the situation at Millbrook Mead which is let to a Mr Burles. Why he is asking to see past minutes? did his shed get planning permission? why he is asking for a rent reduction? What year did he start paying rent? The Clerk is in the process of checking the past minutes and will put the item on the next Lands Committee agenda. RFO to research what year he started paying rent.</p>	CLK  CLK  CLK RFO
<p><b>16. Date of Next Meeting.</b> 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015.</p>	

Anna Field  
Responsible Finance Officer  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2015