

NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee meeting on Thursday 14th January 2021 at 8pm held remotely as per Clause 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and broadcast as a “Livestream” event on the Parish Council Facebook Page.

ACTION by:

	<p>Present Cllrs Burhop (Chair), Walker (Vice-Chair), Tillotson and Dalton (Q) Clerk. 1 member of the public. Meeting began at 8pm.</p>	
Public Forum	<p>Virtual Meeting Regulations Chair Outlined. Public Questions No public questions or representations. Chair closed the public forum at 8.05pm.</p>	
FC20/053	<p>Apologies for absence: All members of the Committee were present.</p>	
FC20/054	<p>Declarations of Interest made: All members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declared their interests as such.</p> <p>Cllr. Tillotson declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 20/048f) in relation to her tenancy thereof, but it should be noted that Cllr. Tillotson has been previously afforded a dispensation to discuss, and vote upon, such matters</p> <p><i>Chair reminded all members of committee that they could, and should, declare any further interests during the meeting as they became apparent.</i></p>	
FC20/055	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of previous Finance Committee meeting 15th December 2020 as previously circulated to members; Cllr. Dalton proposed that the minutes be adopted as a true record of the meeting. Seconded by Cllr. Walker. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Matters arising: Clerk was asked to chase installation of the 2 x new VAS poles with DCC Chair asked that VAS data be downloaded and converted to tabular form for circulation as soon as possible after VAS switch. Clerk was asked to obtain dates for EDDC installation of Turner Close play equipment. Clerk confirmed that surgery decorating was completed. Clerk confirmed that the matter of the additional (SW) gate at VOVG was progressing and that he and Cllr. Hughes were liaising in that regard.</p>	

	Business to be considered:	
FC20/056a	<p>a) To consider proposed expenditure for secondary gate access (SW) at Venn Ottery Village Green:</p> <p>This matter had been covered under Matters Arising from the minutes of the last Fin.Comm. meeting. No further discussion. Clerk: Please proceed with discussions around alternative access point into the VG field.</p>	Clerk
FC20/056b	<p>b) To consider quotations received for parish tree maintenance works:</p> <p>Clerk had provided three quotations for the proposed works (which were outlined in the earlier tree report). After discussion, the quote from Contractor T was discounted on the grounds of cost. Subsequently, it was proposed by Cllr. Tillotson, seconded by Cllr. Dalton, that the works contract be offered to Contractor J for the sum quoted, with the works on the Hazel to be delayed until contact had been made with the EDDC Tree Officer to obtain their opinion as to the condition of that tree. Resolved unanimously. Clerk: Please liaise with Contractor J to arrange the works at the earliest opportunity. Please chase EDDC Tree Officers re: the supplementary matter.</p>	Clerk
FC20/056c	<p>c) To consider matters pertaining to allotment amenity; variation of allotment terms and conditions re: proposed holdings deposits:</p> <p>The form of wording to support the charging of a holding deposit for all new tenancies was agreed as below, to be effective from the date of this meeting:</p> <p><i>REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT. Receipt is acknowledged of a re-instatement deposit £50 (fifty pounds) – per quarter plot - which, subject to satisfactory state of plot on vacation, will be returned to the tenant on termination of this agreement. Such deposit may be used by the Council for any reinstatement of the allotment garden at the end of the tenancy into the condition it was in prior to the commencement of the tenancy and in this case will not be refunded to the tenant. Photographs of the plot will be taken at the commencement of the tenancy. Costs incurred by the Parish Council include, but are not limited to, time taken by contractors and volunteers to reinstate the allotment plot, charged at a reasonable rate.</i></p> <p>Adoption of this wording, and agreement for inclusion in the substantive allotment terms and conditions, was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Dalton. Resolved 3 votes for, 1 abstention (MT). Clerk: Please integrate into current allotment regulations and proceed with this policy decision re: holding deposits as above ie. £50 per quarter plot rented. Please liaise with allotment manager to ensure that plots are photographed before letting to new tenants.</p>	Clerk

FC20/056d	<p>d) To consider update on recent proposal regarding additional allotment land acquisition:</p> <p>Clerk had circulated recent reply from land owner in question. Sadly, at this time, their answer was an emphatic No. But they did say they will bear our interest in mind and be back in touch should their circumstances alter in the future. <i>No further action necessary at this time.</i></p>	
FC20/056e	<p>e) To note offer of £500 grant from Otter Valley Assoc. towards wildflower planting projects in the parish and to agree next steps:</p> <p>Chair asked Clerk to thank the OVA on the committee's behalf for their very generous and kind offer. The consensus of agreement was that the Council should accept this offer of grant funding but that the matter should be discussed by the Climate Change Action Working Party to properly assess and consider where such wildflower planting projects could be undertaken within the parish.</p> <p>Clerk: Please write to the OVA Treasurer to thank them formally for the grant offer and add to January ORD agenda for further discussion within the CCAWP item.</p>	Clerk
FC20/056f	<p>f) To receive NPHPC Budget Monitor to Q3 20-21:</p> <p>Clerk had circulated the document to all members of the committee beforehand. Noted. No questions raised.</p>	
FC20/056g	<p>g) To consider expenditure for repairs to FP3; to consider delegating powers to Clerk in conjunction with grant offer from DCC:</p> <p>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Tillotson, that the Clerk, in conjunction with the Honorary Footpath Warden, spend upto £1500 (£750 to be reimbursed by DCC as previously advised) in respect of the urgent repair works required on FP3. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly in liaison with the P3 warden. Please keep Fin.Comm. uptodate re: expenditure and also establish whether the connecting path from the A3052 is part of FP3.</p>	Clerk
FC20/056h	<p>h) To consider implementation of a CyberProtection Insurance Policy as per broker recommendation:</p> <p>Chair noted the costs (and benefits) of the policy proposed and members discussed whether a risk existed that would justify the costs of such an additional policy (circa £400). Clerk was able to answer some questions but some were too technical to allow a definite response at the point of query. Chair proposed that the matter be deferred to a Full Council meeting at the earliest opportunity and asked the Clerk to obtain comparative quotes from other insurers to ensure compliance with Council's financial regulations.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</p>	Clerk

FC20/056i	<p>i) To consider proposals and costs of planting a permanent Fir Tree on Greenbank to negate the need for annual felling and disposal of parish Christmas Tree; also, to consider provision of permanent metered electrical supply at that site for future use (incl. illuminations):</p> <p>In the absence of quotes from tree providers and Western Power, Clerk asked Chair if this matter could be deferred to a later Fin.Comm. meeting. Agreed by all members Clerk: Please continue to gather in quotes for members consideration and add to next Fin.Comm. meeting</p>	Clerk
FC20/057	<p>Matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair: Chair asked that the issue of whether the provision of a skate park (or similar) in the parish was possible be added to a future agenda. Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</p>	Clerk
FC20/058	<p>Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting; It was proposed that the next meeting of the Finance Committee be held on Thursday 18th February 2021, at 7pm, meeting to be held remotely as per Clause 78 legislation.</p>	
FC20/059	<p>It was proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Local Government Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Dalton. Resolved unanimously. Chair thanked all members of the public for taking part via Facebook Livestream.</p>	
FC20/060	<p>Matters to be considered in committee:</p> <p><i>i) To consider further developments relating to allotment amenities and 3rd party actions:</i></p> <p>Committee noted, with dismay, and concern, the recent incidents of trespass, criminal damage and theft by persons identified as former tenants (previously evicted). The incidents have been witnessed and statements obtained from those witnesses. After further discussion, and mindful of previous resolutions of this committee, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that the matter be reported to the relevant Police authorities so that Council could seek restitution of its losses through damage and theft, in the value of £1400, and that appropriate action be taken by the Police against the perpetrators and anyone deemed to have incited them to carry out such criminal activities against the Parish Council. Furthermore, Council is to seek the full reimbursement of the sums deemed lost by way of a demand to the perpetrators, and those persons who instructed them to carry out said unlawful actions. This action may include, but not be limited to, action through the Small Claims Courts. Resolved 3 votes for, 1 abstention (MT). Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please obtain a crime reference number from the Police and then submit a claim to Council's insurers. Please issue a demand for the sum of £1400 to all parties involved by Recorded Mail (RM Signed For).</p>	Clerk

	<p><i>ii) To ratify Chair's / Clerk's delegated emergency expenditure on allotment leak detection; To receive report from Clerk on findings and proposed course of action as a result:</i></p> <p>Clerk outlined reasoning for works and costs involved, between £450 and £800. Works were in progress and contractor was due to submit a report shortly thereafter.</p> <p>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that the expenditure incurred under emergency delegated authority be approved. Resolved 3 votes for, 1 abstention (MT).</p> <p>Clerk: Please report back to Council with outcome asap. If an undetectable leak was the cause, please liaise with SWW to submit a Leak Claim for the amount of the water loss value incurred.</p>	Clerk
	<p>With no further business to consider, the Chair closed the meeting of the Finance Committee at 9.00pm.</p>	

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Signed as a true record of the meeting above:

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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