

NEWTON POPPLEFORD AND HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday 11th December 2023 at The Pavilion, Back Lane, Newton Poppleford commencing at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs. Walker (Chair), Carpenter, Dalton Lipczynski and Tribble
Jacqui Baldwin, Parish Clerk and RFO
1 member of the public

Chair outlined the Fire Regulations and evacuation procedure and opened the Public Forum.

Public Forum

Questions and Representations from residents/parishioners

A question was raised about agenda item FC23/50A relating to a proposed co-option to the Finance Committee. Chair advised that the proposal is for a temporary co-option to cover the absence of a member of the committee currently experiencing a period of ill health. The member concerned has not resigned from the Finance Committee and will, hopefully, be in attendance in the New Year. As the Finance Committee has responsibility for considering the Budget and Precept for the next financial year it is important to ensure that the committee meetings are quorate. This temporary co-option will be placed before Full Council for ratification.

There being no further questions the Public Form was closed at 7.05pm by the Chair.

To consider the following business:

		Actions:
FC23/47	To consider apologies for absence and approve if accepted (LGA 1972 S.85(1)) Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Tillotson. Apologies were accepted and approved unanimously.	
FC23/48	Declarations of interest from members / Dispensations afforded No declarations made or dispensations requested.	
FC23/49	To consider and, if thought fit, approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee of the Council held on 20th November 2023: Chair proposed that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November, having been previously circulated, be approved as a true record of proceedings. Seconded by Cllr. Tribble and resolved unanimously. To consider Matters Arising from those Minutes not dealt with elsewhere on this Agenda: None so considered.	
FC23/50	BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED:	
	A To review the membership of the Finance Committee and, if thought fit, co-opt an additional member: Chair proposed that Cllr. Lipczynski be temporarily co-opted to the Finance Committee to cover the sickness absence of a member of the committee. Seconded by Cllr. Carpenter and resolved unanimously.	

		<p>Clerk to place this item on the Agenda for ratification at the Full Council meeting on 18th December.</p> <p>Chair thanked Cllr. Lipczynski for his support.</p>	Clerk
	B	<p>To consider and, if thought fit, authorise changes to the Lloyds Bank Mandate:</p> <p>Chair proposed that Cllr. Carpenter become a full signatory to Council's Lloyds Bank account to ensure an adequate number of full signatories to the account. Seconded by Cllr. Tribble and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>RFO to submit the appropriate application forms to Lloyds Bank.</p>	RFO
	C	<p>To review required actions relating to the Public WC in School Lane:</p> <p>After discussion it was agreed that this matter be referred back to Full Council. Finance Committee requires clear instructions if further quotations are required.</p> <p>Clerk to place on the Agenda for the December Council Meeting.</p>	Clerk
	D	<p>To agree arrangements to review the tenders submitted for 2024-2027 Grounds Maintenance Contract.</p> <p>Clerk advised that the deadline date for receipt of tenders is Friday, 15th December. As the grounds maintenance costs have a significant impact on the annual budget it would be helpful if the Finance Committee could meet prior to the next Full Council meeting to discuss. A recommendation can then be made to Council with any impact on the draft budget noted.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Finance Committee will meet on Monday, 18th December 2023 at 6.45pm.</p> <p>Clerk to circulate a matrix of the Ground Maintenance Contract quotations received as soon after the deadline for receipt as possible.</p>	Clerk
FC23/51	A	<p>To review and, if thought fit, approve payments for December 2023:</p> <p>Clerk advised that the funds to pay the MUGA retention sum of £2,829.90 had already been paid to Council by EDDC and were being held in a Unity Trust bank account.</p> <p>Chair proposed that invoices in the sum of £10,724.83 be approved for payment. Seconded by Cllr. Lipczynski and resolved unanimously.</p> <p>RFO to make payments on the due dates.</p>	RFO
	B	<p>To receive financial reports to the end of November 2023:</p> <p>Chair noted that Council had already expended £72,638 of a £96,000 budget with a quarter of the year to go. Any suggestions that Council is cash rich are misleading. Due to some exceptional expenditure through the year it was likely that Council would have to go into reserves before the end of the current financial year.</p>	
	C	<p>To review 2024-25 Parish Council Budget and Precept calculations:</p> <p>Chair thanked the Clerk for circulating a DALC article on Precept calculation to members of the Finance Committee which made interesting reading. It was requested that this be circulated to all Councillors prior to the December Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr. Lipczynski suggested that, by budgeting for the bare minimum, any exceptional event like flooding or the arrival of trespassers, could have a massive impact on finances. Cllr. Carpenter noted that investing in the community definitely resulted in greater community engagement – the MUGA installation and tree planting project being perfect examples of this.</p>	Clerk

	<p>After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Tribble that all three Budget/Precept options be circulated to Councillors for discussion at the December Council Meeting with a recommendation from the Finance Committee that Council approves a budget of £100,452 for the financial year 2024-25. This will require the Precept to be set at £74,571 an increase of 15p per week for a Band D household. Seconded by Cllr. Lipczynski and approved unanimously. Clerk to note and action accordingly.</p> <p>Clerk advised that the deadline for submitting the 2024-25 Precept demand to EDDC is Wednesday, 17th January 2024.</p>	Clerk
	<p>D Questions to RFO on the financial reports: None raised.</p>	
FC23/52	<p>Matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair for discussion only: None raised.</p>	
FC23/53	<p>To agree date, time and venue of next meeting Monday, 15th January 2024 at 7.00pm in the Pavilion, Newton Poppleford.</p>	
FC23/54	<p>It is proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) 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.</p> <p>Proposal not made as there was no confidential business to discuss.</p>	

With no further business to consider, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm.