

# NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee meeting on  
Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 7pm in Harpford Village Hall, Harpford

**ACTION by:**

	<p><b>Present</b> Cllrs. Burhop (Chair) Dalton, Tillotson, Walker and Zirker Clerk. 0 members of the public. Meeting began at 7.05pm.</p>	
<b>Public Forum</b>	<p><b>Fire Regulations</b> Outlined <b>Public Questions</b> No public questions or representations.</p>	
FC18/54	<p><b>Apologies for absence:</b> Cllr. Jeffery</p>	
FC18/55	<p><b>Declarations of Interest made:</b> All members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declared their interests as such. Cllr. Dalton declared a personal interest in agenda item 18/57a)i) as a member of the Village Hall committee.</p>	
FC18/56	<p><b>To consider Minutes of previous Finance Committee meeting 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 as previously circulated to members.</b> <i>Approval of minutes was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Tillotson. Resolved unanimously. Chair signed the minutes as a true and accurate record of that meeting.</i> Matters arising: Preventative measure for dog waste nuisance in parish. It was agreed by Finance Committee that Council will purchase a stencil and supply of temporary marking paint under Chair's delegated authority and apply on soft areas near existing bins and at points determined to be at risk of dog fouling and to monitor effect going forwards. Promotion via social media and local press to be co-ordinated by Clerk. <i>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly in conjunction with handyperson.</i></p>	Clerk
FC18/57a	<p><b>Business to be considered:</b> <b>a) To consider Grant Applications received:</b> i) NP Village Hall. £500 towards toilet improvements <i>Cllr. Dalton declared a personal interest in this matter.</i> ii) Ottery Help Scheme. £450 towards running costs for volunteer driver training. <i>Chair proposed supporting both grant requests in full which would cause an overspend of £83 against 18/19 budget for grants awarded. Seconded Cllr. Zirker. Resolved 4/0/1 (LD abstained).</i> Finance Committee's recommendation to be ratified at next Ordinary meeting of Council before grant payments made. <i>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</i></p>	Clerk
FC18/57b	<p><b>b) To consider update on parish bonfire event 2/11:</b> Chair updated committee members with final financial figures. Takings were down due to lower attendance numbers and higher costs for fireworks, insurance, advertising and the issue of the non-recoverable VAT element of the expenditure resulted in a loss of £385. This was felt to be unfortunate but it was agreed that it was a very worthwhile community event that provided a platform for a great deal of local fundraising and that no event could ever be run without some risk of a shortfall. Council might wish to consider revision of ticket prices for 2019 to address revenue issues. Chair expressed thanks to those involved in providing an enjoyable evening for all.</p>	

FC18/57c	<p><b>c) To consider interim Risk Assessment review:</b>  Pages 5 to 8 of the Interim Risk Assessment Review were considered and amendments made, as a result of recent developments and circumstances.  Chair proposed that pages 9 to 12 be considered at the next Fin.Comm meeting. Agreed unanimously.  Clerk: please note and add to agenda accordingly.  Circulate revised draft document to all Fin.Comm. members beforehand.</p> <p>On the subject of risks relating to Defamation and Libel by Councillors and Staff, Chair directed the Clerk to investigate training via DALC in view of the significant financial and reputational risks of the same, which are not always covered by Council's All Risks insurance policy. Clerk to return to Finance Committee with details and costings when known.  Clerk: Please note and investigate as directed.</p>	Clerk
FC18/57d	<p><b>d) To consider Emergency Planning arrangements:</b>  The Chair proposed amendments to the draft NP emergency plan as below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) That the Ops. Centre primary location be altered to the Pavilion Centre, with the Village Hall becoming the secondary option; this being due to access and parking limitations at the VH.</li> <li>2) That the initial response team include at least 2 bank signatories in case payments are required from Council as a matter of urgency.</li> <li>3) That consideration be given as to whether the Pavilion Centre needs to be alarmed and whether this is a requirement of Council's insurance.  Clerk: please note and investigate accordingly.</li> <li>4) To consider a community call for volunteers with 4WD's etc in case of flooding, snowfall etc.  Clerk was asked to circulate revised plan to Cllr. Jeffery, project lead, and seek her feedback on revisions.  Proposal is for Council to consider and then publicise when complete via usual channels and media.  Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</li> </ol>	
FC18/57e	<p><b>e) To review tree planting proposals in parish:</b>  After discussion of potential locations and costings, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Tillotson, that Council arrange purchase of an established Oak tree (container grown) up to value of £250 to be planted in Webbers Meadow, and also 2 established Cherry trees up to value of £60 each, to be planted in play area and also on Venn Ottery village green.  Costs to also be considered:  Delivery of trees to site  Planting materials required.  Up to value of £500 net of VAT  Resolved unanimously.  Clerk was directed to start enquiries as to suppliers etc.  Clerk: Please action accordingly. Council to ratify / approve this recommendation at next ORD meeting</p>	Clerk

FC18/57f	<p><b>f) To consider future proposals for redundant bus shelter on A3052 west of Lower Way:</b>  Clerk updated Committee on discussions with handyperson and neighbouring property owners. In light of previous resolutions, it was agreed to delegate the matter of disposal to Clerk as time and labour permitted, noting that resident of adjacent property had kindly provided consent for both supply of power for demolition tools and use of land for skip siting during demolition.  Clerk: Please note action accordingly. Liaise with handyperson accordingly.</p>	Clerk
FC18/57g	<p><b>g) To consider short-term request for use of surgery building by local voluntary group:</b>  Clerk had circulated notes and legal documents relating to the Covenant that exists between the Compton family and the Council in respect of the surgery building which clearly state that said building may not be used for any other purpose than to provide a venue for GP surgery in the village. <b>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that Clerk be directed to convey the decision of Council that the request is declined on those grounds. Resolved unanimously.</b>  Applicant was encouraged to contact the Compton family independently to make their own enquiries but also to understand that any alterations to the Covenant would require Council's agreement and that Council would seek full reimbursement of any legal costs incurred should such a revision to the covenant be considered.  Clerk: Please note and notify applicant accordingly</p>	Clerk
FC18/57h	<p><b>h) To consider purchase of improved IT equipment for Clerks office use with costs shared amongst two other Councils:</b>  <b>After discussion, and questions to Clerk, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Tillotson, that a sum of £250 be approved, subject to match funding from the other Councils concerned, to provide the equipment outlined and any additional upgraded software etc. The equipment is not to be considered an asset of any individual Council given its shared nature, moreover the sum approved to be considered as general IT expenditure in financial accounts and not as Capital Expenditure / asset purchase. Resolved unanimously.</b>  Cllr. Zirker kindly provided details of a local supplier of such equipment.  Clerk: Please note and advise Finance Committee when other Councils have made a similar resolution. Liaise with suppliers to provide a suitable specification for the purchase at a later date.</p>	Clerk

FC18/57i	<p><b>i) To consider preliminary analysis of 2019/20 budget (income and expenditure) proposals and level of parish precept for the same period:</b></p> <p>Clerk had circulated a draft forecast / budget model to all members of the FC beforehand and this was used as a template for discussion. Amendments and revisions were made as discussion progressed, with various items of income and expenditure re-calculated based on previous and forecasted financial figures. Chair noted that precept had remained unchanged in the last financial year but that this would result in a forecasted deficit of £5,500 in this financial year, a situation which could not be maintained indefinitely in the future, given the depleted nature of Council's unearmarked, general reserves which had fallen to below 50% of precept. Chair also advised that the downward pressure on Council from the higher local authorities would continue and that the services and amenities now provided to the parish, and which had been positively remarked upon by residents, could only continue if properly resourced. Councillors did express concerns at any increase to precept at a rate higher than inflation but it was agreed that localised precept increases, even at higher percentages than the higher authorities, were minor compared to the £ value of such increases in other aspects of the overall Council Tax bills, such as DCC, EDDC and the Police and Fire authorities.</p> <p><b>After significant discussion, it was proposed by Chair and seconded by Cllr. Walker that the Finance Committee recommend to Full Council that a precept demand of £47,500 be submitted to EDDC for the financial year of 2019/20 against a forecasted budget expenditure of £72,693 for the same period, the balance to be met by other income aside from a small shortfall of under £700 which should be covered by diligent and prudent purchasing and additional revenue streams.</b></p> <p><b>The level of precept for a Band D equivalent dwelling cannot yet be determined as Council has yet to receive tax-base figures from EDDC, the billing authority.</b></p> <p><b>The proposal was voted upon, 4 for, 1 against, and no abstentions. So resolved.</b></p> <p><b>Clerk: Please circulate an electronic, and hard copy, of the revised budget forecast and precept calculator to all Cllrs. prior to the next Ordinary meeting.</b></p>	Clerk
FC18/58	<p><b>Matters considered as urgent by presiding Chairman:</b></p> <p>i) Chair noted that the Internal Auditors supplementary report had been received and that only one recommendation had been made for the period 2017/18, and that had already been addressed and implemented in this financial year. Chair asked that the report be published on Council's website as per Transparency Code conformance. Payment to IA to be approved at Full Council in November. <b>Clerk: please note and action all points as directed.</b></p> <p>ii) Cllr. Walker reported that the donated purple crocus bulbs had been planted by the NP Gardening Club volunteers but that they had run out of bulbs before they could plant on the Greenbank, as per Council's wishes. Chair authorised expenditure of up to £10 under his delegated authority for another supply of similar bulbs to be purchased and thanked volunteers for their kind efforts.</p> <p><b>Cllr. Walker: Please arrange and submit receipt for reimbursement.</b></p>	

	<p>iii) Clerk raised issue of recent allotment plot re-allocations and requested that Council waive the pro-rata rental fees due for the remainder of the financial year as the costs of recovering the same were more than the anticipated charges receivable and that the new tenants were undertaking maintenance on those plots that the Council would otherwise have to fund at it's own cost.</p> <p><b>Waiver of fees until new financial year proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker. Cllrs. Tillotson and Zirker abstained from vote as both are allotment tenants themselves. Resolved 3/0/2.</b></p> <p>Clerk: Please relay this decision to new allotment tenants when tenancy agreements created and posted.</p> <p>iv) Council had been offered a large Christmas Tree free-of-charge for display in the parish and Chair sought suggestions for location and decoration. There were concerns about the tethering of such a large tree and its proximity to the public highway, and in relation to supply of mains electricity to power lights, decorations etc. Matter was deferred to Full Council in November for final decision.</p> <p>Clerk: Please add to agenda accordingly.</p>	
FC18/59	<p><b>Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting;</b></p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> December 2018 – Harpford Hall – 7.00pm *</p> <p>Clerk: please arrange meeting booking and agenda.</p> <p>* Earlier than usual due to early scheduling of December Ordinary meeting due to Christmas holiday.</p>	Clerk
	<p><b>With no further business to consider, the Chair closed the meeting of the Finance Committee at 9.00pm.</b></p>	

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*Signed as a true record of the meeting above:*

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_