

# BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke commencing at 7.30pm on 14 June 2016

**Present:** Cllrs Chaffey, Parker-Jones, Tidridge, Mignot and Winstanley

**In Attendance:** Mr D Hillier-Wheal (Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)

**Public Session** 1 member of the public was present.

**FGP\_1617\_M02/**

**21 Apologies** Cllrs Toher (holiday) and Thornton (attending another meeting)

### **22 Election of Chair**

22.1 The Clerk apologised for the oversight of not including the election of Chair and Vice-Chair for the year on the agenda. In the absence of these items, a Chair needed to be elected for the meeting.

22.2.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Chaffey, that Cllr Mignot be elected Chair for the meeting.

22.2.2 Proposed Cllr Parker-Jones, Seconded Cllr Tidridge, that Cllr Tidridge be elected Chair for the meeting.

22.2.3 A vote was taken, with Cllr Mignot receiving 3 votes and Cllr Tidridge 2.

22.2.5 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mignot be elected Chair for the meeting.

### **23 To adopt and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting held on 12 April 2016**

23.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Mignot, **RESOLVED** that the adoption and signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2016 be deferred to the next meeting.

### **24 To consider Matters Arising from the above Minutes**

24.1 Cllr Parker-Jones reported that, as appointed representative for Public Art, that she had been in touch with Jo Calcutt of Eastleigh Borough Council. A meeting has been arranged between them, and Jo has requested that going forward the term Public Art is used, rather than Street Art. The Clerk agreed to amend previous minutes to reflect this change.

#### **Action: Clerk**

24.2 Cllr Parker-Jones questioned the wording of the agenda statement regarding persons invited to Parish Council meetings. She felt that some of the terms are superfluous, in that the Safer Neighbourhood Team already includes both Police and PCSOs, so it is unnecessary to specify them separately. The word Police could also be taken to mean a representative of Hampshire Constabulary.

24.3 Cllr Winstanley felt that there might be people who were not aware that the Safer Neighbourhood Team included Police and PCSOs, and so the wording was there for the sake of clarity. The Clerk was asked to bring different versions of potential wording before Full Council for a decision.

#### **Action: Clerk**

## **25 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

25.1 None declared or sought.

## **26 Carnival Working Group – to receive progress report**

26.1 The Clerk reported that things are slightly behind schedule as there has been a gap due to the election, and there has been some illness in the group too. However, licenses are all going in this week, posters are going up this month, and application for places are starting to come in so the group are confident of catching up the time that has been lost.

## **27 To consider the Committee's response to the draft recommendations for Electoral Review of Eastleigh Borough Council**

27.1 The Clerk reminded the Committee of the main thrust of the review – that the number of Borough Councillors would be reduced from 44 to 39, as multiples of three were now considered to be the best way forward. In addition, there is a requirement for the electorate in each ward to not vary by more than 10% from the mean.

27.2 Cllr Parker-Jones noted that the Parish Council comment on the previous consultation had not appeared online and the Clerk was asked to find out why.

### **Action: Clerk**

27.3 Cllr Parker-Jones asked whether this change was worthwhile in light of possible devolution. The Committee was reminded that the boundary changes have to happen, and will do so in 2018. The possibility of devolution does not and will not affect them. Devolution is still only a suggestion, and even if all parties come to an agreement over the way forward, it is still many years away.

27.4 Cllr Winstanley reported that the Parish should be largely unaffected.

27.5 The Committee requested the Clerk link to the consultation on both the website and Facebook.

### **Action: Clerk**

27.6 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Parker-Jones, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the Parish Council support the Borough Council draft proposals on boundary changes.

## **28 To note the meeting dates for the remainder of 2016-17**

28.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Tidridge, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Parish Council note the meeting dates for the remainder of 2016-17.

## **29 To consider the request for a bench at Otter Close**

29.1 A number of possible issues were identified and debated: lack of shade in that particular area; the difficulty of the elderly getting to the bench if it were not near the path; wear and tear of a bench; the need for a bin; the full cost (including installation) of any bench and bin; possible misuse by youths in the area and the need to consult the local residents.

29.2 The Clerk was asked to contact the resident who had made the request with a view to meeting and discussing the Committee's concerns. It is to be hoped that agreement can be reached, and decisions made regarding the exact proposed position, the specific bench and bin, and the installation costs. The Clerk was then asked to bring that report to the next Committee meeting.

## **30 To consider a request for provision of hand railings along the path between Green's Close and Strawberry Mead**

30.1 The Clerk explained that the Parish Council is not responsible for the path itself, but the resident would like the Council's support for their request for hand rails, and for help in determining who to approach.

30.2 Cllr Mignot stated that the pathway was the responsibility of Hampshire County Council, and the ditch should be part HCC as well. Cllr Winstanley stated her belief that it was a definitive footpath.

30.3 The Committee expressed their concern over the current state of the path, which had been demonstrated with recent pictures. Cllr Tidridge also noted that the path does not pass the risk assessment of the running group that she leads – it is considered unsafe. The path itself is in disrepair, is narrow, adjacent to the ditch in places and walkers are often confronted by dog walkers and occasional horse riders.

30.4 Cllr Winstanley also expressed the desire to do something to help this area of Bishopstoke, as the Parish Council has more available to parishioners in the West of the Parish than the East.

30.5 Proposed Cllr Tidridge, Seconded Cllr Winstanley, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Clerk write to Hampshire County Council asking them to repair the path, install safety rails, and fix notices in place reminding horse riders that it is not a bridleway.

**Action: Clerk**

**31 To receive the RFO's Report, and approve Budget Monitoring and Non-Confidential Payments Reports for April 2016 and May 2016**

31.1 The RFO reported that this year's contribution to the Y-Zone youth centre would be £25,000. This is down from £28,000 last year and this is because the Y-Zone are taking more bookings from paying customers.

31.2 The training budget this year will be significantly overspent. This is due to the large number of new Councillors elected in May but there is sufficient money in the reserves to cover the cost.

31.3 The staff pay budget is also likely to be slightly overspent by the end of the year. This is partly due to the need for the Clerk to work more than the original contracted amount of 30 hours pre week, and partly due to the Assistant Clerk having to do extra work to bring in new or updated risk assessments and policies for play areas, the Cemeteries and the allotments.

31.4 Cllr Parker-Jones asked whether the necessary checks and balances were in place to demonstrate proper accounting. It was explained that in addition to two visits from the internal auditors, and of course the audit itself, the Finance and General Purposes Committee see the budget and payments every month, and the Chair looks at the bank reconciliation every quarter.

31.5 Concern was raised that the RFO role is currently being performed by the Clerk. Again, it was noted that many Parish Councils only have one employee, and so it is often unavoidable. Also, as in the case with Bishopstoke Parish Council, other employees may not be willing to undertake the role.

31.6 A question was also raised as to whether the bank reconciliation should be brought to every F & GP meeting, and the Clerk was asked to write to HALC for their advice on what constitutes current best practice.

**Action: Clerk**

31.7 It was noted that, as there is no budget this year for reference materials, but spending had taken place, this had led to a technical error on the spreadsheet which the Clerk was asked to correct.

**Action: Clerk**

31.8 The use of percentages on the spreadsheet was also questioned, but Cllr Winstanley explained that, for those budget areas where spending is expected to be roughly consistent throughout the year, they are a useful gauge to determine whether that budget is likely to be overspent.

31.9 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Chaffey, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Budget Monitoring and Non-Confidential Payment Reports for April 2016 and May 2016 be noted.

## **32 Asset Management Review**

32.1 Cemetery – The Clerk reported he had been asked whether all the necessary checks and legal requirements that have to be undertaken before land can be used as a Cemetery have actually been done. The Clerk stated that he had not been made aware either way and so he had contacted Eastleigh Borough Council to ask them if all the testing had been done. The current temporary path leading from the New Cemetery car park to the Old Cemetery had been the subject of much discussion. Options are to remove it immediately which would prevent any further complaints but would also remove this extra access to the site; to remove it once the development is complete (when parking will be available at both Cemeteries; or to retain and improve it. This final option would cost money, but could be used to aid drainage in a very wet area of the Old Cemetery.

32.2 Fencing around the Old Cemetery is in poor repair and will need either fixing or, more likely, replacing. The assistant Clerk is preparing a report for the next Parish Council meeting on the current state of the fencing, the problems of continued public access through it, and the options for replacement.

32.3 The Cemetery Memorial inspection has taken place, as has bench maintenance, and the owners of those memorials found to be unsafe are being contacted.

32.4 Concern was expressed at the possibility that necessary checks had not been carried out on proposed Cemetery land. The Clerk reiterated that he had no knowledge of whether the work had been undertaken or not, but having been asked the question he thought it appropriate to double check. Cllr Winstanley recommended checking the outline report, and noted that Environmental Health would have been consulted on the original plans.

### **Action: Clerk**

32.5 Discussion regarding the general appearance of the path between Cemeteries, and the Cemetery itself, took place. The Committee thought the path potentially very pretty, and useful, however care needs to be taken regarding wheelchair access to existing ashes plots if the path is retained. Also, the noticeboard, bins, and Cemetery pedestrian entrance are all showing signs of wear and need some attention. The Clerk was asked to add those items to the report being prepared by the Assistant Clerk.

### **Action: Clerk**

32.6 Allotments – The decision has been taken to go ahead with the Manor Farm soakaway, with the work being completed by Jason Bruno. In light of recent difficulties in obtaining quotes for some jobs, a register of local businesses that are willing to undertake work for the Council is to be set up.

### **Action: Clerk**

32.7 Due to the number of people still attempting to access Stoke Park Woods through the Manor Farm allotments, a replacement sign has been ordered which shows much more clearly that this is neither allowed nor possible.

32.8 The Parish Council is now taking on, with the approval of our insurers, a second hand rotavator currently being used at Manor Farm. A manual, and safe use guide, are being provided.

32.9 Play areas – Glebe Meadow is suffering a spate of vandalism at the moment – bikes being broken up and spread everywhere, even being padlocked into a basketball hoop, and condoms, string and tampax being used to decorate or obstruct various bits of play equipment. The Clerk informed the Committee that he had asked the Y-Zone outreach team, the Street Pastors, and the local PCSO's to visit more regular over the next few weeks to try and prevent further abuse, and discover who was responsible.

32.10 Brookfield play area had a failure of a piece of equipment this week. It has been removed and made safe.

32.11 The quarterly inspection of play areas has just taken place. Work identified as necessary will begin as soon as practical. Otter Close has been added to future inspections.

32.12 The Clerk was asked whether the Parish Council owns the play area in Camborne Close. It was confirmed that the area was owned by First Wessex. The Clerk was asked to contact First Wessex and relay residents' concerns that the Play Area is not suitable for the stated "4-11 yr olds", and there is nowhere for responsible adults to sit.

**Action: Clerk**

32.13 Trees – The Clerk reported that he has now invited Eastleigh Borough Council's Tree Officer to undertake a full tree survey of the Parish. It is anticipated that this will take place every two years – a period considered sensible by the Tree Officer.

32.14 Parish Office – Planning permission for the office runs out on 24<sup>th</sup> June. The Clerk reported that he was in the process of applying for an extension.

**33 To receive the Clerk's Report**

33.1 The Clerk reported that, following the discovery of Roman / Iron Age remains at the Breach development, Cllr Tidridge has volunteered to liaise with the archaeologists and report back to the Parish Council.

33.2 Several training sessions have been booked for the new Council members, and more are being booked.

33.3 Eastleigh Borough Council have confirmed that the CiLCA training will resume in the Autumn. There is an introduction course on 20<sup>th</sup> July which the Clerk reported he is now booked on.

**34 Date, time, place and Agenda Items for the next meeting**

34.1 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 12 July at 7:30pm in the Parish Office, Riverside, Bishopstoke.

34.2 No Agenda Items were tabled at this time.

**35 Motion for Confidential Business**

35.1 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Parker-Jones, **RESOLVED** unanimously that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.

**36 To approve payment of staff hours of work, mileage and out of pocket expenses for April 2016 and May 2016**

36.1 Members noted the report tabled by the RFO which is attached to these minutes.

36.2 Discussions regarding working conditions and contracts took place.

36.3 Proposed Cllr Winstanley, Seconded Cllr Mignot, **RESOLVED** unanimously that the April 2016 and May 2016 staff payments be noted as tabled.

*There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9:15pm*

### **Resolutions to be noted by the Full Parish Council**

- 22.2.5 that Cllr Mignot be elected to Chair this meeting.
- 23.1 that the adoption and signing of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2016 be deferred to the next meeting.
- 28.1 that the Parish Council note the meeting dates for the remainder of 2016-17.
- 30.5 that the Clerk write to Hampshire County Council asking them to repair the path, install safety rails, and fix notices in place reminding horse riders that it is not a bridleway.
- 31.9 that the Budget Monitoring and Non-Confidential Payment Reports for April 2016 and May 2016 be noted.
- 35.1 that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed relating to employees' remuneration, it was advisable in the public interest that the public be excluded and for the record the business be regarded as confidential.
- 36.6 that the April 2016 and May 2016 staff payments be noted as tabled.

### **Recommendations for consideration by the Full Parish Council**

- 27.6 that the Parish Council support the Borough Council draft proposals on boundary changes.

### **Payments in April and May 2016 in excess of £500 published in accordance with the Government's transparency directive**

HALC	Affiliation Fees	£803.00
HALC	NALC Levy	£501.00
Green Smile	Grounds Maintenance (Apr)	£3,283.82
Green Smile	Grounds Maintenance (May)	£3,283.82