

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

29 November 2012

Chandler's Ford UR Church, Kings Road, Chandler's Ford

7.00 pm – 9.17 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Olson (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Atkinson, Boyes, Broadhurst, Davidovitz, Mrs Gault, Ms Grajewski, Hughes and Mrs Roberts

APOLOGIES; Cllr Luffman and Pragnell

In attendance – Stephen Mursell, Parish Clerk.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Grajewski stated that she would not make a declaration of interest in respect of discussions on the Parish newsletter as a decision had already been made to engage a person responsible for the editing of the newsletter.

2. MINUTES

It was agreed that the minutes for the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17 October 2012 be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record, subject to minor amendments.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman asked members if there were any matters arising not covered by the agenda items.

Cllr Grajewski enquired if an account had been set up with a stationery supplier and the Clerk confirmed that it had.

Cllr Grajewski also enquired if the letter of appointment of solicitors to act in the asset transfers had been sent and Cllr Atkinson confirmed that subject to minor items of clarification with the solicitor the engagement letter will be signed within a week.

4. DIAMOND JUBILEE EVENTS UPDATE

The Clerk updated members with progress on the Christmas event at Velmore which Reverend Dibb and members of the Velmore Community Association were organising the event. The only item outstanding was the procurement of the Victorian costumes which was being resolved by Reverend Dibb.

The Clerk advised that the event may require some financial support and if so the

Community Association would make a formal request to the Parish Council.

It was AGREED that:

1)The Clerk would forward details of the event to all members of Council and in addition provide details of the Carol singing event at the Hilt on the same day

5. NEWSLETTER

The Clerk advised members that quotations had been received from four separate companies to print the newsletter. Additional discounts had been applied and the best price to print 12,000 newsletters was £650.00 net of VAT. Members were advised that there were 10,500 households to be delivered to and the additional supply will be left at doctor surgeries, schools and other locations for visitors to pick up.

In addition the editor will charge £100.00 for each edition and the distribution costs will be £390.00 net of VAT, making a total of £1,140.00 net of VAT for each edition of the newsletter.

Cllr Atkinson, who is co-ordinating the content of the newsletter, advised members that suggestions for the content of the newsletter include: an article on the forthcoming public meeting to discuss with residents the merits of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and considering the alternative merits of a Parish Plan; an article bringing residents up to date with the changes to the bus services in Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury; an article on the Household Waste Recycling Centre and the comments made by the Parish Council on the proposed siting of the facility; and finally news on the Fryern Funtasia and Chandler's in Bloom in 2013.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASSET TRANSFER AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Confidential minute item for members of Chandler's Ford Parish Council

7. GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT CARD

The Clerk introduced his report concerning the application by the Parish Council of a procurement card and advised members that currently low value purchases are made through the office petty cash of £100; however larger purchases where the Parish Council has no existing account with the supplier, or for internet purchases, such purchases are made through use of the Clerk's credit card. The proposed solution of a government procurement card has been trialled by a local Parish Council and the trial shows the procurement card provides the right level of transparency for the Parish Council accounts.

Members were supportive of the request and felt that the monthly expenditure limit should be of a realistic amount and the procurement card should provide adequate

protection for the Parish Council and the Clerk against fraud in financial transactions.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Parish Council will apply for a government procurement card
- 2)The monthly expenditure limit will be set at £500.00 spend per month
- 3)The maximum spend per transaction by the Clerk will be set at £250.00 without reference to another signatory to the bank account
- 4)For a single transaction in excess of £250.00 the Parish Clerk will seek e-mail authorisation from at least two of the other three signatories to the Parish Council's main bank account

8. NOTICE BOARD REPORT

The Parish Clerk introduced his report on the proposal to purchase a notice board for the Parish Council. It was suggested that the notice board is located at the Fryern Pavilion and members expressed their views that the best location for the notice board would be fixed to the wall adjacent to the entrance to the parish office as it is by a footpath and visible by more residents.

The Parish Clerk also advised members that the purchase of the notice board could be supported by an application for a County Councillor grant, which members were in favour of.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Parish Clerk would purchase the notice board as described in the report and the notice board should also show the name of the Parish Council
- 2)The notice board would be externally mounted to the wall adjacent to the parish office entrance
- 3)The purchase of the notice board would potentially be supported by a County Councillor grant application

9. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Clerk introduced his report and the Communications Policy, with an earlier draft previously seen by this Committee. When the policy was reviewed by the Parish Council, members were of the view that it required further amendment and therefore the policy had been referred back to this committee.

The suggestions made by the Parish Council had been incorporated in to the policy and this Committee was requested to consider the amended policy. Members wished to see a disclaimer on the website with regard to web links to other organisations and also commented on the process through which information is posted to the website. Although it was recognised that the Parish Clerk would post information on request,

there should be a process by which consideration should be given as to the source and the nature of information posted.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The policy should include a process by which the Parish Clerk seeks the approval of the Chairman before posting any information to the Parish website when requested by other organisations
- 2)Subject to minor amendments the Communications Policy was accepted with a recommendation that the Communications Policy be approved by the Parish Council

The Clerk then introduced the Legionella Policy which had been drafted following earlier discussions at this Committee. The Clerk had requested that Cllr Pragnell review the draft policy who had made some helpful suggestions, together with the request that it is named the Water Hygiene Policy.

Members expressed their views on the policy and suggested that the issuing of the policy could increase the potential liabilities of the Parish Council. Members were also of the opinion that the Policy would only be necessary once the Parish Council had taken ownership of buildings.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Parish Clerk would take further advice as to whether a Water Hygiene Policy was a necessity in the Parish Council's current stage of development
- 2)The Parish Clerk should consult with the Health and Safety Executive as to the necessity of drawing up a Water Hygiene Policy
- 3)The Parish Clerk should seek information from Eastleigh Borough Council as to whether there is a Water Hygiene Policy already in existence and also check with regard to the current procedures of review of water hygiene

The Parish Clerk then introduced the Lone worker Policy which members agreed was a requirement in respect of the fact that the Clerk was usually the sole occupant of the Fryern Pavilion. Members recognised that the Clerk did issue a published diary of activities during the day and therefore it was suggested on occasions where the Parish Clerk agrees to a meeting with a resident or anyone else that potentially could lead to disagreement, that the Chairman should be made aware of the appointment and be advised by the clerk when the discussions were complete. This procedure will lead to increased protection for the Parish Clerk in potentially difficult situations.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Loneworker Policy was accepted with a recommendation that the Loneworker Policy be approved by the Parish Council

10. PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Parish Clerk advised members that since the website had been introduced, members of this Committee had been unaware of user traffic on the website. As part of the agreement with the current web provider, the Parish Clerk had been provided with access to a Google Analytics site where the number of visits, duration of visits and other relevant information was provided. Members were pleased with the overall number of visitors to the site and considered that this information should be reviewed on a regular basis.

It was AGREED that:

1)The Parish Clerk would provide regular updates to the Committee on user traffic to the Parish website

11. BUS SERVICES IN THE PARISH

Cllr Atkinson advised members with regard to the latest position on the bus services to Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury. A well-attended public meeting had been held with an audience of both current bus users and other non-bus users. The purpose of the meeting was to advise residents of the current situation and the proposed new bus service. It was recognised that officers of Eastleigh Borough Council and Hampshire County Council had done extremely well in difficult circumstances to secure the new bus service.

Generally members felt the revised service was the best that could be provided in the circumstance and indeed users in Velmore considered the bus service had been improved.

Cllr Atkinson also advised members that the Parish Council would work with all interested parties to help wherever possible with the consultation process now being undertaken by HCC. In particular links to the process would be made available on our web-site, and details of the consultation process would be provided in our forth coming newsletter.

12. FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Clerk tabled the latest financial update and advised members that all items of expenditure was on track. The Clerk highlighted to members the account balance on the Events account and reminded members that it had been agreed previously that a donation would be made to the Diamond Jubilee charities in respect of surplus made on events.

The Clerk also advised members that he had undertaken research of deposit rates for

surplus funds and that the rate of 0.5% offered by Eastleigh Borough Council appeared competitive with banks. Members suggested that Lloyds Bank and Co-operative Bank could be approached as they may offer preferential rates.

It was AGREED that:

1)The Clerk would enquire as to the current deposit rates offered by Lloyds Bank and Co-operative Bank and report back to this Committee

13. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Atkinson advised members that the Employment Committee had undertaken an appraisal of the Parish Clerk's work performance and it was considered it had been an excellent performance.

Members were advised that it was important for the Parish Council to achieve the Quality Council status and this required the Parish Clerk to achieve the CiLCA qualification. Because of current workloads it was difficult for the Parish Clerk to achieve this qualification within the normal working pattern and therefore the Employment Committee had suggested a temporary increase in contractual hours for the Clerk.

It was AGREED that:

1)The contractual hours of the Parish Clerk would be increased by 4 hours from 1 December 2012 to 31 March 2013 to allow the Parish Clerk to complete the CiLCA qualification

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES (for Parish Council members only)

29 November 2012

Chandler's Ford UR Church, Kings Road, Chandler's Ford

7.00p.m – 9.17 pm

1.RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASSET TRANSFER AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

Members were advised that this agenda item was a confidential item and therefore were not in the public domain. The support of the Policy and Finance Committee was being requested by members of the Asset Transfer and Management Committee to these formal recommendations which will also be taken to the Parish Council meeting on 12 December.

Members were advised that in principle a decision had been taken to transfer the recreation grounds at Hiltingbury, Fryern and Pennine Way and solicitors have been instructed to proceed with the transfer. The instruction to solicitors is subject to the following:

- The recreation grounds, including the buildings thereon, are transferred in a good state of repair, i.e. fit for purpose, and dilapidations are made good before the transfer. If Eastleigh Borough Council is unable to implement the works necessary to bring the assets up to the required standard, then the Parish Council is provided with sufficient monies to enable the Parish Council to implement the required works. This is particularly relevant to the Hiltingbury Pavilion where a schedule of outstanding works has already been identified;
- The freehold of the assets transferred on 1 April 2013 is to include all buildings and fixtures, fittings and equipment therein;
- During the first year of ownership of the transferred assets the Parish Council will buy back from Eastleigh Borough Council the provision of maintenance services for the recreation grounds, including play areas;
- The maintenance services to be provided by Eastleigh Borough Council will be agreed and documented in a service level agreement which should include right of recompense if works are not carried out to the agreed standard. The service level agreement is to be agreed between the two parties by 1 April 2013;
- The costs related to the service level agreement are currently charged to parishioners under special expenses. This charge will be clearly identified and

transferred to the Parish Council as part of the precept.

Members were advised that the first recommendation of the Asset Transfer and Management Team was as follows:

- 1) The Asset, Transfer and Management Team recommend to the Parish Council that they progress with the transfer of the recreation grounds at Hiltingbury, Fryern and Pennine Way, together with the buildings thereon that include the pre-existing leases of the Scout Hut and the Hilt, and the children's play areas, subject to satisfactory negotiations in respect of the matters detailed above. For clarity the recreation grounds are marked with a red boundary on the attached plans with areas marked with green not subject to the transfer
- 2) The experience of members of the Asset Team in building matters is recognised and that they continue to work with officers of Eastleigh Borough Council during the due diligence process
- 3) That suitable funding guarantees are agreed to enable the Parish Council to implement the required work to the buildings so that adequate insurance cover can be obtained for the building assets transferred.
- 4) The Parish Council utilise the services of the Parish Councillors who had the skills and experience to carry out building inspections and request them to prepare a schedule of dilapidations for the buildings on the recreation grounds that could be used in discussions with officers of Eastleigh Borough Council.

Members present were aware that there may be rights of access across the Pennine Way recreation ground to enable access to Monks Brook and the railway line by contractors. In addition there is a strip of land parallel to Monks Brook, the ownership of which is uncertain but members present believed the land may be in the ownership of the Environment Agency. These points will require investigation by the Parish Council's solicitors.

Members were advised that the second recommendation of the Asset Transfer and Management Team was as follows:

1) The Asset, Transfer and Management Team recommend that the Parish Council progress with the due diligence process to transfer the remaining children's play areas to the Parish Council, subject to adequate confirmation that:

- Eastleigh Borough Council can provide and will continue to provide adequate records of inspection
- Eastleigh Borough Council can confirm continuation of insurance cover for users of the play areas
- Eastleigh Borough Council can provide adequate records to confirm the life expectancy of the individual items of play equipment

All these matters are subject to confirmation of the terms of a service level agreement and the charges made to the Parish Council for providing such an agreement.

Finally members were made aware that the Asset Transfer and Management Team had authorised Councillors Atkinson, Boyes and Hughes to represent the Parish Council in discussions concerning these asset transfers with officers of Eastleigh Borough Council.

Members were supportive of all three recommendations which will now be considered by the Parish Council on 12 December.