

CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL - POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
2 SEPTEMBER 2013
Chandler's Ford Methodist Church , Winchester Road, Chandler's Ford
7.00 pm – 9.15 pm

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

APOLOGIES: Nil

In attendance – Stephen Mursell, Parish Clerk

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Grajewski made a declaration of interest in respect of agenda item 12 in her position as a partner in a design company.

2. MINUTES

Members considered the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 10 July 2013 for accuracy.

It was AGREED that:

1) The minutes for the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 10 July 2013 be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Parish Clerk reported that the application to the War Memorials Trust had been sent and that the closing date for applications for such grants was 30 September 2013. It was not anticipated that a decision on the application would be received until October at the earliest.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Parish Clerk introduced the report on the terms of reference for this committee. Members were advised that the terms of reference had not been reviewed since they were originally adopted by this committee in 2010. The Clerk advised members that the terms of reference for each committee of the Parish Council will be reviewed by that committee and then All the terms of references with any suggested amendments will be brought to the Parish Council for adoption.

Members suggested that in the first paragraph reference to "strategy" should be replaced by "policy". Members also felt that each committee should consider the terms of reference document for that committee against the document for other committees.

This will address matters of consistency of each document and will ensure that matters of delegation and recommendations to other committees or to the Parish Council were also consistent across all committees

It was AGREED that:

- 1) The terms of reference for the Policy and Finance Committee were approved subject to the change of wording
- 2) The terms of reference of this committee will be recommended for approval by the Parish Council together with the terms of reference for all committees once approved

5. GRANT APPLICATIONS

Merfest

The Parish Clerk reported that no response had been received from the parent teacher association for the Merfest. The Clerk also confirmed that e-mail contact had been made to the association with a grant application form and a follow up conversation with the chairman of the association.

6. GOOGLE ANALYTICS

The Parish Clerk introduced his report on the quarterly update on the traffic to the Parish Council website. It was reported that there was a large increase in traffic at the time of the Funtasia which demonstrated the value to the Parish Council of having an informative website.

The Clerk also suggested that a review of the website content and appearance might be due. Members felt that it should be considered what the purpose of the website was and what users would be looking for when visiting the site. In this respect opinion should be sought from a professional website designer to seek their opinion on the website. In addition other Parish Council websites should be reviewed for comparison purposes.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Parish Clerk would seek comments from website designers of the effectiveness and presentation of the Parish Council website
- 2)That Cllrs Atkinson and Davidovitz together with the Clerk, undertake a review of the Parish Council website based on input from website designers together with comments following a review of other Parish Council websites
- 3) A full report and recommendations with regard to the Parish Council website will be brought back to this committee

7. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Parish Clerk introduced the report on the Internal Audit findings and progress made with the action points following the visit of the Internal Auditor. The Parish Clerk wished to express his gratitude to Cllr Atkinson for the time taken in assisting him to set up Sage to the complex requirements of the Parish Council accounts.

The Clerk reported that with Sage set up for the current financial year the majority of the action points had been addressed and therefore were shown as completed on the action plan. Some action points had yet to be addressed due to the significant amount of time taken to set up the current year's accounts to the right standard of presentation that members could clearly understand and have confidence in.

Cllr Atkinson advised that due to holiday commitments the HR Committee had yet to meet but would do so before the Parish Council meeting and bring forward recommendations with regard to the contractual hours of the Parish Clerk and other recommendations regarding the recruitment of additional staff to meet the needs of the expanding role of the Parish Council. By doing so this would address the action point concerning a minute on the pay and conditions of Parish Council employees.

The Parish Clerk had yet to carry out a review of the deposit rates available to the Parish Council to address the final action point. The Parish Clerk confirmed that a report would be brought to the next meeting of this committee together with recommendations.

It was AGREED that:

1)The Parish Clerk would address all outstanding action points before the next meeting of this committee and bring forward a further report to this committee

8. EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Parish Clerk reported that the Annual Return had been signed off by the External Auditor and a copy of the Annual Return together with recommendations from the External Auditor were contained in Appendix D.

Cllr Atkinson wished to make it clear to members that adequate financial controls were consistently in place to ensure that the Councils funds were protected and the matters raised by the Internal Auditor were concerning the preparation of the accounts which it was agreed could have been improved.

It was AGREED that:

1)To note that the Annual Return has been signed off by the External Auditor and to note the comments in the External Auditor's report

9. CHANDLER'S FORD IN BLOOM

The Parish Clerk introduced his report on the conclusion of the competition. It was reported that entries were received in all categories however the overall number of entries was approximately the same as last year's entries. There was concern at the low level of entries for the competition and the Parish Clerk suggested that if a sponsor for the competition was to be willing to support the event, a greater number of entries might be attracted.

Members were of the opinion that the competition should be held again next year but more effort might be made to attract an increase in participation. This would be helped if greater publicity was given, with news releases issued after judging sessions, describing the event and encouraging human interest by naming the participants who had received awards. Members were invited to take the lead on this initiative for next year and advise the Clerk of their interest in doing so.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Chandler's Ford in Bloom competition should be held again in 2014
- 2)A press release be issued to confirm that the Chandler's Ford in Bloom competition will be organised in 2014
- 3)A sponsor be sought for the competition in 2014

The Parish Clerk advised members that as there was still money available in the original budget of £250.00 for the competition; it was suggested that a donation of £30.00 be made to the judge's charity, National Gardens Scheme, in recognition of her assistance in the judging of the competition and making her garden available for the prize-giving ceremony

It was AGREED that:

- 1)A donation of £30.00 be given to the National Gardens Scheme

10. HAVE YOUR SAY

The Parish Clerk reported that Hampshire County Council had provided a grant of £5,000 for this year's Have Your Say event. It was suggested that the format of the recent Have Your Say event should be repeated. Members commented that the recent event had been well organised and should run on similar lines.

A suggestion that the next event should be confined to new bidders only, was not supported as it was acknowledged that it was the quality and benefit to the community of the projects presented to community voters that achieved success rather than the particular bidders who were proposing them.

Members were anxious that a wider range of residents be encouraged to attend the event, as it was considered this would improve the impartiality in the voting process.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)The Have Your Say event will be held at the end of October or early November to allow sufficient publicity for the event
- 2)There will be no exclusions of potential entrants for Have Your Say
- 2) The Chairman of the Parish Council will nominate members to assist the Parish Clerk in the organisation of the event

11. PARISH COUNCIL SIGNAGE

The Clerk introduced his report with signing proposals for the branding of Parish premises and services. In addition, at the request of the committee, a quotation had been received for the highway signs directing visitors to the Parish Office.

Members were advised that the highways sign would need to be in the same style as the existing highway signs to the Fryern Recreation Ground and members were asked to consider whether “Chandler's Ford Parish Council Office” was the most appropriate phrasing. The cost of the signage was quoted as £526.99 plus VAT.

Illustrations of the proposed design of the Parish signs were considered and various comments made. The style of the signs in respect of colours, font and inclusion of logo and web site address was supported. The key points were that the logo should be prominent and be placed on all signs; the font was considered to be attractive and it was considered to be essential that the Parish website address to be included on all signs. Members suggested that a small working group should be charged with consideration of the design and the revised wording for the committee's final consideration.

It was AGREED that:

- 1)Cllrs Atkinson and Davidovitz work with the Parish Clerk to produce more detailed proposals for all signs across the parish to present to this committee
- 2)That the Parish Clerk order the Highways signs with the wording agreed as Chandler's Ford Parish Council Office to fix beneath the existing signs on Oakmount Road.

12. WALK THE ITCHEN WAY

Cllr Grajewski advised members that together with the Parish Clerk she had met the President of Chandler's Ford and Itchen Valley Rotary Club to discuss the participation of the Parish Council in supporting their proposed charity walk along the Itchen Way.

The Rotary Club requested that the Parish Council allow the Rotary Club to use the Fryern Pavilion as a registration centre and in addition request the support of the Parish Council in general advice and assistance in the publicity and organisation of the event.

Members were very supportive of the Parish Council assisting the Rotary Club in view of their assistance with the Funtasia and members requested further details of the event as they were agreed by the Rotary Club.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Parish Clerk advised members that the format of all future financial reporting will form the basis of a profit and loss account, budget report and balance sheet. He said that members should have the confidence that all the accounts will be fully reconciled and agreed to the bank statements by the Chairman on a monthly basis.

The Parish Clerk then described each report advising members where nominal codes had been set up. Members were advised where income and expenditure had been grouped together to assist members in their analysis of expenditure against the budget.

The Clerk also said, that to assist members, some of the wording of the nominal codes could be changed to more accurately describe income or expenditure. The Clerk advised that members should have confidence in the way the financial information was now presented and be able to accurately track the Council's expenditure against the various budgets areas.

The Clerk advised members that the account for the Fryern Funtasia had been reconciled by the Chairman and the only other point to note was that the £1,500 temporary grant made by the Parish Council had been taken from the Events account and had yet to be reflected in the main Council account.

It was AGREED that:

1)The financial reports be noted

The Clerk advised members that the question of electronic payments needed to be addressed in that the website host would in future only accept payments by electronic funds transfer. The difficulty for the Parish Council was that Barclays Bank could not offer an electronic fund transfer facility where three signatories would authorise the transfer. HSBC could offer this facility but members were advised that this represented the events account and therefore to undertake a funds transfer through this bank was not an ideal solution.

The Clerk advised members that he will be contacting the website host to ascertain if an

exception could be made for payment by cheque and will report back to this committee.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14 October 2013 St Martins Church, Queens Road