

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 27th January 2021 commencing at 7.00pm
Remotely by Zoom Videoconferencing**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllr Janet Foster (Chairman), Cllrs Anne Tomlinson, John Davis and Simon Thomas
IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Goudie (Executive Officer - EO)
	No members of the public
APOLOGIES:	None

21.01 FGP OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman, welcoming all members to the meeting, asked if there were any items under the open session.

Following the presentation at the recent Full Council meeting, the Council are keen to ensure that the Benians Pavilion can accommodate the new Youth Club moving forward. The Committee briefly discussed how this could be achieved favourably and also, looking to the future, agreed that further discussions need to be had and changes to be made to the current Licence to Occupy now that the Sport England restrictions are lifted. It was agreed advice should be sought on possible options for a new agreement and that the Committee should be contacted to see how the Basketball Club/Youth Club should approach the Committee for membership, as this seems the most natural way forward. It is noted that there is likely to be clashes but that there must be a way forward for the clubs to work together. This would be a formal Agenda item for the March meeting.

There were no additional issues raised therefore the meeting commenced at 7.30pm. Standing Orders were applied.

21.02 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

21.03 FGP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21.04 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 28th October 2020 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Tomlinson seconded by Cllr Davis and would be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity, due to current restrictions and the meeting being held remotely.

21.05 FGP POLICIES

Draft policies for consideration had been circulated prior to the meeting and each were discussed with comments as below and agreed for presentation at Full Council for formal approval and adoption.

21.05.1 Lone Workers Policy

There were one or two suggested minor changes to the policy, as circulated, which would be amended as agreed. Cllr Thomas had suggested an additional paragraph in the Violence at Work section to include Support for Ongoing Trauma and prejudice and diversity and agreed to let the EO have a suitable short paragraph for inclusion.

In addition, concern was raised with reference to Councillor/volunteer safety, as this policy was solely for employees, put in place by the employer, the Council in line with employment legislation. The EO agreed to seek advice and look at a similar document to ensure similar safety protocols were also in place for Councillors and Volunteers and would bring back to the Committee for discussion at the next meeting.

21.05.2 Statement of Intent (2021/2022)

It was suggested, and agreed, that the Tree Planting initiative should also be included in the document, and that the date added in for the 10k in July, with the option of running the event in person or virtually. It was agreed that it is difficult to plan for any additional events at this stage.

21.05.3 Investment Strategy (2021/2022)

There were no changes to make to the circulated document, although Councillor Thomas raised adding a section with reference to Reserves, but it was agreed that this was an investment document, and the issue of having adequate reserves is covered in other documents.

21.05.4 Code of Conduct

The newly adopted EHDC Code of Conduct had been circulated prior to the meeting for perusal. EHDC had confirmed that they would not be offering Code of Conduct training to Town and Parish Councils, and had suggested going elsewhere for training, the EO was still awaiting confirmation from EHDC as to whether Town and Parish Council's would be expected to adopt the latest EHDC version. The EO also advised that there was an updated standard NALC code of conduct, which may also be worth considering, if the Parish Council does not have to be in line with the District Council.

The Committee were all in agreement that the current document as it stands is more than adequate and that the newly adopted EHDC Code of Conduct would not be appropriate for the Parish Council. The EO agreed to look at the updated NALC version to see if there are any significant variances that could be incorporated into the current version. It was agreed to review this again in March in preparation for the new Council year in May.

21.06 FGP RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The EO had circulated an updated Risk Assessment for review. Several issues were noted and amended, as follows:

- A section for global pandemics had been included, however it was agreed that this should cover all disasters affecting risk and heading changed to 'Disease and Disasters', with an added reference to adopted local resilience plans.
- It was agreed to remove the words 'statutory charges' from the bank charges section as it was not correct.
- Lone working, additional risks to include, injury and sudden illness.
- Absence of clerk; change the current reference to SLCC and HALC.
- Village Pond, remove the plural as there is only one, and change risk level to L due to the minimal depth
- There was a query as to whether to add Virtual meetings into the assessment, however after discussion it was agreed to wait to see if Regulations were changed again in May to allow ongoing virtual meetings.

There was a discussion as to whether the current back up system was adequate and whether the Council should consider backing up into the Cloud. The EO confirmed that she could have a word with an IT specialist for advice, however it was subsequently agreed that the procedures currently in place were adequate.

The amended Risk Assessment would be circulated for approval and adoption at the Full Council meeting in February.

21.07 FGP CEMETERY REGULATIONS

21.07.1 Update of Cemetery Regulations

An updated version of the current Regulations had been circulated prior to the meeting. There were several suggested amendments noted, which would be incorporated into the document. The amended document would be circulated to the Committee for final approval before circulation and presentation at Full Council for adoption.

21.07.2 Proposed changes to Cemetery administration

Due to late circulation of the summary document and a previous lengthy Agenda item, it was agreed to defer the discussion on this item to the next meeting.

21.08 DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTIONS

The EO had previously reported that the current process for applying for non-specified Developers contributions had been closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

A brief discussion took place over the current situation and although the Council are fully aware of the issues currently being faced by EHDC and staffing, concern was raised over the fact that the funds held are time limited and Developers would not accept Covid as a reasonable excuse for the delay in spending the allocated funds and to reclaim them, as is their right.

It was agreed that this issue should be raised, but tactfully, and that the EO should write to all three District Councillors highlighting the Council's concerns.

21.09 2021/2022 MEETING DATES

Following a request at the previous Full Council meeting it was discussed and agreed to change the time of the Full Council meetings temporarily to 7.00pm. This would be reviewed at the Annual Meeting in May.

The dates proposed were agreed, and the draft version would be circulated for information with the February Council's paperwork and would be adopted formally at the Annual Meeting in May.

It was agreed to move the Annual Parish Meeting from 28th April to the last possible allowable date in May (Wednesday 26th) in the hope that meetings in person would be allowed as this was going to be the opportunity to advise the public of the progress of the new community building. There would be no speaker, just the usual reports and brief presentation.

21.10 FGP NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 31st March 2021, 7.00pm, via Zoom videoconferencing.

21.11 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

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Chairman