

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 29th July 2020 commencing at 6.30pm
Remotely by Zoom Videoconferencing, and at Uplands Lane, Four Marks GU34 5AF**

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 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 |

20.09 FGP OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman, welcoming all members to the meeting, asked if there were any items under the open session. There were no issues raised during therefore the meeting commenced at 6.35pm. Standing Orders were applied.

20.10 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

20.11 FGP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20.12 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 29th January 2020 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Tomlinson, seconded by Cllr Davis and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
 - Cllr Thomas sought clarification on two items from the previous meeting. Had there been any updates on the Four Marks Community Cupboard? The EO confirmed that although there had been no progress with finding a venue in Four Marks, the Alton Community Cupboard had picked up some Four Marks residents in the interim. Cllr Thomas also asked if there were any further updates on the Benians Pavilion expansion. The EO confirmed that there hadn't been to date, but that she hoped to be having a meeting the following week to discuss the planning application and taking the project forward. There was a subsequent discussion with reference to the new Community Facility project, with a brief update on current progress, and proposed next steps, but that it had been agreed that even if a new facility is built, the Benians Pavilion would remain as a sports pavilion.

20.13 FGP EXISTING POLICY REVIEW

The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been updated and re-adopted at the Full Council meeting on 19th February 2020. All the other existing policies had been checked and updated prior to uploading them onto the new website and, to date, there had been no further changes. The EO suggested that Policy Review is added to the March 2021 Finance & General Purposes meeting.

A consultation was currently underway to update the existing Code of Conduct, and the Council's code of conduct would be updated and re-adopted, following confirmation of those changes.

20.14 FGP RISK ASSESSMENTS/REGISTER

The EO advised that, as part of the ongoing audit procedure, it is essential that Risk Registers and Assessments of Risks are reviewed and updated regularly, and Minuted as such.

Due to the current Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic, the Council have been, and still are, actively and regularly assessing risk, preparing and continuously reviewing risk assessments in each regard, and uploading the assessments on the website. A policy for compilation of risk assessments would be put together for the next meeting for the future.

In preparation for the reopening of the play area, and guidance taken from the AEO's attendance at a Health & Safety briefing, three separate risk assessments have been prepared for each activity area and are available on the website as per audit requirements.

20.15 FGP INTERNAL AUDIT PROVISION

The EO circulated paperwork for the review of the internal audit provision. The current auditors have been in post for six years and, although having had two separate auditors during that time, and the EO commented that although they have had no issues with the service provided, it would be good practice to review the current provision. A different approach was suggested, and relevant proposals discussed.

Although there was little cost difference between the existing and proposed provision, it was agreed that a different 'set of eyes' may be beneficial to the Parish Council at this stage, and therefore it was RESOLVED to change the Internal Auditor for this financial year, with a review in a year's time.

20.16 FGP DOCUMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

20.16.1 Investment Strategy

Approval of the 2020/2021 Investment Strategy had been deferred from the previous meeting, and therefore had not been formally approved. There were no amendments to the draft, as circulated, although one or two suggestions were made and discounted, therefore it was RESOLVED to put the document forward for formal Council approval at the next appropriate meeting. However, the Investment Strategy for 2021/2022 would be discussed at the October meeting as part of the budget process.

20.16.2 Statement of Intent

Following the twice deferred approval for the former Action Plan, the document was renamed and redrafted in preparation for Council approval. The suggested amendments by members of the Committee were implemented and agreed. It was therefore RESOLVED to present the amended document to Full Council at the next meeting for approval. This document will also be reviewed for 2021/2022 at the October meeting as part of the budget process.

20.16.3 Climate and Nature Emergency Policy

The draft policy was looked at in detail, and members suggested several amendments, which were duly implemented. This document would also be presented at Full Council for approval at the next meeting and reviewed on a regular basis.

20.16.4 Revised Discipline and Grievance Policies

The existing policy was split into two separate policies and updated in accordance with NALC guidance, from 2019. There were two minor amendments to the drafts, as circulated, which would be changed and circulated for Full Council approval at the next appropriate meeting.

20.17 FGP ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

20.17.1 Deed storage and archiving

A detailed discussion took place over archiving and storage of Parish Council records, and it was agreed that, particularly the historical deeds should be placed in secure storage. Documents would be digitalised and then either destroyed or put into secure storage at a Hampshire County Council archiving facility. Documents would be destroyed as per the retention policy, but other documents, such as Minutes, needed to be kept indefinitely.

Cllr Foster agreed to start logging the documents, currently stored in the attic, with Cllr Tomlinson agreeing to assist with scanning. It was suggested that all the documents are removed from the attic so this task can be carried out methodically and safely, and an area would need to be set aside to keep the documents while this task was being carried out and then prepared to be either appropriately destroyed or stored safely and taken to archive.

Concern was also raised about daily back-ups of the work computer. Although both the EO and AEO have laptops, the work on these devices are primarily on Dropbox, therefore 'cloud' base. However, the desktop should be backed up and the portable hard drive removed from the office each evening. The EO confirmed that this had not

been happening during lock down, but the process would now be reinstated now that office working had recommenced.

20.18 FGP NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 28th October 2020, 7.00pm, either by Zoom Videoconferencing or at the Parish Office, to be confirmed

20.19 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00pm.

.....

Chairman