

MINCHINHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday, 17th January, 2022, at 7pm at The Trap House.

75: Present: Cllrs S. Hemmings (chair), G. Ford, N. Hurst, A. Mylechreest (from 7.10pm), A. Nicholls, A. Smith, the clerk, the deputy clerk.

76: Apologies: None

77: Public questions/participation: None.

78: Declarations of interest/dispensations: None.

79: Minutes: Discussion ensued about minute 71 of the Finance Committee held on 15th November, 2021, in that it related to the electricity/heating bill for the Vestry Room. Tenant Ms Clements had responded she was happy to rent the room, which was above her residence, for storage for one temporary year, but not to also meet its church lighting electricity costs. Considerable debate followed before councillors agreed to offer the tenant a rent reduced from £1,000 to £760 for the year. That lower rental was in recognition of the estimated £20 a month cost of the church lighting. This arrangement would, councillors' believed, enable any electricity bill for the room to be met by the tenants. The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 15th November, 2021, were then proposed by Cllr Ford, seconded by Cllr Hurst, and agreed.

80: Staffing Working Group: The notes of the Staffing Working Group held on 6th December, 2021, were received and accepted. Cllr Hemmings recommended, and it was agreed, to implement the uplift in the clerk's pay scale as put forward by the already accepted independent Staffing Review. This would be effective from the start of the new deputy clerk's employment.

81: Amberley Playground redevelopment: The clerk and deputy clerk had met John Pugh, chair of the Amberley Playground Management Committee and Kay Lillington, advice officer from the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association on this site. Finance Committee members were surprised to learn it remained in use by playgroup toddlers despite the removal of swings highlighted as dangerous in two earlier parish council funded safety inspection reports. Mr Pugh awaited a lease for the playground from the Gloucester Diocese which, if satisfactory to the parish council, might eventually lead to the start of financial input for repairs/improvements to the play area by the council. The committee agreed however that a letter should be sent in the meantime reminding the current playground operators and users of the previous safety warnings.

82: Budget 2022-23 including earmarked reserves: Councillors agreed the proposed allocations of earmarked reserves and recommended that a further reserve be created for the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies currently held. An unchanged budget (attached) was again recommended including a £110,000 precept to Stroud District Council.

83: RFO's report: Members' confirmed the term deposit of the Vosper money with Bank of Scotland for a further 365 days following its maturity on 22nd February, 2022 at £14,647.29. The final future balance with an AER of 0.05% (fixed) was estimated at £14,654.61. The council's newly appointed internal auditor Kevin Rose from Trowbridge based IAC had visited and outlined the three stages - pre-audit, interim audit, and year end – of the process that would be conducted.

The chair suggested council might begin to consider community celebration(s) for the platinum anniversary of the Queen's reign. A modest rental of £5 an hour had been agreed for the future use of the Minchinhampton Baptist Church premises for MPC meetings, since suitable social distancing was not possible in the council's small Trap House offices.

84: Grant applications: a) Minchinhampton Church organ appeal – A £230,000 project to restore the organ in Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton, was outlined in a letter from the chair of the project's fund raising group and a "significant" grant towards it requested. Following debate the committee regretted that it was unable to use public funds for the project, not least because of the current standstill council budget; **b) Minchinhampton Academy projector** – Cllr Hemmings had received two quotations for new projection equipment and screen etc and looked into them. This followed the consideration of use of the academy hall for future council meetings because the Covid pandemic had introduced the need for social distancing. It had also rendered impossible the former use of the council's Trap House offices for public assemblies. The committee acknowledged council had previously rented the academy hall on its required Monday evening for a £40 session, which was when it had found the existing IT installation inadequate. After considerable discussion the committee recommended the council's upfront contribution towards the new school IT of £40 for each of its 26 meetings over two years, plus a further £500 donation, a total of £1,540 to be offered to secure the venue for council sessions for the period with improved IT.

The meeting closed shortly before 9pm.

Signed: Date:.....