

WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Catherine Murray. Rose Cottage, Coughton, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SF.
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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held in Bishopswood Village Hall At 6.30pm on Wednesday 22nd February 2017

Present: Acting Chairman of Walford PC – Shane Carlson
 Councillors Dave Berry, Karen Chinn.

In attendance: Clerk Catherine Murray.

1. **Appoint a new Chair:** It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to appoint Karen Chinn as the new Chair. There was no other candidate.
- 6.4. **Appointments:** This item was brought up the agenda, by unanimous agreement and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to appoint Angus McIntosh as a member of the Finance Committee, to be approved by Full Council.
2. **Apologies:** Frank Myers, Simeon Cole, Heather Evans.
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Dave Berry declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Walford Village Hall play area and requested a dispensation to share information with Councillors, before leaving the room. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the dispensation.
4. **Minutes:** It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 11/01/17.
5. **Public participation session:**
 - Mr Brian Long asked what evidence exists that there is a local demand for the Walford Village Hall play area facility and he expressed a view that it was not a suitable project upon which to spend public funds, he read out a statement covering his objections. *The Chair and Cllr Berry explained that evidence had been gathered historically and said that a play area had been given support in the Parish Plan and in responses to a questionnaire that had previously been circulated to all households in the Parish. The number of parents with children attending Walford School and older Parish residents with grandchildren was also highlighted.*
 - Mr Will Warburg said that he fully supported the play area initiative, thought it a good use of public funds and a very appropriate project for the Parish Council to make a donation to.
 - Cllr Carlson explained that at present, he has to take his grandchildren to Ross on Wye in order to find a play area for them to use and would welcome a play area facility in Walford.
 - Mr Warburg also asked whether new Committee members should be appointed by Full Council, in accordance with Standing Orders; The Clerk looked at the Standing Orders and established that at the Annual Council meeting in May, all Committee members are appointed by Full Council, but that there is no provision in Standing Orders to cover the appointment of a new member, should someone step down mid-term. *The Clerk will update Standing orders accordingly, for approval at the ACM.*
6. **Banking and payments:**

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the bank reconciliation, Finance Appendix A and bank statements for January.

 - 6.1 It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments, with the following conditions:
 - Terry Griffiths for Rights of Way – footpath behind Bishopswood Village Hall. *(Immediate payment)*
 - Ross Gazette, Monmouthshire Beacon and Hereford Times *(30 day terms)*
 - Community Support Co-ordinator expenses January *(Immediate payment)*
 - Flying Colours - Community Support leaflets and business cards. *(30 day terms)*
 - HALC subscription *(By due date of 31/03/17)*
 - 6.2 **The following payments were noted:**
 - 6.2.1 Clerk salary and expenses, Community Support Co-ordinator salary January.
 - 6.3 **Electronic Banking.** Further signatories were reminded to register.
 - 6.4 **Appointments:** It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to appoint Karen Chinn as a new bank signatory.
7. **Budget:** Further information was shared with the Committee, relating to the budget. The clerk explained that specialist companies, who come highly recommended and supply payroll management services to Parish Councils, also manage pensions provision within the same package and that the cost for such services for Walford PC would amount to £13.60 a month for 2 part time employees, which is considerably less than the input required by the clerk. Handing over payroll and pensions management services to a specialist agent would also allow the Clerk to spend more time on Parish projects. The benefit is both financial and guarantees

that the PC complies fully with all existing and new legislation; also in the event of any error, there is no liability for the PC, as the agent has full insurance to cover this. Having considered 3 such agents, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to hand over payroll and pensions management to Autela Group Ltd, subject to redefining the budget, to set up a category to cover it and to include the adjustment on the next agenda. The clerk was asked to engage Autela Group Ltd. <<**Action Clerk**>>

Councillors Chinn and Berry will adjust the budget categories for 2017-18, in order to identify funds which can be used to cover this expenditure. <<**Action Cllrs Berry and Chinn**>>. This adjustment will be approved by Full Council at the next meeting.

In order to achieve transparency regarding finances, Cllrs Chinn and Berry will present a summary of profit and loss up to the end of the previous month at each Finance Committee meeting, in order to track spend against budget and also a cash-flow statement, so that invoices can be approved for immediate payment, or approved and postponed within the terms of the invoice, as necessary going forward. <<**Action Cllrs Berry and Chinn**>>

8. **Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch:** The Committee was acquainted with the expenditure on advertising for preferred development partners at Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch, which had to be actioned before the end of the 2016-17 financial year, in order to expedite the appointment of a preferred partner to manage the launch site. The expenditure will be covered by the budget provision for Kerne Bridge Canoe launch site in 2017-18.
9. **Transparency Code Grant Application:** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Transparency Fund grant application to send to HALC, by a majority, there was one abstention.
10. **Walford Village Hall Play Area:** New information had become available and, as a result The Clerk explained the 'direct power' given by The Government to Parish Councils, in order to give to Community centres, such as village halls and said that a gift of this type does not have to be covered by any Grants and Donations policy held by the Parish Council; therefore a PC can gift what they wish from their coffers / reserves to initiatives such as the new play area, without having to adhere to any grants and donations policy. It was pointed out that there is a £1,000 provision in the 2017-18 budget for donations. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to support a donation in principle, but that the amount should be decided upon and supported by full council.
11. **Information and correspondence:**
 - 11.1 **Spring Newsletter:** Cllr Carlson will provide a write up on the budget and the precept request, giving a full and clear explanation for the rise. The deadline is mid-March, for publication at the end of March. <<**Action Cllr Carlson**>>
 - 11.2 **To note items relevant to finance in Appendix C and HALC Information corner.** None further than those already discussed.
 - 11.3 Responses required to finance correspondence received: None further than those already raised.
12. **Public Response Session:**
 - Mr Brian Long wished it to be minuted that he had still not received a letter from the Chairman in response to his, raising several issues of concern. *The Clerk explained that the Chairman had sent Mr Long more than one e mail in response to his letter and had eventually directed him to the Clerk to request the information he required, which the Clerk had supplied to Mr Long.* Mr Long acknowledged this, but was still not satisfied, having not received a letter from the Chairman.
 - Mr Will Warburg pointed out that any changes to categories in the budget should be approved by Full Council; *The Clerk said that this will go on the next agenda.*
 - Mr Warburg also said that as there is a £1,000 provision in the budget for 2017-18 for donations, he felt that this sum was an appropriate amount to gift to the Village Hall Play Area, given that our grants and donations policy requires requests for donations to have been submitted by the end of 2016-17, for donations required in 2017-18 and upon confirmation that no further requests for donations have been received during 2016-17.
13. **Items for next meeting agenda:** Those already listed above.
14. **Date of next meeting:** At 6.30pm, before the Annual Council meeting on 17th May.
15. **Confidential Session:**

As the Finance Committee meeting had started late, due to the Committee not being quorate until 18.50 and had therefore over-run, the pensions item was postponed to be dealt with in the scheduled confidential session in Full Council.
