

WATERBEACH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance Committee** of Waterbeach Parish Council held on Wednesday 26 March 2014 at 7.30 pm at the Old Pavilion, Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

PRESENT:

Cllr M Williamson, Chairman

Cllrs P Johnson, Kay, Lloyd, Rabbett and Smith

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bull and Grant

IN ATTENDANCE:

Parish Clerk E Jones, Cllrs Cornwell & Smart

47/13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2014 were agreed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Proposed: Cllr Kay. Seconded. Cllr Rabbett. In Favour 5. Abstention 1 Cllr Smith (not present)

48/13 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

It was noted that an amendment to Standing Orders had been agreed in October 2012 to conform to the Localism Act stating that when an interest is declared, the person who declares it must leave the room.

Cllr P Johnson declared an interest in the Sports Club Fees as a member of Waterbeach Bowls Club.

49/13 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The committee worked through the Model Standing Orders in detail and agreed the variable elements as in the draft document circulated and notes provided by Cllr Kay (copy attached). There was some discussion regarding the length of incumbency of the Chair of the Council and of Committee Chairs and rotation of cheque signatories (issues not all covered in the Model). It was agreed that whilst it is not desirable for any member to occupy the same post indefinitely, these posts are already subject to annual election and councillors should make use of this democratic process to make desired changes.

It was RESOLVED to recommend that the Council adopt the new Model Standing Orders as annotated.

Proposed: Cllr. Kay. Seconded Cllr. Lloyd. In Favour 5. Abstention 1 Cllr. M Williamson.

It was also agreed that it would be good practice to create more detailed meeting agendas to better enable members to prepare for meetings and to know if they should declare an interest.

50/13 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was felt that the new Model Financial Regulations were much clearer than previous versions.

It was agreed that the Clerk should go through the variables on the Financial Regulations and make recommendations on these at the next Parish Council meeting.

It was also agreed that a separate discussion should be held after the election on the question of online banking,

It was RESOLVED to recommend that the Council adopt the new Model Financial Regulations except that for the time being the Council should retain the requirement for two cheque signatories.

Proposed: Cllr. Lloyd. Seconded Cllr. Smith. Unanimous.

51/13 S137 LIMITS

It was explained that S137 is the power under which grants and funding are often awarded – for example for the library or the youth club. The Clerk read out the NALC Legal Briefing on the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2014/2015, which amount it £7.20 per resident on the Parish Electoral Roll (as compared with £6.98 in 2013/2014) representing the percentage increase in the RPI between September 2012 and September 2013 of 3.2%.

52/13 S106 FUNDS

The Clerk circulated a spreadsheet (copy attached) showing the various transactions and current balances of s106 monies and explained that these had all been checked with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC). SCDC had advised that in view of agreement wordings it would be more appropriate to allocate s106 'open space' funds to the play park refurbishment project instead of using s106 money from the 'Off-site Sports' category as had been the intention. Whilst this would result currently in a negative figure in the 'open space' category, this will gradually be covered by incoming s106 funds and SCDC stated that it is reasonable for money to be secured from new development to fund something that has already been funded, and that Parish Councils are permitted to reimburse themselves with later s106 contributions.

53/13 SPORTS CLUB FEES

Cllr P Johnson left the room for the duration of this discussion.

The Sport Clubs had queried the level of fees invoiced compared to levels of usage of the facilities – for example the Waterbeach Cricket Club now has only one team and had used the facilities only 4 times over last summer.

It was generally felt that the objective was to secure a contribution towards the cost of maintenance without undermining the existence of the sports clubs. Weather in recent summers had made it very difficult for clubs to operate a normal schedule. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Recreation Users Group for further discussion and to ask them to make a recommendation. It was also agreed to suspend the bills issued for the cricket and football clubs – both adults and Colts - pending further discussion

54/13 CEMETERY FEES

Some information had been collected but further research was needed. It was agreed that the Clerk should consult further with Cllrs B Johnson and Wright and bring recommendations to a council meeting.

55/13 PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON CHAPEL STREET

Despite the fact that we had not succeeded in achieving a grant from Cambridgeshire County Council, all present agreed that the Parish Council should in principle pursue the plan for a pedestrian crossing. However it was too late to include the cost in the current year's precept so the alternatives would be to use a sum from reserves or to borrow.

It was noted that under the new Borrowing Approval Regulations there will be more stringent requirements for community consultation before a Parish Council can borrow funds.

It was also agreed to pursue the option of putting in a Give Way feature on Car Dyke Road

The Clerk agreed to request clear written cost quotations from Cambridgeshire County Council for these projects. In principle committee members felt that the Council would choose to go ahead with both, dependent on the costs and practicalities.

56/13 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Clerk pointed out that a variety of information on opportunities for funding arrives in the Parish Office and whilst it is not always immediately obvious in what way the Parish Council might take advantage of these, individual councillors and other residents may have ideas. It was agreed that a section be created on the Parish Council website for such information to be posted.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed at 9 pm.

Chairman