

Worth Parish Council

Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee Meeting held on May 16th 2022 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Scott (Chairman) Cllr Phillips (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Casella Cllr Cruickshank
Cllr Dorey Cllr Gibson
Cllr Hitchcock Cllr Mayor
Cllr Pointer Cllr Stewart
Cllr Webb
Mrs J Nagy (Clerk)
Mrs E Smith (RFO) 6 members of the public

1 Election of Vice Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations.

Cllr Dorey proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Hitchcock.

There being no other nominations, it was AGREED by all present that Cllr Phillips be elected as Vice Chairman of the General Purposes & Finance Committee 2022/2023.

Cllr Phillips took his seat next to the Chairman.

2 Public Question Time

The Chairman welcomed all the meeting. No members of the public wished to speak at this point of the meeting.

3 Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted from Cllr Coote.

4 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Casella declared a personal interest in discussion relating to grants to the Carnival Committee.

5 Minutes

It was AGREED by all present that the Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee meeting held on 11th April 2022 were a true and correct record.

6 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that payments for April and May would be presented to the next meeting, as the RFO had been busy closing the financial year.

7 Correspondence List

The Correspondence List was NOTED.

8 Accounts and Financial Matters

Expenditure lists and Bank Balances

It was noted that as the RFO had to finalise the Annual Return prior to closing the year, there are no figures available for consideration

Grant Application from Copthorne Players for £500

The purpose of this grant is to replace a redundant piece of stage lighting.

This organisation last had a grant of £750 in July 2021 to address the deficit caused by Covid.

It was AGREED by all present that the grant for £500 be awarded in full.

CDRA Grant Applications for £1000 and for £750

The Clerk referred to her report, and the confusion over the agreement to give £1000 to the Carnival Committee and to the CDRA to put on the annual Carnival and Fayre respectively.

Cllr Casella declared a personal interest in this matter, as he is Chair of the Copthorne Carnival Committee; he did not take part in discussion.

It was AGREED by all present, with the exception of Cllr Casella who had declared an interest, that Copthorne Carnival Committee and the Crawley Down Residents Association would be give an annual sum of £1000 to go towards putting on the Copthorne Carnival and Crawley Down Fayre, such monies to come out of the grants cost code. No application form would be required, a request via email will suffice in future. Both organisations would be able to apply for funding for other purposes throughout the financial year.

With regard to the application for a grant for £750 to towards the Gig on the Green, it was AGREED by all present that this be awarded in full. This will be made via a pledge on the Crowdfunder website, as if the event does not raise the £12,000 required, it will not go ahead.

Grants Generally

The usual practice is to invite recipients of grants to attend the Annual Parish Meeting to explain how the monies have been spent; however, this year this meeting did not go ahead. It is a requirement of the Grants Policy that recipients report back; the Clerk has written to the organisations that received a grant in the last financial year to provide evidence of expenditure, such as invoices etc.

Councillors NOTED this information, and asked the Clerk to invite Grant recipients to a future meeting of this Committee.

Quotes to Clear refuse off site

Since the agenda was published, one issue has been resolved, only one quote needs to be considered.

Plot 20 on the site is not lettable, due to the mature trees on the plot. However, other tenants have been using this plot to dump items such as plastic sheeting, plant pots and other waste items; see photo in this meeting pack.

The Deputy Clerk would like this plot cleared of rubbish once and for all, at a cost of £280. The groundsman will then strim it which should deter such dumping in future.

Cllr Hitchcock declared a personal interest in this matter, being an allotment tenant; he took no part in discussion.

It was AGREED by all present, with the exception of Cllr Hitchcock who had declared an interest, that Plot 20 would be cleared of rubbish at a cost of £280.

The Deputy Clerk is to write to all tenants asking them not to dump rubbish on the plot, saying that the cost of removal could be recharged back to them in future.

However, the Deputy Clerk was asked to get a quote to have the trees on the plot removed entirely, with the roots grubbed out to make it workable again.

It was suggested that the plot be seeded with wildflower pollinators to encourage biodiversity

It was agreed to refer the future management and mitigation of Plot 20 to the Allotment Sub Committee.

Parish OnLine Subscription

Due to lack of take up, WSALC no longer has an agreement with Parish OnLine to subsidise subscriptions, so Councils must pay the whole amount themselves.

The cost of this is £180, when previously the subsidised rate was about half this amount.

Councillors are asked to note the change in circumstances.

Cllr Gibson asked how many Councillors had access to the system and asked the Clerk to source training. She advised that there are several tutorials online; she will send links to Councillors.

9 Council Premises and Land

Trees at Crawley Down Cricket Club

The Club occupies the land under licence from the Council, with the Council being responsible for "boundary hedging and areas of public access", which the Clerk interpreted as the gateway area onto the land, and the border fencing and hedging.

There is an area of woodland to the rear of the cricket pitch. This was not assessed as part of the last tree survey this area (or any of the past tree surveys) due to the belief that this area was managed by the Club.

During the last storms, a tree in this area fell across a neighbouring property, destroying a section of fencing. Due to the uncertainty over the land management, the RFO has been progressing a claim with the Council's insurance company, Zurich.

Zurich cannot defend the claim, as no tree survey was carried out; it is anticipated that the removal of the tree and repair of the fencing will cost in the region of £2000, which will be covered by insurance.

In the interim, the Clerk has been trying to clarify the management issue with the Cricket Club, but has been unable to contact any representative by phone or email.

It was AGREED by all present that the Clerk writes formally to the Club, whilst seeking legal advice as to defining the land management responsibilities on the site. Should this result in the Council taking responsibility for the woodland, a quote for inspection will be sought.

10 Matters for Consideration submitted by the Infrastructure and Environment Working Parties

Electricity Supply on both Greens

The Clerk referred to her report in relation to installing a permanent supply to both village greens.

The cost of installation is dependent on the voltage required. Crawley Down is the easier location, with a lower voltage supply would be around £2000, plus the cost of the cabinet at around £715. There are optional extras for the cabinet at an additional cost of around £160, although currently it is not known which of these will be required.

Copthorne would necessitate digging up the road, so would be around £7,300, plus the cabinet

However, it now seems that a higher voltage installation is needed at both locations, and this requires paperwork for a formal quotation by submitted. Due to lack of availability of the requisite meter, UK Power Networks cannot quote at all for at least 12 weeks. This is due to general national shortages of raw materials.

It is not known how much more expensive a higher voltage supply will be.

Councillors NOTED the progress on this project, and the potential costs.

Village Centre Action Plans

Cllr Dorey noted receipt of this document which had been circulated. Both IEWPs would consider it and decide what action to take.

11 Consideration of items for discussion by the Environment & Infrastructure Working Parties

There were no items to forward to the Working Parties for discussion

12 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on 13th June 2022.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____