

MINSTER-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee of Minster-on-Sea Parish Council held at Minster-on-Sea Parish Office, Love Lane, Minster-on-Sea ME12 2LP on Monday 13th February 2017 from 10 am to 12.20 pm.

Present: Minster-on-Sea Parish Councillors: Mr. R. Baker, Mr. M. Hawkins, Mr. K. Ingleton (Chairman), Mr. P. MacDonald (Vice- Chairman) (part from 10.20 am), Mr. A. Parr and Mrs J. Stimson.

Officers: Mrs T Codrington (Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)

Quorum: 4

2016/FINANCE/22 To note apologies and grounds for absence

Resolved with apologies noted and accepted from Cllr. Mr. E. Jayes (work commitments)

2016/FINANCE/23 Declarations of Interest

Summary: Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman asked Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non-Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

Resolved as follows: -

The Chairman (Cllr. Ingleton), Cllrs. Hawkins and Stimson declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 8 (v) related to the consideration of a grant application from the Sheppey Local History Society & Gatehouse Museum where they are all Trustees. Cllr. Hawkins also declared a non-pecuniary interest on account of his wife who is also a Trustee of the same Charity. In line with (b) above all three councillors stayed during the discussion, spoke and voted on the matter.

2016/FINANCE/24

Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of [incomplete] meeting dated 11th October 2016 (Minute Nos. 2016/FINANCE 12-21) which were considered by the Full Council on 20th October 2016 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. Also, noted that MPC Councillor Mr. M. Hawkins abstained from the vote due to not being present at the meeting.

2016/FINANCE/25

Matters Arising (For Information only)

- i. Update from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on the appointment of external auditors with three audit firms now appointed for the five-year period commencing 1st April 2017: PKF Littlejohns, Mazars and Moore Stephens. Further details of the areas being covered by the three firms will follow when known.
- ii. Update that the Clerk has renewed MPC's data protection registration with the Information Commissioner's Office. This fulfils MPC's legal requirements under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act.
- iii. Matters related to outstanding work such as refurbishing the heritage sign and MPC's Quiet Lane applications will be discussed with the Vice-Chairman [who was not present for the discussion] to offering him some form of support to complete this work. Regarding the heritage sign, a TV company may be interested in doing this. Clerk to investigate.

Resolved with the information noted.

2016/ FINANCE/26

Public Participation

Resolved as not applicable due to no members of the public being present.

2016/FINANCE /27

Consider RFO's report on MPC's financial position and undertake a review of banking arrangements.

Resolved that the report be noted by Members in compliance with current legislation including the Local Government Act 1972 S. 101, 135, 137, 150(5), the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 etc., (ii) that all items relating to income and expenditure be recommended for approval by the Full Council on 23rd February 2017 and (iii) that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Cllr. Hawkins verify that the figures presented in the report agreeing with those listed in the bank statements.

This accords with the Parish Council's Financial Regulation 2.2 whereby on a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman or a cheque

signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the council's Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Regarding the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), the Clerk explained that she resolved the bank's error and it has updated its records to show the Parish Council's funds are fully protected as a small local authority.

2016/FINANCE /28

Review Budget and if required, put forward recommendations for consideration by the Full Council. This will include ensuring that the precept requirement results in an adequate budgetary process where progress against the budget is regularly monitored and reserves checked to be appropriate.

Resolved with agreement that the precept is adequate, the budgetary processes well monitored and reserves deemed to be appropriate, the following amendments are recommended for approval: -

- i. For £1660 for the 'KCC Voluntary Warden Scheme' which involves a 2-year minimum agreement with 2 payments as follows = year one £1075, year 2 = £585 to be entered as a separate item to enable MPC to keep track on the progress of that scheme.
- ii. For the 'Street Furniture' allocation to be reduced by £5k leaving a £5k allocation in place for this purpose.
- iii. For the Parish Council's Community Support Fund to be increased by £5k bringing the total allocation to £10k.

Resolved with a recommendation to approve this proposal put forward. If the Full Council agrees this, it will mean that MPC's £35,388 reserves will reduce by £1,660 to £33,728 which the Committee found to be acceptable. It is also important to note that MPC's £50k Contingency Fund remains unaffected. Regarding the allocation of £10k towards the [Abbey] footpath lighting scheme, as the project has stalled for various reasons, the Committee agreed to revisit this matter with a view to progressing using the Swale Joint Transportation Board forum. Rather than demanding Kent Highway Services takes action, it will work in partnership with it from the beginning to secure the necessary improvements.

Also, noted that MPC's plan to increase the precept by 5% for 2017/18 has been offset by additional development within the parish reducing it to 2.6%. This equates to £27.61 being paid per band D property rather than the £28.33 predicted.

- i. To approve expenditure of £100 for renewal of the 'Local Councils Update' subscription which provides a comprehensive specialist reference library for Clerks. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. Hawkins, seconded by Cllr. MacDonald and carried that this expenditure be approved.
- ii. To consider expenditure up to £200 for staff accommodation and travel costs in attending training and development event in Gloucestershire. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. Parr, seconded by Cllr. Stimson and carried that this expenditure be approved.
- iii. To approve expenditure of £390 plus VAT to upgrade 2 radiators in the Parish Council's staff offices. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. Stimson, seconded by Cllr. Baker and carried that this expenditure be approved.
- iv. To consider grant application to the Parish Council's Community Support Fund for £654.00 from Minster Community Centre to purchase a replacement notice board on the site. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. Parr, seconded by Cllr. MacDonald and carried the Parish Council purchases the item and gifts it to the Charity [This will enable MPC to reclaim any VAT].
- v. To consider grant application to the Parish Council's Community Support Fund for £1,250 from The Sheppey Local History Society and Gatehouse Museum for a digitalisation system. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. MacDonald, seconded by Cllr. Baker and carried that this expenditure be approved.
- vi. To consider grant application to the Parish Council's Community Support Fund for £480 from Sheppey FM to cover the costs of its forthcoming launch. **Resolved** in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, s.111 which allows MPC to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental

to the discharge of its powers and functions, it was proposed by Cllr. Hawkins, seconded by Cllr. Stimson and carried that this expenditure be approved.

- vii. To consider revised details related to a previous application from Barton Court to the Parish Council's Community Support Fund for £500 which was agreed in principle asking that the payment be made to the Sheppey Big Fish Theatre Aka Big Fish Arts who will deliver the project. **Resolved** in accordance with the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011, ss 1-8 which allows MPC as an eligible council to do anything subject to statutory prohibitions, it was proposed by Cllr. Baker, seconded by Cllr. Parr and carried that this expenditure be approved.

2016/FINANCE/30

Consider suggestions on ways to improve the allocation of the Parish Council's Community Support Grants for the year ending 31st March 2018 and thereafter.

Resolved with the following changes recommended for approval by the Council: -

- i. For the distribution of funding to change from accepting individual applications over the course of the year on a first come first served basis, to holding a one-off annual 'YOU DECIDE' event to take place in September of each year when the Council will listen to verbal presentations on the value of the projects and reasons why the applicants believe they should get a grant. The public will be invited to help by voting on their preferred choices for MPC to consider as part of its decision-making processes. Successful applicants will be invited to attend an Awards event to receive their award.
- ii. For the CSF application form to be amended to include a question asking applicant's how they intend to publicise MPC's support of the project if their bid is successful.
- iii. For Members to become more proactive in the presentation and publicising of awards by turning up at various events to hand over cheques / gifts to successful applicants.

2016/FINANCE/31

Complete audit checks and any associated reviews including: -

- i. Approval of the appointment of the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the financial year 2017/18. **Resolved** that subject to the individual's agreement, the appointment be approved.
- ii. Review of the Parish Council's Statement of Internal Control for the year ending 31st March 2017. **Resolved** that no significant control issues were identified during the financial year 2016 -2017. Members also recommend approval of the Statement of Internal Control by the Full Council on 23/02/17.

- iii. Consider Clerk's SWOT Analysis. **Resolved** with the information noted and recommendations agreed for consideration by the Full Council on 23/02/17.
- iv. Carrying out an assessment of the risks facing the Parish Council in achieving its objectives and agree steps to manage those risks including the introduction of internal controls and /or external insurance cover where required. **Resolved** where the Committee assessed the risks facing the Council and agreed MPC has taken appropriate steps to manage those risks including the introduction of internal and/ or external control measures
- v. Review Asset Register to ensure it is up to date and properly maintained. **Resolved** with the register agreed as being up to date with no amendments required.

2016/FINANCE /32

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed.

2016/FINANCE/33

Exclusion of the Public & Press (*Publicity would prejudice public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. This complies with the Local Government Act 1972, ss100 and 102 and Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960*)

- Minster's CCTV Scheme: **Resolved** that the disclosure of sensitive data is not in the public interest.
- Staff Matters: **Resolved** with the public excluded from meeting to progress confidential staffing matter.

All minutes are draft until approved at the next meeting of the Council/ Committee