



Chiddingfold Parish Council

The Banking House
The Green
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Chairman: Councillor Daniel Hall
Parish Clerk: Lauren Blatherwick CiLCA PSLCC
Deputy Clerk & RFO: Sue Frossard CiLCA PSLCC
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Minutes of a meeting of the Chiddingfold Parish Council Finance and Compliance Committee held on **Wednesday 11 March 2020** at 7.00pm in The Banking House, The Green

Cllrs Present: Cllr Tony Wiener (TW) (Chairman) Cllr Peter Little (PL)
Cllr Dan Hall (DH)
In Attendance: Sue Frossard (RFO) **Public:** 0

MINUTES

1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / DISPENSATIONS

Registrable interests must be disclosed and, if not yet registered, must be declared and notified to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days. Non-registrable interests are to be disclosed in accordance with the council's Code of Conduct. Where a councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest they must not vote or speak on the item, unless a dispensation has been granted, or do anything to influence other Members in regard to that item. The requirements in relation to remaining present and for other interests are as set out in the Code of Conduct. No declarations of interest were made and no dispensations were requested or approved.

3.00 MINUTES OF THE FCC MEETING HELD ON 08 JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED: (unanimous) to approve the minutes of the FCC meeting, held on 08 January 2020, as a true record of decisions taken and the Chairman signed the minutes.

3.01 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS FCC MEETINGS

NOTED: Outstanding actions from previous FCC meetings, not itemised on the agenda, were noted.

(TW) Children's Playground. To present the proposal to the Clerk (as set out in the January FCC minutes, Item 8.01) and seek her advice. Completed. [Passed to the Clerk - the PC suggested at its February meeting that a working group be set up to progress this].

(PL) Parish Council Grant Awarding and Donations policy and process. PL to amend the draft policy to incorporate councillor feedback, to chase councillors (a final time) for their issues with the draft grants policy and to check the Godalming TC policy for possible points for inclusion. Then to bring the final draft back to FCC for approval for submission to the full council. See Item 5.02 below.

(RFO) Change to the FCC Terms of Reference. RFO to pass the draft FCC Terms of Reference to the Clerk with a recommendation that the full council approve these at the February PCM. Completed. [Passed to the Clerk].

(PL) Business Plan. To pass the draft Business Plan to the Clerk, with a recommendation that the full council approves this at the February PCM. Completed. [Passed to the Clerk].

(DH) Toilet facility at Combe Common. DH to obtain at least three quotations for drawing up plans for this facility and prepare cost estimates to bring to the next FCC meeting for consideration before making a recommendation to full council. Completed. [Passed to the Clerk].

PUBLIC QUESTIONS (From 7.15 pm to 7.30 pm)

There were no questions.

AGREED: that public questions be moved to the beginning of FCC meetings, from 7.00pm to 7.15pm.

ACTION: the RFO was asked to schedule public questions for FCC meetings from 7.00pm to 7.15pm.

- 4.00 FINANCE
- 4.01 RFO'S BRIEFING ON FINANCES
ACTION: the RFO was asked to provide the chairman with a cost breakdown for the allotments.
- 4.02 FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
RESOLVED: (unanimous) to approve the balance sheet and the actual income and expenditure against the budget, which was as expected at this point in the year.
RESOLVED: (unanimous) that no EMR virements need to be recommended to full council.
- 4.03 RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
 Receipts, future-dated payments, payments necessarily made since the last meeting and transfers of funds between accounts listed on the Order to Pay form were reviewed and were in accordance with the 2019-2020 budget.
RESOLVED: (unanimous) to note receipts and transfers and the payments made between meetings; to authorize the RFO to make the future-dated payments.
- 4.04 BANK RECONCILIATIONS
RESOLVED: (unanimous) that the bank reconciliations to 29 Feb 2020 were reviewed and found to be correct.
ACTION: the RFO was asked to change the payee description (on the Lloyds current account) from 'St Mary's Room' to 'St Mary's Church'.
- 4.05 OFFICERS' TIMESHEETS
 The Officers' timesheets were reviewed and the meeting Chairman initialled them to confirm they had been seen by the FCC.
- 4.06 CIL
NOTED: that the balance of potential, local CIL for Chiddingfold had not changed since the agenda was issued and stands at £37,253.39.
NOTED: that no CIL has yet been confirmed as due, collected or allocated.
- 4.07 OVERVIEW OF ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES
 The newly formed FCC had raised a number of questions around the accounting process and reports. The RFO had invited FCC members to a meeting at her home office to demonstrate the monthly and annual processes and to invite questions. The aim being to enable the FCC to better understand the accounting system and the FCC role. This meeting was rescheduled from 21 Jan to the 05 Feb 2020. DH had not been present at this meeting and was to be briefed on it.
NOTED: The Chairman commenced briefing DH, but DH confirmed that he had been briefed by PL on the organization of the RFO's office and accounting procedures.
NOTED: The Chairman expressed concern with some of the accounting procedures in place if the RFO became unavailable and the council cannot do any finance, can't pay bills, can't receive income. He expressed the opinion that the Clerk should be trained in parish council finance and accounting in order to immediately take-over in the absence of the RFO. The RFO explained the handover of codes that is in place and that the Financial Regulations require that a locum RFO is brought in under such circumstances. The Chairman pointed out that the Financial Regulations could be changed so that the Clerk takes over responsibility. The RFO advised that the Clerk is already full-time, without accounts experience and contracted on the basis that the Council's accounts are undertaken by a separate RFO. The RFO assured the meeting that a locum RFO would be able to access the Council's records but, when asked by the Chairman, accepted this had not been tested in practice. The RFO further advised that RFO locums are specialists in town and parish council accounting and that the issue seems now to be suggestive of an employment matter, requiring significant variation of contract, and should be taken up with the Council. The Chairman agreed.
NOTED: The Chairman asked what the RFO would do if her laptop failed. The RFO confirmed that this had happened and, because no data is stored on the laptop it is all on the encrypted, external hard drives a new laptop was purchased (PC World Currys) which took a half day, and was then up and running, with the accounts, payroll and Office programs installed, within about 20-30 mins. The Chairman queried the use of technology which allows you to plug in and get going straight away. The RFO expressed concern with the use of 'ghosting' as it often doesn't work well between the old and new machine because the Bios is often very different, making it cheaper in the long run to reinstall essential programs on a new machine.
- 4.08 PARISH INSURANCE
 The asset check had been carried out and the asset register updated. Maps had been sent to all councillors and the RFO was asked to also distribute the new register.
PROPOSED (TW): That the parish insurance schedule be reviewed and competitive quotations sought, in conjunction with the Clerk, so that a recommendation can be put before the PC before the new insurance renewal date (01 Oct 2020).

RESOLVED: (unanimous) that the FCC, in conjunction with the Clerk, will review the insurance schedule and obtain competitive quotations prior to the 01 Oct 2020 renewal.

ACTION: the FCC to review the insurance as resolved, before the 01 Oct 2020 renewal date.

4.09 **NATIONWIDE BUSINESS INVESTOR ACCOUNT**

The RFO had received the 'closing account' form from Nationwide and this, together with accompanying documents had been passed to the Clerk for full council to confirm the account closure and transfer of the closing balance to the new Nationwide Business Savings Account.

NOTED: that the Business Investor Account closing form has been resolved by full council and signed and the form to transfer the balance to the new Nationwide Business Savings Account and close the (soon to be discontinued) Investor Account has been sent to Nationwide Building Society.

5.00 **COMPLIANCE**

5.01 **PARISH COUNCIL CIL POLICY**

The RFO had produced a draft CIL Policy for the FCC to consider.

PROPOSED (DH): that the draft CIL Policy be approved for recommendation to the full council for adoption.

RESOLVED: (majority) that the draft CIL Policy is approved for recommendation to the full council for adoption.

5.02 **PARISH COUNCIL GRANT AWARDING AND DONATIONS POLICY AND PROCESS. (Brought forward from January).**

PL had amended the draft policy to incorporate councillor feedback. The amended draft is now tabled for FCC approval for its submission to the full council with a recommendation to adopt.

PROPOSED (PL): to approve the draft Grant and Donations Policy for recommendation to the full council for adoption.

RESOLVED: (unanimous) to approve the draft Grant and Donations Policy for recommendation for adoption by the full council – subject to re-insertion of '/project cost' on the application form.

5.03 **LETTER FROM THE INTERNAL AUDITOR, FOLLOWING AN INTERIM AUDIT**

This item had been the subject of discussion at the PC meeting in February, but the FCC wished to record that the comments had been noted and proper procedures implemented for the future. In particular:

- that projects must be instigated and specified by the full council prior to any FCC research or costing involvement; and
- that bonus payments to staff should be agreed and minuted, in advance of payment, by the FCC or the full council.

It was noted that the latter decision had been made outside of a formal meeting because of the uncertainty (of new councillors) as to whether or not the Clerk/RFO should be present during such staff discussions.

6.00 **GENERAL BUSINESS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

6.01 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

There had been no correspondence.

7.00 **LATE ITEMS**

For information and discussion only. (Lawful decisions can only be made on items specified on the agenda where sufficient information has been provided for councillors to make an informed decision).

There were no late items.

8.00 **DATE OF THE NEXT FCC MEETING**

[For information. Dates are set at the FCC meeting following the annual meeting of the full council].

NOTED: that the next FCC Meeting will be held on Wed 20 May in The Banking House, The Green, commencing at 7pm.