

TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 4th OCTOBER 2013 AT 1.30 P.M AT LISSIAM LODGE MILL LANE TAPLOW

Present

Cllr. John Bamberg (Chairman) Cllr. Euan Felton
Cllr. George Sandy Cllr. Josie Corio
Cllr. Iris Midlane Cllr. Rachel Gainey - Corcoran

Mrs. Hilda Holder –Clerk

The Chairman declared the meeting open at 1.30pm.

FC/26/13 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

Apologies had been received from Cllr. John Kennedy. There were no declarations of interest.

FC/27/13 To approve minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2013

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

FC/28/13 Matters arising from the previous minutes

- 28.1 Cllrs. Sandy and Bamberg had started discussions with Lloyds Bank Plc about the interest rates on the deposit account and were waiting for contact from the Control Centre.
- 28.2 Cllrs. Corio and Kennedy had met with the BCC rights of way manager and agreed that the Parish Council could not undertake the cutting of the footpaths at the rate on offer – 14p per metre – and accordingly BCC would continue to be responsible for cutting footpaths.
- 28.3 Cllr. Bamberg was concerned about the state of litter on the Jubilee river footpath and noted there were no litter bins or signs discouraging littering. The Clerk was asked to contact the Environment Agency and ask if they would put signs up on the bridge asking users to take their litter home with them.
- 28.4 Cllr. Bamberg confirmed that the playgroup contract had now been signed off.
- 28.5 Cllr. Sandy confirmed that the three new dog bins had now been installed.

FC/29/13 To review expenditure to date

- 29.1 Cllr. Bamberg asked the Clerk if in future she could add the percentage of actual spend against budget and a comparison with the same period last year. The Clerk said that she would attempt the former but would have difficulty doing the latter until next year when she could use this year's figures.
- 29.3 Cllr. Bamberg commented that the council appeared to be within budget having spent 51% of budget for the year in the first 6 months although there were large fluctuations from budget within certain categories of expense and some large items of unusual expenditure which had been recently identified in the pipeline. In particular an increase of £3175 in fuel bills for the village centre in addition to what had been budgeted. This was due to arrears which had mounted up owing to our payment plan not having been vigorously reviewed in the last two years. He added that the village centre was making no profit and was in need of investment to bring up to a reasonable standard. The Clerk was asked to write to Land Securities about monies promised to the parish council.

FC/30/13 To consider proposed expenditure on maintenance and other issues relating to the village centre, the village green and trees

30.1 Cllr. Corio reported that the Perkins Room fire door was in need of emergency action. Quotes for repair were being sought. It was agreed that the door should be replaced rather than repaired and the Clerk was asked to obtain quotes to replace the fire door and side windows with a range of alternative materials quoted for.

30.2 It was agreed that a new car park sign should be agreed at the next full meeting but that the free parking sign on the Green should be taken down as soon as possible. In addition an arrow showing that cars should turn left into the car park should be painted at the entrance to the car park. This would be put for approval at the next full meeting.

30.3 The Clerk was asked to chase the suppliers of the chair leg 'stops' as the sample had not been received as promised. In addition the terms of hire of the hall should be amended to provide chairs should not be dragged.

30.4 The Clerk was asked to chase the quotes for the repairs to the brick wall on the Green and if not received by 10th October to go ahead with the quote received from iHandy.

30.5 The crack in the barn wall may be due to subsidence. A valuer could advise especially by checking the floor of the barn.

30.6 The arboricultural quotes were noted and would be dealt with at the next full Council meeting.

30.7 It was noted that two more groundscrews were needed in connection with the mobile vehicle activated sign and there would be stats costs as well. Total costs were likely to be £750. The new groundscrews were needed because BCC had approved two 30mph signs as suitable for the MVAS to be attached to but it had been discovered this week that our contractors were unable to use them in practise.. It was agreed to make do with only the two groundscrews already agreed for the time being.

FC/31/13 To consider obtaining an insurance revaluation of buildings

It was agreed to refer the matter to full council.

FC/32/13 To approve the revised asset register

It was agreed to refer the matter to full council.

FC/33/13 To consider staffing issues

33.1 The Clerk advised that Sue Griffin had agreed to leave immediately upon receiving 11 weeks notice and this was ratified and her cheque signed. The Clerk was instructed to deliver the notice and cheque immediately.

33.2 It was agreed that no steps would be taken at this stage to find replacement staff. The Clerk agreed to work an extra 2 hours a week (bringing her total hours to 12 hours per week) at the Taplow office on a Friday afternoon to ensure the office was manned and issues relating to key pick up covered. This would be on a trial basis for the rest of the calendar year.

FC/34/13 Any other business

34.1 Cllr. Sandy read out a letter he had sent to Joy Marshall upon her resignation as a councillor. The letter was commended and Cllr Sandy thanked. Cllr. Corio offered to organise a small reception for Mrs. Marshall and this was agreed.

34.2 Cllr. Felton was concerned that the unusual items of expenditure identified suggested that there may be a need to increase the precept and perhaps steps should be taken to start preparing a public briefing on the reasons for this. Cllr. Bamberg felt that it was too premature at this stage to come to that conclusion.

34.3 Cllr. Sandy advised that Peter Beckford and Jane Griffin of the Planning Policy unit had agreed to attend a public meeting to be called by the Hitcham and Taplow

Society relating to the Mill Lane development. This would be on Thursday 21st November at 8pm in the Reading Room. Cllr. Sandy was asked to write to Mr Lawrence and request that the event be ticketed and notices put up.

34.4 Cllr. Corio apologised about the removal of the rosebush from the front of the Village Centre. This was due to a misunderstanding between her and the Clerk. However she could confirm that the roots were largely rotten and the rosebush was unlikely to have survived for long in any event. She had personally paid for some replacement plants and the playgroup had obtained the rest through donations from local nurseries.

34.5 The Clerk produced a draft list of meeting dates for 2014 for approval. This would be agreed at the next full council meeting.

FC/35/13 Date and time of next meeting

The next Finance Committee Meeting would be on 10th January. The next full council meetings were scheduled for 22nd October and 14th January.

The meeting closed at 3.07pm.

This concludes the Minutes