

TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF TAPLOW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 2ND NOVEMBER 2012 AT 1.30P.M. AT LISSIAM LODGE MILL LANE TAPLOW

Present

Cllr. John Bamberg (Chairman) Cllr. Josie Corio
Cllr. John Kennedy Cllr. Euan Felton
Cllr. Iris Midlane Cllr. Rachel Gainey
Mrs. Hilda Holder –Clerk

FC/6/12 Apologies

Mr George Sandy.

FC/7/12 To approve the minutes of 18th May 2012

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

FC/8/12 Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

8.1 The Clerk had not yet investigated how other parishes invested their reserves but would do so in time for the next meeting.

8.2 The Clerk would ask the assistant clerk to continue to pursue the previous owners of the property adjacent to the barn for the recovery of the cost of the damage caused by their tree and report back to the next meeting.

8.3 The Clerk was asked to research where best to deposit the Brooking fund monies so that they were kept in a separate bank account with the same mandate and signatories as apply to the Parish Council's current account. Such an account should be a charity account and could be tied up for a year at a time.

8.4 The Clerk reported that she had been unable to gain a satisfactory response from BCC's Corrine Waldron on the issue of footpaths. Only £650 was being offered for us to undertake a final cut for the year. This was the amount previously provided for the last cut we undertook. However our cheapest current quote (for the footpaths Cllr. Marshall had identified as needing cutting) came to £1,350 per cut. The Clerk was unable to clarify how the cut could have been done so cheaply in the past. Either not all the presently identified footpaths had been cut or we had used a much cheaper contractor. The Clerk was advised that we had previously used a local resident who had since died. The Clerk was asked to set up a meeting with the portfolio holder at which Cllr. Marshall and Cllr. Corio should attend with the Clerk. It was accepted that it was too late to undertake a cut this year. The Chairman made the point that there was nothing in the budget for footpaths as this should be the responsibility of BCC.

8.5 The Chairman commented that he had been unable to make satisfactory progress in presenting the financial information more clearly as unfortunately the assistant clerk had no alternative at the moment than to use a badly set up system.

FC/9/12 To review income and expenditure against forecast

9.1 The Chairman explained that, for the year as a whole, expenditure was likely to be less than expected but income was also less and so there would be an overall loss of about £1,000 in total. This would leave about £37-38,000 in reserves (ignoring the Brooking fund and unrepresented cheques). The detailed analysis is as follows:-

9.1.1 Village Hall - The Chairman advised that 80% of the Village Hall budget had already been spent leaving £1,700 to spend. He added that the Village Hall was not just an amenity but was intended to generate income to help keep the precept low. It was important to review the balance between the two aims and either cut our cloth or increase the hire charges. It was noted that the regular bookings revenue was down by £3,200 against the forecast. **It was agreed** that further information was needed for the next meeting to decide whether and to what extent hire charges should be increased. In particular there needed to be an analysis of the regular bookings by user and time consumed to identify where there might be gaps which could be filled by advertising the available slots. Cllr. Corio advised that the steps needed repairing as they were dangerous and a quote was being obtained.

9.1.2 Administration expenses were within budget with a likely under-spend of £3,000 on remuneration.

9.1.3 Diamond Jubilee - £1,400 had been spent on the Jubilee but – according to records supplied by the assistant clerk - only £600 recovered from BCC. Cllr. Dhillon had agreed to donate £800 and a profit should have been made from the sale of torches by Cllr. Forsyth but these had not been recorded as received. The Clerk would ask the assistant Clerk for a breakdown of monies received and spent on the Jubilee.

9.1.4 Village Green – only 64% of expenditure had been spent so far so this seems to be within budget as the next cut would not be until at least March next year.

9.1.5 Streetlighting – 53% of the £6,500 budget had been spent so far which suggested there might be about a £1,000 overspend.

9.2 The Chairman advised that the next meeting would review the eight months' income and expenditure to November and agree the budget and precept for next year. Cllr. Felton noted that – owing to an expected increase in the population this year - this might allow an increase in the precept without changing the amount of tax payable per person.

FC/10/12 To consider adopting a new cashbook system from April 2013

10.1 The Clerk advised that she would consider becoming the RFO from April if a suitable system of recording financial information could be agreed and her hours and pay reviewed accordingly.

10.2 The Clerk produced and explained a draft Cashbook for the Village Hall and a separate Cashbook for the whole of the Parish Council's affairs. If adopted the idea would be that a single monthly sheet would show at a glance all the information on income and expenditure and cheques issued for that month and the year to date broken down into whatever headings were required. A separate cashbook would be kept for the village hall which would feed into the main cashbook but would provide a further breakdown of the village hall income and expenditure when required.

10.3 The Chairman would consider the draft Cashbooks and let the Clerk have his thoughts in due course. His concern was that at each of the three finance meetings in each year he needed a way of comparing current figures with last year's figures and against budget. As the cashbooks were on an excel spreadsheet there may be a way of achieving this. The Clerk said that although the current cashbooks were correctly formatted it would need someone with greater skills than hers to achieve what was required to amend them to meet the Chairman's needs.

PC/11/12 To consider the terms of the new Playgroup contract

The Clerk advised that she had been asked to comment on the playgroup contract. This was a well drafted document but as far as she could ascertain it had never been signed and needed entering into every year. The Clerk suggested that the contract could be made an 'evergreen' contract with a procedure for terminating on say 3 months notice

by either side and with a procedure for agreeing hire charges for example an annual increase based on inflation or 3% whichever is higher. **It was agreed** to suggest this as a way forward to the playgroup once hire charges could be agreed. The Clerk was asked to find out the hire charge rates of comparable halls such as the halls in Burnham, Dorney and the Women's Institute.

PC/12/12 To consider acquiring salt/salt bins

The Clerk advised that BCC were offering one tonne salt bags in a 'two for one offer' at £85. Alternatively if we bought a salt bin for £450 they would be responsible for maintaining and refilling it. After discussion as to the difficulties of storing and delivering the salt **it was agreed** not to proceed with this opportunity.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm

The next meeting will be on 11th January 2013

This concludes the Minutes