

NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Newick Parish Council Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee held at Newick Community Centre, The Green, on Tuesday 11th April 2017 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors: B. Horsfall, G. Jones, I. Nesbitt and K. Wrench

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Berry (Clerk)
One member of the public was present

An audio recording was made of the meeting

- 1. Appointment of Chairman for this committee** – It was agreed that Cllr. Horsfall would act as Chairman for this meeting and noted that all committee positions would be reappointed at the Annual meeting of the Parish Council in May.
- 2. Apologies for Absence** – No apologies had been received.
- 3. Disclosure by Members of personal interest in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct** – No disclosures were made
- 4. Questions or Statements by Members of the Public**

Mr Thomas spoke in connection with agenda item 6, Review of Freedom of Information Scheme. He stated that he believed that, in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, the audio recordings of Council meetings should be available to members of the public and that they should not be deleted.

The Clerk clarified that audio recordings were used as an aid to producing accurate minutes and that, once the minutes of a meeting had been approved, the recording of that meeting was deleted. It was confirmed that the minutes, once approved, were the legal record of the meeting and that this would be the case whether or not a recording had been made. It was agreed that the Clerk would take advice on whether or not recordings of meetings should be routinely made available to the public under the provisions of Freedom of Information. **Action Clerk**

- 5. Review of Statement of Performance against budget for year ending March 2017** – The statement of performance against budget for the year ending March 2017 had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. It was noted that there was a budget surplus of £7660 which had been transferred to reserves. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that this surplus of £7660 plus the £2000 currently in the High Street reserve should be transferred to the General Reserve.
- 6. Risk and Management Controls** – A copy of the updated Risk and Management Control document had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted.

It was reported that the quarterly bank reconciliation, IT controls and the calculation of the Clerk's salary and pension contributions were ready to be checked. It was agreed that Cllr. Horsfall would carry out the checks prior to the next Parish Council meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the quarterly VAT reclaim application had been submitted to HMRC.

It was noted that the Standing Orders had been reviewed. It was agreed to recommend that these should be adopted without amendment.

A draft copy of the 2014 NALC Model Financial Regulations, amended to suit the purposes of Newick Parish Council, had been circulated prior to the meeting. The items which had been highlighted in the text were discussed and the following recommendations proposed:-

2.2 – verification of quarterly bank reconciliations should be carried out by a member appointed by the Council. Wording which prevented the Chairman or a cheque signatory from carrying out the bank reconciliation should be removed.

4.8 – a budget statement should be prepared and provided at every meeting of the full Council.

6.6 – this paragraph should read ‘cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be approved for signature other than at a council meeting unless specifically authorised at a council meeting. Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the Council at the next convenient meeting’.

Paragraphs 6.18 to 6.20 (use of debit, credit and prepaid cards) to be removed pending further research into the implications of the use of such cards.

7.4 – This paragraph should remain unchanged

8.3 – This paragraph to remain and the Clerk should arrange for a copy of the bank statement to be sent to the Chairman **Action Clerk**

11.1g – This paragraph to remain and be cross referenced with Standing Order 18d. Reference to the Bribery Act 2010 should be removed.

14.2 – The amount should be amended to read £50 as in the existing Financial Regulations.

It was agreed to recommend that the Council should approve the updated draft version of the Freedom of Information Scheme subject to the checking of the issue raised by a member of the public and minuted at item 4 above.

It was noted that the three yearly inspection of the Parish Council's trees was due to be carried out. The Clerk was asked to obtain three quotations for this work. **Action Clerk**

7. Policies and procedures to be reviewed

It was noted that the Conditions of Hire of Playing Fields were due for review and that this would be carried out by the Environment and Recreation Committee at its meeting in May.

8. Review of System of Internal Control – A copy of the Council's system of Internal Control had been circulated prior the the meeting. It was agreed to recommend to the Council that this document should be approved, subject to the checking the accuracy of dates shown in the reported/reviewed column. **Action Clerk**

9. Electronic Banking – A report from the Clerk had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. It was agreed in principle that the Parish Council should move towards the use of electronic banking, subject to the correct level of safeguarding being put in place. It was agreed the Clerk and Cllr. Wrench would investigate alternative current accounts which might offer the facility for electronic banking with dual authority. **Action Clerk** (Santander and Unity Trust Bank), **Action Cllr Wrench** (HSBC, Lloyds and Natwest). It was agreed that this matter should be discussed further at the next F&GP committee meeting.

A member of the public left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

10. Items for the next agenda – Electronic banking.

The Meeting Closed at 8.31 p.m.

Signed.....**Dated**.....

The Clerk: Mrs SE Berry, 18 Newlands Park Way, Newick, BN8 4PG
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