

NEWICK PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Newick Parish Council Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee held at Newick Sports Pavilion, King George V Playing Field, Allington Road, Newick, on Tuesday 9th January 2018 at 7.15 p.m.

Present: Councillors: B. Horsfall, I. Nesbitt, M. Thew and K. Wrench

In Attendance: Mrs. S. Berry (Clerk)

An audio recording was made of the meeting

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – No apologies had been received.
- 2. 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
- 3. Questions or Statements by Members of the Public**
There were no members of the public present at the meeting.
- 4. Review of Statement of Performance against budget as at end December 2018** – Copies of the Statement of Performance against budget as at the end of December 2018 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were noted. The Clerk gave further information in respect of overspends for the administration, subscriptions, play equipment maintenance and allotments budget headings. It was noted that a precept request for £55,000 had been submitted to Lewes District Council as agreed by the Parish Council on 28th November 2017.
- 5. Risk and Management Controls** – Copies of the Council's Risk and Management Controls document, in which items requiring action had been highlighted, had been circulated prior to the meeting and individual items considered. It was confirmed that the quarterly bank reconciliation, calculation of salary and pension contributions and IT controls had been carried out and were due to be checked by the Chairman of the Council.

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

6. Policies and procedure to be reviewed

Review of IT back-up procedures – The Clerk reported that she had pursued the option of setting up a Google Drive account intended for charities and small not for profit organisations but that during the registration process it became evident that this was not the right kind of account for the Parish Council. Advice had been sought from the Council's website provider, Upper Bridge Enterprises, and a quotation had been received for supply of additional email accounts so that each councillor could have their own Parish Council email address as recommended by SSALC (£10 per annum for each email account) and for assistance in setting up Microsoft OneDrive for secure document back-up (free for up to 5GB and £1.99 per month for up to 50GB). After discussion, it was agreed to recommend that the Council should not pursue the proposal to set up individual email addresses for councillors in view of the additional cost. It was agreed to recommend that a subscription should be made to OneDrive and that this should be used to back-up of all the Council's electronic documents.

It was noted that the Emergency Plan was in the process of being updated by Cllrs. Horsfall and Sheppard following their attendance at the Town and Parish Emergency Groups Conference in November 2017. **Action Cllrs. Horsfall and Sheppard**

The Council's Standing Orders were reviewed in the light of suggestions made by Cllr.Armitage following his attendance at the Chairs Networking Day in November 2017. The following matters were considered:-

- Proposer/Seconder for a Motion – It was noted that Standing Orders 9 and 10 deal with Motions and that there is no mention of a seconder being required. Recommend no change.
- Draft minutes should only be sent to the chair of the meeting – It was considered that this was an administrative matter and the Clerk reported that it was her usual practice to send the draft minutes to the meeting chairman so that he/she could check for accuracy. Recommend no change to Standing Orders or current practice.
- Questions/statements from the public should not be restricted to those items on the agenda - It was noted that Standing Order 3d had been taken from the NALC model Standing Orders and that most other Councils appeared to include it in their Standing Orders. In view of the fact that there was a time restriction on public participation at meetings it was agreed that it was reasonable to restrict public questions and statements to items on the agenda and that other matters could be raised using normal communication methods via the Clerk. Recommend no change to Standing Order 3d.
- Invitation from Chair to member of the public to speak outside public participation session – It was agreed that, at times, it may be of benefit for a question to be asked of a member of the public present at the meeting, but that any question should be asked by the Chairman with the agreement of other Council/Committee members. The Clerk advised that this was in order but that it was important that members of the public should not be allowed to join in with the meeting discussion or speak unless specifically requested to do so by the meeting Chairman.
- Decision making at committee level – It was agreed that certain areas of work could be dealt with at committee level rather than being referred to the Council for a final decision. Recommend this should be considered further when reviewing terms of reference for committees at the next annual meeting of the Parish Council.
- Publication of salaries etc. in the minutes. It was noted that in line with the Council's Financial Regulations adopted in May 2017 amounts paid for salary, pension and tax/national insurance were aggregated before being published in the minutes. Recommend no change.

It was noted that the Business Continuity Plan was in need of updating now that the Clerk's main place of work and location of files and equipment had changed. **Action Clerk**

- 7. Electronic Banking** – The Clerk reported that an online application had been made to open a current account with Unity Trust Bank and that signatures had been obtained for the various forms that needed to be submitted. Once outstanding cheques had cleared the existing account with Cooperative Bank would be closed.
- 8. Insurance against Cyber Crime** – Information had been obtained from the Council's insurance brokers about cyber crime insurance. The policy details had been circulated prior to the meeting, however, a proposal form would need to be completed in order to obtain a quotation. It was considered that the risks were low and that the policy would not offer much in the way of protection. In view of this it was recommended that the matter should be reconsidered at a later date once electronic banking was in use.
- 9. General Data Protection Regulations** – The Clerk reported that she was gradually compiling a register of the various categories of personal information held and how, why and for how long it should be held as a basis for future work on ensuring that the Council complied with the

forthcoming General Data Protection Regulations. NALC Legal Briefing L10-17 had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was noted that NALC was of the opinion that in most cases the Clerk could not be designated as the Council's Data Protection Officer. It was noted that SSALC had identified a company set up in order to provide a data protection service to local councils and that this company would charge £150 per annum for this service. It was agreed that the Clerk would continue to monitor future developments and to update the Council on this matter. **Action Clerk**

10. Items for the next agenda – End of financial year reports.

The Meeting Closed at 8.20 p.m.

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

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