

FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minute of the Finance and Constitution Meeting

FINANCE & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Tuesday 9 October 2018 at 19.30 at Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School, School Lane

PRESENT

Cllr Kent Chair of this meeting
Cllr Buchanan
Cllr Caswell
Cllr Mitchell (attending)
Cllr White
Annette Eggett Clerk in attendance

1 Apologies for absence and meeting Chairmanship

Received from Cllr Henderson; Cllr Kent was nominated and appointed chairman of this meeting in Cllr Henderson's absence

2 Declarations of interest

None.

3 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018

There were approved.

Proposed : Cllr Buchanan Seconded : Cllr Kent Vote : All in favour of those who were present

4 Matters Arising – for information only

- 4.1 (5.1) Update of Finance Regulations and Standing Orders – these would be carried forward.
- 4.2 (5.2) The Clerk confirmed the Parish Council was noted at HDC as adhering to their Code of Conduct. Clerk will circulate these as a refresh for councillors. **ACTION : Clerk**
- 4.3 (5.3) Grants policy – completed and sent to those interested to date.
- 4.4 (5.4) Review dates for documents – ongoing reviews at present.
- 4.5 (10.3) Terms of Reference for all committees – Cllr Buchanan confirmed he and the Clerk had been working on these. He had examined, edited and circulated to committee chairmen for review and return with comments to him. A third draft would be sent to Full Council for ratification. He had included information from old terms of reference and added much more and hoped to standardise all of these. He had also spoken to Sally Lee (lay-Chair of the Burial Board) and asked her to look at that set. Cllr Kent suggested staggering these over the coming months. Cllr White reminded members that committees looked at matters for the Parish Council, not other authorities. Cllr Buchanan was aware of this but felt comment was needed from more experienced Councillors. Cllr Kent mentioned that as there were now more Councillors it would be worth looking at reducing the number of committees Councillors sat on so that the new Councillors could take on some committee work. This would be examined in November. It was felt that more committees would not be necessary.

Cllr White pointed out that now the A14 project was almost finished discussions on transport were no longer needed hence the transport committee had not met. Cllr Kent felt this was part of the evolution of the Parish Council. Cllr Caswell reminded members that every Councillor is allowed to attend every committee if they so wished. Cllr White felt six was the ideal limit (all agreed) and mentioned that when the Park and Dairy Crest developments are complete the electorate would increase, as would the number of Councillor positions.

Cllr White stated that at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council committees were 'appointed'. Clarification would be needed over whether this was in fact an appointment. Cllr Buchanan agreed this was why the terms of reference must be correct.

Cllr Kent mentioned the maximum of six committee members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Cllr Caswell felt this could be considered and Councillors' particular skills could be taken into account with an aim to sign off suggested formats by April. Cllr Kent agreed this was a good idea and it was decided to invite all councillors to the next committee meetings (General Purposes and the Burial Board). Cllr Caswell suggested reminding residents that the Committees are also open.

- 4.6** (11.1) Hilton Road / Pear Tree Close – community pay back date still TBC
This area was on the list for the Community Pay Back team however a date was proving difficult to fix due to a lack of supervisors for community service. This would be pursued.

5 CIL

5.1 To agree criteria and selection process

- 5.1.1 Review draft Guidance Notes for Councillors
- 5.1.2 Review draft Assessment Grid
- 5.1.3 Review draft CIL Selection Criteria and notes for submission

Cllr Mitchell had kindly supplied all of the CIL documents for this meeting. The aim was to summarise what the Parish Council wanted and to set up a clear and transparent process in case of any queries over decisions made.

He had looked at securing external money for larger projects and what information would be needed. Requirements seemed quite standard throughout and he had used this to pull the briefing document together (there was inevitably a small amount of duplication here). The evaluation sheet would be used against the criteria in place for recommendations. The register was to manage enquiries and the process.

Cllr Kent had read through the documents and felt it all seemed very solid. He asked Cllr Mitchell what he needed from this Committee; Cllr Mitchell needed to know if the committee agreed with the suggested process and whether they felt the documentation was correct. Cllr Caswell agreed to both.

Cllr Kent added that the guidance notes seemed very clear including the nuances of Section 106.2. He would be happy to issue this to new Councillors. Cllr Mitchell explained that the evaluation sheet would contain Parish Council comments and notes.

Cllr Kent suggested that the documents and processes now required an 'owner'; Cllr Mitchell confirmed he was willing to take on this role.

Whilst Cllr White was, in theory also happy to agree to this process he noted that some decisions to spend CIL money already taken had not gone through this process. Cllr Mitchell felt these could be retrofitted; Cllr Caswell suggested including a statement that from a specific date the process would begin thereby explaining some projects were actioned before the new policies were in place.

Cllr Mitchell agreed, confirming work on the pond and its fencing and the new play area and adult gym were submitted by the Parish Council to external funders.

Cllr White counselled caution as CIL money was finite. Cllr Kent pointed out that the Parish Council had not committed much CIL money to date; it was also seeding funding and applying for grants (for example the cycleway). Cllr White agreed these were important. Cllr Caswell urged members to get the system in place for the future irrespective of CIL amounts available. All other Councillors agreed. Cllr Caswell added that slowly and surely the Parish Council was being modernised and future projects would require this and other systems.

Cllr Kent commended Cllr Mitchell on all his work. He suggested a 12-month review date to which Cllr Mitchell agreed.

Cllr White mentioned the possibility of overlapping with County and District Council work; Cllr Mitchell agreed there could be overlap but there was scope to spend CIL money on those sorts of projects (for example overgrown vegetation). Cllr Caswell stressed that County and District would

cut back their work even further and if the Parish Council had to cut back trees for Health and Safety reasons, then it must do so. Cllr Mitchell agreed that work may have to be done in conjunction with County and District and even other Parish Councils. Cllr Kent agreed that costs and benefits of deliverables may well have to be shared. Cllr Caswell reminded members that the Parish Council did not have to limit its precept in the same way that County and District needed to.

There was some discussion about ongoing village vegetation issue with Cllr White urging caution. Cllr Caswell stated safety was paramount (reasons for any work could not be based on aesthetics) and if such work were justified it should be considered.

Cllr Mitchell pointed out that the last criteria in his document was sustainability – how would work be sustained and who would be responsible for this. Cllr Kent stated there had to be the driver for work that was not Parish Council responsibility and that had to be the safety of parishioners. Cllr Caswell felt this was a good point (and mentioned the broken fence at Church Leys car park; HDC would be contacted again, perhaps through Cllr David Mead).

Cllr Caswell suggested considering a statement that repairs would be undertaken for safety reasons but that this would not take away responsibility in the future from the appropriate authority and that the Parish Council may bill for the work.

Cllr Buchanan suggested a one-off meeting with District to establish exactly what they were prepared to do. Cllr White stated that this is the work of the District Councillors and Cllr Mead should be approached. Cllr Buchanan queried Cllr Mead's terms of reference and suggested he contact the latter direct.

Cllr White stated that cut backs impacted badly on Parish Councils. Residents were not aware of this and pressure therefore fell on Parish Councillors. He therefore agreed a meeting with Cllr Mead would be a good idea. Cllr Kent reminded all that Councillors must adhere to the Code of Practice at all meetings.

At this point the Complaints / Issue Register was discussed. This should be renamed to just Issue Register and used with meetings with District and Council. Cllr White queried the reporting procedure and follow up methods. Cllr Caswell suggested getting a time table of tree pruning, bin emptying, drain cleaning, fence repairs etc for Fenstanton. All agreed this was a good idea. Cllr Mead would be approached on this and Cllr Buchanan suggested all parishioners should be informed of District and Council responsibilities (this would be good information for the village meeting).

5.2 Recording

5.2.1 Review draft CIL Register – covered above.

5.3 Discuss brainstorming ideas and community suggestions

5.3.1 Cllr Mitchell and the Clerk had worked on breaking these down into categories. Cllr Kent felt there were now four cornerstones in place (Chequer Street play area, adult gym and pond refurbishment – all funded or to be funded – and the cycleway which would be seed funded. It was now necessary to build on these and prioritise plans. Cllr Caswell pointed out that there were a lot of suggestions on this list and that a separate CIL meeting for all Councillors was required. All agreed. Cllr Mitchell pointed out that there were more pressing issues at the moment (such as the withdrawal of the Whippet bus services). A CIL meeting would therefore be arranged with a request for all Councillors to feed all queries and ideas through to Cllr Mitchell. Cllrs Caswell and Mitchell would arrange to meet prior to any meeting and the former suggested a simple scoring system. All agreed this would work.

Cllr Kent stressed that whatever decisions were made the Parish Council needed to be meticulous. Cllr White suggested a feasibility study; Cllr Kent agreed that first should be the brainstorming and score list followed by feasibility studies around timescales and costs.

Cllr White felt that with grant applications now made another should be considered. Cllr Mitchell suggested a rolling list of applications. Most external organisations asked for timescales. He felt that something like the electric charging points could be done now as opposed to six months

later. Cllr Caswell agreed electric charging points were a good idea. Cllr Mitchell added that consideration could be given to electric bike points at the end of the Fen.

The above plan of action was therefore agreed.

Proposed : Cllr White

Seconded : Cllr Kent

Vote : all in favour

5.4 Consider options for external funding for recommended ideas

5.4.1 Review possible sources of external funding

Cllr Mitchell pointed out that this would follow. Cllr Kent considered this a very good document.

6 'Seed Funding' for cycleway project

The members discussed a sum of money to be ring-fenced for this project for approval at Full Council. A sum of £5,000 was agreed as an investment at County level to get this project going.

Proposed : Cllr Kent

Seconded : Cllr Buchan

Vote : all in favour

The Clerk confirmed she had asked for an update on CIL money due to Fenstanton Parish Council; her HDC contact was on leave but she would update when she could.

7 Budget vs spend (new report)

Cllr Mitchell had kindly been over the figures and confirmed the expenditure forecast was 25% over budget. He would be working with the Clerk and Cllr Henderson on a cash flow forecast. Cllr Kent suggested adding CIL monies and linking appropriate costs to CIL. **ACTION: Clerk and Cllrs Mitchell and Henderson**

8 Clerk's salary

The Chairman had carried out an assessment of the clerk's salary with input from CAPALC and established there was a large difference between what she was currently being paid and what she should be paid. It was decided to make an immediate increase of £1,600 with further increases when CILCA training was complete and a successful review undertaken. These would both be at the same amount and did not include the annual percentage increases recommended by CAPALC. This decision would be reported to Full Council. The Clerk and Cllr Mitchell to liaise regarding her job description. **ACTION : Clerk/Cllr Mitchell**

9 To accept notices & matters for the next F&C agenda

None.

10 Parish matters to note

CIL workshop date

10.1 Cllr Caswell noted the CIL meeting date should be discussed on Thursday (11 Oct) at Full Council

Whippet Buses

10.2 Cllr Mitchell noted that buses would be a big issue.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING WAS CLOSED AT 21.00