

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee – 15 September 2010
Held at the Bockeridge Centre, Woodend Road, Frampton Cotterell

Present: Councillors Susan Tubey (*Chairman*), Mrs Bashford, Broome, Clothier, Farbrother (*part*), D Hockey, Pat Hockey, Mrs Stickland and Mrs Rowan

Apologies: Councillors Thomson and Manfield

In attendance: PC Ian Matthews

443 Evacuation Procedure

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

444 Declarations of Interest under the Local Government Act 1972

- Cllrs D and P Hockey declared that the participation of those Parish Councillors who are also members of South Gloucestershire District Council in both the debate and any subsequent vote on matters contained in the agenda was on the basis that the views expressed were preliminary views taking account of the information currently available to the Parish Council. Parish Council members who are also District Councillors reserved their final views until they were in full possession of all relevant information both for and against.
- Cllrs Broome and Stickland declared interests as members of the Frampton Cotterell Over 50s Computer Group.

445 Confirmation of Minutes – 7 July 2010

RESOLVED:

- That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of 7 July 2010 be confirmed and signed.

446 Report from PC Matthews

PC Matthews reported two burglaries, two reports of vehicle crime, eight calls of rowdy nuisance behaviour, no damage only collisions and two injury collisions in the area. He also advised Members of ASB calls relating to The Park ; patrols have seized alcohol and taken names so that warning letters might be issued. The Committee noted with satisfaction police successes in recovering a stolen dog and the arrests of two people for cultivating cannabis. The Chairman thanked PC Matthews for his report.

Cllr Farbrother joined the meeting.

447 Meeting with Bockeridge Centre neighbours

The Clerk reported an undertaking given at the Annual Parish Meeting in May to hold a meeting with the Bockeridge Centre's neighbours. Members agreed that a meeting should be arranged, chaired by Cllr Clothier and attended by the Youth Leader and the police as well as Councillors. PC Matthews offered to deliver the invitation letters to local residents.

RESOLVED:

- That the Clerk be requested to arrange a meeting as soon as practicable.

PC Matthews then left the meeting.

448 Dissemination of Information to Members

Referring to a query raised by Cllr Mrs Rowan, the Clerk outlined his normal practice in dealing with incoming information and the criteria he used for passing the information on to Members and Committees or Council. He agreed to seek Member advice when unsure of the best course of action.

RESOLVED:

- That the Clerk's current practice be endorsed.

449 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Referring to Minute 430, the Clerk reported that the Working Group had met three times and presented their recommendations to the Committee. Cllr Hockey asked for attention to be paid to the use of substitutes for Committees with delegated powers; this was especially important for Planning Committee given the time constraints imposed upon the Council for responding to planning applications and other planning documents. The associated Media and Press Policy was also considered. Members went on to discuss proposed amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED to recommend:

- That the Standing Orders be recommended for adoption by the Council.
- That the question of substitute Members be considered at the Annual Council meeting in May 2011.
- That the Media and Press Policy be recommended for adoption by the Council subject to the addition of the sentence "The Clerk will also refer the press to the appropriate Chairman and Councillor(s)".
- That the proposed Financial Regulations be recommended for adoption by the Council subject to the revision of Regulation 5b so that it states that accounts for payment shall be presented for approval to F & GP Committee or Council prior to payment and sets out the process to be followed for dealing with the authorisation of urgent payments.
- That the Committee's best thanks be offered to Cllrs Clothier, Pat Hockey, King and Susan Tubey for successfully completing this work.

NB. In accordance with Standing Order 6, the Chairman called for a recorded vote on this matter. The names of the Members voting in favour, against or abstaining on the above resolutions was as follows:

FOR: Cllrs Broome, Farbrother, D Hockey, Pat Hockey, Mrs Rowan, Mrs Stickland and Susan Tubey (7)

AGAINST: Cllr Clothier (1)

ABSTENTION: Cllr Mrs Bashford (1)

450 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

The Committee noted the contents of a schedule from SGC of polling districts and polling places within the parish. Members heard that the review aimed to ensure that electors had reasonable facilities for voting and that polling stations are accessible.

RESOLVED :

- That SGC be advised that the Council is satisfied with the arrangements as described.
- That an assurance be sought from SGC that the staffing arrangements for the elections in May 2011 are robust, given that polls relating to SGC, the Parish Council and a Referendum may all be taking place at the same time.

451 Review of Council Business

Referring to Minute 77, the Clerk presented a comprehensive report which set out proposals for an overhaul of the meeting cycle, Committee memberships, Terms of Reference, changes in the number and status of Committees, the distribution of agenda papers and minutes and the introduction of a Capital Programme to take forward projects which embody the Council's stated aspirations. Cllr Pat Hockey commented that the adoption of an eight-week cycle would mean that Cllrs disengage, that consultation processes with SGC may be disrupted and also the transparency of the Council's actions might be lost. Cllr Farbrother supported the idea of more working groups and fewer Committee meetings. Cllrs D Hockey and Mrs Rowan both felt that the proposals should be introduced, if at all, in May 2011 by the newly elected Parish Council. All Members accepted that regular attendance at meetings was critical to the efficient handling of Council business and that there was scope for greater use of electronic communication to distribute Council papers. It was then proposed by Cllr Mrs Rowan, seconded by Cllr D Hockey and

RESOLVED to recommend:

- That any changes be introduced after the elections in May 2011 only; and
- That in the interim the Clerk be requested to look into the issues raised, particularly with regard to a scheme of delegation, and report back to a future meeting.

452 Councillor/Officer Relations and Netiquette

Referring to reports considered by this Committee in May and July, and by the Staffing Committee in September, the Clerk presented a Code of Practice that summarised the minimum standards of behaviour that all Cllrs and staff should be expected to observe. Cllr Pat Hockey's comment to the effect that Cllr requests should always receive a response was widely supported. Members agreed to incorporate an addition about supporting and applying Council policies, proposed by Cllr D Hockey, into the Code.

RESOLVED to recommend:

- That the Code of Practice as amended, attached as Appendix 1 to the minutes, be recommended to the Council for adoption with immediate effect.

453 Parish Council Newsletter

The Clerk reported progress to date in the production of a Council newsletter. Members heard that the newsletter was on target for distribution during the week commencing 20 September 2010. The Committee supported Cllr D Hockey's suggestion that the publication should also be circulated to the local press, the libraries, Crossbow House and doctors' surgeries.

The Clerk's progress report was noted.

454 Draft Agreement between the Council and the Over50s Group

The Clerk reported the responses received from Cllrs and the Chairman of the Over50s Group to the Draft Agreement issued on 16 August 2010. The Over50s Group had asked for more time to consider the document.

RESOLVED :

- That the matter be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

455 Street Lighting Switch-off

Referring to Minute 435, the Clerk reported that the initiative had been highlighted in the forthcoming Council newsletter and that SGC's Andy Porter would attend the Open Day on 9 October 2010 to discuss the plans with local residents. Cllr D Hockey suggested that posters should be prepared for the Council's noticeboards and for display in local shops and undertook to liaise with the Clerk on the matter.

The report was noted.

456 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Clerk reported the quotations for providing an internal audit service from both Auditing Solutions Ltd and SGC.

RESOLVED to recommend :

- That the SGC be appointed as the Council's internal auditors for the current financial year 2010/11, for the sum of £434 for a two-day audit.

457 Finance

a Accounts for Payment (see Appendix 2)

RESOLVED:

- That the Accounts totalling £15384.22 be approved.

b Income and Expenditure Report as at end-July 2010

The Clerk presented the above report for Members' information.

RESOLVED:

- That the Clerk be requested to investigate SGC's arrangements for the payment of the Youth Service grant and report back.

c Powers to cap Council Tax and Parish Councils' Precept Levels

The Committee noted the contents of NALC Briefing Note L06-10 on the above matter. In response to a query from Cllr Pat Hockey, the Clerk confirmed that he had not yet received a consultation document from ALCA on this subject.

d Valuation of Parish Council property

The Clerk reported two quotations for providing the above service, required to update the Council's Asset Register and for insurance purposes.

RESOLVED to recommend:

- That the quotation from David James & Partners, in the sum of £250 plus VAT, be accepted.

e Estimated Election Costs May 2011

The Committee noted the above costs supplied by SGC in the sum of £10458 if all Parish wards were to be contested.

RESOLVED :

- That the Clerk be requested to seek clarification of the charges that would be imposed if only one or two of the three wards were contested and report back.

458 Correspondence

Notice of ALCA AGM -14 October 2010

Cllr Pat Hockey advised the meeting that a recommendation for the dissolution of ALCA was to be considered at the AGM.

RESOLVED :

- That Cllr Susan Tubey be authorised to attend the AGM and report back.
- That the situation be further considered at the Council meeting on 27 September 2010.

Thank You letters

Thank you letters for grant assistance from the Twinning Association, South Glos Senior Citizens Forum, Victim Support and the British Legion were noted.

459 Date of Next Meeting

WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2010 AT 7.30PM AT THE BROCKERIDGE CENTRE