

LANCING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 17 July 2019

CLLrs Present:- Ann Bridges, Mick Clark, Emma Purnell (in the Chair) and Jean Turner.

Officer:- Helen Plant, Clerk and Nick Wiltshire (Minutes 1 to 8).

As there was not a full compliment of Committee members, those present agreed that it was more appropriate to defer items 1 and 2 until the next Committee meeting.

Cllr Purnell was subsequently nominated and approved as chair for the purposes of this meeting.

1. To receive nominations for, and the election of Office of Chair for this Committee

Item deferred until the next meeting.

2. To receive nominations for, and the election of Office of Vice Chair for this Committee

Item deferred until the next meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies had been received and, with the reasons outlined, were accepted from Cllrs Albury and Monk.

4. Declaration of Substitute Members

None.

5. Declarations of Interest

None.

6. Public Forum/Questions

None.

7. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 8 May 2019

Resolved – That the Minutes of the previous meeting be approved.

8. Presentation from Empower Energy Ltd

Pursuant to Committee Minute 60.8/May/19, Roy Roberts, Business Development Manager for Empower Energy Ltd, was in attendance to provide a presentation regarding Empowers proposal to supply and install solar panels and electric car charging points at the Parish Hall and to answer Members questions.

Solar Panels – details of the solar products were outlined, including warranty and maintenance service options. However, Members were disappointed to learn that the 29 panel system on the south facing ridged roof area would only produce 20% of the Parish Hall's electricity usage. It was stressed that there would be difficulties installing panels on any flat roof due to the use of ballast. A structural survey would need to be carried out to ascertain what weight any flat roof could bear before such an area could be considered for solar panels.

EV Charging Points – the power supply would be from the existing electrical mains supply and the charging rate could be set at any rate. The basic units were accessible by a key, but an upgrade would allow users to charge via an App.

Mr Roberts was thanks for his attendance and asked to provide further costings for additional panels on other suitable roof space and for upgraded EV charging points.

The Clerk advised that a further funding stream had been sourced via WK Power Networks and an application was in the process of being completed.

Resolved – That further investigations into the installation of solar panels and EV charging points at the Parish Hall remain ongoing.

9. Presentation from Sussex Community Housing Hub

Pursuant to Committee Minute 60.12/May/19, it was noted that Graham Maunders, the Hub's Community Led Housing Advisor, was not able to attend the revised date of this meeting but instead would be making the presentation at the full Council meeting on 24 July 2019.

10. Accounts for payment

10.1 May Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. May Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £44,006.22
- ii. May Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £5.50

10.2 June Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. June Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £46,609.96
- ii. June Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £60.50

11. Approval of Cash Balances & Investments

It was **RESOLVED** that the cash balances and investments of the Council totalling **£702,645.69** as at 30 June 2019 was a true record.

It was also **RESOLVED** that any excess funds held in the bank deposit account should be invested in Adur & Worthing Council's higher rate account to maximise the interest return.

12. Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading

Resolved – That the information be noted.

13. Clerk's Report

13.1 Clarification regarding recommended levels of General Reserves

Further to the request for a more detailed explanation in respect of the need to retain a specific level of general reserves (Minute 60.4(b)/May/19 refers), the Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices (Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England) stated it was essential authorities had sufficient Reserves (General and Earmarked) to finance both its day to day operations and future plans should an unexpected event or emergency occur. However, given that local council funds were generated from taxation, such reserves should not be excessive, i.e. local councils did not have the power to hold onto an amount of reserves more than required.

The generally accepted recommendations were outlined, and it was stressed that it was important that a local council adopted the level appropriate to its size and situation and assured that level be maintained. The Council's current agreed level of reserves was £60k (Council Minutes 65.2(f)/Jan/18 and 80.2b/Jan/419 referred), albeit the Internal Auditor considered that level should be slightly higher (at least 50% of the precept = £161k), but certainly not reduced by any less.

It was noted that changes in activity levels/range of services provided would inevitably lead to changes in the minimum level of General Reserve.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

13.2 Review of Council Policies and Procedures

A review of the Council's Policies and Procedures remained ongoing. The submitted policies were new, in line with models as provided by the NSPCC, necessary for the Parish Council's work with the Youth Council, and had been previously circulated for members' information and comments if considered necessary: -

- i. Online Safety Policy
- ii. Online Safety Agreement for use with Young People
- iii. Behaviour code for adults working with children & young people
- iv. Behaviour code for children and young people

Resolved – That the policies, as submitted, be approved.

13.3 Damp in the Parish Hall corridor

It was reported that pursuant to Committee Minute 60.11/May/19, Dyno Plumbing had failed to respond to the request to carry out further investigation works to ascertain the main cause for the damp patch in the corridor. However, a surveyor from Paine Manwaring had since visited the site and was due to submit an associated report. It had been anticipated that this would have been received by the time of the meeting but was not yet available. A further update would be provided to the next meeting.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

13.4 Request to set up Lancing Parish Youth Council email addresses

It was stressed that as the Youth Council continued to develop, so did the learning around issues associated with safeguarding. It had been recommended for youth councillors to be issued with generic email addresses, to ensure all LPYC communications could be carried out safely and securely, without recourse to the use of private email addresses or phone messenger apps.

However, it was highlighted that there was an associated cost to set up email addresses, but there was no specific Youth Council budget heading. Approval was therefore sought for the cost of setting up the relevant number of youth councillor and mentor email addresses to be paid from an existing Administration budget heading, at an anticipated maximum cost of £240.

Resolved – That the cost of issuing email addresses to the Youth Council be approved.

13.5 Community Cinema

The Cinema's income and expenditure had been submitted for Members' information. It was noted that the more recently released films appeared to be popular judging from the small increase in ticket sales and it was hoped this trend would continue.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

15. Parish Council Flat – Request for a Review of Current Arrangements

The Clerk reported that the tenant to the Parish Council flat had made a specific request to review the current arrangements following an unexpected personal circumstance.

Members sympathised with the tenants' situation but suggested an alternative option.

Resolved – That the alternative suggestion be put to the Parish Council flat tenant and be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.