



## NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE NORTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT ROFFEY MILLENNIUM HALL, CRAWLEY ROAD, HORSHAM ON THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022 COMMENCING AT 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors: A. Britten (Chairman), Mrs. K. Burgess, P. Burgess\*, J. Davidson, Mrs. R. Ginn, Mrs. J. Gough\*, R. Knight\*, D. Mahon, R. Millington, T. Rickett B.E.M.\*, D. Searle, A. Shine\*, J. Smithurst, S. Torn\*, R. Turner\*, I. Wassell\* and Mrs. S. Wilton (Vice Chairman)

\* denotes absence

**In attendance:** Sarah Norman (Clerk)  
Vivien Edwards (Deputy Clerk)  
County & District Councillor Andrew Baldwin (part of meeting)

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#### **FC/01/22 Election of Chairman of the Council 2022/23**

The following nominations were made :-

- i. Cllr. Britten - Proposed by Cllr. Mrs. K. Burgess and Seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Ginn
- ii. Cllr. Mahon - Proposed by Cllr. Millington and Seconded by Cllr. Davidson

Following the vote, Cllr. Britten was duly elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year and would sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form after the meeting.

#### **FC/02/22 Election of Vice-Chairman of the Council 2022/23**

The following nominations were made :-

- i. Cllr. Mrs. Wilton - Proposed by Cllr. Mrs. K. Burgess and Seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Ginn
- ii. Cllr. Mahon - Proposed by Cllr. Millington and Seconded by Cllr. Davidson

Following the vote, Cllr. Mahon was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

#### **FC/03/22 Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present at this point.

#### **FC/04/22 Apologies for absence**

The Council received apologies for absence from Cllrs. P. Burgess, Mrs. Gough, Knight, Rickett, Shine, Turner and Wassell. No apologies had been received from Cllr. Torn.

Members also received apologies from County Cllr. Mercer and District Cllr. Milne.

**FC/05/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of Interests.

**FC/06/22 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 were **AGREED** and were signed by the Chairman as being a correct record.

**FC/07/22 Decisions made by delegated power since 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 for ratification**

The Council noted that, following the cancellation of the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March, as a result of staff shortages due to COVID, it was necessary for decisions to be made under the approved scheme of delegation and these decisions were ratified at the Committee Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

**FC/08/22 Committees and Working Parties.**

The following Committee Minutes were presented to the Council:-

- (i) Finance and Administration Committee Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Members noted and ratified the recommendation to approve the Direct Debit Mandates (Min. FA/495/22 refers).
- (ii) Personnel Committee Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- (iii) Property Committee Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee Minutes as listed above be received and adopted. Members also **NOTED** that the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee Meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 was cancelled due to staff shortages arising from COVID.

**FC/09/22 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Members **NOTED** the verbal report from Cllr. Mahon, updating on the situation at WSALC one year on from the changes, together with the current position for HALC. Both bodies now have new, effective administrations with paperwork circulated regularly to keep all informed. HALC, with its new Chairman in Cllr. M Eastwood, is keen to forge a close relationship with both the elected leadership and senior officers at HDC and arrange meetings to raise the profile of the Parishes.

A report was also received on the "Big Conversation" event held in Horsham the previous evening which had been well attended. It was understood that a recording would be available online and it was noted that there may be matters arising from this that should be discussed by the Parish Council when appropriate. It was also noted that the next session would be held in Pulborough, but this had already been fully booked.

**FC/10/22 Reports from District or County Councillors**

As noted earlier, County Councillor Mercer and District Councillor Milne had sent their apologies.

Cllr. Baldwin reported on the following WSCC matters :-

Several enquiries had been received from the public regarding the 18-month TRO for the A264/Rusper Road works relating to the Mowbray development and he had been able to confirm to them that whilst the TRO is “live” for 18 months the works were not planned to last for that period of time. There will be some future night closures to enable resurfacing and Cllr. Baldwin advised that he had successfully lobbied for noise reducing tarmac to be used on the Moorhead/new roundabout section, similar to that used on the A24 Southwater bypass, for the benefit of the residents near to the road.

With regard to the Novartis site, it was reported that Muse are now progressing with the design of the phase one residential, and that the planning application will be submitted for validation by Feb 2023. At that time, Muse will also submit an overarching water neutrality statement that will allow them to progress the planning application. Muse have also commissioned a water neutrality study, and the initial findings should be made available in July 2022.

Cllr. Searle queried the lane closure between Moorhead and the new roundabout, as it had been suggested that the lane would be reopened (even for just a period) from 29<sup>th</sup> April, but this had not happened. Cllr. Baldwin stated that he would make enquiries and report back in due course.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Baldwin for his report and he then left the meeting.

**FC/11/22 Report from the North Horsham Community Land Trust (NHCLT) link councillor**

Cllr. Gough, who would normally report on behalf of the Trust, was not present but she had advised the Parish Office that the team are working very hard but have nothing to report at the current time and would hopefully have more to update the Council on at the next meeting.

Cllr. Mahon reiterated this and that with the Governance now sorted, the main area was the securing of land. Brownfield sites were the preference, especially in light of the challenges posed by Water Neutrality, as they would have a history of water usage. However, finding a suitable site for 15-20 dwellings was very difficult and whilst several sites had been considered, it had not been possible to pursue these.

**FC/12/22 Chairman’s Announcements**

There were no Chairman’s announcements.

**FC/13/22 Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23**

Members noted the calendar of meetings for the 2022/23 municipal year (as circulated with the Agenda). The Clerk reported that the circulated list would have to be amended for the May 2023 Annual Meeting of the Council as this would be an election year which affects the timings. It was therefore agreed that May 2023 should include the following :-

- Annual Meeting of the Council - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- Planning, Environment and Transport Committee - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- Personnel Committee Meeting would be scheduled if required

After a brief discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the schedule including the amendment noted above.

Cllrs. Mrs. K. Burgess and Mrs. Ginn gave their apologies in advance for the Property Committee Meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

#### **FC/14/22 Appointment to Council Committees and Outside Bodies**

Members had received a summary of the current position and subsequently **AGREED** the following changes to the 2021/22 Appointments:-

- (i) Cllr. Smithurst appointed to take the vacancy on the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee.
- (ii) Cllr. Mahon removed from the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee.
- (iii) The Chair and Vice Chair not to be included on the Finance and Administration Committee.
- (iv) The Personnel Committee for 2022/23 to continue with 7 members.
- (v) Attendance at the Gatwick Airport Noise Management Board (NMB) to continue to be open to any Councillor and an opportunity to observe a meeting in public only.
- (vi) The Bus Shelter Advertising Working Party to be dissolved.
- (vii) The Community Highways Partnership Working Party to continue subject to investigations by the Parish Office as to whether the Partnership was still being offered by WSCC.
- (viii) As last year, the Harwood Road allotments working party to remain in case any issues arise.

Members noted the request from Horsham Green Spaces (HGS) for a Parish Council representative to be appointed to the organisation and following discussion whilst the proposal to appoint a representative was **REJECTED**, it was agreed that Cllr. Searle, through his involvement with the Horsham Town Community Partnership, would act as a communication link between the Council and HGS.

It was also **NOTED** that the appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of each Committee would take place at their first meeting.

#### **FC/15/22 Financial Matters**

##### **1. Finance Report to show income, expenditure and reserves for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**

Precept (full year)	338,600
Environmental Grant (full year).	10,356
Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) Payment	26,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>375,119</b>

##### **Income to 31st March 2022**

Cost Centre	Actual income	Annual Budget*
Admin	187	100
Allotments	948	875
North Heath Hall	54,086	50,000

<b>Funding at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022</b>		
Multi Court Lettings	24,181	30,000
Roffey Millennium Hall	19,883	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,867</b>	<b>60,000</b>
	<b>154,152</b>	<b>160,975</b>

#### **Expenditure to 31st March 2022**

Cost Centre	Actual Expenditure	Annual Budget*
Admin	45,023	50,120
Grants	6,785	10,000
Burial	7,461	6,750
Personnel	285,727	315,450
Planning, Env, Trans	0	2,250
Allotments	928	1,575
Amenity, Recs and Open Spaces	31,844	52,995
North Heath Hall	30,776	28,421
Holbrook Tythe Barn	14,855	22,196
Roffey Millennium Hall	37,739	37,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>461,138</b>	<b>527,645</b>

<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>-306,986</b>	<b>-366,670</b>
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\*Total cost centre budget for 2021/22.

#### **Income**

By the end of the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, Income was only £6,823 lower than had been anticipated for in the budget. The gap between anticipated and actual income continued to decrease slightly from 7% of expected income at the end of February to 4% at the end of March, and this was because of the increasing usage of the buildings as the country emerged from the pandemic. However, it must be noted that income was substantially boosted by the receipts from the NHS for the vaccination centre, which totalled £36,706 or 24% of the total income for the year but it is not anticipated that there will be further income from this source in 2022/23.

#### **Expenditure**

During the 2021/22 year, significant savings were made on staff costs, general maintenance and Open Spaces with only necessary Health & Safety work carried out together with ongoing necessary inspections and servicing. Towards the end of the year, as the buildings opened up more and more, it was necessary to undertake maintenance activities outside of the Health & Safety remit, as restricting works to only those necessary under Health & Safety was unsustainable and could have led to higher costs in the longer term if repairs were put off until they reached the Health & Safety threshold.

By the end of the year, the gap between actual and anticipated expenditure was £66,507 equating to 13% of the Annual Budget. This was a considerable decrease from the 21% at the end of month 11 but this was due to the

backdated Non-Domestic Rates that were collected by HDC in respect of both the current and preceding year.

### **Reserves**

Members will recall that when considering the 2022/23 Budget and resulting Precept requirement, it was estimated that General Reserves as at 31st March 2022 would be £230,685. However, despite the unexpected expenditure for the backdated Non-Domestic Rates, General Reserves at the year-end stood at £250,373 - £19,688 higher than expected

As previously agreed, from these General Reserves, £5,000 will be Earmarked for the RMH Boiler, £5,000 for Tree works and £25,000 for the playground refurbishments. In addition, £25,224 of the General Reserve has been budgeted to fund the 2022/23 expenditure. Therefore, after taking these into account, the Council is expecting to see minimum General Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 of £190,149.

In addition, there were additional Earmarked Reserves of £237,082 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 as detailed on the summary as circulated with the Agenda.

Cllr. Smithurst queried the annotation of the number "6" against 339 CIL 2020/21 on the Reserves summary. The Clerk indicated that this was an error and would ensure that the summary was corrected for the next meeting and confirmed that no CIL funding had been used for any tree works.

### **Summary**

As mentioned above, there is £6,823 less income than budgeted for in the 2021/22 year but this is offset by £66,507 less expenditure. The overall position is that expenditure after income is about £59,684 less than anticipated at this time of the financial year. There are adequate reserves to cover 6 months running costs.

The Council **NOTED** the Financial Report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

### **2. Expenditure Lists**

The Council **AGREED** the expenditure lists for February 2022 totalling £41,433.03 and March 2022 totalling £79,142.03 as circulated with the Clerk's report and as published on the website.

### **3. Asset Register Fee Listings 2022/23**

Members **NOTED** the Asset Register, showing a total asset value of £1,390,092 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, as circulated with the Agenda

Cllr. Smithurst queried the inclusion of very low-cost acquisitions and also suggested that where disposals have happened in previous years, they be removed to declutter the report. The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor, whilst commending the comprehensiveness of the Register, had suggested that a cost threshold be agreed by Council under which new acquisitions would not be added to the Register. The matter will therefore be considered by a future Finance and Administration Committee.

## **FC/16/22 Internal Audit Report 2021/22 - Final**

Members **NOTED** the Final Internal Audit Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 including the following comments made by the Auditor :-

- A recommendation that the Fidelity Insurance be increased to cover the maximum balances held by the Council during the year. It was reported that the quotation for the 2022/23 insurance to be discussed later on the Agenda included this increase.
- That the General Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 of circa £250,000 are appropriate for a council of this size.
- That assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement has not been met and must therefore be signed as “no” by the Council.

Following discussion Members **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the final report, the points raised and the actions in response.

Members proceeded to review the effectiveness of the Internal Audit as per the circulated document with the Agenda, and following discussion **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the review.

## **FC/17/22 Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR) 2021/22**

Members **NOTED** the Clerk’s Report on this matter and the circulated AGAR form, partially completed.

The Council **NOTED** the completion of Page 3 of the AGAR by Mr. A. Beams of Mulberry & Co and the answers of “No” to points M and N in relation to the Exercising of Electors’ Rights.

Members **NOTED** as detailed in the Clerk’s Report the Governance Procedures undertaken in 2021/22 including:-

- The review of the scope of the Internal Audit undertaken at the Finance & Administration Committee Meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (Min. FA/463/21)
- The review of the External Audit, including their comments regarding the announcement for the Period of Public Rights, was undertaken at the Finance & Administration Committee Meeting held 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (Min. FA/464/21)
- Review of the Financial Risk Assessment was undertaken at the Finance & Administration Committee Meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (Min. FA/481/21 refers)
- Consideration of the Internal Audit (Interim) was undertaken by Council at the Meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (Min. FC/667/22 refers)
- Review of the system of internal control procedures and practices was undertaken at the Council Meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 (Min. FC/682/22 refers)
- Review and agreement of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit was undertaken earlier in the Meeting (Min. FC/16/22).

The Council then considered the responses to the Statements in Section 2 of the AGAR 2021/22 (Page 4) and having considered the Clerk’s report and the Internal Audit Report, Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** answering

'Yes' to statements 1-3 and 5-8 and "No" to statement 4 on the Annual Governance Statement, noting that statement 9 was not applicable to the Parish Council.

Members subsequently **AGREED** that Section 1 be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Members then moved to Section 2 - Accounting Statements for 2021/22 and following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that these be signed by the Chairman, **NOTING** that this Section had been signed by the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer prior to presentation to Council.

Finally, Members **NOTED** the following additional information that was to be submitted with the AGAR 2021/22 :-

- i. Cash and Investment Reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- ii. Explanation of the differences between Box 7 and 8 on the AGAR
- iii. Summary and detailed explanation of Significant Variances between 2020/21 and 2021/22

Finally, Members **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the dates for the period from 6<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (inclusive) as shown on the circulated Notice of Public Rights.

#### **FC/18/22 Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves**

Members received the report from the Clerk regarding Periodical Electrical Testing (PET) which was being carried out on the MUGA floodlights (Min. PR/16/22 (e) refers) including the Report identifying the issues identified as circulated.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** expenditure from the Repair and Renewal Earmarked Reserve of £1,860 plus VAT for remedial works to MUGA floodlighting.

#### **FC/19/22 Insurance arrangements for 2022/23**

Members had received via email the Renewal Invitation and Policy Summary from the Council's Insurance Broker, Gallagher. It was **NOTED** that there had been an increase in the quoted premium to £13,925.08 (inc. IPT) and that this included an increase in Fidelity Insurance as recommended by the Internal Audit at the recent inspection.

Members also noted that In order to ensure rate stability, the Council may choose to set up a three-year binding Long Term Agreement (LTA) with the insurer, Hiscox Insurance Company Limited, at an LTA premium of £13,925.08. This means the Council would have to commit to keep their policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited for the period of the LTA, which will expire 3 years from the original inception date on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** the following :-

- The renew the Insurance Policy with Hiscox Insurance Company at an annual premium of £13,925.08 (inc.IPT), including increased Fidelity Cover of £750,000.



- To enter into a three-year binding Long Term Agreement (LTA) with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited, at an LTA premium of £13,925.08 ending 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025.

**FC/20/22 Policies**

The policy under review had been circulated with the Agenda and it was subsequently **RESOLVED** to adopt the reviewed policy as recommended by the Property Committee Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (Min. PR167/22 refers) as follows:-

- a) Tree Works Policy
- b) Bus Shelters Policy

**FC/21/22 Correspondence**

The Council **NOTED** correspondence list 1 as circulated with the Agenda and list 2 issued immediately prior to the meeting, covering the period 3<sup>rd</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**FC/22/22 Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 was **NOTED**.

Cllr. Smithurst gave his apologies in advance for this meeting.

**FC/23/22 Exclusion of Press and Public**

Members **RESOLVED** that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, for reasons of confidentiality as the following discussion items relate to staff matters.

**FC/24/22 Staff Recruitment**

Members had received the confidential report regarding the recruitment for a new Deputy Clerk and subsequently **RESOLVED** to **RATIFY** the appointment of Lisa Underwood for the position of Deputy Clerk.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.42pm.

Signed .....

Date .....