



# Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council

27 May 2020

## Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council held this day at 6.30pm

**Present:** Cllr R Hutchings (Chairman), Cllr A Martin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr N Brooks, Cllr T Butcher, Cllr N Geary, Cllr W McNeill and Cllr S Smith.

**Also Present:** T Jamieson (Clerk)

### Part 1 Open Items

<b>20/89</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies received from Cllr L Harris	<b>Action</b>
<b>20/90</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests</b> Cllr Mc Neill declared an interest in Planning Application 8/20/0354/HOU as it related to his place of residence and he would take no part in discussion should it arise.	
<b>20/91</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> No errors or omission reported. Unanimously agreed a true record of the virtual meeting held 29 April 2020. Minutes to be signed by Chairman at a later date.	
<b>20/92</b>	<b>Chairman's Remarks</b> The Chairman reported that he had written to the PM regarding NHS staff and carers. To date he had no response. Other matters would be dealt within the agenda of the meeting.	
<b>20/93</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
a)	<b>20/73c Maintenance of Verges &amp; Footpaths</b> It was reported that mowers had been out clearing footpaths and roads in some areas. Cllr Brooks reported that the footpath opposite Lord Bute Hotel should be cleared during week commencing 8 June. Members were asked to inform the Clerk about any other areas that require urgent action. The Clerk to pass information to BCP Officer (AO).	<b>Clerk</b>

b)	<p><b>20/57 Office Accommodation</b> The Chairman reported that HRA had appointed a solicitor to prepare a formal agreement for rent of the office. He would follow up with the Chairman of HRA.</p>	BH																								
20/94	<p><b>Internal Audit Report</b> The Chairman reminded Members that they had received a copy of the Internal Auditors Report. The Chairman had prepared a response to each of the 7 issues raised: <b>Recommended: and Unanimously agreed</b> That the Parish Council reminds the Internal Auditor that it had previously requested copies of all audit reports be sent to the Chairman as well as the Clerk. The Parish Council responds to the 7 issues raised as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="376 779 1204 2011"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="376 779 440 846"></th> <th data-bbox="440 779 719 846">Issue Raised by Auditor</th> <th data-bbox="719 779 1204 846">Parish Council Response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 846 440 1128">1</td> <td data-bbox="440 846 719 1128">There is no clear grant application form or policy</td> <td data-bbox="719 846 1204 1128">The Council does have a clear grant making policy (approved in November 2019) and the policy specifies the information required from applicants. The Council takes the view that there is no need for a standard application form.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1128 440 1234">2</td> <td data-bbox="440 1128 719 1234">It is not permitted to pay a grant for a flagpole at the Castle</td> <td data-bbox="719 1128 1204 1234">The Council has resolved to pay this grant under s137 LGA 1972.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1234 440 1402">3</td> <td data-bbox="440 1234 719 1402">Confidential sessions were held by the Council with no clearly stated purpose</td> <td data-bbox="719 1234 1204 1402">Normally the Council agenda does state the purpose but if there are examples where this has been overlooked it would be helpful for the auditor to itemise them.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1402 440 1503">4</td> <td data-bbox="440 1402 719 1503">AGAR Box 4 did not match payslip data</td> <td data-bbox="719 1402 1204 1503">Agreed – the Council now retains the services of a different payroll provider and this problem will not recur</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1503 440 1608">5</td> <td data-bbox="440 1503 719 1608">Full payroll reports not on file at year end</td> <td data-bbox="719 1503 1204 1608">do</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1608 440 1709">6</td> <td data-bbox="440 1608 719 1709">Fixed assets should be recorded at £1 each on the AGAR</td> <td data-bbox="719 1608 1204 1709">Agreed and done</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="376 1709 440 2011">7</td> <td data-bbox="440 1709 719 2011">Earmarked reserves should comply with current guidance</td> <td data-bbox="719 1709 1204 2011">All earmarked reserves relate to specified purposes and locations (Parish Council minutes 29<sup>th</sup> April). What is missing is the estimated completion date in some instances. These will be added once Covid-19 allows for a realistic estimate to be made. The auditor is invited to recognise in her forthcoming audits</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Issue Raised by Auditor	Parish Council Response	1	There is no clear grant application form or policy	The Council does have a clear grant making policy (approved in November 2019) and the policy specifies the information required from applicants. The Council takes the view that there is no need for a standard application form.	2	It is not permitted to pay a grant for a flagpole at the Castle	The Council has resolved to pay this grant under s137 LGA 1972.	3	Confidential sessions were held by the Council with no clearly stated purpose	Normally the Council agenda does state the purpose but if there are examples where this has been overlooked it would be helpful for the auditor to itemise them.	4	AGAR Box 4 did not match payslip data	Agreed – the Council now retains the services of a different payroll provider and this problem will not recur	5	Full payroll reports not on file at year end	do	6	Fixed assets should be recorded at £1 each on the AGAR	Agreed and done	7	Earmarked reserves should comply with current guidance	All earmarked reserves relate to specified purposes and locations (Parish Council minutes 29 <sup>th</sup> April). What is missing is the estimated completion date in some instances. These will be added once Covid-19 allows for a realistic estimate to be made. The auditor is invited to recognise in her forthcoming audits	Clerk
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		that the pandemic has meant that earmarked reserves will not be spent as intended and may well grow further before we are able to utilise them as speedily as we had intended.	
<b>20/95</b>	<b>Finance Reports</b> The following reports had been circulated and copies would be filed in the Minute Book: a) Annual Governance Statement - To confirm AGAR 1 b) AGAR Section 2 record of financial position for the year ended 31 March 2020 – To confirm c) Public Inspection Notice – To agree dates of Public Inspection 15 June to 24 July 2020. d) Current month’s Financial Accounting Statement at 20 May 2020 - To approve Payments  <b>Recommendation:</b> To confirm and approve a – d above. <b>All papers unanimously approved.</b>  All necessary papers to be forwarded to External Auditors.		<b>Clerk</b>          <b>Clerk</b>
<b>20/96</b>	<b>Council Initiatives</b>		
a)	<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b> A chart showing project updates had been circulated. Cllr Brooks reported that the project fees after grant receipt would be approximately £3,645 plus some ancillary costs. As a result of Covid19 and BCP Council the project would likely to push into 2022. Results of the residents consultation was available on the website at <a href="https://www.highcliffewalkfordplan.org.uk">https://www.highcliffewalkfordplan.org.uk</a>		
b)	<b>Revitalising the High Street</b> Cllr Martin stated that the sub committee had not met but that BCP Council was looking at improvements to town centres and district High Streets in the conurbation but Covid19 has had a serious impact on funding of projects. Overall the project remains curtailed at present although figures for traffic movement from Somerford roundabout to Ringwood Road would be made available. It was reported that following our photographic report to BCP identifying 35 defective areas, some work was now being carried out on the High Street pavements. It was generally felt that other parts of the conurbation were getting more funding than Highcliffe and Walkford. To progress this initiative properly it will be necessary to have firm proposals to put to BCP, including costings and details of possible funds available from within the parish. It was decided		<b>AM</b>

	that a Skype meeting should then be arranged with some BCP members to move matters forward.	
c)	<b>Pavements</b> Nothing further to report regarding the project.	
d)	<b>Wingfield Pavilion</b> The Chairman stated that an update would be given in Part 2 of the meeting under Confidential Matters.	
e)	<b>Sensory Garden</b> Cllr Smith reported that no progress had been made as she was concentrating on getting flowers in the High Street. The Chairman reported that he with the Vice-Chairman and Clerk had attended a (Skype) meeting with officers from BCP Council. This had been constructive and the procedure to transfer the play areas to HWPC could be started. Regarding Highcliffe Recreation Ground it was intimated that BCP would not wish to separate the toilet and pavilion from the rest of the ground. The Chairman had asked for costs regarding the upkeep of the buildings. Another meeting was scheduled for 3 week's time. It was generally felt by members that the PC should seriously look at taking over the whole site and what cost incurred may be.	<b>BH/AM</b>
f)	<b>A337 Fencing</b> The Chairman reported there no progress had been made.	
<b>20/97</b>	<b>Planning Report</b> A detailed report had been circulated to Members and it was noted that regular updated reports were received. The following developments were discussed and decisions made: 8/20/0335 280 Lymington Road – Strong objection to be made 8/20/0254/TTPO 15 Saufland – Supported* 8/20/0287/FUL Greystones Estate – Supported* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These two applications were dealt with in accordance with delegated powers between meetings</li> </ul> Reference was made to payments required from developers in respect of Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement. It was agreed that we should ascertain to whom such payments are made and whether any element of the payments should be received by the Parish Council.	<b>WMc</b>          <b>BH/NB</b>

<p><b>20/98</b></p>	<p><b>Treasury Management Policy</b></p> <p>The Chairman introduced a paper and reminded Members that the Financial Regulations require the Council to consider the need for an investment strategy.</p> <p>The Council aims to maintain adequate reserves for both general purposes and specific purposes and pending the utilisation of these funds they must be prudently managed. In the Council’s view the correct principles of prudent management, <b>in priority order</b>, are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring maximum security against loss</li> <li>2. Having sufficient liquidity to meet the Council’s needs</li> <li>3. Maximising the yield.</li> </ol> <p>The difficulty of ensuring investment was only made in ethical banks was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that investments will be made within these rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All investments will be with UK registered banks, building societies or financial institutions</li> <li>2. General reserve monies may be invested on appropriate deposit terms but in no instance for longer than 2 years</li> <li>3. Specific reserves will have regard to the nature of the reserve and its likely utilisation but will be invested on terms no longer than 1 year.</li> <li>4. To ensure maximum security all investment will be with institutions covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and will not exceed the scheme’s limit (presently £85k).with any institution.</li> <li>5. This policy will be managed by the Clerk/RFO who will make investment recommendations to the Council. When urgent investment decisions are required the Clerk/RFO will liaise with the Chairman &amp; Vice Chairman and report all transactions to the next available Council meeting.</li> </ol> <p>The Chairman reported that the present bankers (Unity Trust Bank) had notified the Council that interest on deposit accounts had been reduced to zero. Contact had been made with other banks and it was clear that better terms were available elsewhere.</p> <p>An approach had also been made to BCP Council’s Director of Finance who declined to accept an investment from the PC as “administering loans of much smaller value and variable duration would be a considerable additional administration burden for the small treasury function at BCP”.</p> <p>Marginally improved terms available were discussed and the following <b>recommendations</b> made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To adopt the policy as set out and to review its operation at 12 monthly intervals.</li> <li>2. To authorise the Clerk/RFO to open deposit accounts as follows:</li> </ol>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
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	<p>a) Lloyds Bank Ltd £75k on 95 day deposit account at 0.45% variable interest rate</p> <p>b) Monmouthshire Building Society 75k on 90 day deposit at 0.75% variable interest rate..</p> <p><b>Voting:</b> Majority in favour. Cllr Martin abstained due to a possible conflict of interest.</p>	
20/99	<p><b>Expenses &amp; Allowances Policy</b></p> <p><b>Members were asked to approve the Policy as set out:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>All payments</b> will be made in accordance with this policy.</li> <li>2. <b>Clerk’s Expenses:</b> The following expenses will be reimbursed following a claim made on the appropriate form by the Clerk, supported by receipts as appropriate, and certified by the Chairman: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Travelling and associated travel expenses whilst on official business; including mileage at current NJC rates</li> <li>➤ Reasonable subsistence, including meals and, exceptionally, overnight accommodation provided the duties have been approved by the Council.</li> <li>➤ Stationery, postage and printing costs and other office consumables including IT costs.</li> <li>➤ The cost of telephone calls made from home on official council business;</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>Chairman’s Allowance</b> The Chairman may receive a small annual allowance to defray the incidental expenses of the office. For the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 this allowance is set by the Council at £500.</li> <li>4. <b>Attendance Allowances.</b> Highcliffe &amp; Walkford Parish Council will not pay its members an attendance under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. This is a permissive power, it is not obligatory and the Council has chosen at this time not to pay these allowances .</li> <li>5. <b>Councillors’ Expenses</b> When required to travel on approved council business <b>outside the area of the parish</b> Councillors will be reimbursed for travel and subsistence. Claims to be made on the appropriate council form (attached) and certified by the Chairman or Vice Chairman. Claims may include:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Travelling and associated travel expenses; including mileage at current NJC rates</li> <li>➤ Reasonable subsistence, including meals and, exceptionally, overnight accommodation.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

	<p>Should any councillor have a disability, any reasonable expenditure necessarily incurred for the discharge of their duties, will, subject to approval by the Council, be reimbursed.</p> <p><b>Policy agreed.</b> An Expenses Claim Form would be sent to Members for future use.</p>	<b>BH</b>
20/100	<p><b>BCP Planning System</b></p> <p>In March 2020 H&amp;WPC resolved to write to BCP to draw attention to a perceived flaw in the existing planning system. The PC was advised that where significant changes were made to a planning application the process was to undertake a further publicity period. However, this was not happening in all cases and details of these were sent to BCP in order that they could be investigated.</p> <p>The investigations led by Head of Planning, have been concluded. He found that in three of the four cases cited there had been re-publication. In the fourth case officers decided there was no requirement for re-publication.</p> <p>As a result of the correspondence with the Head of Planning it has become clear that the decision to re-publicise amended plans is at the discretion of officers. In practice, it is said, officers will re-publicise unless the changes are genuinely minor and/or an improvement in the impacts.</p> <p>The problems with this approach are twofold. Firstly the officers' decision is clearly a subjective one with which we might not agree. Secondly, there is no safeguard in the system to prevent a simple mistake whereby an officer omits to re-publicise a significant amendment.</p> <p>These comments have been passed back to the Head of Planning with the suggestion that the system be changed to include the requirement that re-publication is mandatory in any case if there is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a considerable level of public disquiet or</li> <li>b) where an objection was raised by the parish council to the earlier application.</li> </ul> <p>This change would be helpful but it would not cover a case where the original application was unobjectionable and caused no public or parish council disquiet but was followed by amendments that introduced horrific changes. In such a case we would still be reliant on officers opting to re-publicise.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> that as no satisfactory response had been received from the BCP Officer the Chairman will make a formal request that a safeguard be put in the system to ensure that re-</p>	<b>BH</b>

	publication must take place if the PC raised objections to the original planning application.	
<b>20/101</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 6.30pm</b>	
<b>20/102</b>	To consider passing a resolution to exclude the press and public present pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the confidential nature of the business. <b>Proposed</b> Cllr Martin, <b>Seconded</b> Cllr Mc Neill Carried unanimously.  The meeting closed at 7.55pm	

Signed.....

Date.....