

NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday 15th December 2020 at 7pm held remotely as per Clause 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and broadcast as a “Livestream” event on the Parish Council Facebook Page.

ACTION by:

	<p>Present Cllrs Burhop (Chair), Walker (Vice-Chair), Tillotson and Dalton (Q) Clerk. 0 members of the public. Meeting began at 7.05pm.</p>	
Public Forum	<p>Virtual Meeting Regulations Chair Outlined. Public Questions No public questions or representations. Chair closed the public forum at this point.</p>	
FC20/045	<p>Apologies for absence: All members of the Committee were present.</p>	
FC20/046	<p>Declarations of Interest made: All members present are, by definition, members of the NPPFF Trustee Board and declared their interests as such.</p> <p>Cllr. Tillotson declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 20/048f) in relation to her tenancy thereof, but it should be noted that Cllr. Tillotson has been previously afforded a dispensation to discuss, and vote upon, such matters</p> <p><i>Chair reminded all members of committee that they could, and should, declare any further interests during the meeting as they became apparent.</i></p>	
FC20/047	<p>To consider and review the minutes of previous Finance Committee meeting 15th October 2020 as previously circulated to members; these minutes having been approved at the meeting of Council held 19th November 2020. Minutes noted.</p> <p>Matters arising: <i>Clerk confirmed current situation with the 2nd VAS device – awaiting erection of new supporting poles by Devon County Council Highways.</i></p>	
	Business to be considered:	
FC20/048a	<p>a) To consider proposed expenditure for secondary gate access (SW) at Venn Ottery Village Green: In light of recent correspondence received from adjoining landowner, Chair proposed that this matter be considered under agenda item FC20/52 (Matters to be considered in Committee). Resolved unanimously. This business was therefore deferred to a later part of the Finance Committee meeting (see below).</p>	

FC20/048b	<p>b) To receive update on planned playground improvements at Turner Close (EDDC asset):</p> <p>Clerk outlined progress with EDDC officers regarding approval for the works proposed by way of Section 106 contributions and negotiations with the supplier (see earlier Fin.Comm. minutes 15/10 – FC20/040e). It was confirmed that approval had been obtained for the spend eligibility and that an order would be placed by the offer deadline date of 18/12. EDDC would act as the primary agent in this matter, arranging for equipment to be delivered to, and stored at, their Sidmouth depot and for the equipment to be installed early in the New Year. EDDC will arrange all the financials “in-house”. Noted and Clerk thanked for work in this regard. Clerk: Please note and keep members up-to-date with progress in this respect.</p>	Clerk
FC20/048c	<p>c) To consider tender bid submission for 2021-24 Grounds Maintenance Contract:</p> <p>Clerk reported that two bids had been received by the deadline date – Contractor A and Contractor B. Both were eligible for consideration and Clerk had converted the bid figures into a matrix for ease of comparison. This had been circulated to members before the meeting. After discussion, Chair proposed that Contractor A be awarded the 3-year contract based on the bid value submitted. Seconded by Cllr. Tillotson. Resolved unanimously. Chair asked that this recommendation be considered by Full Council at the next Ordinary meeting on 21st December. Clerk was also asked to discuss service issues raised. Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please add to ORD agenda for 21st December 2020.</p>	Clerk
FC20/048d	<p>d) To consider quotations received for proposed surgery building internal redecoration:</p> <p>Clerk had circulated three quotations received. Supplier P, F and Y. After consideration, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that Supplier P be awarded the contract at the rate quoted. Resolved unanimously. It was also proposed that the large picture in the waiting room be moved to the Pavilion building at the point that the redecoration begins. Noted. Clerk: Please note and action accordingly as above. Please convey Council’s thanks to unsuccessful suppliers for their quotes.</p>	Clerk
FC20/048e	<p>e) To consider quotations received for parish tree maintenance works:</p> <p>Clerk apologised to members as, despite his best efforts, he had been unable to obtain the requisite quotes from contractors prior to this meeting. Clerk was asked to chase the prospective suppliers and present these to next meeting of the Finance Committee; this excludes the urgent / safety works which had already been delegated to Clerk & Cllr. Hughes. Clerk: Please action accordingly</p>	Clerk

FC20/048f	<p>f) To consider matters pertaining to allotment amenity:</p> <p>i) Clerk confirmed that there were currently 107 chargeable plots generating approximately £900 income per annum (£600 from rents charged, and £300 for water/maintenance sub-charges). Clerk advised that other authorities did charge more for their plots, but often this was coupled with provision of better / enhanced on-site amenities. Clerk also outlined current Allotment Act regulations regarding the financial rules relating to Allotments when operated by local authorities.</p> <p>After discussion, it was proposed from the Chair that no increases to the basic tenancy quarter-plot charge (£6) be levied for the allotment tenancy year 2022-23. Resolved 3 votes for, 0 against, 1 abstention (MT).</p> <p>Clerk: Please note no action necessary. Please bring this matter back to Finance Committee in December 2021 to consider rental charges for 2023-24.</p> <p>ii) It was similarly proposed from the Chair that no increase in the water/maintenance charge per quarter plot (£3) be levied at the present time although members were minded to consider any such increase should the need arise in the future (any such increase is exempt from the legislation laid down in the Allotment Act which relates to tenancy rental charges only). Resolved 3 votes for, 0 against, 1 abstention (MT).</p> <p>iii) Cllr. Tillotson outlined some issues which had arisen in the past regarding tenancy cessations which resulted in debris, waste and materials being left on vacated plots which then required disposal at Council's cost (and by volunteers). After further discussion, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that a holding deposit of £50 per quarter plot be charged for all future tenancies from this date. These deposits to be held in a non-interest bearing, earmarked fund, within the Council's overall accounts. The deposit would be released back to the vacating tenant only when plot was adjudged to be in a suitable condition for re-letting. Resolved 3 votes for, 0 against, 1 abstention (MT). <i>Clerk was asked to bring a draft of the necessary Allotment Terms and Conditions wording (to allow this policy to be implemented and to ensure that a fair and reasonable assessment process to be established) back to Finance Comm. when they next meet. Noted.</i></p> <p>iv) With regards to waste disposal amenity on the allotment site, Chair thanked Cllr. Tillotson and those other Cllrs. who had given their time and energy to clear the site as much as possible of waste material and debris. It was further proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that another waste skip be provided at the site – albeit a smaller unit – in the New Year (February/March?) at a tentative cost of £285 plus VAT. Resolved 3 votes for, 0 against, 1 abstention (MT). <i>It was felt appropriate that a notice be displayed (and provided to tenants) explaining what was to be provided and the need for personal responsibility in respect of the disposal of waste materials arising from allotment activities.</i></p>	Clerk
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FC20/048g	<p>g) To consider update on recent enquiries regarding proposed additional allotment land acquisition and/or provision:</p> <p>Clerk advised that no reply had been received as yet to his initial enquiries to the landowners involved for the proposed site and thus no further action was possible at this time. Chair asked for the matter to be added to next agenda if progress had been made by that time. Noted.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</p>	Clerk
FC20/048h	<p>h) To consider update on EDDC Community Asset Transfer requests lodged:</p> <p>Clerk reported that no further progress had been made at this time. Noted. Chair asked for Clerk to add to agenda when appropriate.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly.</p>	Clerk
FC20/048i	<p>i) To consider latest draft (v3.) of 2021-22 Budget and Precept Calculations and Proposals:</p> <p>RFO had forwarded a revised draft incorporating the latest EDDC Taxbase figures and had made some further adjustments in relation to decisions made earlier in this meeting which had financial repercussions to Council's budget calculations. After further consideration of the Council's financial forecast for 2020-21, and taking on board members views regarding the future spending plans for the Council and parish, the RFO was asked to prepare a new draft (v4.) for circulation to all members of Council to be considered at the FULL Council meeting on 21/12 for final decision – two recommendations to be considered; 1) To retain precept at current rate £47,500, or 2) To reduce precept to £44,000 to recognise the financial pressures being experienced by all parish households and to take into account the likely financial surplus at the end of this financial year. Agreed by all members.</p> <p>RFO: Please note and prepare revised draft accordingly. Please circulate to members and add to ORD agenda.</p>	RFO
FC20/048j	<p>j) To consider purchase of 10 no. Litter Pickers for £33 total as a parish amenity:</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr. Tillotson, seconded by Cllr. Dalton. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and arrange purchase and storage.</p>	Clerk
FC20/049	<p>Matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair: None raised.</p>	
FC20/050	<p>Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting;</p> <p>It was proposed that the next meeting of the Finance Committee be held on Thursday 14th January 2021, time to be agreed upon, meeting to be held remotely as per Clause 78 legislation (see above) in conjunction with the Trustee Board Meeting of the NPPFF beforehand.</p>	

FC20/051	<p>It was proposed that, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Local Government Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Dalton. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Chair thanked all members of the public for taking part via Facebook Livestream and wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Livestreaming of meeting was terminated at this point.</p>	
FC20/052	<p>Matters to be considered in committee:</p> <p><i>i) To consider further correspondence relating to Eco-toilet at Newton Poppleford Allotment Site.</i></p> <p>Chair outlined the nature of the correspondence received by him. No further response has been sent to originator given the nature and content of the correspondence received. Cllr. Tillotson asked why the correspondence had not been shared with other members of the Finance Committee. It was explained that correspondent had not given their implicit consent for the letter to be shared with anyone other than the recipient and that, given the nature of the dispute, the Chair felt that the sharing of the letter may be construed as a breach of the Data Protection Act hence the fact that it had not been circulated to members. Noted.</p> <p><i>ii) (Item 20/48a) as deferred from earlier in the meeting. To consider proposed expenditure for secondary gate access at SW corner of Venn Ottery Village Green:</i></p> <p>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that expenditure as proposed (est. £450 excl. VAT) continues, with further discussion between Clerk and members of VOSRA as to the exact siting of the proposed access gate. It was noted that some sections of hedgerow may need to be removed to facilitate the installation; Clerk advised that a HRN planning consent would be required to enable this, ensuring that egress and ingress was possible over the public highway and avoiding privately owned land. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please contact EDDC Planning Dept. to seek guidance on the process for a HRN application and liaise with members of VOSRA accordingly. Please report back to Fin.Comm. as soon as possible; no works to be undertaken at the present time.</p>	
	<p>With no further business to consider, the Chair closed the meeting of the Finance Committee at 8.30pm.</p>	

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Signed as a true record of the meeting above:

Chair: _____

Date: _____

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