

# NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee meeting on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 6.30pm 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><b>Present</b>                  Cllrs Burhop (Chair), Walker (Vice-Chair), Tillotson and Dalton (Q) Clerk. 1 member of the public.                  Meeting began at 6.30pm.</p>	
<b>Public Forum</b>	<p><b>Virtual Meeting Regulations</b> Chair Outlined.  <b>Public Questions</b>                  Public representation re: agenda item FC20/064b.                  Chair thanked member of the public for their contribution.                  Chair closed the public forum at 6.35pm.</p>	
FC20/061	<p><b>Apologies for absence:</b>                  None. All members of the Committee were present.</p>	
FC20/062	<p><b>Declarations of Interest made:</b>                  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>	
FC20/063	<p><b>To consider and, if thought fit, to approve the minutes of previous Finance Committee meeting 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as previously circulated to members;</b>                  Chair proposed that the minutes be adopted as a true record of the meeting. Seconded by Cllr. Dalton. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Matters arising:                  Query on progress with VOVG SW gate access. (In progress).                  Query re: leak allowance at allotment site (claimed and rec'd).                  Update on proposed improvement works on FP3 (In progress).</p>	



FC20/064c	<p><b>c) To consider proposals for the installation of a permanent Christmas Tree on Greenbank with associated works to enable mains powered festive illuminations:</b></p> <p>Clerk had been able to obtain quotations from Western Power for the connection of electrical supply to a suitable cabinet, but had not been able to obtain the associated costs for the additional works as yet. Costs for a suitable tree had been circulated to members, as had costs for permanent mains powered illuminations for both trees (one existing, one new). Chair confirmed that the resident of the property nearest to the proposed planting site had indicated their consent to the works. <b>It was proposed by Chair seconded by Cllr. Walker, that Clerk be directed to obtain quotes for the power supply cabinet and return to this committee as soon as possible for further consideration.</b></p> <p><b>It was also proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that Council proceeds with the purchase, and planting, of a suitable Fir Tree (maximum growth height 4-5m) on Greenbank at a cost of no more than £500 net (excluding fixings and groundworks which could come from existing tree planting budget). Resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Clerk: Please note and arrange for the tree to be purchased and planted as soon as possible in consultation with Cllr. Hughes and the Tree Warden. Please also gather in the necessary quotes for the electrical installation works and the costs of fixed mains powered lighting and bring these to the first Finance Committee thereafter.</p>	Clerk
FC20/064d	<p><b>d) To consider request for purchase and installation of additional dog waste bin (DWB) in King Alfred Way to alleviate dog waste nuisance and to provide parish amenity:</b></p> <p>Clerk had circulated details of costs relating to this request, both for installation and contractually thereafter. Consent would be required from landowner (Cavanna) but should not be unreasonably withheld. Clerk sought decision in principle.</p> <p><b>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Dalton, that Council agrees "in principle" to the installation of a suitable DWB at cost to the Parish Council and that an annual emptying contract be entered into, subject to agreement with the landowner, and nearby households, on the siting location. Clerk duly delegated to liaise with relevant parties and make the necessary arrangements. Resolved unanimously.</b></p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please liaise with Parish Maintenance Contractor when consents obtained.</p>	Clerk

FC20/064e	<p><b>e) To consider expenditure for additional skip hire amenity at allotment site and to agree timetable for provision of the same:</b></p> <p>Cllr. Tillotson declared a pecuniary interest in this matter as an allotment plot-holder but, as she has been previously afforded a dispensation in this regard, she was able to participate in the debate. Cllr. Dalton is also a plot-holder and declared a similar interest but does not have a current dispensation and so left the meeting for the duration of this discussion.</p> <p>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker, that a 12yd skip be provided for tenants use at a cost of not more than £350 net; said skip to be provided at the site between 26/2 if at all possible and a date approx. 2 weeks later. Resolved 2 for / 1 abstention (MT)</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and make necessary arrangements with skip hire firm used previously. Please liaise with Cllr. Tillotson for access and to publicise the amenity to the allotment tenants (not wider publicity to prevent misuse)</p> <p>Cllr. Dalton re-joined the meeting. The Chair proposed that Council consider the provision of skips within the allotment budget for the financial year 2022/23. Agreed.</p> <p>Clerk: Please add into budget consideration document for 2022/23 when circulated at the latter part of this year.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
FC20/064f	<p><b>f) To consider implementation of a CyberProtection Insurance Policy as per broker recommendation:</b></p> <p>Clerk had provided an alternative quotation for the proposed policy as previously directed. Members again discussed whether a risk existed that would justify the costs of such an additional policy (circa £250).</p> <p>Subsequently, it was proposed by Chair that Clerk/RFO discuss this matter with our broker and provide them with details of the alternative quote to seek their impartial advice as to whether this cheaper policy would afford the same protection to the Parish Council for this potential risk as the more expensive policy previously considered. Resolved unan.</p> <p>Clerk/RFO: Please note and action accordingly. Please bring this matter back to Finance Committee for further discussion at the earliest opportunity</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

FC20/064g	<p><b>g) To consider costs and practicalities of installing flower planters at village gateways to both improve the appearance of the parish and to assist towards the Parish Council’s Climate Change Action goals:</b></p> <p>Clerk had provided indicative costs for planters manufactured from wood, man-made materials (recycled plastic) and Zinc. At this stage, Clerk had been unable to obtain a definitive agreement from the DCC Highways Officer (HO) as to the legalities relating to the placement of such planters adjacent to the highway. Members also considered the ongoing costs of such planters in terms of flower planting, upkeep and maintenance.</p> <p>Subsequently, it was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Tillotson, that Committee agreed “in principle” to recommend the purchase of 3 planters to be manufactured from suitably treated softwood. It was also proposed that the planters must use only wood that was certified as “sustainably sourced” and accepted that this may cause the cost per unit to rise accordingly. Resolved unan.</p> <p>In addition, discussions should continue with DCC HO to establish where such planters could be placed safely and legally around the parish and also with organisations such as the parish Garden Club and Parish Handyman to consider the costs and arrangements for planting, upkeep and maintenance moving forwards.</p> <p>Clerk: Please add to next Fin.Comm. agenda for further discussion with quotes made available as obtained. Please continue to liaise with DCC HO and with the other parties named above and report back to the Finance Committee.</p>	Clerk
FC20/064h	<p><b>h) To consider request for additional play equipment at Back Lane play area:</b></p> <p>Clerk had provided a report based on recent requests from members of the public for improved play facilities at the Back Lane site. Clerk was still awaiting final spend details for the recent Turner Close play improvement project from EDDC (funded by s106 contributions) and was therefore unable, at this time, to provide any figures for available capital expenditure for such additional equipment (other than to confirm that £3000 was set aside in Council’s earmarked reserves for play equipment &amp; maintenance.</p> <p>It was proposed by Chair that this matter be deferred to a future date of the Finance Committee to consider again once capital budgets via s106 had been confirmed by EDDC. Clerk was also directed to seek initial quotes for the particular items of play equipment requested. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please bring back to Fin.Comm. as soon as possible with information and quotes as mentioned above.</p> <p>Furthermore, Clerk was asked to liaise with Council’s insurance brokers to seek guidance/advice on the indemnity issues relating to the provision of mixed-age equipment in the same play area (this issue being raised by Chair).</p> <p>Clerk: Please action accordingly.</p>	Clerk  Clerk

FC20/064i	<p><b>i) To consider arrangements for progression of the Parish Emergency Plan:</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Chair that this matter be deferred to the March meeting of the Finance Committee to consider the progress to date, the work required to both review (and maintain) a compliant Emergency Plan (which already exists in draft form) and to seek volunteers from the parish community to assist. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please add to the March Fin.Comm. meeting agenda. Please circulate the draft NPHPC E/Plan reference document to all members of the committee for their perusal &amp; review.</p>	Clerk
FC20/064j	<p><b>j) To consider current status of WC refurbishment project and to agree on next steps:</b></p> <p>Clerk provided a briefing paper to the Committee members outlining progress to date and explaining why progress has stalled; ostensibly, due to the Covid19 pandemic which had necessitated the closure of the existing WC on health and hygiene grounds and also because Clerk had been unable to meet any prospective contractors on site in a safe and compliant manner.</p> <p>It was proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Dalton, that Clerk continue to seek out quotes as per specification document (and plans) drawn up but only if safe to do so. Noting that no expenditure in relation to WC cleaning had been incurred in this financial year (but had been budgeted for), it was also proposed to vire the sum of £5500 from the 2020-21 budget (for WC cleaning and maintenance) into the WC Refurbishment Reserve) with immediate effect. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and action accordingly. Please add to a future Fin.Comm. meeting agenda when, and if, quotes could be safely obtained. Please prepare an updated briefing report for all Committee members prior to that meeting.</p>	Clerk
FC20/065	<p><b>To consider matters pertaining to Risk Assessment and Internal Financial Controls:</b></p> <p>i) Clerk had circulated a draft of the revised 2021-22 Risk Assessment to all members of the Committee (and Cllr. Chapman) beforehand for their review and perusal.</p> <p>Revisions were made (to part 1 of 3) and were integrated into draft working document.</p> <p>Clerk: Please add as an agenda item to next Fin.Comm. meeting to consider the final parts 2 and 3 of the draft Risk Assessment.</p> <p>Action points from the Risk Assessment Review will be circulated to all members of the Committee as soon as possible.</p>	Clerk

FC20/065 Continued	<p>ii) Clerk had circulated a revised Review of Internal Financial Controls document for 21-22. Committee members considered the document which was found to be fully satisfactory and not in need of further revision or amendment.</p> <p>The Chair declared a personal interest in the subject as an acquaintance of the current Internal Auditor. The RFO suggested that, when this document was next considered, the Chair does not partake in the debate given the discussion that would be necessary regarding the possible recruitment of a replacement IA as per audit protocol and guidelines.</p> <p>Subsequently, it was proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Dalton, that this draft document be approved and adopted as the formal review of Council's Internal Financial Controls as per the requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Review for the year ahead. Resolved unanimously.</p> <p>RFO: Please note and publish on website accordingly. Please provide a copy to the Internal Auditor for his audit records.</p>	Clerk
FC20/066	<p><b>Matters considered as urgent by presiding Chair:</b></p> <p>None raised.</p>	
FC20/067	<p><b>Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting;</b></p> <p>It was suggested that the next meeting of the Finance Committee be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 6.30pm start; the meeting to be held remotely as per Clause 78 legislation.</p> <p>Clerk: Please note and publicise accordingly.</p>	Clerk
FC20/068	<p>It was NOT 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 as there was no business to discuss in this manner.</p> <p>Chair thanked all members of the public for taking part via Facebook Livestream.</p>	
FC20/069	<p><b>Matters to be considered in committee:</b></p> <p>This agenda item was not considered or discussed (as above).</p>	
	<p><b>With no further business to consider, the Chair closed the meeting of the Finance Committee at 8.07pm.</b></p>	

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*Signed as a true record of the meeting above:*

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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