

Clerk to the Council/RFO: Caroline Higgins

Chairman: Cllr Keith Keel

15 March 2018

Minutes of a Full Council Meeting held at 7.00 pm on Monday 5 March 2018 in the Memorial Hall.

Present: Cllrs Keel, (Chairman); Breeze (Vice Chair); Jones; Clarke; Engler; Mrs Lewis; Mrs Whittall, Mrs Robinson; Mrs Howells and Gouge;

In

attendance: Caroline Higgins, Clerk

FC 18.18 **APOLOGIES** – Cllr Parkhurst, (work commitment); Cllr Ryan (family commitment) Hudson (prior commitment)

FC 19.18 **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST** – Cllr Clarke declared his personal interest as the Council's representative to the Bowling Club and his pecuniary interest as his wife is employed as key holder to the Council; Cllr Mrs Whittall declared her personal interest as her son-in-law hires the football pitches

FC 20.18 **PUBLIC SPEAKING/QUESTIONS AT COUNCIL MEETINGS** – Cllr T Clarke gave a report on the activities of Shropshire Council, including the recent spate of break-ins at the former Oakfield School. He reported that permission had been granted to the fire service to use the school as the location for a full scale emergency exercise in the coming weeks. *In response to a request that the gym equipment be removed or protected during the fire exercise he stated this had been removed from the building by the perpetrators of the recent break-ins.*

He reported that Planning Officers had indicated that they hoped to present an outline planning application within the next two months for the Oaklands / Glebelands site.

FC 21.18 **MINUTES** – The Council **resolved unanimously** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2018 as a true record.

FC 22.18 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS** The Council **resolved unanimously** to adopt the minutes of the following Committee meetings: Finance, 16 October 2017; Amenities, 20 November 2017; Planning, 20 November 2017 and 8 January 2018; Management and Personnel, 18 December 2017.

FC 23.18 **CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE** – The Clerk tabled her report which had been circulated with the agenda and which was noted by the

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Council. The Council noted that the strategic planning event scheduled for 26 February had been postponed and would be rescheduled in April.

Cllr Engler requested an update on the Scouts proposals to build a new hut at Lythwood as he had been approached for some maps of the pavilion area. It was resolved that rather than approach individual Councillors, the scouts be invited to attend a meeting of the Full Council to discuss their plans.

The Clerk expanded on the disappointing response from the Football Federation with respect to their grant application for Changing Room improvements but emphasised that it did not constitute a refusal. It was agreed to discuss the required improvements at the next Amenities meeting.

FC 24.18 **COMMUNITY LED PLAN** – The Council noted the draft questionnaire, which had been circulated to all members. Cllr Lewis invited any comments be sent to her for consideration by the Steering Committee and advised the questionnaire would be finalised at the next meeting on 13 March 2018 in Christchurch, to which all Council members were invited.

It was noted that there would be a separate youth questionnaire and it was suggested that a question be added to gauge interest in a new youth club, although the term youth club was agreed to be somewhat outdated and could put young people off.

FC 25.18 **GRANT APPLICATION** – Cllr Clarke declared his interest as a Governor of Oakmeadow School. The Council noted an invitation to attend a meeting at Oakmeadow School on 20 March at 4pm. Cllr Lewis and Cllr Keel agreed to attend with the Clerk if they were available. It was agreed to defer consideration of this application until the next Full Council meeting.

It was noted that the Council had not advertised a deadline for grant applications and had not observed its policy of a single round of grant applications during the last two years. The grant application form downloaded from the Council website was therefore out of date and would be replaced as soon as possible.

FC 26.18 **OUTDOOR GYM** – The Clerk reported that 10 residents had attended the brief drop-in event preceding the meeting and that a number of other residents had commented on Facebook where the drop in session was advertised. Cllr Lewis proposed that the consultation be extended and moved to the library to encourage further responses and this was **resolved**.

The Council discussed the merits of a number of locations, including the Brookfield and Longmeadow and it was suggested by Cllr Howells that the equipment be dual sited. It was **resolved** to bring an analysis of the responses to the next Amenities Committee meeting with recommendations for consideration.

FC 27.18 **LYTH HILL MANAGEMENT SUMMARY** – It was **resolved unanimously** to note and approve the financial report from Shropshire Council detailing the expenditure of Parish grant funding on Lyth Hill maintenance.

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FC 28.18 **INTERNAL AUDIT** – The Council noted the Internal Audit Report dated February 2018 and resolved to revive the Financial Spot Checks that had fallen behind. The Council noted and approved the Statement of Internal Controls circulated with the agenda.

FC 29.18 **GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT** - The Council reviewed a draft General Risk Assessment, which had been revised and updated by the Finance Committee, for approval by Full Council.

It was noted that the Finance Committee had recommended improvements to physical security in the Parish Office and that Lone Working procedures be revised and updated to reduce the high risk identified.

The high risk of holding large reserves was noted and the recommendation that an adequate General Reserves Policy be developed and kept under regular review agreed as an appropriate control measure.

The importance of business continuity was identified by Cllr Clarke, who proposed that the Council develops an Office Manual setting out all current procedures in case the Clerk should become incapacitated. Cllr Lewis seconded the proposal with an amendment that this task be delegated to an assistant and developed over time.

It was agreed to incorporate this additional control into the Risk Assessment. The Council then **unanimously approved** the updated Risk Assessment and the Chairman signed it. The requirement for at least annual review of this document by Full Council was noted.

FC 30.18 **GENERAL RESERVES POLICY** - The draft Reserves Policy developed in consultation with the Finance Committee and circulated with the agenda was proposed by Cllr Breeze, seconded by Cllr Jones and **unanimously approved** by the Council. The Chairman duly signed the policy confirming that **the Council will maintain a general reserve of six months net revenue expenditure which will be held in a readily accessible account with due regard to security, liquidity and yield** and that the policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Furthermore, **the Council will keep a detailed record of earmarked reserves and these shall be kept separately from the revenue accounts.**

At 8:00pm Cllr A Parkhurst arrived and joined the meeting.

FC 31.18 **CCLA DEPOSIT FUND INVESTMENT** – The Council noted receipt of the Key Investor Information circulated with the agenda and noted the availability of the full Prospectus from the Clerk or the CCLA website. It noted that the fund is a low risk investment fund with correspondingly low returns. It was further noted that the Council had received no bank interest whatsoever from its reserves during the year to date.

It was proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded by Cllr Breeze and **resolved unanimously to deposit the General Reserve of £75,000 (50% of NRE) into the CCLA Deposit Fund by the end of March.**

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The Council resolved that two signatories shall be required to operate the account and nominated them to be Cllrs A Parkhurst and J E (Ted) Clarke. The Clerk was authorised to operate the account and be the main contact on the account.

The authorised signatories duly signed the Application Form tabled by the Clerk.

FC 32.18 **UNITY TRUST BANK ACCOUNT** – The Clerk reported that the new accounts with the Unity Trust Bank had been opened and that the authorised signatories should expect to receive confirmation from the bank to their private addresses. Council signatories had authority to View and Authorise transactions set up by the Clerk. It was noted that an initial deposit of **£500** was required to confirm the opening of the account and the transfer of this sum was **authorised unanimously**.

Following confirmation that the account is operating correctly, the Council authorised the transfer of a maximum of **£85,000** from the Earmarked Reserves account into the Unity Trust Bank.

FC 33.18 **MEMORIAL TREE** - The Council considered a request to plant a memorial tree in the Community Woodland in memory of a close friend and suggested two native varieties. The Council authorised Cllr Whittall to plant either or both trees and Cllr Parkhurst confirmed he could arrange for a suitable dedication to be inscribed in the memorial book kept for the purpose in the Parish Office.

FC 34.18 **TRAINING & CODE OF CONDUCT** – The Council was reminded of its obligations under the Members Code of Conduct and that each member had an obligation to sign the file in the Parish Office confirming their acceptance of the Council’s Code. Cllr Parkhurst suggested that each member be encouraged to sign the Code of Conduct annually and that members receive regular training to update them on the Code of Conduct, particularly in view of the forthcoming review of Local Government Ethical Standards being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

It was further proposed that a dedicated training session on the Code of Conduct be arranged in the Memorial Hall to enable as many members as possible to attend. It was noted that the training session delivered by Graham White to the SALC Area Committee recently would suit the needs of the Council and it was **resolved unanimously to arrange for Code of Conduct training to be delivered as soon as possible and to be repeated annually**. Members were urged to make every effort to attend.

The list of SALC training sessions in 2018 were noted by the Council and it was **resolved** that any additional training needs required by members be notified to the Clerk who was authorised to make the necessary arrangements..

FC 35.18 **APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS** - It was **resolved unanimously** to authorise payments 277 to 282 listed on the schedule tabled by the Clerk together with the direct debit payments numbered 285 - 287. It was further resolved to authorise an additional payment of £8.41 to EB Smith (reference 284) and to

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authorise the transfer of £500 into the Unity Trust Bank (per minute FC 32.18). It was resolved to withhold payment of 283 until the end date of the Glebefield lease had been confirmed. The salary and other statutory payments becoming due on 28 February were authorised in retrospect.

FC36.18 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC** – It was resolved unanimously to exclude the press and public to discuss confidential matters.

FC37.18 **CONFIDENTIAL REPORT** – This report was deferred to the next Full Council meeting as it had not yet been concluded.

The meeting closed at 8:35pm

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