

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11th AUGUST 2020

The meeting was held remotely using Zoom software.

PRESENT: Cllr. Beck (in the Chair), Fairweather, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Warne.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Smith.

Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

20/20: Internal finance check:

Cllr. Beck confirmed that the internal finance check has been completed and everything was in order.

21/20: Authorisation of payments made after the July meeting:

A list of payments totalling £11,726.01, made after the July meeting is filed with these minutes.

22/20: Transfers of monies between accounts:

Cllr. Beck confirmed that £100,000 had been transferred to the Unity Trust Bank account as an opening balance to facilitate making more of our payments electronically.

23/20: Invoices for Payment:

A list of payments to be made in August had been circulated for approval, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. It was proposed by Cllr. Beck, seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed to authorise the payments. Two members are required to logon onto the account and authorise the payments.

These included:

Policy and Resources	£8,086.68
Burial and Properties	£1,418.47
Environmental Management	<u>£5,874.74</u>

Total **£15,379.89**

24/20: Staffing:

Cllr. Fletcher reported that the additional Deputy Clerk had been appointed. The successful candidate was Clare Bezuidenhout, a local person who would be coming to us from the St. Dunstan's Church office. She would be contracted to work 32 hours a week and had agreed to undertake the CiLCA qualification. It was hoped she would be attending the Full Council meeting where she could be introduced to all Members.

The Members discussed the necessity to increase the office equipment to include another PC. The Clerk would speak to our IT support to obtain a quote.

Members also discussed the purchase of new suits for all three members of the office staff. It was felt that this would encourage a corporate image and although it was not necessary for the Clerks to wear them every day it would promote a professional look. It was proposed by Cllr. Fairweather, seconded by Cllr. Warne and agreed that new suits for the Clerks should be purchased. The Clerk would seek authorisation for the expenditure from the Chairman prior to placing any order.

25/20: Tennis Club:

Cllr. Beck had spoken to Will Addis regarding their attempt to seek grant funding from Sports England and a possible need to amend the current lease. Cllr. Beck will be arranging a meeting with the new Chairman David Leckie, to discuss the options and will report back to this Committee.

Cllr. Fletcher confirmed there is no further information regarding the Weald Sports Centre tennis courts. Cllr. Fairweather advised that the Borough was working with Fusion to reopen the Sports Centre, however these decisions were outside of our control.

26/20: Bedgebury Forest Park Lane Parking Bays:

Cllr. Fletcher declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Pinetum.

As a trustee he was able to explain the current situation which had arisen from Forestry England's decision to close the parking bays located on Park Lane. As more and more people had become aware there were no parking charges applicable, there were no longer sufficient spaces to meet the growing demand. This had resulted in vehicles parking outside the marked bays and on occasion blocking Park Lane residents' access to their own properties.

The Parish Council had received several emails from both residents of Park Lane that supported the closure of the free parking bays and from local residents that had historically used the parking bays for access to the public footpath and that side of the forest.

Forestry England have consulted with Park Lane residents, the results of which are available to view on the DEFRA website. They are now asking for local Parish Council views.

Patrick West the Bedgebury Manager, had offered to meet with councillors onsite to discuss the options. It was agreed that in order to understand the issues from all sides and to suggest a possible solution, an onsite meeting was essential. Cllrs. Beck, Fletcher and Gilbert offered to attend a site meeting with Patrick West. It was also agreed they would be delegated the responsibility to put forward the views of the Parish Council on this matter.

27/20: Website Accessibility:

The Clerk confirmed we had received two quotes from our current website provider, to update the website to meet the new regulations. The first at £1,300 to enable compliance and to produce an Accessibility Statement. The second at £6,300 which would include converting the 173 PDF's published after September 2018 to html with appropriate tagging, a much more time-consuming exercise. This could be seen as a disproportionate burden and providing this is explained in our Accessibility Statement, it should be in their opinion be sufficient. None of the Committee felt they were adequately experienced or had sufficient knowledge to make this decision, therefore Cllrs. Pethurst and Hatcher would be asked to comment on the proposals at the Full Council meeting when these minutes are discussed.

It was also agreed to ask our current website provider, IT Planning, to send monthly Google Analytics reports as our previous provider had done.

28/20: Grant Applications:

a) A grant application had been received from the organiser of the Cranbrook Farmer's Market requesting £75.20, along with a spreadsheet of their accounts. Audited accounts had not been provided. Members did appreciate that many smaller organisations are not required to have their accounts audited. It was agreed to defer a decision until the applicant could provide sufficient bank statements in support of the accounts provided.

29/20: Items for Information:

a) Cllr. Fletcher reported he had received a list of useful suggestions from a parishioner on ways in which to improve the level of feedback we have received on the Community Centre. He had taken this on board and would be writing a piece for the next edition of Parish Cake.

b) Cllr. Gilbert referred to the white paper on planning reform. Cllr. Warne advised that TWBC would be looking to assist Parish Council's in their responses to the Government's three consultations on reform of the planning system. Cllr. Fletcher advised that TWBC had already invited Parish Chairmen, Chairmen of Planning Committee's and NDP's to a meeting to discuss the emerging Local Plan and other Planning Policy matters.