

TIBBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATEGY and FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY 2nd AUGUST 2023, 7.30PM at

TIBBERTON PARISH HALL, PLOUGH ROAD, WR9 7NQ.

Committee Members present: Cllr Robbie Hazlehurst, Chairman
Cllr Trevor Knight
Cllr Liz Morton

Cllr Helen Savage

Committee Members absent: All present.

In attendance: Cllr Margaret Rowley,
Rachel Hinton-Jones, Clerk & Gill Lungley, Support Officer

1. Chairman's welcome.

All were welcomed to the meeting.

2. To receive and note apologies for absence. No apologies required.

3. Declarations of interest.

Cllr H Savage declared a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) in agenda item 9 (minute no. 9) on the grounds that her husband has submitted a bid to take on the Lengthsman's contract.

4. Written requests for dispensation.

No requests for dispensation had been received.

5. To hear from members of the public. There was no request to speak.

6. To agree the minutes of the previous committee meeting held 05/07/2023.

The minutes of the meeting held 05/07/2023 were **AGREED** a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

7. To discuss and recommend where appropriate:

A. The SmartWater project and recommend uptake.

SmartWater is a product used for protecting valuable articles; if the marked items are recovered after being stolen, they can be easily traced back to the owner. The blanket use of SmartWater in a community acts as a deterrent to acquisitive crime meaning felons will be less likely to operate in known SmartWater areas, thus signage is important.

Following the presentation by West Mercia Police at the recent council meeting and having considered the terms of the funding support provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) it was **AGREED to recommend to the full council** to purchase 166 SmartWater kits using the CIL funding. With match-funding from the OPCC this would be increased to 222 kits and associated signage. The cost to the parish council will be £1,481.85. Details for the roll out of the kits to each household would be firmed up in due course.

Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s31.

B. Solar Powered vehicle-speed warning indicators.

The Chairman reported that the county councillor has offered to purchase a solar-powered vehicle-speed warning indicator for Tibberton. The proposal to purchase a second pole so that the indicator may be moved between two sites was **AGREED for recommendation to the full council**.

A meeting is to be arranged between members of this council and the county councillor.

8. To review the Asset Register.

A. template had been prepared which would be built upon to represent a complete picture of the community's public assets, not only those owned by the parish council.

9. Appointment of Lengthsman.

Having declared a DPI, Cllr H Savage left the meeting.

Three bids had been received of which that from experienced Lengthsman Jeremy Moore was deemed the most acceptable at this time and he would be contacted to take on the contract. It was **AGREED** to appoint Jeremy Moore as the council's Lengthsman.

Cllr H Savage rejoined the meeting.

10. To approve the following policies:

- a) **Health and Safety**, with amendment to cover responsibility for employees, councillors and volunteers working on council business.
- b) **Sickness Absence**, subject to clarification of SSP.
- c) **Grievance**.
- d) **Disciplinary**.
- e) **Equality and Diversity**.
- f) **Scheme of Delegation**, as amended to include delegation of urgent matters to the

Strategy and Finance Committee and spending authority in such instances up to £2,000.

To also include wording to support, where the Clerk agrees, correspondence from the Chairman and / or Vice-Chairman to expedite and aid the progress of council business. **g)**

Investment.

All were **AGREED** and are subject to the approved policy review calendar.

11. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Action Plan.

The internal Auditor's recommendations, numbered 1 – 5, were reviewed:

Recommendation 1. The Council undertake a comprehensive review of its financial control systems, introducing arrangements that ensure there is:

- effective controls to manage the Councils financial risks.
- compliance with the Councils Financial Regulations.

The Council develops policies and associated process appropriate to the Councils size and its activities in support of its governance and administration arrangements.

It was AGREED to continue to monitor risk throughout the year and carry out six-monthly reviews, with the next one in December.

Recommendation 2. The Council formally establishes its position in respect of the 'old' Village Hall and respond appropriately.

It was AGREED to review all documents available and contact relevant bodies to sort out the confusion over ownership. Cllr M Rowley provided relevant paperwork.

Recommendation 3. The Council has recently introduced risk management arrangements, during 2023-24 the control processes need to be fully established with the effectiveness of those controls, and compliance with them, being assured, evidenced and reported. **It was AGREED** to attend to this in December.

Recommendation 4. The Council introduce a Reserves policy that identifies earmarked reserves (for specific projects and specific projected costs) with the balance being held as general reserves. The general reserves being set in the policy (a percentage of the years expenditure, see JPAG guidance). The level of reserves should be a factor when setting the coming year's budget and precept.

It was AGREED to adopt a policy at the next meeting of this committee.

Recommendation 5. The Council reviews its Asset Register and the arrangements operating to ensure the effective management of its assets, including inspections and associated record keeping.

It was noted that a start has been made on this task.

Arising from the responses provided in the AGAR Annual Governance Statement, the council had undertaken to contract-out payroll. **It was AGREED** to appoint Three Counties Payroll to undertake the monthly payroll duties for an initial period of one year. They would also be asked to rectify the outstanding matters relating to the council's PAYE returns since July 2015.

On the matter of sector-specific bookkeeping software, **it was AGREED** to defer any decision on this whilst the new Clerk gets acquainted with the current bookkeeping system.

It was noted the next council meeting will be required to appoint the Internal Auditor for the 2023/24 financial year.

12. To discuss the budget for three years 2024 – 2027.

This item deferred to the committee meeting in October.

13. New Village Hall update.

- a) **Lease revision.** Members of both Tibberton Community Land Trust (TCLT) and the parish council had met to discuss a way forward and produce an amended document agreeable to both parties. A meeting is to be arranged with the council's solicitor to draft a clean document to issue to the TCLT's solicitor for signing.
- b) **Start-up budget.** The TCLT could apply for funding from the Wychavon Rural Fund to add to the £25,000 promised from the old village hall funds and its own funds of £5,000.
- c) **Equipment requirements.** The initial budget would have included the VAT reclaimed on building costs and this would be used to fund the equipment required in the new hall. A list of items was circulated.
- d) **Works required pre-handover to TCLT.** It was noted there were some matters that required attention from the original builder before the building could be handed over and a meeting is to be arranged.

It was also noted that two outside taps were required, especially important to ensure the newly laid turf is to thrive over the summer months. This was considered of such importance that it was **AGREED** to carry out the installation of two external taps as a matter of urgency, having reference to the council's Financial Regulations 4.1 and purchase the related equipment such as hose pipes.

14. Identify possible applicants for the Wychavon Rural Fund.

TCLT attention would be drawn to this.

15. Items for discussion at next meeting.

To be advised.

16. Date and time of next meeting.

The date of the next meeting would be held on a date before the next council meeting.

This meeting ended at 9.53pm.

Signed as a true record: BY Robbie Hazelhurst @ S&F Meeting held on Thursday 12/10/23.

Chair, Strategy and Finance Committee

Date: 12/10/23