

BISHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE BISHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3rd April 2019 at Underwood Community Centre.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Underwood Allotments

A number of representatives who held allotments at Underwood raised issues for discussion and points to be addressed.

Ahead of the discussion, Councillor Mike Hillman declared his interest in Underwood Allotments.

- i. The representatives first of all pointed out that the resurfacing of the car park was a great success. However, the track to the car park had been damaged during the work and that vehicular access was now a problem, especially during wet weather. The issue had previously been recognised by the Council and that Councillor Jennick had been investigating how the issue could be resolved.

AP1(3/4/19) – Councillor Jennick to investigate the issue of the damaged track.

- ii. Concern was strongly expressed by representatives about rat infestation at the allotments. It was recognised by all that the presence of chickens running free over the allotments and their feed being easily accessible was the major contribution to attracting the rat population. The Clerk highlighted that this issue was covered within the Allotment Agreement signed by all allotment holders in that it is the responsibility of the plot holder(s) with chickens to ensure appropriate pest control measures are taken. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to plot holders with chickens accordingly. It was further agreed that the issue would be added to the May 1st Monthly Meeting to review progress on reducing the rat infestation.

AP2(3/4/19) – Clerk to write to allotment plot holders with chickens to ensure pest control measures are implemented as a matter of urgency.

AP3(3/4/19) – Clerk to include agenda item to review progress on reduction of the rat infestation at May 1st Monthly Meeting.

PRESENT

Councillors Gill Burton (Chair), Keith Boot, John Davies, Rob Hepworth, Mike Hillman, Craig Johnson, Ian Long and Reg Southall (Clerk).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Anke Hillman, Georgina Jennick, Ben Rice and Graham Watts.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Hillman declared his interest in Underwood Allotments.

Councillor Davies declared his interest in issues regarding staff employment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINUTES AND ACTION POINTS OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Monthly Meeting held Wednesday 6th March 2019, having been previously circulated to all Councillors and published on the Council website, were approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

The Action Point list was also reviewed and it was agreed that AP13(Councillors to inform Clerk in writing if they don't wish to receive mandated payment) to be raised again during the January 2010 Monthly Meeting ahead of March 2020 implementation. AP4(3/4/19) – Clerk to include agenda item for the January 2020 Monthly Meeting to review the issue of mandated Councillor payments.

A – PLANNING

No planning issues

B – FINANCE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

B001/3.4.19 Monthly Financial Statement

The monthly financial statement for February presented by the Clerk was agreed by the Meeting. The Clerk presented an updated monthly statement format which would be used from March 2019 onwards which categorised spend more accurately for better financial budgeting. It was also confirmed that a redacted monthly financial statement would be published on website along with the monthly minutes.

It was recognised that interest from the Council's Bank Saving Account was relatively low. It was agreed by the Meeting that the issue should be remitted to the Finance Working Group to investigate potential alternative investment opportunities.

AP5(3/4/19) – Clerk to include a review of investment opportunities as an agenda item for the April 2019 Finance Working Group Meeting.

B002/3.4.19 2018/19 Audit and End-Year Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk presented the 2018/19 end of year bank reconciliation which was signed off by the Chair. The Clerk also confirmed that the financial reserves to carry into 2019/20 would be £32,991.

The Clerk also gave details to the Meeting of the planned audit timetable which would see the internal audit completed during May 2019, the Governance Statement and Annual Return presented to Council at the June 2019 Monthly Meeting and returned to external auditors by July 2019.

B003/3.4.19 Savings Working Group (update)

Councillor Boot who is leading on this initiative gave feedback on progress to date of identifying potential cash savings for the Council. A team comprising Councillors Boot, Anke Hillman, Mike Hillman and Davies had met on two occasions and produced a draft set of recommendations for the Council to explore. Councillor Boot took the opportunity to thank those Councillors involved for their hard work and valuable input in producing the draft recommendations. The draft recommendations comprised the following:

- i. That the window cleaning at Underwood Community Centre be cancelled after April 2019 until further notice. This was agreed by the Meeting.

- ii. That the Council considers putting a budget cap of £600 per annum on the cost of cleaning and associated products.
- iii. That the Council strictly applies the £700 allocated for the annual awards evening and considers having trophies for winners and runners-up only, and that a slide show of the entries be displayed on the evening rather than a printed photographs display.
- iv. That given the relatively high cost of printer consumables, Monthly Meetings to go paperless with the responsibility falling to Councillors to produce printed copies of documents. It was also proposed that an alternative laser printing facility for the Clerk be investigated to reduce costs.
- v. An investigation of utility bills had identified that almost 33% of energy costs had been incurred by the changing rooms at Underwood playing fields, possibly the result of incorrect setting being applied. It was proposed that in future, nominated individuals would have responsibility for meter readings at the Council sites to ensure that accurate quarterly energy bills were produced.
- vi. That the payroll service contract not be renewed and the responsibility for running the payroll to rest with the Clerk.
- vii. The maintenance of the Bishton Play Park was reviewed. However, investigation of alternative options identified that maintaining the current contract with Newport City Council was the only practicable way forward.

AP6(3/4/19) – Clerk to renew Bishton Play Park maintenance contract with Newport City Council.

- viii. That the hourly rental costs of Underwood Community Centre and Bishton Village Hall be increased by 50p.
- ix. That no grants or donations to be made until September 2019. At this point a review of the financial position to be undertaken to ensure that the £1,000 allocated is still affordable.
- x. That a thorough review of employee holiday pay entitlements be undertaken. This issue was discussed under agenda item B005/3.4.19 (Bishton Community Council Employee Salaries).

B004/3.4.19 Chair's Purse 2019/20

The Meeting agreed that the Chair's Purse of £100 would be continued for 2019/20 with the Clerk to monitor spend against the budget allocation.

B005/3.4.19 Bishton Community Council Employee Salaries

Councillor Davies retired from the Meeting before employee wages was discussed and in so doing avoided any conflict of interest. The Meeting agreed that employees should, as a minimum, be in receipt of the Real Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation. Accordingly, the wages of the caretakers to be increased from £8.75 per hour to £9.00 per hour from 1st April 2019.

Before the next item regarding employee holiday pay was discussed, the Clerk offered to retire from the Meeting as there could be a perceived conflict of interest. However, as no decisions were being made and this was an issue for discussion only, the Meeting agreed it would be appropriate for the Clerk to remain and answer questions on the current arrangements. Following discussion, the consensus from the Meeting was that the current holiday pay arrangements for 2018/19 would need to be honoured. However, the arrangements would be reviewed moving forward in light of statutory requirements and employment contracts amended accordingly.

AP7(3/4/19) – Clerk to contact One Voice Wales for a view on employee holiday pay arrangements.

AP8(3/4/19) – Clerk to calculate number of holiday pay hours for employees and forward to payroll service provider for payment.

The Meeting was informed that one of the caretakers had recently undergone an operation and was undergoing a period of recuperation. The Meeting agreed that flowers should be sent to the employee along with the Council’s best wishes. It was agreed that this was to be funded from the Chair’s Purse.

AP9(3/4/19) – Clerk to arrange for delivery of flowers to caretaker.

B006/3.4.19 Asset Management Plan

The Meeting briefly discussed a new policy on asset management. This document supports the recently developed Asset Register and inventory for insurance purposes, along with a Fixed Asset Register for audit purposes. The Meeting agreed that the document should be implemented accordingly.

C – LEISURE AND AMENITIES

C001/3.4.19 Extension to Gymnasium (update)

Held over to the May Monthly Meeting

C002/3.4.19 Tree liabilities

Councillor Johnson informed the Meeting that he had been provided with an initial quote for cutting down the tree struck by lightning at the Underwood playing fields which was significantly higher than anticipated. In light of this, it was agreed that Councillor Johnson should seek additional quotes for cutting down and removal of the damaged tree.

AP10(3/4/19) – Councillor Johnson to obtain quotes for cutting down and removal of damaged tree at Underwood playing fields.

C003/3.4.19 Communication Working Group (update)

Held over to the May Monthly Meeting.

C004/3.4.19 Proposed Railway Work Adjacent to Llanwern Steelworks (update)

Held over to the May Monthly Meeting.

D – HIGHWAYS AND UTILITIES

E – FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 1st May 2019 at Bishton Village Hall.

The next Finance Working Group Meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 16th April 2019 at Bishton Village Hall.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of Council