



Minutes of the Parish Council Tuesday 9 March 2021

101 / 20 Attendance and Apologies for absence

Attendance: Cllr Buxton (Chairman); Cllr Jacklin (Vice-Chairman); Cllr Biggs; Cllr Booth; Cllr Burn; Cllr Evans; Cllr Grover; Cllr Penney; Cllr Pike and Cllr Sayer

Apologies for absence: Cllr Christine Bateson (RBWM Borough Councillor)

Present: Ruth Davies (Clerk)

There were 3 members of the public present. Their details are recorded in line with GDPRs.

The Chairman requested approval from the council to move agenda item 110/20 to after the approval of the minutes so that PC Michelle Race could address the council and then leave.

RESOLVED: To **approve** amendment to the agenda as proposed.

102 / 20 Declaration of interest for items on the agenda

Cllr Pike declared a Personal Interest in item 110/20 and confirmed she would not participate in the meeting at that point.

103 / 20 Approval of Minutes of Council of 9 February 2021 and 2 March 2021

The council **resolved to approve** the minutes and they will be signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of the meeting once the Clerk and Chairman meet.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

110 / 20 To receive a funding request from Thames Valley Police for an ANPR camera.

The Clerk turned off via the zoom app Cllr Pike's video due to her declared personal interest and promoted PC Michelle Race to a panellist for this agenda item.

PC Michelle Race provided the council with background and information on the reasons why TVP were seeking this funding and the benefits to the residents.

A discussion took place with all council members being given the opportunity to ask questions. Due to several questions which were not provided in the meeting the council agreed the following:

RESOLVED: To return the proposal to the Finance Committee to confirm the funds to be used in connection with this; the local government power to make the payment and whether this should be a RBWM funded item.

The Chairman thanked PC Michelle Race for her time to attend. PC Michelle Race left the meeting at this point.

The Clerk requested via the zoom app that Cllr Pike turned on her video. Cllr Pike re-joined the meeting.

104 / 20 Announcements from the Chairman

The Chairman updated council on the great success in the litter project which the council funded the equipment for and many pictures were available on local Facebook pages.

The Chairman reminded council that the RBWM Library consultation was still ongoing until the 30 April 2021 and would have significant implications on Sunningdale.

The Chairman explained to council the Local Government regulations (*Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Part 3, point 14.1 and 14.2; Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Part 3, point 15.1*) regarding the calling and holding of the Annual Assembly of the Parish Meeting, more commonly referred to as the Annual Parish Meeting, or Annual Electors Meeting. The Chairman explained that due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the only way in which the meeting could take place would be via Zoom. The council **resolved** that the council would once again not hold the meeting in the period between 1 March and 1 June and would hold a community event later in the year when this could be done in a face-to-face environment.

The Chairman brought forward the proposed names for the streets in Sunningdale Park. There were no comments made by the council.

RESOLVED: To accept the suggestions which were: Madeira Walk; Crimson Avenue; Linnet Drive; Ashcroft Way; and Holly Hill Drive.

105 / 20 Public Adjournment

The Chairman acknowledged the attendance of a member of the public and their wish to ask questions however repeated the request made on 3 separate occasions for a response to direct emails sent before questions would be received from this person.

There were no new questions submitted prior to the meeting.

There were no new questions submitted in the meeting.

There was a question due for response from the meeting on the 9 February 2021. The full question and response provided are [appended](#) to these minutes.

106 / 20 Councillors Questions and Business Motions

The Chairman confirmed:

- There were no business motions brought forward.
- There were no questions from previous meetings to be answered.
- There were no new questions submitted prior to the meeting.

The Chairman invited council members present to raise questions.

Cllr Pike asked if there was any material provided for the training taking place on Wednesday 10 March? The Chairman stated there was not, however the training commenced at 7pm prompt.

107 / 20 Business from previous meetings

The council received a verbal update from the Clerk about the numbers of users of the recreation ground and playground. These were increasing due to the good weather and the gradual lifting of restrictions; therefore, the car park would once again be fully opened in the coming days.

The council received the letter sent on behalf of the council by Cllr Biggs to RBWM regarding their consultation on Cycling and Walking and a verbal update from Cllr Biggs on the progress so far in establishing a working group to prioritise projects within Sunningdale and Sunninghill and Ascot.

Cllr Pike questioned whether cycle lanes on the A30 had been discussed?

Cllr Biggs confirmed that the project priorities were yet to be set and these would initially come from the list of already identified projects by RBWM and the parishes, and whilst cycle lanes had not been put forward, this did not mean they would not be reviewed.

108 / 20 Presentation of Committee Minutes, reports from Representatives and proposals from Working Groups.

Cllr Jacklin presented an overview of the Operations Committee minutes of 16 February 2021 and highlighted:

- The documentation review has been delayed due to other events happening out of the council's control. For example, the Code of Conduct which has been reviewed is now potentially not the code to be used by RBWM as they propose to move to the LGA new model code written in the first person.
- HR Policies and Procedures due to be sent out for review have been delayed as they are being reviewed by Croner under the council's HR contract and we have been notified that they have some amendments to make.
- The Council Committee Structure was reviewed, and comments received, however identification of the scope of work involved in Clerking committees has prompted a further review to see how the tasks can be split between the existing committee structure. This will return to council once the Operations Committee has completed this review.
- Work on the Business Plan sent to the Operations Committee will return to full council for discussion based upon a framework which has been brought together by a working group of councillors. This will take place when the time is available.
- The resident's survey will continue to be delivered by Cllr Sayer assisted by the Clerk.

Cllr Booth presented an overview of the minutes of the Finance Committee 16 February 2021 and highlighted the following:

- The query re FC48/20 on the disparity between the income and expenditure figures as highlighted in council then finance committee was identified as being due to the removal of the VAT income and expenditure in the report to Finance.
- There were no other areas to highlight.

Cllr Booth brought forward the Risk Register, noting the added risks for COVID-19 which were mitigated by the actions taken meaning that none of the residual risks were assessed higher than low.

RESOLVED: To **approve** the council risk register as presented.

Cllr Booth brought forward the Investment Policy and requested this was returned to the Finance Committee for additional amendments.

RESOLVED: To **approve** the return of the policy to the Finance Committee.

Cllr Booth brought forward the Internal Audit Report January 2021 and highlighted the actions which the council had been requested to make. These were confirmed as:

- The council bank reconciliation to be signed off by a councillor who was not a bank signee.
- The financial regulations to be aligned with the NALC template.
- The council investment strategy to be agreed.

109 / 20 To receive NALC information in relation to the resuming of face-to-face meetings.

The Chairman requested that all council members responded to the Clerk by 22 March with any concerns or comments regarding the briefing document from NALC. After this time, the Chairman and the Clerk would put together a plan for the council for meetings for the coming council year.

111 / 20 Finance Report

The council received the Finance Report presented by the Clerk/RFO with the following question:

- Cllr Booth questioned when the full audit reports would be received for the AGARs 2018 2019 and 2019 2020, now that the council had received the outcome of the objection to audit. The Clerk confirmed these were due on weekly runs, so they were expected at the end of this week.

The council **received** and **reviewed** the receipts and payments for February 2021.

RESOLVED: To **approve** the February 2021 receipts and payments.

112 / 20 Information Sharing.

Cllr Sayer informed the council of the fund raising by Charters School. The Chairman asked that Cllr Sayer sent this information to the Finance Committee for review.

There were no further items brought forward.

113 / 20 To resolve exclusion of members of the public and press in accordance with the applicable Legislation for the following PART II Agenda.

RESOLVED: To **approve** the exclusion of members of the public from the PART II of the meeting.

The members of the public were removed from the zoom meeting and the Chairman closed PART I of the meeting at 8:52pm.

Appendices

Question received from a member of the public at the council meeting 9 February 2021:

My question concerns the budget for the upcoming year commencing 1 April 2021. The only information released to the public is that the value of the precept demand to the Borough is £194 303, 1% higher than last years. The income/expenditure balance is provided by the calculation at the top of the "Budgets and Precept" section of the Financial Information part of the SPC website. However, the "Movement to Reserves figure of £61,934 should be increased to £68,934 to balance the expenditure figures, thus adding a further £7000 to reserve, which will 31st March 2021 will have reached £376,000. Without having had sight of next year's budget it is difficult to comprehend the reason for maintaining a very similar level of precept and acquire a further £70,000 increase in reserves. Please clarify.

Response provided by Cllr Booth, Chairman of the Finance Committee on Thursday 4 March 2021:

In your request for clarification, you addressed the budgets for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

2020/21

You referred to the financial information on the Parish Council website and contended that the stated reserves transfer should be £68,934 not £61,934.

You were correct in suggesting that there was an error in the figures. However, the error was that the expenditure, not the reserves transfer, was understated by £7,000. This has been corrected and thank you for drawing this to our attention.

You stated that the reserves would reach £376,000 by 31 March 2021.

Presumably, you have arrived at your figure of £376,000 by adding what you believed to be the reserves transfer (£68,934) to the opening total reserves figure of £310,545.

That takes no account of the outcome for 2020/21 which is still not known, and which will be subject to, inter alia, normal operating uncertainties, actual reserves transfers and receipts and expenditure of section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") funds.

When determining the precept for 2021/22 the Council took these factors into account and at that time it was forecast that aggregate reserves would be £405,963 on 31 March 2021, being £95,993 general reserves, £136,647 ear-marked reserves, and £173,323 section 106/ CIL reserves.

2021/22

You queried why it was necessary to maintain the precept at a very similar level to 2020/21 and to increase reserves by a further £70,000.

Wherever possible it is the Council's policy to stabilise the precept demand from year to year.

This means planning ahead and over time setting aside funds where significant expenditure is expected at some point in the future. This policy is intended to avoid extreme fluctuations in the precept.

A good example of where this is appropriate is the resurfacing of the tennis courts. The same also applies to inter alia the replacement of the recreation ground equipment, cemetery provision and maintenance of the Council's properties.

As a matter of prudence and part of the annual budget-setting process the Council reviews the need to ear-mark reserves for specific purposes and determines how much should be transferred to reserves on account of such future liabilities. That amount will not always be the same and indeed once appropriate reserves have been established for any given purpose no further transfers would be required in that particular case.

In considering the Council's overall reserves it is important to distinguish between general reserves, ear-marked reserves and section 106/CIL reserves.

At 31 March 2020 the Council's detailed accounts, which can be found on its website, showed total reserves of £310,545 comprising general reserves of £82,774, ear-marked reserves of £100,738 and section 106/CIL reserves of £127,033.

The general reserves are broadly in line with generally accepted guidance. They are there to ensure the Council does not run out of money in the event of unexpected events. The Covid-19 pandemic is a good example.

The ear-marked reserves are set up for specific purposes, examples of which are given above.

The section 106/CIL reserves relate to funds received but not yet spent. They are only available for specific restricted purposes and in certain instances they are liable to be returned if not spent. They are not therefore part of the Council's free reserves.

The precept for 2021/22 was arrived at after taking into account the anticipated income and expenditure for that year and the need to manage the reserves on the basis described above. The survey to be carried out this spring will assist the Council in establishing spending needs and priorities for the future.