

Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 21st May 2007 at 7:30pm, Benson Parish Hall Committee Room

Present: Cllr B. Pattison (Chairman)
Cllr J. Fowler (Vice Chairman)
Cllr I. Leppard
Cllr E. Leppard

Finance Officer: Mrs E. Lemaire

Members of the Public: None

1. Apologies: Cllr N. Bailey

2. Budget Monitoring:

Councilors reviewed a report detailing and showing the variance between 2006/07 budget and 2006/07 actual income/expenditure.

The report to be given to councilors and reviewed at the full meeting on Thursday 24th May 2007 under budget monitoring. The finance committee to **recommend to full council** acceptance of these final figures.

The Finance officer to prepare an up to date report detailing income/expenditure to date against 2007/08 budget.

3. To recommend the signing of sections 1 & 2 of the Audit Commission Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2007

This to be dealt with at the meeting on Thursday 24th May 2007.

4. Any other items to note

Parish Hall entrance repaving – a quote has come in for this work from Mel Cross to block pave an area of 22m² at a cost of £1,100. The finance committee believes that this is a good quote and would like the work done as soon as possible. Clerk to check through other quotes requested and received (how many and prices) for this work before decision can be made and work can commence.

Allotments – Cllrs Leppard have inspected the allotment site between St. Helen's Avenue & A4074, and the area that is undergoing clearance by Gilbert Hobbs. There has been a vast amount of rubbish dumped on the site over the years and Cllrs Leppard feel that Mr. Hobbs will cost the money he has quoted to do the job and perhaps more. It might be necessary for him to get a skip on site. Amongst the rubbish are items such as trailers that may have been there for ten years or so. It will be necessary for all such items to be removed.

Cllrs Leppard noticed that several of the allotments backing on to the site being cleared had actually expanded and spread over their boundaries. Once the site has been cleared, the allotments will need to be re-measured and straightened.

The Parish Clerk is to write to the allotment holders informing them of the clearance works, requesting that anyone owning any items being stored on the site (e.g. trailers) remove their belongings and inform that the allotments will be re-measured and put back to their correct sizes once the work has been completed.

Laminated signs are to be placed on items stored on the site – “if this is your property, please contact the parish office or else it will be removed”

The parish office is currently trying to get hold of the internal auditor of Chinnor Parish Council to ask if he would be able to come to Benson.

The Lands committee needs to meet to have a look at where would be an appropriate place in the village centre to locate a bench in the memory of Peter Horner. It has been suggested that it be placed in the corner close to the bike rack; however, this is the site of the Christmas tree and is not suitable. Another possibility is the other side of the road (Butcher's side) at the bus stop for people waiting for a bus. In the past, residents of that area have been opposed to a bus shelter in this position, as it would block their light. This pavement is Oxfordshire County Council land so permission would need to be sought from Highways for a bench here.

5. Appointment of Parish Clerk

The councilors each received a schedule summarizing the applicants for the position of parish clerk for the purpose of writing their comments after reading the applications. A total of seven applications were received and were laid on the table for the councilors to circulate and read. The chairman asked the councilors to consider that since the Parish Council aims to become a Quality Council, the right applicant for the job would need to be someone who would be prepared to undertake the necessary studying in order to achieve this. The parish office is to look into whether it is required that the parish clerk undertakes the studying or if an officer of the council may do so.

The councillorship decided that if after short listing and interviewing they feel that there are no suitable candidates for the position, the position would be re-advertised.

The councilors studied the applications, compared their notes and decided upon three applicants to invite to interview.

Councilors suggested possible questions to ask at interview and the chairman and vice chairman arranged to meet later in the week in order to finalize the questions to ask each candidate and to pick out points from their C.V.'s to discuss.

The interview date was arranged for Tuesday 29th May 2007 from 6.30pm allowing ½ hour for each of the three candidates.

The Parish Clerk is to write to the unsuccessful applicants and the chairman is to contact the successful candidates to arrange their interviews.

The chairman will report to the full council in his chairman's report at the meeting on Thursday 24th May 2007 that short listing has taken place and the finance committee has chosen three applicants to interview for the position. Recommendations to the full council will follow the interviewing procedure.

There being no other business, meeting closed at 9.20pm