

Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 23rd April 2007 at 7:30pm, Benson Parish Hall Committee Room

Present: Cllr B. Pattison (Chairman)
Cllr P. Peers
Cllr M. Spence

Finance Officer: Mrs E. Lemaire

DPS: Mrs T Ellis (8.30 – 9.00pm)

Members of the Public: None

1. Apologies: Cllr J. Fowler (Vice-Chairman)

2. Financial Statements

Fixed Assets: The draft unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2007 were reviewed and the following points were made:

The finance committee is aware that the figure shown for land and properties at the year end is based on an outdated valuation and is therefore not a true reflection of the current values as at 31st March 2007. Simon Alden of Adkins, the land agent acting on behalf of Benson Parish Council is currently in the process of revaluing the land and property of the Parish Council. Once received, the valuation will be incorporated into the financial statements and will be subject to annual review. The financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2008 will show the updated valuation.

Valuations for insurance purposes are also being prepared.

Allocation of precept funds: This is to include an amount of £500 per annum set aside for the purpose of maintenance to the main hall lighting every two years. £500 to be included for 2007/08 and £500 for 2008/09 and maintenance to be first carried out in summer 2008.

Bank: The finance officer is to instigate the setting up of new accounts with the Bank of Ireland once the new councilors are in position. This has already been agreed to and minuted.

3. Rent reviews

Simon Alden is currently preparing commercial rate figures for the Cuckoo Pen rent as this is due for renewal in June 2007.

The Tennis club ground rent of £15 pa should have been increased last year. The finance committee **recommend to the full council** that a letter be written to the tennis club stating that whilst the parish council appreciates that the club is an asset to the community, it is also a business in its own right and the parish council have to be seen to be giving best value and charging a realistic figure for the ground rent. The suggested amount is to increase to £2 per week, subject to annual review.

4. Outstanding projects

a) Rivermead Entrance improvements. Not all quotations received for this work provided enough detail of the work to be carried out. The Splinter Group quotation has the best specification and price. A further quotation to be requested from this company quoting for hardcore and 100mm light tamped concrete in place of the no. 1 type shingle.

- b) Millbrook Mead walkway. Expenditure for this work has been recommended to (finance committee meeting of 15th March 2007 item 3) and agreed by the full council (council meeting of 22nd March 2007 item 12). The path as it stands is dangerous and the work must be stated as soon as possible for health and safety reasons. The work will be carried out by BEST.
- c) Other incomplete projects. Green Close – new play equipment is to be put in funded by i) the £1,534 from the Green Close bank account ii) £6,500 from Michael Shanly Homes and iii) £ 6,000 previously precepted funds.
Parish Hall entrance slabs. This needs to be done as the current slabs are unsafe. In the past, Southern Construction has provided a quote for the work. A new quote is to be sought for brick paviors instead of paving slabs due to the area being driven and parked on by hall hirers. Cllr Peers is seeking a quote, 2 further required.
The dead tree felling at Millbrook Mead is to be carried out on Wednesday 25th April 2007.
Office improvements. Majority of work completed; see recommendation at item 5 re DPS.

5. Annual staff reviews

Designated Premises Supervisor - Tanya Ellis

After discussion with Mrs Ellis, the finance committee decided to **recommend to the full council** that the designated premises supervisor role be expanded and new dedicated halls telephone line that can be diverted to a mobile be put in place for the purpose of managing hall bookings and associated works. All forms and website to be updated to include the new number and the times the number is available (Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm).

Mrs Ellis will present the parish council with an idea of an itinerary of the daily/weekly/monthly/annual tasks required for the running of the halls. The parish office will no longer deal with hall bookings, but details will be communicated by the DPS to the office as necessary i.e. invoicing.

To recommend to Full Council that the DPS is to be an ex-officio member of the halls sub-committee and may take part in confidential discussions.

Mrs Ellis to confirm the date she will commence this extended role, end of May suggested.

Finance committee to **recommend to the full council** that a proper workstation comprising desk, chair and new computer be provided for the DPS.

Responsible Finance Officer – Elizabeth Lemaire

The RFO is satisfied with present conditions and salary, but wishes that the distracting noise of the CCTV equipment be silenced. The finance committee to **recommend to the full council** that solutions to this be investigated.

6. Recruitment of new parish clerk.

The position is to be advertised – around the parish, Wallingford Herald, Clerks journal, Oxford Times and a flyer in Benson Bulletin are possible places to advertise, this week. 2006 advertisements to be used with amended dates. Applications are to be in 14 days after advert displayed and a short listing meeting will be held. Application forms are as 2006, same starting scale as April 2006 (at 2007/08 rate once announced by NJC) with possibility of increase to next scale point at 6 month review.

7. Any other items to note

A summary of the halls running costs against halls income to be prepared and included in the financial statements. This will show if it will be possible to increase only commercial and non-parishioner rates next year, and leave parishioner rates unchanged.

Grass cutting. AD Clerks quote of £5,300 is a large increase on previous years, but a c. £2,000 lower than other quotes received. Berinsfield Community Services to be asked for a quote for next year.

There being no other business, meeting closed at 9.30pm