



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD BY ON 23RD SEPTEMBER 2021

- 1. Present:** Councillors: R. Case (Chairman); R. Campbell;
R. Davies; N. Ingledew; I. Johnston; H. Parker; M. Tye;
B. Walton; T. Walton

Mrs M. Carey (Clerk)
- 2. Apologies:** Councillors: A. Barton; J. Clifford; S. Parker; R. Smith; A. Woollard; D. Wright
The apologies were accepted. In the absence of Cllr Parker, the Chair was taken by Cllr Case
- 3. Public Question Time:** There was one member of the public present.
- 4. Chairman's announcements and declarations of interest:** There were no declarations of interest. The Chairman stated that she had asked for this meeting as a lot of time is spent on discussing how the Council should conduct its business.
- 5. Structure of Committees – clarity on what Committees discussed:**
Cllr Johnston felt that the Highways did not sit properly on the Policy & Finance committee and proposed that this become a separate Committee. This was endorsed by Cllr Davies.
Cllr B. Walton stated that if Committees are to be changed this would have to wait until the Annual Meeting in May next year. It might be that some of the other Committees may not need as many meetings as at present. Cllr H. Parker did not feel that there should be too much workload on the Councillors. Councillor Smith felt that a Highways Committee could feed into the CATG meetings. After discussion it was **recommended** that councillors interested in the Highways issues set up a Working Party in the short term and report back to the Policy & Finance Committee. This would be reviewed in the spring when it could be decided whether there would need to be a full Committee from May. This was carried unanimously

It was asked whether the Climate Working Group should be a separate Committee. Cllr B. Walton felt that this should straddle all of the Committees. The Action Plan (if adopted) should be on every Committee Agenda so that it becomes imbedded in all that the council does.

Other Committees:
It was agreed that there should be no change to the Planning & Conservation Committee.

Cllr Johnston stated that a number of the same items were being discussed on different Committees and all correspondence should go to the correct Committee. The Terms of Reference for Committees need to be specific to what each Committee should deal with.

It was agreed that the Box Hill & Rudloe Open Spaces Committee should remain but this should deal with more than just the play area at Rudloe.

It was agreed that the Playing Fields & Pavilion Management committee remains but Cllr B. Walton would like there to be a lead Councillor for the Pavilion and this will be discussed at the next Committee meeting. She also felt that Working Parties were good as they could bring information back to the Committee.

Cllr Davies stated that this was the only Council to have a Policy & Finance Committee – many other Councils have an Finance & Administration Committee. He stated that if something comes in that it urgent this could be raised at Policy & Finance as it meets every month and felt that this was reasonable.

Cllr T. Walton asked whether the Cemetery Management Committee is needed or maybe it does not need to meet as often as it does. It was agreed that this would be reviewed.

Cllr T. Walton felt that the policies element of the Policy & Finance Committee should be removed. These could be developed by a working group to present to Full Council or could go out to the different Committees to review. Cllr Ingledew felt that all the policies and documents need to be owned by other Committees. . It was considered that this Committee should be looking at the budgets throughout the year and monitoring what is being spent. It could be that the Finance Committee would only need to meeting four times a year. Cllr Davies felt that this committee should be looking to see if something should be done and then budgeting for it. Cllr Johnston reported that he had sat in on the last Policy & Finance Committee and this should be monitoring the budget to be able to say where the Council is at with this.

After further discussion it was **proposed** that the policies are redirected to the appropriate Committees and that from next May this should become the Finance Committee to manage the budget and assist and advise the committees with every aspect of the budget. It would be helpful to look at the policies to filter them out between now and May to the correct Committees. Any urgent correspondence would be taken to the Policy & Finance Committee. This was agreed unanimously.

The non-chair member of the Policy & Finance Committee was discussed. It had been suggested that the non-chair member is rotated but Cllr Davies felt it more appropriate that this stays for one year.

From next May the Finance Committee would be made up of the Chairs of Committee. It was stated that if any Councillor was interested in being on another committee they should be allowed to take part. It was felt that these need to be made more open and accessible to Councillors and don't need to be so closed up as they are and that any councillor can join any committee.

6. Terms of Reference for Committees. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would need to be more specific and show what each Committee was responsible for dealing with. It was agreed that these should be discussed at each Committee meeting. The council buildings need to be allotted to a relevant committee.

7. Expectation of Chairs of Committees: It was agreed that there should be a handover of chairmen. There should be more physical folders /handbook detailing items for each committee. It was agreed that this would go back to the committees to expand on this.

8. Council procedures including review of Standing Orders and how the Parish Council manages co-options; This arose during a recent training session with Katie Fielding from WALC. The issue of a vote by written ballot was raised and she felt that this was unusual and should only be done if it is written in the Standing Orders.

Many of the Councillors felt that the applicants should have been invited to the meeting and it was suggested that a Co-option Policy be drawn up.

It was **recommended** that for any future co-option process the council does not use a written ballot but votes by a show of hands. This will follow Standing Order. This was carried with one abstention.

It was stated that the recent presentation by the By-Brook Conservation Group did not follow procedures and should have been on the Agenda. The Council needs to tighten up on following Standing orders and when a vote is taken it should be decided who will action this and the timescale.

It was **proposed** and agreed that when the parish Council talks about notice boards, it will mean that the website if the primary notice board but the individual notice boards should also be used.

- 9. General Powers of Competence:** This item had been raised by Cllr T. Walton. He explained that this would make the Council more like a business and would enable a Council to do anything that an individual can do. It opens up the powers and takes away restrictions. For example the Parish Council could run a Community Shop or Pub. Cllr Walton had been thinking of the Rudloe Community Centre when he had raised this item. He explained the procedure for this. The Council meets one of the criteria as it had sufficient councillors elected at the recent election. The other criteria would be that the Clerk obtains the necessary qualification. The Clerk stated that she would be willing to undertake this. Information entitled "The General Powers of Competence: An introduction to key facts for local Councils" and "NALC A guide to the local council award scheme" had been circulated to all Councillors

It was felt that this needs more discussion and should involve all Councillors. It was agreed that the information would be recirculated for further discussion in February.

- 10. Zoom meetings:** It was agreed that the cost of equipment needed to use this properly would be considered with the budget. In the meantime it was agreed to cancel the Zoom subscription.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Chairman