



## BOX PARISH COUNCIL

### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

- 1. Present:** Councillors T. Walton (Chair); R. Davies; D. Dorey;  
M. Tye; B. Walton; D. Wright  
R. Bean  
Mrs Carey (Clerk)
- 2. Apologies** Cllr S. Parker  
Her apologies were accepted
- 3. Absence:** Nil
- 4. Public Question Time:** There were no members of the public in attendance
- 5. Chairman's Announcements and Declarations of Interest:**
- 6. Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were taken as read and signed as a true record.

Cllr Bean had raised an issue at the Full Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 under item 9a – draft budget for 2024/25

He had asked that the draft budget be sent out to all councillors before the Finance & Governance meeting when it is discussed and finalised.

The process of the budget setting meeting was explained and it was felt that to circulate the draft budget to everyone at that time might be confusing as it could be altered at the Finance & Governance meeting before a recommendation for its adoption was made.

It was agreed that if any councillors wished to see the draft budget before it was finalised they could ask or it could be circulated to all councillors with a cautionary note that it may change at the Finance & Governance meeting. Any councillor can attend the budget setting meeting.

### **7. Matters Arising/Actions**

- a. **Resilience Plan:** The draft Plan had been sent to Wiltshire Council. Details of the Emergency Contact Hub had been received and it was agreed to put this on the website.  
It was agreed to check that everyone named in the Resilience Plan was happy for their details to be put on the website.
- b. **Jubilee Youth Centre Management Committee:** A draft Agreement will be drawn up.
- c. **Parish Council Carbon Audit:** Cllr H. Parker was proceeding with the second phase of this to cover 2023/2023
- d. **Communications Working Group:**  
The software for parishioners to sign up by email & for the creation of surveys had been set up. This will enable copies of surveys, newsletters etc to be circulated.

## **8. Policy Matters:**

### **a. Review of Policies**

**Freedom of Information Publication Scheme:** The Freedom of Information Publication Scheme was discussed and it was agreed that this needs revising and updating as many of the documents can now be put onto the website and not supplied as a hard copy.

The issue of the classification of commercial contracts as confidential and therefore exempt from any Freedom of Information request was discussed and it was agreed to add “where a third party may gain commercial advantage by seeing the contract”. This would allow some contracts to be available with personal information redacted but a decision would be made on each individual request.

The revision of the whole Publication Scheme will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **b. Protocol for recording an apology by Councillors at Parish Council meetings**

This had been circulated was discussed and agreed with one small addition.

It was **recommended** that the policy be adopted by the Full Council.

### **c. Protocol for dealing with challenging interactions with parishioners:**

This had been circulated and was discussed.

It was **recommended** that the policy be adopted by Full Council

### **d. Display of Councillors' mobile phone numbers:**

Letter received from WALC stating that there is no specific legislation on whether Councillors have to publish their contact details on the Council website but there must be some way to contact the Parish Council – usually through the Clerk as the Proper Officer of the Council. As Councillors, they may wish to have some way for residents to contact them – this could be by email with a dedicated email address or a mobile number (dedicated to council business). Dedicated email addresses are always a good idea, just in case the ICO needs to investigate as they have the power to seize email accounts.

## **9. Financial Matters**

### **a. Clerk's report for period 1.12.23 – 31.1.24/Detailed Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading**

The reports had been circulated and was agreed with three queries that the Clerk would pursue.

### **b. Accounts for payment:** The following payments were submitted and agreed for payment:

<u>BACS</u>			
Salaries	-		6350.31
HM Revenue & Customs	-	PAYE	2944.21
Avon Sportsground Main Co	-	BG contract	770.30
J.H. Jones & Son	-	Cemetery Contract (inc VAT)	816.50
Castle Water	-	Car Park	2.72
Bloom	-	Carbon Audit 2023 data	660.00
Westcare Supply Zone	-	Printer cartridges	138.00
Corsham Property Maintenance	-	Concrete bases for seats on Common	943.93
Wiltshire Council	-	Contributions to LHFIG	1375.00
James Long (Masons) Ltd	-	Repairs to headstones	108.00
Water2Business	-	Rec Grd and Pav	16.80
Greenway Training	-	Assessment in Chainsaw Man	360.00
 <u>Direct debits</u>			
NEST	-	Pension contribution	

Initial Washrooms	-	Feminine Hygiene	36.40
Hills Waste	-	Refuse collection	158.28
bOnline	-	Office	39.53
bOnline	-	Pavilion	31.73
Hitachi (Novuna)	-	Mule Leasehire	
Novuna	-	Mowers Leasehire	396.00
Fuel Card Services	-	Petrol	42.29
Wiltshire Council	-	NDR Car Park	91.00
Wiltshire Council	-	NDR PFs & pavilion	247.00
<u>Standing Order</u>			
T.H. White	-	Mule service contract	
Giffgaff	-	Tablet monthly plan	8.00

- c. **Disposal of the Mule at end of Lease:** The lease on the Mule is due to terminate on 19<sup>th</sup> February on which date the Parish Council has to return it to T.H. White in the condition that it was at the beginning of the lease. The four wheel drive currently needs fixing and a quotation for parts and fittings has been given as £4000.

T.H. White has agreed to extend the lease until the end of February and have offered to sell the vehicle back to the Parish Council at a cost of £4500. The Parish Council could then sell this on to a third party for as much as possible.

It is **recommended** that the Parish Council accepts the offer to buy back the Mule at a cost of £4500

- d. **Capital Asset Strategy** It was agreed to draw up guidelines for the Committees to use for Capital Asset planning with a calculator for future budgeting re inflation.

- e. **Insurance issues:**

**Flood Wardens:** No reply had been received from Wiltshire Council re the issue of insuring the flood wardens.

After discussion it was **recommended** that the Parish Council does not pursue this any further as it is the Parish Council's view that it is the Wiltshire Council's responsibility.

**Red telephone box, Henley Lane:**

Following the Full Council meeting it was agreed to write to the residents of Henley Lane to apologise for the slowness in dealing with this issue.

As discussed previously there are three options:

- Remove the telephone box
- Remove the telephone box and replace it with an alternative
- Pursue the repairs with the Insurance Company

The Clerk had been discussing this with the Insurance Company and they have come back requesting the following details:

- Location/address and postcode of the damage
- Photos of the damage/date of incident
- A full description and circumstances of how the incident occurred and what damage has been caused
- Two independent quotes, for comparison, for the repairs or replacement needed, on a like for like basis, including the cost of install
- Crime reference number
- Covered by any other insurance
- VAT registration number

All the information is on hand apart from the two quotes. One has been received but despite going to three companies it has not been possible to obtain a second quote for the repairs. Cllr Wright agreed to pursue this. **Action: DW**

#### **10. Legal matters:**

- a. **Lodge:** On going
- b. **Licences:** Licences renewed from April
- c. **Data Protection:** On going
- d. **Lease of field behind Cemetery:** This had been signed wef 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022
- e. **Wall at the Selwyn Hall:** Considered with the budget for the forthcoming year

#### **11. Items for Discussion**

##### **a. Governance issues raised relating to the parking on Hazelbury Hill:**

Following the discussions at the recent Highways Committee meeting on the issue of parking on Hazelbury Hill, a letter had been received from a resident making statements about the conduct of a Parish Councillor.

Some members of the Finance & Governance Committee had also attended the Highways Committee meeting in question and stated that they did not feel that the Councillor in question had acted in a partial or unreasonable way at the meeting and fully supported him on this issue.

Any complaint made against a Councillor should be dealt with through the Monitoring Officer of Wiltshire Council. The Clerk will send a copy of the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure together with a copy of the Protocol for dealing with challenging interactions with Parishioners, to the complainant drawing attention to the clause regarding vexatious complaints after the Protocol has been adopted by Full Council.

It was agreed that any further comments on this matter would be classed as vexatious and it was agreed to advise the parishioner not to approach any other members of the Council or to send any further emails on this issue.

##### **b. Format for the Annual Parish Meeting:** It was agreed to hold the APM on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May at Broadwood School or the Rudloe Community Centre if this is possible.

The format will be the same as last year with reports and displays. It was agreed to put a timetable on the door advising everyone of when there would be a question and answer session at the end of the meeting.

Clerk to request reports from local Community Groups; the Rudloe Community Group and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee

##### **c. Community Payback Team – Endorsement by the Parish Council**

It is **recommended** that the following endorsement be sent to the Community Payback Team:

“The Chippenham Community Payback team have been supporting Box Parish Council with the Box Hill Common Community Orchard and the Thoday Wood biodiversity projects. The Community Payback team led by Guy Pearce have provided material benefits to the community; the team have addressed the physical challenges of the work with enthusiasm and a very positive attitude. Guy Pearce has led by example throughout the period delivering concise and accurate briefings, sensible Risk Assessments and demonstrating the individual tasks to ensure the quality of the work. The local residents appreciate the benefits that the team are delivering and regularly take the time to thank them for their

efforts. It would be appreciated if you could pass on the thanks of the Box Parish Council and the local community to the team”

- d. **Proposed increase in matched funding for the purchase of materials:**  
It is **recommended** that the increase from £200 - £250 be agreed.

**12. Forward Plan/Risk Assessment/Capital Asset Management:** To be updated.

**13. Correspondence:**

- a. **Map of drains for the Council Offices:** The Clerk had obtained a map of the drains but it did not show the connection to the Parish Council Offices. Clerk to write to Lucy George at Wessex Water to ask her to investigate **Action: MC**
- b. **Septic tanks upgrade:** A letter from Wiltshire Council had been circulate
- c. **Tourism:** Copy of the statement from Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council, had been circulated. Cllrs H. Parker and Tye to attend the Council Meeting at Wiltshire Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February to read out a statement re the cuts in funding for Visit Wiltshire.
- d. **Obstruction of stream:** Letter received regarding a grill placed in the stream preventing the trout migrating upstream. Clerk to write to the resident concerned asking them to cut off a section of the grill at the base to let the trout get through but preventing the ducks from getting out. **Action: MC**

**14. Items of Report and future Agenda items:**

- a. **Rudloe Community Centre:** Cllr Dorey reported that Wiltshire Council had now offered to extend the lease to seven years
- b. **Rudloe Green/Rudloe Play Area:** To be discussed at Box Hill & Rudloe Open Spaces Committee meeting
- c. **Visit Wiltshire:** To be discussed at the next meeting after the Wiltshire Council meeting

**15. Date of next meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024

*Meeting closed at 9.10 pm*

**Chair**