



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 11th DECEMBER 2023

- 1. Present:** Councillors T. Walton (Chair); R. Davies; D. Dorey; S. Parker
M. Tye; B. Walton; D. Wright
Mrs Carey (Clerk)
- 2. Apologies** Nil
- 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 9th October 2023 were taken as read and signed as a true record.

Cllr Parker asked why her apology had not been accepted. The Chair gave the reason that the committee considered the prioritising of another meeting over the PC meeting was not a reasonable excuse for absence, and confirmed that it is up to the chair of each meeting to propose the acceptability or otherwise of an apology, and up to the committee to vote on this. The Chair stated that he felt that it was important for Councillors to make an effort to attend their required meetings as part of the commitment they make when they accept the position of councillor.

Clerk will check the protocol for recording of apologies.

7. Matters Arising/Actions

- a. **Resilience Plan:** The draft Plan had been sent to Wiltshire Council. Renate Malton from Wiltshire Council has stated that if someone is named in the Plan as a Flood Warden it should be confirmed that they are covered by the Parish Council's insurance. This was discussed later in the meeting
Information received from Wiltshire Council with Community Emergency Contacts which will be added to 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 this
- d. **Communications Working Group:**

It was **recommended** that the Parish Council subscribes to software for parishioners to sign up by email & for the creation of surveys. This will enable copies of surveys, newsletters etc to be circulated.

8. Policy Matters:

- a. **Review of Policies**
Freedom of Information Publication Scheme: It was agreed that this will be reviewed in the New Year.

9. Financial Matters

- a. **Draft budget for 2024/25:** The draft budget drawn up at the budget setting meeting was reviewed and changes made to release some of the earmarked reserves to be used towards the cost of the replacement Mule.

It was **recommended** that the Precept for 2024/25 is set at **£199547** which is an 11.5% increase on last year.

Details of the Band D Council Tax formula have not yet been received from Wiltshire Council

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

BACS

Salaries	-		8896.98
HM Revenue & Customs	-	PAYE	0.00
Avon Sportsground Main Co	-	BG contract	640.70
		Materials	138.60
		Vertidrain	779.30
			540.00
J.H. Jones & Son	-	Cemetery Contract (inc VAT)	816.50
Castle Water	-	Car Park	2.63
Water2Business	-	Council Offices	102.02
D. Wright	-	Working Party refreshments	51.00
Carer Support Wiltshire	-	Grant	250.00
SSE	-	Office Gas	71.10
Hi Tech Engraving	-	Bronze plaque	40.50
Glasdon UK Ltd	-	Seat	1617.77
Consortium	-	Toilet rolls	125.96
Greenway Training Ltd	-	Training course JA/CD	528.00
Westcare Supply Zone	-	Black sacks	117.60

Direct debits

NEST	-	Pension contribution	193.69
Initial Washrooms	-	Feminine Hygiene	36.40
Hills Waste	-	Refuse collection	97.15
bOnline	-	Office	
bOnline	-	Pavilion	
Hitachi (Novuna)	-	Mule Leasehire	344.74
Novuna	-	Mowers Leasehire	396.00
Fuel Card Services	-	Petrol	41.84
Wiltshire Council	-	NDR Car Park	91.00
Wiltshire Council	-	NDR PFs & pavilion	247.00

- c. **Quotations for renewal of Motor Insurance Policy**

Two quotations had been received in the sum of £849.65 and £831.89

It is **recommended** that the quotation from MS Amlin Insurance SE in the sum of **£831.89** be accepted.

- d. **Capital Asset Strategy:** A draft strategy had been drawn up and it is **recommended** that this be accepted.

All Committees to use this to look at the assets to draw up a list of when they would need to be replaced etc.

e. **Insurance issues:**

Flood Wardens: In 2018 a letter was received from the Insurance Company stating that the key consideration would be who is accepting responsibility for the activities of the group as the insurance policy can only insure activities undertaken by volunteers who operate under the Parish Council's control and direction. The contents of the letter have been confirmed again by the insurers.

It was stated that there is a difference between the Flood Warden group operating in Box to those in other parishes. There are no properties that are flooding from natural causes. The flooding incidents in the Market Place have been caused by blocked drains and the Flood Wardens are working to keep these clear. This is fundamentally the responsibility of Wiltshire Council and as the volunteers would be working on the highways the Parish Council's insurers would not be prepared to insure the risk. The Flood Wardens were originally a Wiltshire Council initiative and the volunteers are helping the highways authority by keeping the drains clear. It was agreed that parishioners should be asked to take photographs of blocked drains and send these in to Wiltshire using mywilts app.

Litter Picking: The same reasoning applies to the litter picking groups. These volunteers are picking up litter on Wiltshire Council roads and verges and are not under the control of the Parish Council. It was confirmed that they are giving a safety brief and warned that they are acting at their own risk.

Recreation Ground Car Park: The Insurance Company has stated that it is not essential to provide lighting for a car park. Any claimant against the council for accidents would have to prove that the Parish Council was negligent in not providing a light. To be discussed further by the Highways Committee to carry out a risk assessment re uneven surfaces, potholes etc.

Red telephone box, Henley Lane: Letter received from the residents requesting that the Parish Council puts money aside for the repair the damage to the telephone box estimated at £2950 + vat.

This had been discussed with the insurance company who has stated that they would not make a third party claim against the person who damaged the box. The Parish Council could make a claim and if it was agreed then the insurance company could request the insurance details of the third party in order to claim recovery of any damages paid from his insurers.

The person who damaged the telephone box was seeking to make a claim for compensation from Wiltshire Council for not gritting the road.

It was agreed to ascertain the details of the make and registration number of the car together with the owners full name and address before taking this further. The issue of a further grit bin will be discussed by the Highways Committee.

10. Legal Matters:

- a. **Lodge:** A new Tenancy Agreement had been agreed and signed from the beginning of October. An Inspection Report had been carried out with no issues raised.
- b. **Licences:** Licences renewed from April
- c. **Data Protection:** On going
- d. **Lease of field behind Cemetery:** This had been signed wef 1st January 2022
- e. **Wall at the Selwyn Hall:** To be considered with the budget

11. Items for Discussion

- a. **Website Development**: It was reported that the website is being updated with the latest pages for the drop down sections. Cllr Ingledew had again requested relevant photographs from committee chairs
- b. **Challenging interactions with parishioners**: Following a few incidents of situations between parishioners and councillors it was agreed to draft an article for the parish magazine and website reminding parishioners that whilst councillors are representing the parish they also have a right to a private life and all council issues should be addressed in the correct way through the Clerk and the relevant committees. This will be discussed further at the next Full Council meeting.

12. Forward Plan: This was reviewed and a note will be made on the relevant pages of the Forward Plan regarding the repayment of the earmarked reserves in next year's budget.

13. Correspondence

- a. **Royal British Legion**: £10.69 had been raised by the Council for the Poppy Appeal. Total raised in the Box area was £1436.68
- b. **Signing of Climate Coalition Open letter**: The request for the Council to sign up to the Climate Coalition will be discussed at Full Council. Clerk to circulate to all Councillors.

14. Items of Report and future Agenda items

- a. **Full Council – 18th December**: It was agreed to hold drinks with the members of staff at 6 pm on Monday 18th December with the Council meeting starting at 6.30 pm.
Councillors to bring some mince pies, sausage rolls or crisps
- b. **Terms of Reference for group representatives at Committee meetings**: It was agreed to draft terms of reference to be discussed at the next meeting
- c. **Seat at top of Box Hill**: It was agreed to notify the person who installed the seat that it has come off of its base and is on its side
- d. **Policy for talking to the media**: Cllr Davies asked for clarification at the next meeting.

145 Date of next meeting: 12th February 2024

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Chair