

**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

held in The Stevenson Centre at 7:54pm on Monday 25th April 2022

**PRESENT** Councillors A C Bavington **Chairman**

 T J Keane M D Newman

S M Sheridan T M Welsh

Mrs P White Mrs J Wilson

C G Wright D Young

Council Administrator Miss E Skuce

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

Councillor T Harman did not attend the meeting.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Councillor Bavington declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item relating to Thomas Gainsborough School as he volunteers at the School and a family member is employed by the Trust.

Councillor Young declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item relating to Thomas Gainsborough School as he and a family member are employed by the Trust.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

**NONE.**

1. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – FOR NOTING**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the Items Brought Forward list.

Councillor Bavington referred Members to Item No. 8 relating to Cornard News and proposed that the Item be moved to the end of the meeting following the exclusion of press and public. **AGREED.**

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Babergh District Council: Request to consider three new road names for the development at Cats Lane**

Members reviewed correspondence from Babergh District Council which asked the Parish Council to suggest approximately 3 new road names for the new development. The developers had suggested ‘Chalk Close’ as one of the names.

A Member stated that they had seen a recent national trend where personal names were not being used to name new roads because there was the possibility of those people’s political affiliations being offensive to others. Members were not aware of this and stated that names of people who play or played an active role in Great Cornard village life had always been used.

Members discussed the names on the Street Names List and agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Council Manager respond to Babergh and decline the developer’s suggestion of ‘Chalk Close’, but put forward the following names, due to their close connection to the location of the development:-

1. Mary Leftwich
2. Jon Colleer
3. Doris Rowland

Some Members believed that the list of names that had been provided was an old version and believed that other names had been added recently. It was therefore **AGREED** for the Council Manager to present a copy of the most up to date list to a future meeting for Members to discuss and update accordingly.

1. **TO DISCUSS THE COMMUNITY WARDENS SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

Members reviewed Report No. E15 **(see Appendix A)** which informed Members that the new Service Level Agreement for the annual Community Warden service for FY2022/2023 sought to increase the hourly rate by 6.5% from £20.60 to £21.95. The Chairman advised that this was the third year where the Town Council has increased its cost for the Community Warden service above inflation.

The Chairman was in favour of the Council having its own ‘in house’ service rather than employing the Community Wardens. Another Member said there would be no harm in the Council exploring this option and the costs involved.

A Member said they thought the Wardens were good value for money and that the Service Level Agreement should be agreed. He believed that the cost of employing a ‘handyman’ would be significantly higher and would be more than just a wage, it would include pension contributions, transport and insurance, equipment and the issue of cover if they took annual leave or were off unwell.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts the Service Level Agreement for the 2022/2023 Community Warden Service.

1. **BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL: NOTICE OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members considered the Notice of Community Governance Review from Babergh District Council which informed that the review would enable the District Council to consider what changes, if any, were needed to Parish arrangements. The first stage of the consultation was inviting residents and interested organisations to submit their views by the 27th May 2022.

The Chairman said that at the last review, the Parish Council argued strongly that Great Cornard parish and ward boundaries together with Councillor numbers should remain the same and The Boundary Commission did not make any changes at that time. Members discussed the issue and the Chairman proposed that he produces a draft response to the consultation to be reviewed at the Annual Council meeting on the 23rd May, in order to meet the deadline for submission. **AGREED.**

1. **TO REVIEW POLICIES FOLLOWING THE OUTCOME OF FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH THE BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL MONITORING OFFICER AND STAFF AND/OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES**

Members were advised that in October 2021, the Full Council agreed to adopt the Procedures, Protocol and Policies listed below subject to further consultation with Babergh District Council’s Monitoring Officer and staff and/or their representatives.

The Chairman confirmed that those further consultations had now taken place and a number of small amendments had been made.

1. **Grievance Procedure**

Paragraph 33 had been added

1. **Disciplinary Procedure**

Paragraph 51 had been added

1. **Capability Procedure**

Paragraph 52 had been added

1. **Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy**

Name of Policy had been changed from Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy to Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy

1. **Protocol Governing Councillor-Staff Relations**

No change

The Chairman advised that the Council Manager had also proposed a number of minor amendments to the documents. Members noted the changes that Councillor Bavington had made to the Policies and agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that all five Policies be adopted subject to Councillor Bavington silently making the Council Manager’s minor amendments.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
2. **To approve the latest list of payments**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the latest list of payments **(see Appendix B).**

1. **Notification of CIL payment – April 2022**

Members reviewed notification of a new CIL payment received in April 2022 for the sum of £19,474.50 between 1st October 2021 and 31st March 2022. **NOTED.**

The Chairman advised that the Council Manager was currently working on the end of year accounts so the figure would not be allocated until the Council’s current financial position was clearly understood.

1. **Cornard News: Increase printing costs**

Members reviewed a request from Cornard News for the Parish Council to fund an increase in their printing and paper costs of £36 per copy (£144 annually), a quarterly increase from £797 to £833.

Members agreed that they were happy with the Council funding the extra printing and paper costs as Cornard News was a good village resource.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that they accept the increase in printing costs of £36 per issue/quarter.

1. **Public Works Loan Board: Confirmation of balance outstanding**

Members **NOTED** the amount of £265,000.00 outstanding in relation to the loan for the refurbishment and extension of The Stevenson Centre.

**At 8:34pm, The Chairman proposed that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act (1960) for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information. AGREED.**

1. **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM CORNARD NEWS TO RESPOND TO A RESIDENT’S LETTER CONCERNING THE CLOSURE OF GREAT CORNARD DOCTORS SURGERY**

Members considered a request from Cornard News to comment on a resident’s letter regarding the closure of the Great Cornard Doctors Surgery which had included some inflammatory comments.

Members discussed whether it was appropriate for the Council to respond to the letter and **AGREED** to submit a response, subject to Councillor Wright circulating a draft response for Members to comment prior to its submission to Cornard News.

**Meeting closed at 8:51pm**

**APPENDIX A**

**Report: E15**

**Item 15 ii) To approve the FY22-23 Service Level Agreement for the Community Warden Service and increase to the hourly rate**

Please see attached the FY22-23 Service Level Agreement for approval and signing by the Chairman. Sudbury Town Council have confirmed they are increasing the hourly rate from £20.60 to £21.95, a rise of 6.5%, which is slightly higher than the current rate of inflation.

As well as Sudbury Town Council’s attached response to the proposed increase, the Council Manager has spoken to the Town Clerk who has emphasised that the Community Warden Service is not run at a profit but must at least cover its costs.

For information I have attached the current list of jobs carried out by the Wardens on behalf of the Council which is extensive as the Parish Council has no inhouse services. The Council office staff not only rely on the Wardens for their regular weekly services but also for one off events such as traffic management following any flooding issues in the village, clearing the drains at The Stevenson Centre and carrying out tree clearance if required urgently.

When assessing the Budget in December each year, the Parish Council takes into consideration the rise in inflation, which at the time of setting the FY22-23 Budget was 4.6% but has since risen to 6.2% in the 12 months to February 2022, up from 5.5% in January 2022. The Parish Council agreed not to increase the Budget figure of £9.75K for FY22-23 as the FY21-22 Community Warden Budget was significantly underbudget and it was estimated that the then current rise to inflation of 5% could be absorbed and still leave sufficient funds for one-off works such as the laying of the planings at the Allotment Car Park. The final cost of the Warden service for FY21-22 was £6,457.65, which was £3,293.00 under Budget.

Since the introduction of the Warden Service, the Parish Council has maintained the same level of contracted hours at 7.5 hours per week despite an increase in the range of services such as the recent installation, site rotation and data collection of the SID unit.

The Parish Council’s FY22-23 Budget Notes stated that the Bank of England expected inflation to peak at 6% but this has now been adjusted to an average of 7.4% for the year. Costs are continuing to rise exponentially and if the Parish Council agrees to continue with the SLA, the Town Clerk’s offer to jointly review the costs in October will avoid the issue of assessing rising costs at different times of the year and allow both Councils to set their Budgets with a clear understanding of the cost of the Warden service.

**APPENDIX B**

**Great Cornard Parish Council BACS Payments up to 25th April 2022**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| **INCOME UP TO** |   |   |   |
|  | **Source** | **Amount** | **Details** |
|   | Babergh District Council  | £19,474.50 | CIL Payment  |
|   | Babergh District Council  | £124,240.00 | Precept Payment  |
|   | Little Cornard Parish Council  | £326.29 | Contribution to Village Gateway Sign  |
|   | Allotment Fees  | £30.00 |   |
|  | Cemetery Fees | £135.00 |   |
|   | **TOTAL**  | **£144,205.79** |   |
| **EXPENDITURE** |   |   |
| **Direct Debits**  | **Company** | **Amount** | **Details** |
|  | Intuit  | £31.20 | QB Accounts Support Package |
|  | Talk Talk  | £34.25 | Monthly Internet Provision  |
|  | Intuit  | £34.80 | QC Accounts Support Package |
| **BACS**  | **Company** |  | **Details** |
|  | Herts FullStop | £55.85 | BHL Toilets/Stationery  |
|  | L J Snow | £85.00 | Allotment Tap Repairs |
|  | AJ Smith  | £552.00 | Installation of Village Gateway Sign  |
|  | Vertas | £1,254.00 | Tree works to trees on land adj. Allotments |
|  | SALC  | £1,259.38 | Annual Subscription  |
|  | 3it | £211.91 | IT Support  |
|  | British Telecom  | £157.46 | Quarterly Telephone Bill  |
|  | Environment Agency  | £43.23 | General Drainage Charges |
|  | Eon | £28.83 | Quarterly Electricity Bill - Cemetery  |
|  | Communicorp  | £527.23 | 2 Boxes of Jubilee Celebration Mugs |
|  | Countrywide Grounds Maint Ltd | £497.00 | Monthly BHL Maintenance Costs  |
|  | S & K News Limited | £14.40 | Provision of Suffolk Free Press |
|  | Suffolk County Council | £190.00 | Poles for SID Unit |
|  | Suffolk Town Council | £1,502.10 | Quarterly Warden service Jan-Mar 22 |
|  | Parkers Pitches Limited | £382.00 | Restoration works to cricket square |
|   | M J Maynard | £120.00 | Electrical repairs to BHL Pavilion |
|   | Zurich Municipal | £4,809.92 | Annual insurance premium |
|   | National Allotment Society | £66.00 | Local Authority Membership Renewal |
|   | Sudbury Office Supplies | £100.50 | Stationery supplies |
|   | Wishes | £80.00 | Queen's Jubilee Bunting |
|   | **TOTAL** | **£12,037.06** |   |
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