

**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

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

held in The Stevenson Centre at 7:55pm on Monday 23rd October 2023

**Present**  Councillors Cllr Tony Bavington **Chair**

Cllr Sharon Bowman Cllr Tom Keane

Cllr Stewart Sheridan Cllr Jane Wakeman

Cllr Pamela White Cllr Judith Wilson

Council Manager Mrs N Tamlyn

Council Administrator Miss E Skuce

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Marjorie Bark and David Young.

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

**NONE.**

1. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

**NONE.**

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

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

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Babergh District Council: Review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations**

Members reviewed correspondence from Babergh District Council which stated that a compulsory review of their polling districts, places and stations would be held from 6th October 2023 until 30th November 2023. The conclusions of the consultation will be published on 26th January 2024. **NOTED**.

Members raised concerns over the fact that Pot Kiln School is no longer used as a polling station and as a result, they felt that a lot of Great Cornard residents were disadvantaged during recent elections due to a large amount being elderly or disabled and not being able to get to an alternative polling station.

It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Parish Council and request that Pot Kiln School is re-established as a polling station.

1. **TO CONSIDER A FEE PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF THE VILLAGE HALL PROJECT**

Cllr Sheridan declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter as he is the Chairman of the Scouts who lease the Village Hall from the Parish Council.

Members considered a Fee Proposal received from Concertus the Council’s architects, for the next stage of the Village Hall extension. The Chair explained that himself, the Council Manager and Cllrs Keane, Sheridan and White, had met with Concertus to discuss the next stage of the project.

The Chair advised that the next stage of the process is shown as RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 4 at a cost of £13,860.00 which would provide the Parish Council with accurate build costs and would assist with identifying funding for the project.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it instructs Concertus to carry out RIBA stage 4 work at a cost of £13,860.00 plus VAT.

Funds to be allocated from Earmarked Funds for the Village Hall.

1. **TO CONSIDER A FEE PROPOSAL FOR THE PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE AND CHAMBER**

The Chair explained that at a meeting with Concertus the Council’s architects, himself, the Council Manager and Cllrs Keane, Sheridan and White had discussed the Parish Council’s plans for extending the office and Chamber but the plans for the Chamber had proved not possible and both were cost prohibitive. There may be other ways of adapting and improving the Parish Council office on a smaller scale in the future and it was **AGREED** to add the matter to the Items Brought Forward List for consideration by the Committee in the future.

Members also agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to not engage the services of Concertus to draw up plans to extend the Parish Council office and Council Chamber.

1. **TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL’S MAJOR PROJECTS LIST**

Members reviewed the Parish Council’s updated Major Projects List **(see Appendix A)** and noted that the Village Hall extension project had been identified as the top priority. The Chair confirmed that he had arranged to meet the Deputy CEO of Babergh District Council, Cathy Nixon, in Great Cornard on the 22nd January 2024 when they will discuss the Council’s project aims and any potential funding that may be available from the District Council, for the Village Hall in particular.

The Council Manager advised Members that the swimming pool plant, under both Policy and Resources and Art, Sports and Leisure can now be removed from the list as Unity Trust have replaced the plant themselves. The Chair stated that the Trust and Thomas Gainsborough School had been very helpful with the swimming pool and had helped to secure its medium to long-term safety. **NOTED.**

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** the updated Major Project List to the Full Council and for the Village Hall extension project to be identified as the Parish Council’s top priority.

1. **TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF A MEETING WITH THE CORNARD UNITED CHAIRMAN**

The Chair confirmed that he, the Chair of the Parish Council Cllr Keane and the Council Manager had held an informal meeting with the Cornard United Chairman, Tom Clarke, following the Club’s request for financial assistance with various matters at the Clubhouse, including repairs to the accessway and replacement of the fire doors.

In relation to the condition of the accessway, the Parish Council were made aware of the issue in May 2022. The Club Chairman at that time had agreed to provide a breakdown of material costs so that the figure could be included in the Council’s FY22/23 Budget. Unfortunately, the quotation had not been submitted by the Club until now.

In relation to the fire doors, this had not been highlighted to the Parish Council until it carried out an inspection of the Clubhouse in August 2023. The Club had instructed a fire safety inspection, which recommended that all fire doors needed to be replaced. The Club’s Chairman had provided material costings for this work of around £8,500. It had been agreed that the fire doors were the priority but Members felt that if the Parish Council has responsibility in this area, then it should instruct its own independent fire safety inspection from a company it has used in the past.

The Parish Council Chair, Cllr Keane confirmed that he and Cllr Bavington had made no financial commitment to the Club at the meeting but had listened to their position with regards the fire doors, accessway and the outcome of the recent FA grounds inspection in particular.

Cllr Bavington stated that he had explained to Mr. Clark that the Club’s costings had been received mid-financial year and that it would be very difficult to make monies available for things that had not been included in this financial year’s Budget.

Members **NOTED** that the Club’s Committee had advised that if the Clubhouse was not safe due to the fire doors being faulty then they may have to cancel hired events which would cause damage to the income of the Club. They had also raised the issues of responsibility and liability should an incident occur before the repairs to the fire doors and accessway are carried out.

**At 8:34pm Cllr Wakeman left the meeting.**

The Chair suggested that the fire doors are included in the Parish Council’s figures for the FY24/25 Budget meaning funds would be available from April 2024, unless it transpires that as Landlords, it is the Council’s responsibility to replace the fire doors beforehand.

**At 8:36 Cllr Wakeman rejoined the meeting.**

It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to establish what Landlord responsibility the Parish Council has in respect of the accessway and fire doors and also to investigate costings for an independent fire safety inspection from a company the Council has used before.

1. **TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDING EXPENDITURE ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FY24/25 BUDGET**

Members agreed that continuing to build funds for the Village Hall extension project was a priority

and for the Village Hall fees and build costs to be separated in to two separate funds.

Members agreed to consider including a Budget figure for the material costs to the proposed works to the Cornard United Clubhouse fire doors and accessway.

It was also agreed to consider including a Budget figure for works which are the Landlord’s responsibility at the Blackhouse Lane football pavilion.

A Member stated that they would like the Council to start looking at Councillors using tablets or other technologies to access Agenda documents in particular, in order to reduce the Council’s paper usage and associated costs. Members were in agreement that it was important to receive documentation based on individual preferences as some may still wish to receive paper copies.

It was **AGREED** to add the use of new technologies to improve the Council’s practices to the Items Brought Forward List for future consideration.

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

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

The Council Manager highlighted that the third item listed under income, UK Power Networks was for Wayleaves. **NOTED.**

1. **TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION OF CIL PAYMENT RECEIVED FOR PERIOD 01/04/23**

* **30/09/23**

Members **NOTED** that a sum of £1,010.32 had been received from Babergh District Council in relation to Community Infrastructure Levy payments for the period of 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023. The Council would also need to consider how the funds were to be allocated.

1. **Proposal to EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC from the meeting in accordance with section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act (1960) for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information**

The Chair 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information. **AGREED.**

1. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BLACKHOUSE LANE CRICKET SQUARE**

Members had been provided with copies of The independent Commission for Equity in Cricket’s Report and the English Cricket Board’s response to the report, as well as a summary of the Council’s recent investment in the square.

The Chair advised that there was clearly a move to promote cricket but confirmed that there had been no local interest in starting a ladies cricket team. Mr Bavington stated that he recognised the reality of the situation as there were no other positive solutions, but that he remained concerned that if the square were given up that it would never be reinstated.

Members discussed further the retention of the cricket square and Cornard Dynamos’ request for the Parish Council to allow them to use the square as additional playing surface. It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the future use of the cricket square should be determined as part of the Lease negotiations.

1. **TO RECEIVE UPDATES FROM THE COUNCIL’S SOLICITOR AND CORNARD DYNAMOS REGARDING THE LEASE**

The Council Manager confirmed that correspondence regarding the Lease had finally been received from the Council’s solicitor. In order to progress the Lease, the solicitor had asked several questions regarding the management structure of Cornard Dynamos and that the Council was currently awaiting the Club’s response. **NOTED**

**Meeting closed at 9:15pm**

**APPENDIX A**

GCPC Major Project List

Criteria

1. Need, Want, Desire: will the project contribute to making better the circumstances in which Great Cornard people live their lives, whether individually, in families or other groups such as clubs and societies, as allotment holders, relatives of the deceased, members of church congregations, Country Park or Leisure Centre users?
2. Affordability, Capital: can the funds – perhaps from a variety of sources, including Council Tax precept, PWLB, CIL, grants from the charitable sector, and others - be assembled over a reasonable timescale to create the projected asset?
3. Affordability, Revenue: can a revenue stream be created by the Council – perhaps including rental or other fee income as well as Council Tax precept – which will enable the Council to manage and maintain the asset?

Priorities

Priorities are expressed as High, Medium and Low. It is important to have a statement of what projects are significant to the Council’s objectives. High priority projects should be worked up so that they are ready to go, resources permitting. Equally, because the Council does not have anything like a big enough budget from its own resources to undertake everything it would like to do at the same time, it needs to have the flexibility to respond to opportunities as they arise, particularly funding opportunities.

Major Projects

The priorities are summarised under the main committees and other bodies of the Council. In some cases, the same project is shown in more than one place when it seems likely that more than body will be involved in bringing the project to fruition.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Body** | **Description** | **Capital Funds** | **Revenue Funds** | **Priority** | **Project Completed** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Burial Authority** | Turning Circle | £10k |  | High |  |
| New land for cemetery |  | Maintenance | Medium |  |
| Demolish building and redevelop for better convenience of visitors |  | Increase Fees | Low |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Dev and Planning** | GCPC Street light upgrades **Phase 1**  **2nd stage** to be instructed by end of 2023 (est. cost £30k) | £120K |  | High |  |
| GCPC Street light upgrades **Phase 2** | Est. £120K |  | Medium |  |
| Platinum Jubilee commemorative benches (Est.£0.5-1k per bench)  5 locations agreed (2 installed @ Aug 23) | £5k |  | Medium | 2 of 5 completed |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Body** | **Description** | **Capital Funds** | **Revenue Funds** | **Priority** | **Project Completed** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Art, Sports & Leisure** | Negotiate Cornard Dynamos BHL lease |  | Legal fees | High |  |
| Upgrade Recreation Ground play area - s106 Funds secured. Project due to start Oct 23. | PC - £13k  S106 -£57K | Maintenance | High |  |
| Assist TGS in assembling funds to replace plant at Cornard swimming pool | Seed corn from GCPC grant/S106 | Matched funds with BDC up to ceiling of £3k | Medium |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Policy & Resources** | IDENTIFIED AS GCPC TOP PRIORITY  Village Hall rear extension, demolish & rebuild | **Est. £400K** | Design Fees £24k | High |  |
| The Stevenson Centre car park surface water drainage and resurfacing | £55k |  | High | Works instructed. Commence 11/23 |
| Negotiate Cornard Dynamos BHL Lease |  | Legal fees | High |  |
| Negotiate Lease of Village Hall to Scouts |  | Legal fees | High |  |
| The Stevenson Centre Overspill car park | Est.£30k |  | Medium |  |
| The Stevenson Centre Council Chamber & offices |  |  | Medium |  |
| Platinum Jubilee commemorative benches -  build additional funds @ £700 per bench | £5k | Maintenance | Medium | 2 of 5 completed |
| Assist TGS in assembling funds to replace plant at Cornard Swimming Pool | Seed corn from GCPC grant/S106 | Matched funds with BDC up to ceiling of £3k | Medium |  |
| Neighbourhood Plan**(on hold subject to JLP adoption)** Working Party to reconvene 2023 |  |  | Medium |  |
| The Stevenson Centre additional function room |  |  | Medium |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **The Stevenson Centre** | Acoustic Panels in Hall | £18-20K TSC Trust Funds |  | High |  |

**APPENDIX B**

**Summary of income and payments for Great Cornard Parish Council**

**up to 23rd October 2023**

