



SAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 07 SEPTEMBER 2021

Held at Spicers Pavilion - Meeting commenced at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Parish Clerk Jo Keeler

Councillors

Kieran Cooper (Chair)

Brian Milnes

David Bard

Kevin Cuffley

1 TO ELECT A CHAIR OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor David Bard to nominate Councillor Kieran Cooper as Chair of the Finance & General Purposed Committee for the ensuing year.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST (UNANIMOUS)

2 TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor Brian Milnes to nominate Councillor David Bard as Vice Chair of the Finance & General Purposed Committee for the ensuing year.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST (UNANIMOUS)

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Colin Groves (Work commitments)
Beck Laxton (Personal)
Jayne Merrick (Personal)

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR THIS MEETING

None

5 CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 February were read and confirmed.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley and **seconded** by Councillor David Bard **TO ACCEPT** the minutes of 16 February 2021.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST (UNANIMOUS)

6 MATTERS ARISING

None

7 REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (AGAR) FOR 2020-2021

The external report has not been returned so this will be deferred until it is received.

8 TO REVIEW ACCOUNTANT

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that it's been a long time since we reviewed our accountant and the current accountants have not been as efficient in the last couple of months and maybe we should revise what we require and go out to tender. The clerk explained there has been some staff changes at the current accountants and that the lady that is now looking after our accounts has got on top of it. This was discussed and agreed that we will defer to the next F&GP meeting in November.

9 UPDATE ON PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESSES

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained all but three Councillors/staff are now set up with the new .gov email addresses and he is helping those that haven't done to set them up. Councillor Kieran Cooper and Councillor Brian Milnes agreed we need to have a retention policy with regards to parish council emails which they will look into.

Red Graphic have done the designs etc for the new parish council website and we now have a skeleton site which we need to copy the content from the existing website onto the new one which Councillor Kieran Cooper has scheduled in.

10 IT SUPPORT UPDATE

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that we have been using Grace Solutions for our IT support for a while now and explained that they provide a timesheet with every invoice so we know exactly what we are paying for. The clerk is impressed with their service, they always respond immediately and are quick at sorting any issues out.

11 TO DISCUSS RESERVES

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that we should be looking at how much money we keep in uncommitted reserves. This was discussed.

We will need to look into current and future projects to use some of the reserves. Councillor Brian Milnes said we should look at both clerks hours and even the possibility of employing another clerk/administrator as the village is growing and the workload increasing.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **seconded** by Councillor Kevin Cuffley to **RECOMMEND TO FULL** we aim to have £100k in uncommitted reserves.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST (UNANIMOUS)

12 TO DISCUSS HAVING A PARISH COUNCIL FACEBOOK PAGE

The committee discussed having a parish council Facebook page. Councillor Kieran Cooper explained we could set one up that had different moderators so the burden wasn't on both clerks.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **SECONDED** by Councillor Brian Milnes to **RECOMMEND TO FULL** we set up a Parish Council Facebook page and also consider using Instagram. Councillor Kevin Cuffley suggested we have a conversation with the village college to get their views on these platforms.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST UNANIMOUS

13 TO AGREE TO CONTINUE BACS PAYMENTS

The clerk explained that the signatories for the Co Op account are now set up and we should continue to make payments by bacs with three signatories signing off payments online.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Bard to **RECOMMEND TO FULL** that as soon as we can make these payments online we stop writing cheques.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST UNANIMOUS

14 TO DISCUSS VAT ON MILL LANE PROJECT

Councillor Kieran Cooper explained that we should get professional advice with regards to claiming back VAT on our projects. He asked if the council was sufficiently clear on this which we were not. The clerk has made enquiries regarding the cost for this advice and contacted 4 companies with one coming back with a quote of £600.00 + vat which includes reasonable aftercare (for example answering any questions as the council considers and implements the advice) through to completion of the project. This company is recommended by CAPALC.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Kieran Cooper and **SECONDED** by Councillor David Bard to **RECOMMEND TO FULL** we go ahead and get the professional advice.

VOTE: 4 FOR : 0 AGAINST UNANIMOUS

15 COUNCILLORS ISSUES AND AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING – F&GP ONLY

Councillor Kevin Cuffley explained we should be looking into doing something for the 70th Jubilee next year and consider this when doing the budgets in November.

Meeting closed 8.45pm