

**Minutes of a Meeting of Finance & Personnel Committee**  
**Held in the in the King Edward VII Meeting Room, Ascot Racecourse, SL5 7JX**  
**On Tuesday 10 September 2024, commencing at 7.00pm**

**Members Present:** Councillors A Sharpe (Chairman), B Hilton (Vice Chairman), L Davison West, C Richardson & R Wood.

**In attendance:** Mrs H Goodwin, Clerk to the Parish Council.

**8851 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr D Hilton and approved by the committee.

**8852 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. None were received.

**8853 CO-OPTION INTERVIEWS**

The committee interviewed the two applicants for co-option:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[REDACTED]

After interviewing both the candidates the committee discussed which they felt would bring the most to the parish council. It was felt that both candidates were very personable and each had skills that would benefit the council. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] n.

[REDACTED] This decision was agreed by show of hands, by a majority of 4-1.

**8854 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 04 June were approved as a correct and signed as such.

**8855 CLERK'S UPDATE ON PERSONNEL AND CURRENT MATTERS**

- The clerk presented a personnel report – attached below as Appendix 1.
- The clerk presented a report on recent and ongoing legal matters – attached below as Appendix 2. The committee discussed the situation with the lease on the South Ascot land – the situation is very frustrating and councillors expressed an opinion that there have been enough extensions to the lease and court action should be the next stage if no progress is made when the current extension to coming to an end. The clerk was instructed to ask the council's solicitors to suggest wording appropriate for a formal statement to issue to the public, as well as wording which can be used to approach the chairman of the Sunninghill Trust to advise that the council considers the next course of action will be to go to court.
- The clerk advised the committee of the status of the tender process for renewing the grounds maintenance contract. The suggestion was made that employing a groundsman be considered as an alternative to contracting for the work and the clerk was asked to research costs for employing a groundsman.

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- The clerk reported on Freedom of Information requests that had been received since July – attached below as Appendix 3.

#### **8856 FINANCE UPDATE**

Cllr R Wood referred the committee to the presentation he gave to full council on 03 September and wished to highlight the clerk's suggestions put forward to that meeting which set out where overspend and underspend had taken place and where savings could, with the agreement of the council, be made. The conclusions of that report were:

• Administrative spending expected to be over budget by	9,000
• Civic Activities spending expected to be over budget by	7,777
• Grants spending expected to be over budget by	4,158
• Leisure running costs expected to be under budget by	<u>-6,000</u>
Total overspend	14,935

However, further possible savings include:

• Capital projects 2024/25 possible savings of	-19,800
• Capital projects 2023/24 possible savings of	<u>-9,065</u>
Total possible further savings	-28,865

#### **8857 BUDGET**

The committee was reminded that the budget for 2025/26 will shortly be drawn up. Discussion took place, particularly over deferring some items from this year to next. The chairman brought to the committee's attention:

- In 2021 the parish council committed to providing £5,500 per year in financial support to the Sunninghill Library for five years, but must consider whether they wish to continue this beyond 2026.
- When drawing up the budget it should be ensured that there is a proper amount included for the parish council sponsorship of the Street Fayre.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.

Councillor Allison Sharpe, Chairman

## APPENDIX 3

### Clerk's Report for F&P - 10 September 2024 - Freedom of Information Requests

Freedom of Information requests must be responded to within 20 working days. The following three requests were received in the last two months, the first two have been responded to and the last acknowledged, with a full response planned by 04 October. Time spent on these to date is 4.25 hours clerk's time, 8 hours admin assistant time.

#### Received 17 July from David Sanders:

*I am filing this freedom of information request to gain clarity around the Sunninghill and Ascot Parish parks' maintenance costs and the schedule for works carried out annually in Victory Fields and South Ascot Park, as well as some of the parish's smaller green spaces. This is on behalf of the local residents/taxpayers in the Parish of Sunninghill and Ascot.*

*I would like to access the records of:*

- 1. Monthly schedule of works or any records that relate to the schedule of works on a weekly, monthly and / or yearly basis.*
- 2. How much is paid by the Parish Council to David Norman, weekly and annually.*
- 3. When the tendering for the parks maintenance up for renewal and the process that is followed.*
- 4. What works are carried out by Ascot Gardening Services within - and paid for by - the Parish.*

#### Received 18 July from David Sanders:

*I would like to make a freedom of information request for information on the development of the Victory Fields Pavilion by Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council. I am making this request on behalf of Sunninghill and Ascot Business and Residents Alliance (SABRA). Please can you let me have copies of all documents relating to the project to confirm: .*

- 1. How much was the original quote.*
- 2. What was the final cost of the project to complete the Pavilion.*
- 3. Which companies were involved in building the Pavilion.*
- 4. The Business Plan as presented to Council and the public to justify the project.*
- 5. The accounts and income from the Pavilion since completion.*

#### Received 06 September from David Sanders:

*I would like to make a freedom of information request to gain some clarity to the works that are carried out in our parks and green spaces by Ascot Garden services and Nigel Jeffries.*

- 1. Can I have a copy of all invoices for 2023 that are submitted to Sunninghill and Ascot Parish council by Ascot Garden Services that shows the work that is carried out to raise these invoices by this contractor.*
- 2. Can I have a copy of all invoices for 2023 that are submitted by the member of the public that Helen Goodwin referred to in her earlier email to me, as he is also responsible for checking works are carried out and suggesting works that need doing.*
- 3. Can I have the dates of when the maintenance contracts were last tendered for and the companies that tendered for the works contract.*