

Minutes
of the Sulhamstead Parish Council Meeting held at Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet
Village Hall,
on Thursday 21 June 2018 at 7.00pm

Present: Mrs Margaret Baxter (Chairman), Mr Richard Smith, Mrs Liz Penston, Mrs Rosemary Sanders-Rose, Mr Ivan Wise and Mr Stuart Stanley.

In attendance: Mrs Fiona Jones (Clerk)

Open Forum: Members of the Public were invited to comment on any of the items on the agenda before the meeting convened.

Declarations of Interest: Visitors were reminded that declarations of interest must be made where appropriate.

1) Apologies for Absence

Mr Keith Chopping, Mr Roger Ashfield and Ms Teresa Sosna.

2) Declarations of Interest by Councillors

There were none.

3) Open Forum

There were 3 members of the public present.

Mr Joe Atkinson, enquired why Sulhamstead Parish Council were not participating in the Burghfield Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), since some of Sulhamstead Parish adjoined Burghfield Common. The Chairman responded that she and Mr Wise had attended the initial meetings of the Burghfield NDP committee, but at the time the committee were unable to provide a timeframe or budget for the process. Being a small Council with few resources it was felt that Sulhamstead Parish Council could not commit to the process, particularly as the NDP only included part of Sulhamstead. However, the Chairman had suggested that the Burghfield committee get back in touch when they had made progress. To date there had been no further information from Burghfield Parish Council.

The Council had also been made aware of an anonymous flyer that had been distributed to some residents in Sulhamstead regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The flyer contained a number of inflammatory statements that were untrue, but as the author had remained anonymous there was little that could be done. It was agreed that it would not be possible to take any action with regard to the flyer unless the author could be identified.

Mr Tony Holden, who acted as a litter picker for the Council, stated that he was very unhappy with the request by the Council for all litter pickers to document the days and times they had worked. He also expressed dissatisfaction at the terms and conditions of his current contract. The Chairman stated that there were reasons why the Council had made the request for timesheets but it was not appropriate to discuss them in open forum. She also pointed out to Mr Holden that the terms and conditions of his contract were also a private matter and she would discuss both issues with him outside the meeting.

Action: Chairman

4) Approval of Minutes of 15 May, 2018

It was agreed to discuss and approve these minutes at the next main Council meeting on 26th July.

5) Approval of the revised Standing Orders

The Chairman thanked Councillor Smith and the Clerk for their work on revising the Standing Orders. She suggested that where it said 'he' or 'his' it should read 'he/she' or 'his/hers'. The Councillors agreed this and therefore the Chairman proposed the new Standing Orders should be adopted and this was seconded by Councillor Sanders-Rose and unanimously agreed by the Council.

6) Finance:

a) Account Balances at 30 May, 2018:

Current Account:	£24,207.18
Deposit Account:	£ 4,679.00
Investment:	£10,000.00
Notice Account:	<u>£25,030.81</u>
	£63,916.99

An up-to-date Bank Reconciliation had been sent to the Councillors prior to the meeting.

b) Internal Auditor's Report

The Internal Auditor had concluded that the Council had maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements in all but one area. They noted a significant issue in relation to the high level of the Council's reserves. They stated that the Council has no powers to hold revenue reserves for general purposes, other than reasonable working capital, and that the Council had not established any proper earmarked reserves for specific purposes. As a result the Internal Auditor had made a negative assertion on the Annual Return.

This assertion had been challenged by the Clerk, who had pointed out that the Council had been given money by the District Council when the Parish Council had acquired the Public Open Space (POS). The money was held specifically for the purpose of the upkeep of the POS. The Chairman asked the Clerk to contact West Berkshire Council to establish a legal perspective and to try and obtain a statement from them about the purpose of the money that had been transferred to the Parish Council. **Action : Clerk**

The Chairman proposed that the Council adopted the report, but with the caveat that the Council did not agree with the point the Internal Auditor had raised. This was seconded by Councillor Penston and unanimously agreed by the Council.

c) Amendments to the Financial Regulations

The Chairman again thanked Councillor Smith and the Clerk for their work on revising the Financial Regulations. She had one query which related to the provision of bank statements to both the Clerk and the Chairman. Currently only the Clerk received a bank statement. It was agreed that requesting an additional bank statement was not necessary and the Chairman would check the balance on the on-line bank accounts on a monthly basis, instead of receiving paper statements. She proposed that the revised Financial Regulations be adopted by the Council, this was seconded by Councillor Stanley and unanimously agreed by the Council.

d) Review of Internal Control and approval of the Annual Governance Statement

The Chairman and Councillor Smith had reviewed the effectiveness of the system of financial control and they reported that they were satisfied that everything was sound. The

Chairman read through the Annual Governance Statement to the Council and it was agreed to affirm all of the statements. This was proposed by Councillor Wise and seconded by Councillor Sanders-Rose. The Chairman and the Clerk signed the Statement.

e) Approval of the Statement of Accounts

The Clerk had circulated the Statement of Accounts prior to the meeting for the Councillors to review. Councillor Wise proposed that the statement was approved, seconded by Councillor Sanders-Rose and unanimously agreed by the Council. The Chairman signed the Statement.

7) Review of Post/ Any Other Business

Councillor Wise informed the Council that he had arranged with one of the litter pickers to carry out an additional round in light of the recent resignation of another litter picker.

He also informed the Council that the people who had recently been using the Public Open Space (POS) for alleged drug taking had moved on.

Councillor Stanley suggested that the Council could purchase some land at the rear of the village hall for use as a POS with the forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from Firlands. The Chairman responded that it was a good idea but unfortunately the sale of the land would be concluded well before the CIL funds from Firlands would be available. However, the Chairman reported that the Village Hall Trustees were investigating the possibility of buying some of the land for additional car parking spaces.

Next Parish Council Meeting

To confirm that the next Parish Council Meeting would be on Thursday 26th July, 2018 at 7.00pm, to be held in the Sulhamstead and Ufton Nerve Village Hall.

Mrs Fiona Jones (Clerk)

Distribution

All Councillors

Clerk – Sulhamstead Parish Council

Mr Keith Chopping

Notice Boards

Website