



COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Highfield Park Office
 Highfield Park Visitor Centre
 Hill End Lane
 St Albans AL4 0RA

Village Office
 83 High Street
 Colney Heath
 Hertfordshire AL4 0NS

Tel: 01727 825314 Email: clerk@colneyheathparishcouncil.gov.uk

**MINUTES OF THE COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL
 FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
 HELD VIRTUALLY
 THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2020, 7pm**

Members in attendance
Cllr H Brazier (audio only) Cllr P Cook Cllr K Slaughter Cllr R Solts (Chairman) Clerk of the Council, Ms. L. Chaplin
Due to the nature of the virtual meetings it is noted that members of the public may join and leave without notice so only Councillors leaving and joining the meeting will be documented.
Other attendees
One member of the public.

FG-01	APOLOGIES & ANNOUNCEMENTS None
FG-02	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST None received or noted – it was noted that should these become apparent that they would be raised at the appropriate time during the agenda
FG-03	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC None
FG-04	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS FINANCE COMMITTEE The minutes of the meeting held 30 January 2020 were noted as being presented to Full Council item 20/119b in February 2020 and recommendations were accepted. The minutes were accepted by the Committee as a true and accurate record duly proposed and seconded then unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands and verbal agreements.
FG-05	REVIEW OF BUDGET END OF YEAR 2020/21 Council noted the papers circulated and the variances were noted and discussed. It was noted by the RFO that there were three areas on the external audit that required explanation as variances were over/under the 15% limit. The 3 sections which require explanation are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3 Other Receipts There was a 65.8% decrease in other receipts/income this is largely due to the S106 income in 2018/19 being £39,467 but in 2019/20 the total was £0. • Section 4 Staff Costs There is a 18.5% underspend (£16,617) in the staff salary budget owing to the reduced overtime which was worked by the Clerk which is now covered by the employment of the Assistant to the Clerk. An underspend due on the employee and employer pension contributions as one member of staff chose to opt out of the scheme. • Section 6 All other payments There is a 54% decrease in all other payments down by £111,607 and this is largely down to the expenditure at Roestock Park of £63,849 and Tyttenhanger Park of £26,549 so a total reduction in expenditure of £90,398



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<p>FG-06</p>	<p>BUDGET 2020/21</p> <p>a) Members noted the appendix circulated. The grass cutting contract process was discussed and it was noted that the reduction in 12/14 cuts per area would reduce the overspend and extra cutting required. Ward Councillors were now being tasked to look at their own areas and assess the need. There would be a tender document produced to be approved by this Committee for issue in November/December 2020. It was duly proposed and seconded that the Environment Committee be delegated the budget as circulated of £48,950 to be recommended to be resolved by Full Council. This was unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands and verbal agreement. A copy of the proposed budget would be presented to Full Council with these minutes.</p> <p>b) The draft recommendations on the Reserves was noted by Council and the following amendments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forecast was requested from the Neighbourhood Plan Officer to establish predicted spend to completion • It was suggested that Contingency be changed to General contingency and a new code be introduced for Legal Contingency with a £6,500 budget allocated. • The Voluntary Land Registrations would have £1,500 added to it also making a budget for 20/21 of £6,500. <p>It was unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands and verbal agreement that the EMR report would be amended to reflect these changes and be presented to Council for resolution. A copy of the amended reserves proposal would be presented to Full Council with these minutes.</p>
<p>FG-07</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>a) Members noted the draft Members Allowance and Expenses policy circulated. The policy was discussed and duly proposed and seconded then unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands and verbal agreement.</p> <p>b) It was duly proposed and seconded then unanimously RESOLVED by a show of hands and verbal vote that contracted salaries would be paid by Standing Order from July 2020 payments. Financial Regulations would be amended to reflect this change subject to Full Council approval.</p>
<p>FG-08</p>	<p>RFO REPORT</p> <p>Members noted the report circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was suggested by the RFO that the next payment run approvals should be carried out by Cllrs H Brazier and Cllr West who required some active payments to assist in their training. This would take place on Friday 26 June 2020. • The continuing issues with the internal audit were noted and were currently being addressed by the RFO, should this become an issue which remains unresolved the RFO was asked to include the Chairman in future correspondence. • The pay award remained delayed. Staff were being kept informed of the delays and that any increase would be backdated to April 2020. • Queries regarding the publication of signed documentation being legally displayed in 2018/19 were noted. • The current status of Freedom of Information requests was noted. The only outstanding request was for legal expenses costs spent on a local planning appeal and challenge. It was expected more time would be needed for response.



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FG-09

LEGAL UPDATE

a) ROESTOCK HUT

Members are asked to review correspondence and comment. Survey carried out in late May report not yet received. It was noted that the representative was now requesting again a short-term licence which was a change in the previous position. The Committee recommended that Council would in a better position to review once the report had been received and received. On receipt of the report the matter was recommended to be discussed in an Emergency Full Council meeting.

b) COMMUNITY PARK

Members reviewed correspondence received. This item has been previously debated by the environment working party and they recommended to cease all works and did not want to retain the asset if a further lease was ever offered. The heads of terms were debated, and it was recommended by the Committee that the lease offered be declined. It was duly proposed and seconded that in the event that the Council approved to take on the 14 year lease that the land should be restored at no cost to the Parish Council, with 50% of the costs to be received in lieu of maintaining the land over the 14 years and this be paid to the Parish Council, furthermore each party would be maintain their own costs in this matter. This was **RESOLVED** by a show of hands and verbal vote.

c) TYTTENHANGER ACCESS

To note access issues raised. The Committee discussed the agreement and terms of use. New signs, height limiter and registration would be discussed and cutting back had already been carried out. After debate, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** for the Clerk to be instructed to send a cease and desist letter in the first instance and the action herewith noted to follow would be carried out should no response be received.

d) FIDELITY CLAIM

The Committee noted that all requested documentation and historical data including wage records were sent 16h April 2020. The Chairman confirmed that he had independently chased with an email to show good governance and transparency. A further update would be requested.

e) VILLAGE HALL PARISH OFFICE

The matter remains unresolved as no response has been received to correspondence sent 24 Feb 2020 and 22 April 2020. It was recommended that a further and final letter maintaining the previously resolved offer should be sent, subject to Council approval.

f) HIGH STREET RECREATION GROUND

Committee deferred this decision to Full Council. The Clerk was instructed to place on the agenda for 25 June 2020.

g) OLD AIR RAID SHELTER

It was noted by the Committee that despite previous arrangements there was no movement from the other party to honour the verbal agreement as to the removal of the Land Registry case and retract the legal challenge against the Council. If this remained the case the Council would proceed as planned with the matter and costs in the defence of this application would be sought.



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h) **VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION OF PARISH ASSETS**

Committee noted that all letters had been distributed as instructed. It was confirmed that all landowners would be dealt with consistently when discussing access and wayleaves. Advice was being sought from Wellers Hedley specialist in Common Land registration next week. The current plan would be to meet with groups of residents in sections and register all areas of the Colney Heath Common by the end of 2021.

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm

L Chaplin LCGI PSLCC CPFA CiLCA
Clerk to the Council
Drafted 15/06/2020
Presented to Full Council 25/06/2020