

**MINUTES OF A MEETING (18) OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE OF CAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

MEETING HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY 12th JANUARY 2021 AT 7.30 PM

Members in attendance: Councillors R. Bishop, S. Bestwick and M. Cool.

Guests in attendance: None

Minutes: R. Nash (clerk)

Officers in attendance: Mrs V. Moody (Facilities & Communication
Manager)

Cawston Parish Council, Scholars Drive, Rugby, CV22 7GU

Email: Clerk@cawstonpc.org

F20-85 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

F20-86 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this time.

F20-87 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (17) held on 8th December, 2020, were considered.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (17) held on 8th December, 2020 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

F20-88 Finance Reports

A report was considered setting out payments arising during the month of December. Payments requiring approval totalled £10,414.49. The current account bank reconciliation and banks statements for December had also been circulated and were considered. With regard to aged debtors, the Clerk reported that there had been no change to the position reported at the last meeting with the sum of £319 remaining outstanding. One of the debtors had now been advised that no further bookings would be accepted on behalf of her use of the hall until the debt was cleared.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Report of payments arising in the sum of £10,414.49 is approved;
- (2) that the bank reconciliations for the period to 30th December are approved
- (3) that the position in respect of aged debtors is noted.

F20-89 Cawston Community Hall

The Facilities and Communications Manager reported on the current arrangements for use of the Community Hall in the light of Covid-19 restrictions. In the light of the current Tier 4 restrictions applicable to this area, the Hall was closed to all users with the exception of the proposed use by Warwickshire County Council for the purpose of tutoring a small group of GCSE students who required specific support. The original commencement date could not be met due to the demands of Covid testing but it was hoped that some lessons could commence at the Hall within the next two weeks. The cleaning contractor had undertaken work within the building to ensure that it was ready for use but had then been stood down in view of the limited number of bookings. All users of the Hall had been advised of the restrictions presently in place.

In terms of routine maintenance, Facilities and Communications Manager advised that work to comply with the Fire Safety Inspection had been undertaken and upgrading to meet the requirements of the Lightning Protection survey would be conducted in the next few weeks. A problem had arisen in relation to the heating system which would necessitate the replacement of two valve manifolds which were now obsolete.

It was noted that throughout the period of restrictions arising from the Pandemic, the loss of revenue from cancelled bookings had been borne entirely by the Parish Council. The Council was ineligible to claim business rate relief or a support grant and it was felt that the question of possible assistance should be pursued with Rugby Borough Council in the light of use of the Community Hall for educational purposes.

Discussion took place in connection with the possible modification of the rear access to the Community Hall which had been problematic given that the doors were primarily intended as a fire escape route. It was agreed that whilst other aspects of internal use of the building were less pressing, a decision on modifying the fire doors should be taken as soon as possible. Members also concurred that the current heating system would benefit from a review to ensure that it remained the most cost effective and efficient solution.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the report of the Facilities and Communications Manager is noted;
- (2) that an information bulletin is placed in the Parish Notice Boards regarding the recommencement of use of the Community Hall for educational purposes; **Action: FCM**
- (3) that a suitably qualified mechanical engineer is invited to compile a report on the options for improvement of the heating system in the short-term to ensure its continued effectiveness; **Action Clerk**
- (4) to RECOMMEND the Council that it considers securing the services of an Architect to advise on the scope for enhancements to the external fire doors and shuttering mechanisms to support the continuing use of the Hall by a range of organisations following the end of the Covid-19 restrictions. **Action: Clerk (agenda)**
- (5) That the Clerk seeks an opinion from Rugby Borough Council on possible remission of business rates in relation to the exclusive use of the Community Hall for educational purposes. **Action: Clerk**

F20-90 Investment opportunities with CCLA

The Committee was reminded that at the last meeting it had considered the possibility of investing in the CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund. This was an option that was opportune due to the accumulated funds within the Council's current cash holdings which were attracting a very low rate of interest.

Both the investment opportunities and potential restraints arising from investment in the Local Authorities Property Fund were discussed. The Committee acknowledged that the Fund was a longer term commitment and that any agreed investment should not constrain the Council's ability to meet its short term spending commitments, particularly those arising in relation to improvements to the Community Hall. It was also emphasised that in view of the current volatility of property based investments, the advice of an independent adviser should be obtained before proceeding further.

RESOLVED to recommend the Council:

- (1) That an application is made to CCLA to affiliate to the Local Authorities Property Fund; **Action: Clerk**
- (2) That the Clerk is authorised to obtain an opinion from an independent financial adviser on the investment of Council balances in the Fund. **Action: Clerk**

F20-91 Appointment Process – Parish Clerk

The Clerk advised the Committee on a potential process for appointment of a new Clerk which would need to take account of the following:

- Review of Job Description, including hours of employment
- Evaluation of grading of Post
- Appointment process, including advertisement, interview and securing possible external assistance.

The Clerk suggested that when undertaking a grading evaluation, this should also apply to the Post of Facilities and Communications Manager.

RESOLVED that a Report on the options for advertising and appointing to the Post of Parish Clerk is made to the next meeting of this Committee.

Action: Clerk

F20-92 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

The Committee was advised that a new sign to replace that illegally removed from the Whitefriars Drive location had now been obtained and was ready for installation. It was agreed to instruct the lengthsman to complete this task.

Action: Clerk

The FCM reported that she had now obtained sufficient copies of location maps from Rugby Borough Council at a cost of £30. These would be placed in the large Notice Boards around the Cawston development. **Action: FCM**

F20-93 Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 9th February 2021

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.