



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, Warrington,
Cheshire WA4 5EQ

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Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary monthly Parish meeting of Appleton Parish Council held on Friday 20th March 2019 at 6pm at Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road Appleton WA4 5EQ

Present: - Councillor J Wheeler (Chairman)

Councillor B Axcell, Councillor I Axcell, Councillor J Walker, Councillor R Johnson, Councillor S Bengner (until 6.30pm),

Mrs J Monks (Clerk) From 7pm late due to accident on M56.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Councillor J Wheeler welcomed everyone to the Parish Council meeting. Apologies for received from Councillor G Skentlebery, Councillor K Arnett, Councillor J Price and Councillor P Walker.

2. Members Code of Conduct

None declared.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4. Covid-19, Business Continuity

The clerk had circulated a report to all Parish Councillors prior to the meeting.

Standing Orders

RESOLVED that;

The Standing Orders should be amended for a period of six months from 20th March 2020 until 20th September 2020.

Financial Regulations

RESOLVED that;

Two Councillors chosen from the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee plus Clerk and Assistant Clerk to be authorised for expenditure of up to £5,000.

The clerk had circulated a report which did detail that on Monday 16th March 2020 the Parish Ranger's van required four new tyres at the cost of £478.50 plus VAT. The total cost of this was £585.00. These were purchased on the Parish Ranger's debit card. As such this was a breach of the Financial Regulations as the Parish Ranger has a £500 limit on his debit card.

Phones

The clerk had circulated a report informing the Parish Council that she had taken out a new contract with BT. The Parish Council were paying £180 a quarter and BT wanted an extra £4.00 per month to divert the office phone onto a mobile phone number. The clerk re-negotiated the deal and has taken out a new contract with BT for £171.59 a quarter.

RESOLVED that;

It was agreed to approve an increase in credit limit on the Booking Secretary's mobile phone to £30 a month as the clerk was currently using this.

RESOLVED that;

The clerk and assistant had delegated authority to purchase up to the value of £200.00 two additional mobile phones for the purpose of home working. The most appropriate package will be chosen whether that is Pay as You Go or Contract.

Website

As this can only be accessed from the PC in the office, a holding statement will be put on the site explaining the current situation. It is hoped the new website will be available in the next few weeks.

Defibrillator

The Parish Ranger is on annual leave from 23rd March for one week. It is the Parish Ranger's job to check the defibrillators. The clerk will hold a training session on Monday 23rd March 2020 regarding on how to check a defibrillator.

Litter picking

Clarification would be sought on the health and safety risks of litter picking.

Covid-19 Crisis Committee

RESOLVED that;

To set up a Covid-19 crisis meeting from with immediate effect with delegated responsibility to make decisions during the Covid-19 period. Councillor J Wheeler, Councillor S Benger and Councillor J Walker will be members. Other Parish Councillors are welcome to join.

RESOLVED that;

Planning – The Clerk and Assistant Clerk should liaise with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee on planning applications received during the Recess with subsequent discussion with other Councillors as required.

The Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Clerk and Assistant Clerk be authorised to deal with all routine and necessary matters including payment of staff salaries, insurance and other payments in liaison and in consultation with other Parish Councillors.

The clerk will circulate a monthly payment schedule to all Parish Councillors and then the signing of required cheques/bank transfers be undertaken by authorised signatories in accordance with the bank mandates and as detailed on the monthly payment schedule.

Working from home allowance

RESOLVED that;

The clerk and assistant clerk could claim working from home allowance if they were working from home at the HMRC rates of £4.00 per week, £18 per month. From 6th April 2020 the rate increases to £27 per month.

The clerk and assistant clerk were asked to contact their home insurance providers to confirm that they are covered on their home insurance for working from home. Any additional premium due to this could be claimed via expenses.

5. Covid- 19, Parish Hall

The clerk had circulated a report to all Parish Councillors prior to the meeting. Many groups had cancelled bookings until further notice.

RESOLVED that;

The Parish Hall will be closed at 10am on Monday 23rd March 2020 until further notice. The closure is in line with Central Government guidance and with the closure of all community centres run by Warrington Borough Council. The reason for the closure is due to public safety.

An email would be sent out on Friday evening to all Hall users informing them of this and asking them to get anything they needed out of storage over the weekend.

The clerk was asked to inform the insurance company of this decision any additional premium due to the close would have to be paid by the Parish Council.

Request to use the Hall from Appleton Independent Methodist Church

The Parish Council had received a request from Appleton Independent Methodist Church to use the Hall during the Covid-19 situation.

The clerk had sought legal guidance and advice on this request. All public buildings were closed due to public safety concerns and the Parish Council would have a duty of care for anyone that used the Parish Hall. Cleaning equipment was limited, and it would be necessary for the hall to be kept sterile. The insurance company had also requested a full risk assessment by a qualified person.

RESOLVED that;

The Parish Hall was to be closed on public safety grounds and as such it would not be possible to allow Appleton Independent Methodist Church to use the Hall.

The clerk was asked to inform Appleton Independent Methodist Church of this decision.

A decision would also have to be made about when the mandatory checks would be carried out. PAT testing would be due in May, fire and boiler checks in June, emergency lighting which is due in April.

Bookings and Cancellations

The current cancellation policy of the Parish Council is that a hirer books the Hall and if they give less than three months' notice, then the full hire hall fee is due and payable.

The clerk has confirmed that Warrington Borough Council are waiving all hire hall cancellation fees in respect of this Covid-19 virus.

RESOLVED that;

Due the cancellations due to the Covid-19 virus the Parish Council would refund the charge for those users who have prepaid for events such as birthday parties.

With regards to regular users they would be offered a credit for those who have prepaid or offer a refund. Should any user wish to waive their fees, it is suggested they make a donation to Warrington Foodbank.

Hall hire fees for bookings that went ahead the normal charge would be due and payable.

Deep Cleaning

RESOLVED that;

to defer a decision on whether to deep clean the Hall as it was unclear as to what type of cleaning would be needed when it reopens. If the Hall is required to open, then there would have to be another risk assessment.

Trade Waste

The contract with Warrington Borough Council ends on 31st March 2020. The Veolia contract was agreed at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 17th March 2020 however this has not yet been signed.

RESOLVED that;

Although there would be no trade waste whilst the Hall was closed the Veolia contract should be signed anyway and the clerk could sign this on behalf of the Parish Council.

6. Cancellation of Local Elections

The clerk has received a letter dated 16th March 2020 from the Electoral Services Department stating that the Parish hall is no longer required from 7th May 2020 and that it is likely that an election will take place on Thursday 6th May 2021