



# Appleton Parish Council

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## Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 9.30am

### Present

Councillor P Walker, Councillor S Benger and Councillor B Axcell.

Mrs J Monks (Clerk) and Mrs I Derbyshire (Assistant Clerk).

### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Councillor P Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor J Wheeler sent her apology for the meeting.

### 2. Members Code of Conduct

None declared.

### 3. Matters Arising

None

### 4. Annual Review of Internal Financial Controls, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee had undertaken a review of the internal financial controls

#### Recommended that;

the present arrangements for financial controls as detailed below are acceptable:

- a. All payments are raised in accordance with an approved payment schedule. This includes agreed direct debit and bacs payments and will include supporting documentation. These are agreed as correct and signed at the third Tuesday monthly Parish Council meeting.
- b. The schedule is included in the minutes of that meeting and receives formal approval from Parish Council at the next full Parish Council meeting.
- c. The Chair at the next full Parish Council meeting reconciles the Receipts & Payments Schedule and the Bank Statement and signs the Account Balance Summary.
- d. Payments are input onto the Parish Council's internet banking account by the Assistant Clerk and then are checked by the Clerk. Once input, each payment needs to be approved two Parish Councillors, who will authorise the payment in accordance in payment schedule. Once a payment has been input and approved it cannot be amended in any way by the internal banking system. It can only be cancelled. Payments are made in accordance with the Financial Regulations adopted by the Parish Council.

- e. Four samples of payments are selected at random each month and these invoices are cross matched with the internet banking payments in order to match the bank details on each invoice with the payments being made.

**Recommended that;**

the Standing Orders were confirmed for the Parish Council.

**Recommended that;**

the Financial Regulations were confirmed for the Parish Council.

## **5. Publication scheme, complaints procedure, grant policy, Social Media Policy and Safeguarding policy**

**Recommended that;**

(a) The publication scheme should be amended to show that agendas and minutes are posted to Stockton Heath Library.

(b) The complaints procedure will be updated with the new Chairman' details and then it should be confirmed for the Parish Council

(c) the grant procedure was discussed as concerns were raised regarding expenditure. The assistant clerk has suggested looking at grants once or twice a year in order to monitor and review expenditure as the grant budget for 2019/2020 was considerably over budget. Councillor B Axcell stated this would limit the Parish Council to actively responding to grant applications when needed, for example the donation to Warrington Foodbank due to the Covid-19 crisis. It was recommended that the current grant policy should be confirmed by the Parish Council however the grant budget was closely monitored in the future.

(d) the Social Media policy was confirmed for the Parish Council.

(e) the Safeguarding policy should be confirmed for the Parish Council.

## **6. Direct Debits, Debit cards and payment by Bank Transfer**

### **Direct Debits**

The clerk confirmed that the following payments were made by variable direct debit.

British Telecom paid quarterly

CNG Energy (gas bill) paid monthly.

Information Commissioner Office for data protection registration fee paid yearly.

Sottish Power, paid quarterly.

Tesco mobile, (Booking Secretary phone), paid monthly.

Veolia, (Trade Waste collection), paid monthly.

**Recommended that;**

The use of variable direct debit for the above supplier should continue.

### **Debit Cards**

The clerk, Mrs Joanne Monks, Assistant Clerk, Mrs Irene Derbyshire and Parish Ranger, Mr David Pearce be authorised to use a debit card on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Recommended that;**

The above arrangement should continue.

### **Payment by Bank Transfer**

The following were authorised to use internet banking and to authorise payment by bank transfer.

Mrs J Monks, Clerk  
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk  
Councillor Judith Wheeler  
Councillor Peter Walker  
Councillor Sandra Bengler  
Councillor Brian Axcell

Councillor S Bengler advised that it would be beneficial to have additional authorised users. The clerk will ask for any volunteers to be additional authorised users.

**Recommended that;**

The use of payment by bank transfer for the above should continue.

## **7. Asset Register**

The Asset Register had been updated and subsequently circulated to all the Parish Councillors by the clerk.

**Recommended that;**

The asset register is confirmed to be correct and the total value of the asset register as at 31.03.20 is £412,931.

## **8. Breakdown of Grant budget**

Councillor J Wheeler asked for a breakdown of the grant budget. The clerk confirmed that the grant budget for 2020/2021 was £6,000 and the amount spent so far the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 was £3,100. The Parish Council had donated £1,000 to Warrington Foodbank, £200 to Appleton Cross Church for a grant application for the flagpole and £1,900 to LiveWire for the hire of the football pitches. Councillor P Walker reported that the grant budget may need reviewing dependent upon expenditure.

## **9.Parish Hall update**

The clerk informed the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the trade waste collection service could be suspended as there was no waste as the Parish Hall was closed.

**RESOLVED** that;

The clerk should suspend the trade waste with immediate effect.

The assistant clerk had also notified the water company and had informed that the Parish Hall was now closed as such the charge had been suspended.

The clerk reported that although the Parish Council had approved expenditure for work such as the PAT testing, Fire Risk Assessment and installation of sanitary bins all this work would have to be completed prior to the re-opening of the Parish Hall as many firms had closed and were only doing emergency repairs. Also, items for PAT testing were not all at the Parish hall as the clerk and assistant clerk were working from home.

**RESOLVED** that;

All routine maintenance for the hall would have to be completed prior to the hall reopening.

Councillor P Walker expressed concerns regarding the loss of income as the hall was closed and that the budget may need reviewing. The budget would be reviewed when more information was known regarding the length of the temporary closure.

Meeting closed at 10am.