

Upper Beeding Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held virtually using Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 24th November 2020 at 7pm

Present: Councillors: B. Harber (Chairman) S. Birnstingl, S. Garrod, I. Ivatt, T Kardos, C. Verney.

Also, present: Clerk: Celia Price; Councillor: A Chilver

Members of the public: None

- F:1120:01 Election of Chairman**
Cllr Harber was elected as Chairman for the Finance Committee for the municipal year ending May 2021. Proposed Cllr Birnstingl, seconded Cllr Ivatt and agreed by all.
- F:1120:02 Election of a Vice-Chairman**
Cllr Ivatt was elected as Vice-Chairman for the Finance Committee for the municipal year ending May 2021. Proposed Cllr Birnstingl, seconded Cllr Kardos and agreed by all.
- F:1120:03 Apologies for absence**
Cllr Warren was unable to join the meeting due to technical issues.
- F:1120:04 Declaration of Councillors personal or prejudicial interest**
The Chairman reminded councillors that previous declarations still stand (as defined under the Localism Act 2011).
- F:1120:05 Minutes of the last meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on [17th March 2020](#) were approved as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Birnstingl, seconded Cllr Harber and agreed by all. The Chairman will sign the minutes as soon as is practical.
- F:1120:06 Public Adjournment**
None Present
- F:1120:07 Terms of Reference**
Draft [terms of reference](#) were circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved that they should be presented to Full Council for adoption but that these should be reviewed in preparation for the new municipal year. Proposed Cllr Garrod, seconded Cllr Ivatt and agreed by all.
It was also resolved that the Finance Committee agree priorities and objectives to ensure continued improvement and to maximise public benefit.
- F:1120:08 Business Risk Assessment**
The [business risk assessment](#) was circulated prior to the meeting. It was resolved that this item be carried forward to the next meeting and be reviewed following updates, particularly on the lone worker, GDPR, monitoring and governance sections.
- F:1120:09 Tax Base**
The [tax base from HDC](#) and an [explanation](#) about the tax base was circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Harber presented an overview of the documents and invited

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questions. Cllr Kardos thanked Cllr Harber for a comprehensive explanation. It was resolved to note these documents.

F:1120:10 Budget 21/22

Draft [budget proposals](#) for the financial year 2021/22 were circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Harber gave an overview of the budget and invited questions and comments.

Councillors discussed and reviewed budget lines, reserves, potential income and other cost saving ideas. It was agreed that the potential for utilising volunteers for some maintenance tasks should be investigated, recognising the complex requirements of such a scheme whilst noting the successes in other local parishes. This will be investigated further with specific input from the Facilities and Community Committees.

All recognised the whole country's financial difficulties as caused by the pandemic and are pleased to be able to recommend a standstill budget to Full Council for approval. It was noted that this could require consideration of ideas for further costs savings throughout the year but is achievable with careful monitoring. Proposed Cllr Verney, seconded Cllr Kardos and agreed by all.

F:1120:11 Matters raised by Councillors

Cllr Garrod suggested providing residents with information on the budget and finances before the council tax bills are issued and the Clerk confirmed this will be the focus for the next newsletter and has been highlighted in the edition to be distributed in the coming weeks. There may also be an opportunity for councillor surgeries in the new year. The potential for business advertising in the newsletter and on the website was also discussed. Cllr Garrod raised questions regarding budget monitoring and Cllr Harber requested that the 'Good Councillors Guide to Finance and Transparency' be distributed to the committee along with any other useful information the Clerk has available.

Cllr Warren joined the meeting by phone and having expressed frustrations with technology; meaning he was unable to join the meeting, asked questions regarding the budget, particularly regarding salaries and trees which were discussed.

Cllr Harber suggested the Parish Office be closed from Friday 18th December until Monday 4th January. All agreed.

F:1120:12 Future Meetings

It was resolved that Finance Committee meetings shall be held quarterly with the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 23rd February at 7pm.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 8:10pm

Minutes Signed By:

Date: