KIDLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee
Held at Exeter Hall on Thursday 29 February 2024 at 6.30pm

Present: Cllr Lesley Mclean (Chair), Cllr David Robey, Cllr Alan Graham, Cllr Alison Street, Cllr Linda Ward, Cllr Ian Middleton, Cllr Nik Soheili

In attendance: Sarah Kearney – Relief Clerk, Cllr Melanie Moorhouse, Cllr William Easdown Babb, Cllr Phil Wyse

Apologies: Cllr David Betts, Cllr David Thurling

1. **To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.** No Councillors had anything to declare.

2. **Public Participation –** to receive questions from members of the public relating to items on the agenda. There were no members of the public present.

24/PF069 **Minutes –** to confirm and approve the minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2024. An amendment was requested to include the reference to St Mary's Fields Ear Marked reserve. To be brought to next meeting for approval.

24/PF070 **Confirmation of Parish Precept 2024-25 –** Precept information details had been circulated to councillors before the meeting. The councillors also expressed their gratitude to the officers for keeping the budget increase to only 6.6% for the 2024-25 Financial year.

24/PF071 **Kidlington Parish Council Grants Policy** – it was agreed to remove specific dates for grant applications and replace with instructions that applications should be received two working weeks ahead of Policy and Finance meetings. Members suggested a number of small edits to the policy that were agreed by members.
Action: A new draft policy is to be drawn up by the office for approval at the next P&F meeting.

To Consider S137 Grant Application:

a **Community Bingo -** unable to approve the Grant Application due to not receiving all the documentation.

b **Cherwell Collective –** Grant application hasn't been received

24/PF072 **To consider a report from the Clerk and the Cherwell Collective Working Group regarding the Cherwell Collective.**
The clerk produced a financial report providing details of the existing discounts applied to Cherwell Collective. In order to assist the officers with on-going negotiations the Chair proposed that the committee consider an 'in-principle' discount of 60% to the Cherwell Collective to be confirmed once grant applications were received. This discount would only be applied to the Main Hall/Kitchen and Bar, which are charged areas, and not to the Barn, which remains free of charge. The Cherwell Collective will still need to complete grant applications. This discount will

be effective from 1 April 2024 until the end of March 2025, after which it will be reviewed. The committee agreed in principle to the proposal of a 60% discount.

24/PF073 To review the report produced by the Communications Working Party and consider its recommendations

The communication report was circulated to all councillors before the meeting and the Chair asked that the committee consider the recommendations in the report.

Executive Summary

The committee discussed various strands in the report including Values, Aims and Objectives, Policy and Strategy, Communication Plan, Narrative vs Broadcast, Reach, and Website. Each of these subjects was discussed individually, and it was decided that priority should be given to ascertaining the Council's Values, Aims and Objectives. It was acknowledged that the office staff already have regular contact with the public but that external communications have not been a priority for the Council. It was agreed that it was important to understand what the message is that the Council wish to communicate as well as how it is communicated. It was also agreed that staff resource would be required to action the Communications Plan. It was explained that a Comms Plan was a working document that maps out key events and messages and how to communicate them across the year. It was agreed that any documentation should be light weight and light touch.

Councillors agreed that work needs to be done to improve the website. Cllr Robey stated that he is currently responsible for keeping the website up to date, and he asked the committee if he could continue doing this until he steps down from Chair of the Council or until someone in the office can take over. The committee agreed to his request.

The committee agreed the recommendations of the Executive Summary subject to approval by full Council.

<u>Action Points:</u>

Values, Aims and Objectives – P&F Committee to create a proposal for Council approval.

Policy and Strategy – This section will be addressed after the completion of the Value, Aims, and Objectives. There are draft policies to be agreed by full council.

Communication Plans – The work can be done in parallel with other work streams. The suggestion is to work on 3 months at a time. To be created by the Communications Working Group in conjunction with the office.

Broadcast and Narrative – it was agreed that the Council should communicate with residents in different ways in order to engage with them.

Website – The website will be updated by Cllr Robey until May whilst staff are given additional training. Some of the recommendations have already been actioned by the office.

Training – It was agreed that the term 'mandatory' be removed from this point and it be made clear that the Council is committed to ongoing training.

The Committee RECOMMENDS that Council approve all the above proposals.

24/PF074 To consider the minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee and any recommendation made.

The Council members reviewed the Traffic Advisory Committee meeting minutes. It was agreed that that KPC should not be responsible for any payment towards the consultation regarding double yellow lines. Consultation on double yellow lines should not proceed further pending the outcome of the planning application for the new OUFC stadium.

Additionally, the Council members discussed the Blenheim Road Junction and agreed to proceed with knee rail fencing around the grass area, as well as planting a tree. The committee **RESOLVED** that the work for the knee rail fencing on Blenheim Road Junction should proceed as planned using funds kept in ear marked reserves.
Cllr Middleton recently reported that he had contacted the Oxfordshire County Council regarding the faulty Rising Bollard located in Kidlington's High Street. The bollard has never functioned adequately since its installation. The County Council has agreed to replace the bollard with ANPR camera and has secured funding. However, the KPC members expressed concerns regarding the maintenance of the ANPR system, who would be responsible for it, who would be granted access, and who would bear the costs.

24/PF075 To consider the notes from the Stratfield Brake Liaison Group

The Committee considered Cllr Robey's note of the meeting. It was agreed that the present drainage system was working reasonably well, so no further work is required although the situation will be monitored.
Dog mess: measures have been taking place and the pitches have been improving.
The main item discussed was the management arrangement with CDC.
The committee **recommend**s to Council that the arrangement stays the same for 2024-25 and 2026-27.

24/PF076 To consider the Clerk's report regarding UKSPF funding via CDC for public realm improvements.

CDC have approached KPC regarding UKSPF funding. They have allocated £30,000 to be spent before the end of March 2024, with an additional £40,000 to be spent in the following financial year. The Clerk and Cllr Street have met with RAW to discuss plans for an Animal Theme Zoo Trail, which would include planters and benches. The proposed location for these additions is where the current seating that replaced the bandstand is currently located. It has been suggested that the current seating unit could be relocated to another area in Kidlington. Concerns were raised about the ongoing maintenance of public realm furniture.
The committee agreed that due to the timescale, they would be happy for this to proceed and for the Clerk and Cllr Street to oversee the project.

The dates of the next meeting will be: 14 March and then 25 April 2024

Meeting Finished at: 8.30pm