

BRITWELL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BRITWELL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 7.00 P.M. IN THE PARISH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Present Cllr P K Mann (in the chair)
Cllrs. R Anderson, P Brooker, Mrs S Brooker and J Finn,.

In Attendance : Mr. J. Holder (Locum Clerk) ;
Mary Knight & Paul Jagger (*agenda item 11 only*)

19/117/PC Apologies

There were apologies from Cllrs. P.Murphy and S Wright.

19/118/PC Declaration of Interest

118.1 Cllrs. Mann , Anderson, and P Brooker, Cllr. Mann made a general declaration that each was a member of Slough BC, with Cllr Mann making a further declaration that she was a Cabinet member of Slough BC (for Planning) and specifically in respect of agenda items 6 and 7.3.

19/119/PC Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2019

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th July were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

19/120/PC Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

120.1 AGAR 2018 -19 (*item 19/81.4*) - The Locum Clerk noted his contact with the external auditors.

120.2 26th May Hire Accident (*items 19/98.4*) - The Locum Clerk said that insurers had recently advised that liability had been admitted subject to causation.

120.3 Bank Signatories (*item 19/113.5*) – The Locum Clerk said that Cllr Mann was now an approved bank signatory , with the process still to be finalised for Cllr Brooker. **Action: Locum Clerk/ Cllr Brooker**

19/121/PC Neighbourhood Police

121.1 The Locum Clerk was awaiting details of the new police officer, following which he would contact her. **Action: Cllr Wright / Locum Clerk**

19/122/PC Updates from Outside Bodies

122.1 The Council *ratified* Cllr Brooker as the Parish Council representative on the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee of Slough BC, with its next meeting tomorrow evening. He would need to step down in April 2020 as he would become Slough Mayor for the year 2020 -2021.

122.2 Cllr Brooker said that since agreeing to take this role, he had noted the Committee's terms of reference and was unsure whether he was currently not eligible as he was the Slough Deputy Mayor. Cllr Anderson said that as a Parish Council representative, as distinct from a Slough BC member, this exclusion might not apply. Cllr Brooker would seek advice from Slough BC Democratic Services. **Action: Cllr Brooker**

19/123/PC Planning

123.1 The Locum Clerk said there had been no recent applications.

19/124 /PC Post Community Governance Review Strategy

Material Contracts

124.1 *Grounds Maintenance* – The Locum Clerk said that he had issued a tender to three suppliers but had by the due date only received one supplier response quoting on the stated work tasks, a copy of which he had circulated. Following discussion, members noted they would prefer if possible to have at least two quotes to look at and the Locum Clerk was requested to extend the time period and chase the other suppliers to seek such quote, with the tender to be considered at the next meeting. It was further **agreed** that in light of delay, the current contract to be extended to 31 December 2019 and in turn, the term offered on tender to be reduced to two years three months, (from 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2022).

Action: Locum Clerk

124.2 *Utilities Supply Renewal* - The Locum Clerk said that the current Electricity supply contract with British Gas was due to expire on 4 August 2020 and the Gas supply contract with Total Gas & Power to expire on 1 September 2020. In the final year of a term, one could seek quotes to fix the price now for a further term after the current one and in view of rising energy prices, this was recommended. He had sought three year term quotes from a number of energy consultants and the best received was from Energy Buzz Utilities. Separately he had contacted the two current utility suppliers direct. Highlighting the respective quotes made, he said that for electricity, both were higher than the current rates with the quote from British Gas higher than that from Buzz Utilities. For Gas, both quotes were lower than current rates, with that direct from Total Gas & Power lower than that from Energy Buzz Utilities. The best quotes obtained by Energy Buzz Utilities were in fact from the current suppliers. Mr Holder confirmed that Energy Buzz Utilities fee was not built into the rates charged but was separately charged direct to the supplier. Following discussion, it was **agreed** to appoint Energy Buzz Utilities and to authorise them to fix the gas and electricity supply for a three year term following expiry of the current supply agreements.

Action: Locum Clerk

124.3 *Communication: New Website* - The Locum Clerk said that he would issue the tender and seek quotes for consideration at the October meeting; he requested members to advise him if they were able to suggest potential developers.

Action: ALL/ Locum Clerk

124.4 *Building Works* – In response to Cllr Brooker who drew attention to the pothole outside the building, the Locum Clerk said that due to his recent accident, Cllr Wright had not yet arranged a site assessment with a builder for a specification to be drawn up, following which the Locum Clerk would seek tenders for consideration.

Action: Cllr Wright /Locum Clerk

Bar Tender

124.5 The Locum Clerk said that the current three year term was due to expire on 21 December 2019. Members first considered whether the leased area should continue as a bar or be otherwise used. Cllr Mrs Brooker noted the broader appeal of a coffee shop. Whilst there might be scope for a broader use, the Council **agreed** it should still continue as licensed premises.

124.6 The Locum Clerk noted the benefit of engaging a suitable expert such as commercial estate agent or surveyor who would be better able on terms going forward, which bearing in mind timelines, should be engaged in the near future. It was **agreed** that the Locum Clerk

should engage such expert, subject to any commercial terms being confirmed by the Council and ratified at the next meeting.

Action: Locum Clerk

Precept 2019 -20

124.7 The Locum Clerk noted that he had only recently written to Mr Thobhani requesting an update on Slough BC's review.

Action: Locum Clerk

19/125/PC Community Centre and Sports Ground

Slimming World

125.1 The Locum Clerk noted that since the last meeting, Ms Cooke, one of the Slimming World hirers, had expressed concern to the notice sent to her in respect of hire rate increases. Members noted that the Council had decided to vary rates following a review, including a benchmarking exercise, and that the previous rate had been unchanged for three years; it **confirmed** its earlier decision and requested the Clerk to so respond. However noting that in light of her appeal which had tonight been considered, it was **agreed** that the increase should not come into effect 1st October as originally agreed but on 1st November 2019.

Action: Cllr Murphy/ Locum Clerk

Hire use

125.2 - 26th May Hire –The Locum Clerk noted that as previously requested he had viewed CCTV of the day but this had not assisted. In view of the Insurers' new position on liability, there would appear to be no fault on the hirers' part and that accordingly, he would be returning the deposit

Action: Locum Clerk

19/126/PC Insurance Renewal: 18 October 2019 -17 October 2020

126.1 The Locum Clerk noted that last year, the Council had reviewed its insurance cover and had decided to move from its previous broker and insurers to Zurich. The cover was similar and there was a saving of over £1,500 on the annual premium. Zurich had quoted a premium for the coming year of £2,103 which was only just over £40 more than this year's premium. The Council **agreed** to renew with Zurich.

Action: Locum Clerk

19/127/PC Finance

127.1 *Income & Expenditure* - The income and expenditure and bank reconciliation for July and August 2019 were **approved**. Mr Holder highlighted several items in the Cashbook.

127.2 In response to Cllr Anderson, the Locum Clerk said that other than the initial £13,000 payment made, Slough BC had yet to repay the legal costs incurred by the Parish Council in the judicial review case. Slough BC had in the last month offered to pay a further £12,000 in total but he had been advised by the Council's solicitor that this was too low and accordingly costs solicitors were to liaise.

127.3 It was **agreed** to ratify the approval of the following cheques which had been issued since the last meeting but prior to this meeting:-

- £150 to C Torr to reimburse Hall deposit for 21 July;

- £150 to S Manikham to reimburse Hall deposit for 27 July.

127.4 In addition to bank payments and direct debits, it was **agreed** to approve the following payments) :-

- £630.00 (inc VAT) to Nigel Stow for plumbing repairs to Bar's ladies toilets ;
- £2,103.23 to Zurich Municipal for insurance for period 18 October 2019 -17 October 2020;
- £1,312.50 (inc VAT) to Manorcott Legal & Business Services for Locum Clerk's services;
- £118.70 to Paula Murphy to reimburse for cleaning supplies.

127.5 *Repayment of shared Election costs* – Mr Holder noted the charge received from Slough BC of £5,175.76, being the Parish Council's share of costs incurred in respect of the may elections. It was **agreed** to approve this payment subject to a) upon receipt of a formal invoice and b) Council members agreed with Cllr Anderson that payment should be made only following payment by Slough BC of outstanding legal costs from the court action. **Action: Locum Clerk**

127.6 The Locum Clerk noted that it had been necessary for Cllrs Murphy and Wright to issue cheques for both the July and August staff salaries rather than electronic payment. The previous transitional arrangements agreed for previous staff salaries since this issue arose were **agreed**, namely that although neither Cllr Murphy nor Cllr Wright had signed a cheque which the other had signed, allowance for them to do so in the present circumstances was expressly agreed . The Locum Clerk was noted that as Cllr Mann had this month become a bank signatory, electronic payment of salaries would resume with Cllr Mann providing the second authorisation to that made by Cllr Murphy. **Action: Cllr Mann**

127.7 Mr Holder said that with Cllr Murphy, he had authorised NEST to make the outstanding direct debit pension payments for staff .

127.8 The Locum Clerk said he would shortly be issuing invoices to the Bar tenant in respect of utilities recharges, as well as the quarterly rent invoice. He noted that those for water, following change of supplier , complicated this process. Further to that, he would draw up a summary on outstanding moneys and latest repayment position. **Action: Locum Clerk**

(Mary Knight and Paul Jagger joined the meeting for the following item)

19/128/PC Chicken Ranch Bar

128.1 The Chair was pleased to note that the arrangements recently agreed were working. Cllr Brooker raised a query in respect of the recent management accounts which Ms Knight would review with her accountant.

128.2 Further to the heating and fault in the ladies toilets which had been fixed by the Council since the last meeting, Mr Jagger noted a problem with the taps in the Gents **Action: Locum Clerk**

128.3 The Chair noted the Bar lease was due to expire in December and that the Council would be looking to tender for a new lease. The tenants confirmed that they would be interested in applying. The Chair said the Council would welcome hearing from the Tenants with any new ideas or thoughts they might have . Ms Knight noted that more could be done with the Function Bar but it would need a working dishwasher and chiller. She was requested to provide a list of what would be required. **Action: Locum Clerk**

128.4 Members and the Tenants discussed changing the name of the bar from *The Chicken Ranch* which the Chair said had negative connotations. Cllr Anderson suggested *The Bright Well* at Britwell .

(Mary Knight and Paul Jagger left the meeting)

19/129/PC Any Other Business

129.1 *Agenda for Next Meeting* -There were no specific requests.

19/130/PC Next Meeting

The next Full Council Meeting to be at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 16th October 2019.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

.....Chair

Dated.....