



Minutes - Executive Committee Meeting - Tuesday 25th April 2023

Present: Cllrs Clint, Murphy, Starkey; also, the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the Clerk

Absent: None

Other: No members of the public were present

- 1) To receive and accept any apologies for absence - None**
- 2) To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** – Cllr Murphy declared an interest in planning application 230807.
- 3) The minutes from the last Executive Meeting held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 were approved and signed by Cllr Clint.** Proposed by Cllr Clint, seconded by Cllr Murphy; all in favour.
- 4) Public Participation** (allotted time - 15 minutes) – No members of the public were present.
- 5) Location of Parish Office after May 2023.**

The Executive Committee confirmed 'Plan A' was for the Clerk to share an office with the Barkham Clerk on a temporary basis until Phase 2 of the Pavilion had been completed. The Executive discussed plans to vacate the office at the village hall; thanks to Cllr Starkey who offered the use of a horsebox, however, the committee agreed that a removals company will be required to deal with heavy items of furniture. Clerk to obtain a quote to move office furniture.
- 6) Pavilion phase 2**

Cllr Murphy talked through the steps for the proposed Phase 2 of the pavilion build. As regards planning, either an amendment to the previous planning application (section 71) or a new planning application will need to be submitted to take in to account the addition of a parish office. Following the planning approval, working drawing followed by structural drawings will be obtained, the latter will be used to write the specification for building. At this time a Building Control Application will be submitted at the same time as the tender for build going out. Tenders for the build will be submitted by a sealed bid. The Executive Committee discussed the timeline which is very tight to get planning approval and building complete before the next football season.
- 7) Coombes woodland purchase**

Councillor Clint updated the Executive Committee. Although we have been informed that another bid has been accepted it is not clear whether this is proceeding to completion, following ratification of the Council's approach at the last full council meeting the Council will be contacting the agent to signal that

Arborfield and Barkham are still willing to proceed. Cllr Clint has received a questionnaire from the lawyers regarding the set up and operation of the Charitable Trust that will be established to own the land and it is currently being considered by representatives of both Arborfield and Barkham. The conveyancing solicitor has confirmed the Councils can make their contribution for the purchase of the Coombes Woodland directly to the conveyancing solicitor which will enable set up of the trust's bank account to be completed after the sale. If the sale does not proceed, the Council will be able to reclaim the money in full. The RFO confirmed that he has made contact with Unity Trust bank to enquire about setting up a bank account for the charitable trust.

8) How the council is working and 9) Attracting new members

The Executive Committee and also the RFO and Clerk discussed this and the following points were noted:

- Following the recent resignation of a Cllr, The Council currently has 7 members – there are 3 vacancies.
- The Council is making very good progress in undertaking projects such as the gazebo replacement, the pavilion phased building and refurbishment, and the recent installation of CCTV in the Park.
- The committee expressed concerns that not all members of the council felt engaged in the decision making processes and that it was not clear what powers, if any, were delegated to the Parks, Planning and F&GP Committee

More Cllrs are needed to ensure the council is sustainable, representative of the full community and to avoid Cllrs having to be on many different committees. The Executive Committee discussed how to engage with residents to raise an awareness of the Parish Council, and potentially recruit more Cllrs. Suggestions included:

- Increase our visibility in the area by having quarterly stands displaying the Parish Council banner in various locations around the parish and invite people to come and meet the council and discuss a particular topic which is under the council's control, for example, 'What they would improve in the area' or 'How can Arborfield contribute to the climate emergency'.
- Promote what the Council is doing to create interest and encourage participation.
- Use events such as the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) as a recruitment drive. Cllr Starkey to draft a survey for the APM about what new item residents would want in the park.
- Hold an event in May at the Pavilion to launch the newly refurbished pavilion, the Nursery and to promote the Parish Council. Cllr Murphy to speak to lessee of the pavilion who will be running the Nursery.

The Executive Committee agreed it needed to:

- Specify which agenda items lie in Parks and which are covered under F&GP.
- Potentially delegate more authority to the Committees in terms of being able to spend up to the agreed budget, to reduce the number of items needing approval at full Council meetings. Action on the RFO to check with the internal auditor that such changes to the Standing Orders are permitted.

10) Risk Management - Any RM matters considered urgent.

The Old Churchyard is rather dilapidated in some areas. The Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Church and the Council to discuss possible actions.

11) Date of next meeting – The next executive meeting will be held in July, exact date to be confirmed.