



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

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Clerk: Mrs Annabel Wood

Minutes of an Executive Committee Meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023 at Arborfield Pavilion, 7:30pm

Present: Cllrs Clint (Chair), Murphy, Starkey and Fox.

In Attendance: Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the Clerk.

Public: No members of the public were present.

- 1) To receive and accept any apologies for absence.** – No apologies were received.
- 2) To receive any declarations of interest on items on the agenda** – No declarations were made.
- 3) To approve the minutes from the last Executive Meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2023** – These minutes were approved and signed by Cllr Clint. Proposed by Cllr Clint, seconded by Cllr Murphy, all in favour.
- 4) Questions from the Public** (allotted time - 15 minutes) – There were no members of the public present.
- 5) Delegating power to Committees.**

The Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting for each committee. A discussion was held about the areas of responsibility for the Parks and Finance and General Purpose (F&GP) Committees, how the Parks, Planning and F&GP committees currently operate, including: quorum, frequency of meetings, and how Committee decisions are currently approved in full council meetings.

The Executive Committee decided that delegated powers should be given to committees with the aim of reducing the number of items needing to be approved at full Council meetings. To facilitate The Parks Committee to exercise delegated powers, The Executive Committee resolved to amend the Parks Terms of Reference as follows:

- a. Reduce the quorum of the committee from 4 to 3.
- b. Remove the item “to review and recommend fees for the use of the Council’s facilities” and add it to Areas of Responsibility in the F&GP Committee Terms of Reference.
- c. Amend the item regarding “control spending in Areas of Responsibility” to link to the Standing Orders and becomes:

“To control spending within the agreed limits of the budget in compliance of the Standing Orders”.

The Committees will work such that Parks is dealing with facilities and F&GP, the business side of the Council.

The Executive Committee discussed where “Climate Emergency” should lie in meetings; and it was suggested that the Council should always be considering the impact of its actions on the environment through all Committees. Climate Emergency is also one of the Councils six priorities discussed at full Council meetings. It was suggested the Parish Council should have a policy for Climate Emergency which could include increasing biodiversity by creating a wildflower meadow. Although it was pointed out the success of establishing such a meadow is dependent on how and when it is prepared and sewn and cut. Clerk to ask Winnersh Parish Council which items of outdoor gym equipment get used and which don’t. request experts from WBC to assess the Parish Council’s Carbon footprint.

Since the Planning Committee only hold meetings to discuss large scale developments, the Executive Committee resolved to disband with the Planning Committee and use a working party as required to prepare responses to such developments. Cllr Fox to remain as the Planning Lead.

6) Risk Management - Any RM matters considered urgent.

The Executive Committee discussed how the Parish Council currently completes Risk Assessments for assets and felt it was not wholly satisfactory. Some people were unsure about carrying out a risk assessment and when it is required to be completed. It was suggested that any actions regarding Risk and Health and Safety should be logged separately from all other actions to enable easy viewing and avoid items getting ‘lost’. Such risks may be logged for years, others for much shorter periods of time. There are also risks associated with Planning and Finance which should be monitored. Clerk to ask Handyman to complete a weekly timesheet to enable Officers and Cllrs to understand how time is being spent and ensure the Council is making the most effective use of his time.

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