

Backford Parish Council
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 14th January 2020

Part 1

In Attendance

Chairman Mike Cheers
Councillor Clive Morgan
Councillor Andrew Harkness
Councillor Dave Ruscoe
District Borough Councillor Simon Eardley
Councillor Anita Dodd
Councillor Ade Deary
Deborah Jones – Parish Clerk

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Mark Littler

Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in any item on this agenda, subject to the rules regarding disclosure contained in the Members' Code of Conduct.

Nil declared.

Open Forum

Members of the public are invited to raise issues not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda. The maximum time allowed is 30 minutes, subject to the Chairman's discretion.

Colin Davies, Stephen Thackray and Roger Jones attended in order to provide a further perspective on the Village Hall re build.

CD explained that the costs for the tenders had come back well in excess of the budget available. The delay in the programme meant the loss of 45K of funding from Virador. Local community funders have been spoken to and all the external works now are removed from the building costs i.e car park, ramp landscaping etc in order to bring the budget closer to the cheapest tender price.

Retaining wall required now and is going to be done free of charge by a local builder.

Additional £6000 costs for waste to go into landfill.

Management costs remain the same but this still left the project £255,000 short in total.

Met with builder yesterday and £35,000 removed from the works cost. Which leaves us £225,000 short so now in the process of reducing the size of the hall by 3 metres to reduce costs further.

Big Lottery willing to present to heads with a grant for a further £155,000 application gone today, and this will be considered on 29th January 2020. If successful there will be a £20,000 shortfall remaining. End of Feb contracts will be signed building to start in April and finish work on the build in December 2020.

MC asked if the Quantity Surveyor has reduced his costs based on the mistake that was clearly made in the cost assumptions made which has led to such a significant shortfall.

CD explained no invoice has been received so assumed he is not charging. Discussion ensued re the inflated costs.

It is notable that this is a National Lottery first for West Cheshire.

CD hoping that there could be additional funds coming from each of the Parish Councils.

AH – has been in touch with the PWLB for further clarity on if loan could be extended to a further 2 years. Nathalia Pullis - local Finance Minister (replaced Shaffi Khan), she confirmed that the whole process would need to be re visited should the terms of the loan change as follows:-

- Updated resolution to borrow
- Updated consultation with residents
- NALC application form
- New loan factored into Parish budgets.
- Cannot increase original loan amount.
- Need to submit a new application if it is changed.
- Loan has to be taken by 29th July 2020

CD asked if the group would consider if there is any additional financial support the Parish council can offer.

MC asked for clarification on the size of the bays and why the cheaper options are not being considered. CD stated structural engineer is in charge of designing.

Whitfield and Brown are the builders.

Sweat equity will be utilised.

Contract must state that there will be flexibility in achieving cheapest costs for materials where possible.

DJ to write a letter to Jamie Christon Zoo.

DJ Letter to Jones Homes

Lex Greensill local resident can he be approached – ST.

AD offered £3,400 figures to be confirmed

Current Parish Balance £7,000

Interpretive panel costs to be reimbursed out of SE account from the council.

Part 2

17/20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Approved as a true record.

18/20 Previous Parish Clerk Issues

Discussion was held with regards to the problems relating to the past documentation and £576 for the previous year and then a further charge was given £280, all relating to the end of year financial audit. Alex Malthouse had agreed to cover these losses but the council has been unable to expedite this with AM.

The group agreed as recommended by SE to contact one more time and then write to the chief executive.

DJ to prepare a further letter.

19/20 Planning

Nil new planning applications.

20/20 Reports by Representatives

To receive reports from the following representatives:

- Village Hall - Chair Mike Cheers
- Backford Charities - Councillor Mark Littler
- Local Issues - Mike Cheers

Telephone Box has been requested to be kept and adopted by the Parish Council.

Councillors to consider potential uses for the box.

21/20 Finance

Payments and Receipts: To note/approve the payment of salaries/wages and expenses and invoices for goods received and services rendered and to note any receipts. A schedule will be presented at the meeting.

- Bank Balance
- Littlejohn payment to be made – **invoice not received DJ to contact.**

Precept - £22.78 currently. Extra houses in the area to come on stream. Discussion about whether it should be increased or not. Current precept would generate £113 more due to additional houses in Backford Park for the new houses. AD initially highlighted a potential of 3.4K potentially available within budget. DR proposed to increase the Village Hall bursary to £600 seconded by CM for budget purposes. There are no other projects planned in the foreseeable future.

In favour 4 against 1 abstain 1 - **Motion carried.**

£3200 for the village hall agreed AD proposed and seconded by CM 5 in favour and 1 against - **motion carried.**

Proposed Budget

MC proposing £1 increase on precept to cover revised budget- DR seconded

5 in favour and 1 against - **motion carried.**

- Interpretive panel – hosting charges to be considered in partnership with Mollington and Lea by Backford for 21/22.
- Payment for staff – Parish clerk payment made £166.77.
- Audit costs for independent auditor £120 agreed to be undertaken and DJ to organise dates with AD.

22/20 Correspondence

DJ needs to have a set of standing financial instructions.

Chris Matheson and bridle path **Anita D to speak to Chris Matheson again.**

23/20 Updates by Clerk

- CHALC Newsletter
- Police Report – nil to report
- Highways Issues – as above correspondence. Chorlton lane **AH to contact re hedge** horse riders would be at risk.
- Noticeboard – will be ready mid February.

24/20 Matters Arising

DJ fed back about the Chester Half Marathon 17th May 2020.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday March 10th 19.45hrs