



Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held in the Bonvalot Room at the Downton Memorial Centre on Monday 27th September 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr Brentor (Chair) and Cllrs Hall, Jones (until 9.50 pm), Mace, Randall and Watts.
Bev Cornish, Parish Clerk.

Eight members of the public were present.

01.21 To elect a Chair for the Committee for 2021/22:

With no councillors wishing to be nominated, Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Jones seconded and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Brentor be elected Chair of the Committee for the meeting.

02.21 Public Question Time

The Chair of the Downton Society commented that the 3 Year Plan did not include the finding of a location for a Post Office for which the Society considered there was a need for a parish the size of Downton and also, as raised at the recent New Housing Development Committee, a need for traffic surveys to assess the impact of new housing.

A member of the Brian Whitehead Association gave a detailed presentation and responded to questions from councillors which included a specific request for £20,000 from the Parish Council towards the setting up of a capital fund for the repairs to the buildings on the BWSCA site over the next 10 years.

03.21 To receive apologies for absence:

Cllr Brentor advised that no apologies had been received.

04.21 Minutes

Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED, with abstentions from Cllrs Jones, Mace, Randall and Watts that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th October 2019 be approved as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

Cllr Brentor asked that it be recorded that she resigned as Chair of the Committee the day after the meeting.

05.21 Declarations of Interest:

- a. **To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.**

Cllr Mace declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in matters relating to the Memorial Centre as he was a Trustee.

b. To consider any Dispensation Requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered:

The Clerk advised that no dispensation requests had been received.

06.21 Business Raised During Public Question Time

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that:

- The comments from the Downton Society will be taken into account when the 3 year plan is considered by the Committee. However, the Council had formed a Working Group to pursue the re-siting of a Post Office but after 2 years of work, it had not been able to find a suitable location or a person who wished to run it. Cllr Hall said he was happy to continue to pursue the matter as the councillor currently responsible for liaising with the Post Office van which visits Downton on Fridays.
- The presentation from the BWSCA would be taken into account when the Committee considered the 3 year plan and the potential future liabilities for the Council as identified by the Clerk.

07.21 Annual Insurance

Following delegation from the Parish Council and consideration of a report from the Clerk, Cllr Jones proposed, Cllr Mace seconded and it was RESOLVED that the quote of £7,596.68 for the term of a year offered by Pen Underwriting be approved as it offered the most competitive terms and the broadest cover from the limited options provided.

08.21 3 Year Strategic Plan

Following a detailed review and suggested changes, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that they be approved and recommended to the Council. This item was considered in tandem with the next item on projects for the 2022/23 financial year.

Cllr Mace commented that the outcomes of the public consultation could not be regarded as representative of the views of the parish as there was a limited number of respondents and they could not be regarded as a cross section of the community.

Cllr Brentor advised that the spreadsheet setting out the key projects supported by that consultation would be considered by the Committee but that for the project on the playgrounds there would need to be a formal consultation with the whole parish.

09.21 Projects for 2022/23 Financial Year

Following consideration of the report from the Clerk, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that recommendations be made to the Parish Council on the projects to be delivered in the 2022/23 financial year as follows:

i. Order of priority and any re-scheduling of actions to future years;

- Playground project for Memorial Gardens and Moot Lane Recreation Ground subject to approval by the Council and agreement by the community to the taking of a Public Works Loan Board (PWL) loan. The proposed loan when taking account of the £70k and the £38k Early Years funding from the Scott's House development was to take the total combined funding for the project up to £200k.
- If approval is not obtained, that the Council proceeds with upgrading the existing equipment using the currently available s106/R2 funds of £70,000.
- Refurbishment of the public toilets.

- Refurbishment of the cremated remains area of Downton Cemetery.
- Improvements to the street scene eg bollards, road signs, etc;
- Remedial works to the 2 rooves, the windows and the replacement of the guttering at the Downton Memorial Centre as set out in the Survey Report dated October 2018.

ii. Total potential costs:

The total costs were to be calculated by the Clerk for the Council's budget meeting being held on 25th October 2021 and the total costs would be determined by the term of the loan the Council wished to take for the playground project and the approval of it by the community. The Council's approval of the BWSCA's request to provide funds of up to £20k for capital projects over the next 10 years would also have an impact.

iii. Any requirement for additional staff resource:

The Clerk advised that the work proposed to be delivered in the 2022/23 financial year would require additional staff resource and this would be included in her budget calculations for the meeting being held on 25th October 2021.

iv. Impact on annual precept:

The Clerk advised that the impact on the precept would not be known until the budget had been completed and decisions on the PWLB loan and size of the BWSCA contribution had been agreed. She said she would try to include different options within the draft budget.

10.21 Potential Future Liabilities

Following a lengthy discussion on the issues raised in the Clerk's report, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk's recommendations be approved and recommended to the Parish Council as follows:

- The issues identified with the Leisure Centre, the Memorial Centre and the Millennium Green be added to the Council's Corporate Risk Register with agreed mitigations; and
- The Council's representatives to instigate regular communication with the BWSCA, Memorial Centre Committee and Millennium Green Trust as to their future plans, particularly as far as they impact on the liabilities of the Council.
- The Council's representatives to ensure that the Clerk is kept fully apprised of the situations relating to these organisations.

At this point and time of meeting, 10.00 pm, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that councillors have a 5 minute break and the remaining business of the meeting be completed by 10.30 pm.

11.21 Corporate Risk Register

Following a discussion and consideration of the suggested changes proposed by the Clerk and additional changes put forward by Cllrs Mace and Brentor, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that amendments be recommended for approval to the Parish Council.

12.21 Actions Requiring Additional Research

Following a brief discussion, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the following additional research was required by the following councillors and officers:

- Cllr Hall to investigate the potential costs for the refurbishment of the public toilets;
- The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group to carry out a review of traffic surveys in Downton;
- The Clerk to arrange for a surveyor to be appointed to carry out a survey of the Memorial Centre to ensure the Council is compliant with its lease with the Downton Memorial Centre Committee;
- Councillors and officers to consider the work needed for the writing of a business plan and the conducting of the public consultation whose results will accompany the application to the Secretary of State for the PWLB loan.
- The Clerk to calculate the additional hours of staff time needed to complete the projects identified in the 2022/23 financial year.

13.21 Next Meeting

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the date for the next meeting be approved as Monday 28th February 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Bonvalot Room of the Downton Memorial Centre.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 10.25 pm.