



**Minutes of a Remote Meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee  
held on Thursday, 27 May 2021 via Zoom Video Conference**

**Commenced: 7.15pm - Concluded: 9.30 pm**

**Councillors Present.** Kate Guest [Chairman], Victoria Bowden, John Brownrigg [Ex-Officio], Susan Davidson, John Housley [Ex-Officio], David Ogle and Thomas Sturgess.

**Absent Councillors.** Gary Lakin.

**Officers:** Andrew Towleron – Parish Clerk/RFO (minute taker).

**Members of the Public.** One member of the public.

**Chairman’s Opening Remarks.** Before the formal commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor Kate Guest, outlined the procedure for this remote meeting to ensure that the meeting was effective, lawful, and safe. It was reported that the Clerk would be recording the meeting to assist with minute taking.

She went onto to state that there was an issue with the titling of some of the agenda items, a few of which were prefixed 2020, when should have read 2021. The Clerk agreed to rectify this.

<b><u>2021/1</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<b><u>Item 1: Apologies and Reasons for Absence</u></b>  The Clerk stated that he had not received any.
<b><u>2021/2</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<b><u>Item 2: Declarations of Interests</u></b>  The Clerk stated that he had not received any declarations nor any request for dispensation.
<b><u>2021/3</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<b><u>Item 3: Exclusion of Press and Public</u></b>  The Chairman, in consultation with the Clerk, explained that she considered that there were two items on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public for part of their consideration due to the confidential nature of the business to be considered. These were the consideration of item 2021/6 (F&P) Grant Applications and 2021/21 (F&P) Maintenance of the defibrillators, cleaning service of the toilets and cleaning service of the war memorial. It was also agreed to move the consideration of these items to the end of the agenda.  Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and seconded by Councillor John Housley and <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the press and public be excluded from the consideration of item 2021/6 (F&P) Grant applications and 2021/21 (F&P) Maintenance of the defibrillators, cleaning service of the toilets and cleaning service of the war memorial.  <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p>

<p><b><u>2021/4</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Item 4: Public Participation Session</u></b></p> <p>A verbal and written question was raised by a member of the public about aspects of the Council's financial policies and procedures, including reclaiming of VAT, systems for approval of payments and April's accounts. The Chairman provided a verbal response and said that she would follow up this enquiry in writing, if required.</p>
<p><b><u>2021/5</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Item 5: To appoint a Vice-Chairman</u></b></p> <p>This was considered.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor Kate Guest and seconded by Councillor John Housley and <b>RESOLVED:</b> That David Ogle is appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Premises Committee for 2021/22.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p>
<p><b><u>2021/6</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Item 6: Grant Applications</u></b></p> <p><b>Ward Based Grants</b></p> <p>Two were considered.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor Victoria Bowden and seconded by Councillor David Ogle and <b>RESOLVED:</b> That it is recommended to Council: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Unibrass Foundation be granted an award of £981.00 for hire of percussion instruments from Chapelton Silver Prize Band, van hire, music and printing, on-site activities, and concert costs towards the inter-university brass band summer school at Hesley Wood and that this should be 'top sliced' from the overall ward-based grant pot.</li> <li>2. That Ecclesfield Gala Committee be granted an award of £1,100 from the COVID Recovery Fund towards the September 2021 Ecclesfield Gala.</li> </ol> <p>Members also suggested that consideration should be given in next year's budget for a specific budget heading for supporting galas and similar events.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p> <p><b>Community Infrastructure Levy</b></p> <p>One application was considered.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Brownrigg and seconded by Councillor David Ogle and <b>RESOLVED:</b> That it is recommended to Council that Friends of Charlton Brook be granted an award of £4,270 towards BMX track refurbishment and replacement of wooden knee rails and provision of litter bins, seating, and minor path improvements at Charlton Brook greenspace.</p> <p>It was also agreed that there should be a formal cheque presentation to Friends of Charlton Brook involving relevant parish and City Councillors. Councillor Susan Davidson agreed to assist with this.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p>
<p><b><u>2021/7</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Item 7: Finance and Premises Committee Minutes</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Kate Guest provided a brief overview of the approved minutes and matters arising from the meeting held on 29 April 2021.</p>

The Clerk gave a brief overview of preparations for Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/2021. It was agreed that if it was necessary to pay staff overtime to assist with this, the Clerk could use his delegated powers to facilitate this.

**2021/8**  
**(F&P)**

**Item 8: Update on the Accounts of the Council**

The Clerk provided a verbal and written report regarding the financial affairs of the Council. This included the cashbook, account bank reconciliation and management accounts for March 2021. He explained that subject to final confirmation and verification, these were in effect the Council's end of year accounts. He added that the Council was heading for a major underspend due to COVID and other reasons. He had supplied copies of the various supporting bank statements to the Chairman for her signature.

Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and seconded by Councillor John Housley and  
**RESOLVED:** That the cashbook, account/bank reconciliation and management accounts for March 2021 as shown at appendices 8a, 8b and 8c be recommended to Council for approval.

(7 in favour)

**2021/9**  
**(F&P)**

**Item 9: Payments for Approval**

The Clerk gave a brief verbal and written report on payments between 14 May 2021 and 20 May 2021 requiring approval. Councillor John Brownrigg queried the amount to be paid to British Gas (dated 14.5.21) for gas for the community room, which the Clerk agreed to look into.

Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and seconded by Councillor Victoria Bowden and  
**RESOLVED:** That the schedule of payments dated 14/5/21 to 20/5/21 and shown below be endorsed and the payments be recommended to Council for approval.

<b>Date invoice received</b>	<b>Payee Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ref</b>	<b>Amount</b>
14.5.21	Hoey Ainscough Assoc. Ltd	Consultancy fee for governance and HR support as part of the Moses/Presland Ecclesfield Intervention report	BACS	£2400.00
14.5.21	Personnel Advice & Solutions Ltd	Production of report on staffing issues as part of the Moses/Presland Ecclesfield intervention report	BACS	£180.00
14.5.21	HMRC	Tax and NI: May 21	Cheque	£476.88
14.5.21	British Gas	Gas: Community room	DD	£62.54
17.5.21	YLCA	Good Councillors Guide x6	BACS	£24.93

18.5.21	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Follow up work to Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020	BACS	£852.00
20.5.21	Auburn Creative Design	*Walking website – Archive Project	BACS	£1920.00
20.5.21	YPO	Boxes for walks leaflets and USBS for Councillors	BACS	£293.28

(7 in favour)

**2021/10**  
**(F&P)**

**Item 10: Challenge to the Council’s Accounts for 2019/2020**

The Chairman led on this both in her capacity as Chairman of the Finance and Premises Committee and Chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Finance and Premises Committee leading on this. She explained that the challenge had been satisfactorily resolved.

She explained that the Sub-Committee leading the investigation had produced their findings and recommendations. These had been discussed with the person who made the complaint, who had confirmed they were happy with them. They had been reported in full at the Council’s Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 May 2021. Both the complainant and the Council had notified the external auditor that it has been satisfactorily resolved.

The Clerk confirmed that the relevant Notice of conclusion of the audit: Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2020 had been placed on the Council Notice Board and Website on 26 May 2021.

**2021/11**  
**(F&P)**

**Item 11: Review of Financial Regulations**

The Clerk explained that it was good practice for a Council to review its Financial Regulations on a regular basis. The Council’s had been independently reviewed as part of Moses/Presland Ecclesfield Intervention Report 2021 which in its draft report concluded ‘*The Council’s Financial Regulations are up to date and based on the NALC Model template, and as such mirror good practice*’, though did add ‘*the regulations need to be updated in line with procurement regulations*’. The Clerk made other suggested changes to the Financial Regulations especially in respect of the policies and procedures for authorisation of payments and potentially grants between the various Council meetings as well as the Clerk, including under delegated powers. These and other suggestions to the Council’s financial regulation and procedures were then discussed.

Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and seconded by Councillor Vic Bowden and  
**RESOLVED:** That it is recommended to Council that the Council’s Financial Regulations should be updated as follows:

1. They should be brought up to date in line with procurement regulation as highlighted above.
2. The Clerk is granted delegated powers to approve spend on any item up to £100 where there is sufficient budget provision for that class of expenditure.
3. All payments should be reported to and approved by Full Council.
4. Full Council should authorise expenditure on approved earmarked reserves.
5. They should include an agreed schedule of payments to be made by Direct Debit, Standing Orders and Bacs.
6. Finance and Premises Committee be granted delegated power to authorise Ward Based

	<p>and COVID grants up to a value of £350.</p> <p>7. The revised Financial Regulation should be brought to 15 July Finance and Premises Committee for consideration.</p> <p>8. In addition, the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance and Premises of the Committee, review the process for authorising expenditure on an earmarked reserve.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p>
<b><u>2021/12</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 12: Updating of the Council’s banking mandates</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed that this should be considered at the same time as Item 13 (below).</p>
<b><u>2021/13</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 13: Unity Bank revised pricing to the Council’s current account fee</u></b></p> <p>It was reported that Unity Bank had announced a significant increase in the fee they charge for providing its banking services to the Council. This was then considered. The Clerk was asked to review the services Unity Bank provide to ensure that they represent good value. It was also agreed that it may be prudent if the Council was to delay updating its bank mandates (see item above 2021/12 (F&amp;P)) pending the outcome of this exercise.</p>
<b><u>2021/14</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 14: Use of ‘CCTV’ Building next to Chapeltown Toilets for the storage of Council materials</u></b></p> <p>It was reported that Councillor John Housley, the Vice Chairman of the Council, and Council staff had visited the building next to Chapeltown Toilets to establish whether it could be used to safely store Council materials. As storage space at the Council Offices is close to capacity. Their opinion was that the building with some minor works, such as the introduction of shelves, and if the materials were safely stored, such as through the use of plastic boxes, would be suitable.</p>
<b><u>2021/15</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 15: Community Infrastructure Levy 2021/2022</u></b></p> <p>Members were asked to consider their priorities for spending of the Parish Council’s share of the Levy for 2021/22, with a view to recommending this to Full Council. A wide-ranging discussion then took place on this. It was agreed that the focus of the Council’s spending of its share should be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) improvements to parks and open spaces and</li> <li>(ii) highway safety measures, including the provision of zebra crossings.</li> </ul>
<b><u>2021/16</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 16: Chapeltown Toilets</u></b></p> <p>It was reported that the same person had contacted the Council twice about difficulties they had experienced in locking the disabled toilet. The toilets had been inspected by an electrician, the contractor FMS, and a councillor, and they could not see any obvious issue with them. Councillor John Housley offered to meet with the person should the issue arise again. It was also agreed that it may be useful to strengthen the guidance on how to use the toilets; Councillor David Ogle offered to prepare a video if required.</p>
<b><u>2021/17</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 17: Update on the audit of Council’s notice boards</u></b></p> <p>Councillor John Housley gave a verbal report on his findings and recommendations following the audit.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor David Ogle and seconded by Councillor John Housley and  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That it is recommended to Council that it purchases four noticeboards (a mix of open and closed) for various locations across the Parish including outside the Acorn</p>

	Public House and Ecclesfield Park.
<b><u>2021/18</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 18: Improvements to the Council's IT systems</u></b></p> <p>The Clerk gave a verbal report. All in all, despite a few hiccups, the improvements were progressing well. This was then discussed.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Brownrigg and seconded by Councillor David Ogle and  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That it is recommended to Council that it purchases an additional four laptops for the use by Councillors and these be offered in the first instance to the Vice-Chairman of the various Committees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(6 in favour, 1 against)</p>
<b><u>2021/19</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 19: Outsourcing of the Council's payroll systems</u></b></p> <p>A verbal report was provided by the Clerk. He explained that due to a variety of reasons progress was not as advanced as he hoped. The intention was to progress this over the summer.</p>
<b><u>2021/20</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 20: Other Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>It was reported that the Council had received two grant monitoring forms. These were from High Green Women's Institute and Royal British Legion, details of which had been circulated to members.</p> <p>It was also explained that High Green in Bloom had returned their grant of £2,500. This was because their insurers had agreed to replace the equipment they sought to purchase through the grant. High Green in Bloom was thanked and commended for doing this. It was suggested that this £2,500 could be used towards the War Memorial. It was agreed that this suggestion was not without merit and should be formally considered at the next meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee.</p>
<b><u>2021/21</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 21: Maintenance of the defibrillators, cleaning service of the toilets and cleaning service of the war memorial</u></b></p> <p>It was explained that following an incident, it had been necessary to consider the adequacy of the arrangements in an emergency. At its last meeting, Council had agreed in principle to appoint FMS to provide an out of hours subject to confirmation that they would be willing to provide such a service and of their fee. FMS had stated that they would be willing to offer this service. They had also provided details on their fees for doing this, which were then considered.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Housley and seconded by Councillor David Ogle and  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That it is recommended to Council that Facility Maintenance Solutions be appointed to provide an out of hours service based on the fee structure set out in their email dated 10 May 2021 to the Clerk.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(7 in favour)</p>
<b><u>2021/22</u></b> <b><u>(F&amp;P)</u></b>	<p><b><u>Item 22: Date and Time of Future Meetings</u></b></p> <p>It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting would be provisionally on Thursday 17 June 2021. Also, that it would commence at 7.30 as there was an Environmental Planning Committee meeting straight before it.</p>