

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council Finance and General Purposes Committee

Extraordinary General Meeting
7th November 2022

MINUTES

80/22 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

In attendance – Cllr Sue Mullan (Chair)(SM) Cllr Andy Rogers (AR) and Cllr Jacky Godden (JG)
Cllr Steve Campkin (SC) Sarah Evans (SE) Community Council Manager.
Apologies Nirosha Apologies were received from Cllr Thilagarajan and approved

81/22 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

None

82/22 On a motion of the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to consider & discuss signatures, timings, salary payments, Standing Orders, & options on expense account methods for the future.

Signatures

SM explained the Signature role and Members discussed how this worked and was facilitated. Members enquired on details of how the signatory levels are delegated for View, Submit and Authorise to ensure for their own diligence there was no risk of either a single user or dual users having view submit and authorise signature facility for the future. Members noted the Council decision to remove Peter Porter as signature and to add David Mullan. Members also discussed the Financial Regulations items

- 1.1. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

Resolved Proposed SM Seconded JG Agreed unanimously to 1) Send written details of how the signatory levels are delegated for View, Submit and Authorise to ensure for their own diligence there is no risk of either a single user or dual users having view submit and authorise signature facility for the future. 2) To ensure the Council decision to remove Peter Porter as signatory and to add David Mullan is actioned as soon as possible and the bank mandate is updated and a regular timeline of progress is sent to all members. 3) To consider the rotation of the role of signatories as an ongoing consideration at least quarterly in line with the financial regulations.

Action 1) SE to email Members of view submit and authorise tiers to confirm

Action 2) RFO to progress with removing Peter Porter and adding David Mullan, setting up a new mandate and ensuring a regular time line for this is communicated to all Committee members.

Timings

SM explained timings on payments at present and that payments had not been able to be met since the last FGP meeting due to the resignation of PP, the holiday of NT and the absence of EP that this was unprecedented but had caused a delay in monthly commitments and the paying of staff salaries. Members discussed how they wished to make this month's payments and to mitigate this risk for the future.

Resolved Proposed AR seconded SC and agreed unanimously

Timings 1) That an email is sent round by the RFO to confirm that 2 signatures would be available for authorising payments the day after the next FGP meeting by the 10th of the month every month. 2) When the salary notifications are made by Manningtons the payment should be raised but that it is made after the FGP committee have approved them. 3) That going forward with new staff being hired, staff pay day should be the last Friday of the month as this is not stipulated in staff contracts only that a monthly payment would be made. 4) That a separate notice board is kept permanently UpToDate in the Clerk office confirming all committee member holiday dates and this is recommended to Council for all Committees.

Actions 1) RFO to send round email confirming signatories for each committee meeting, 2) RFO to raise payments for salaries on the 10th of each month provided this is supplied by Manningtons. 3) RFO to ensure payments are made in such a way that the last Friday of the Month will be pay day for new staff. 4) RFO to set up noticeboard for member holiday or availability dates.

Salary Payment

Members reviewed the SWANCC adopted financial regulations and noted the conditions of the paying of staff salaries. Members listened to challenges experienced by Community Council Manager in the public notification of gross and net salary and overtime.

- 1.2. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
 - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 1.3. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have been paid.

Resolved Proposed JG and Seconded AR and agreed unanimously

1) A confidential breakdown of individual salaries would be reported at FGP and kept confidential subject to 1.1 terms of the Financial Regulations. The total of staff salaries would be reported in the minutes and to Council. 2) A check that the current cashbook is kept confidential as in 1.2 of the regulations and if not a separate cashbook is to created to ensure that all salaries are kept confidential and the total recorded in the current cashbook. 3) The Chair of this committee would remind the Council that if individual salaries need to be disclosed at full Council the meeting would be closed to the public to ensure information about an individual member of staff is confidential between the council and the staff member. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, a Council also has obligations as to how it uses such information about an individual.

Actions RFO to ensure new methods of reporting and recording salaries is set up for the next committee meeting.

Standing Orders

Members discussed using standing orders to pay salaries and payments

Resolved: Agreed unanimously not to use bank standing orders at present to pay salaries or payments and to maintain current payment arrangements in place, with payments being submitted by the RFO presented to FGP approved and then signed off by the Signatories. To use the above agreed methods for paying salaries.

Expense Accounts methods for the future.

Expense account methods for the future were discussed and Members noted that the agreed expense account and debit card had not yet been opened and was now needed as a point of urgency. Members also listened to challenges experienced by the Community Council Manager on expenses and considered this in light of the adopted financial regulations.

- 1.4. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council [Finance Committee]. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the [council] [relevant committee] and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the [council] [relevant committee].
- 1.5. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk [and RFO] and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

The council will not maintain any form of cash float. All cash received must be banked intact. Any payments made in cash by the Clerk [or RFO] (for example for postage or minor stationery items) shall be refunded on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

Resolved Proposed AR Seconded JG Agreed Unanimously 1) To open an expense account for the use of the Clerk with a debit card. 2) That a balance of £1000 be transferred £500 for an emergency decision and £500 for ongoing expenses in line with Council procedures and to prevent the need for personal debit card use. 3) All expenses are to itemised and receipts kept. 4) This would be regularly scrutinised by the Committee and transfers made to top up the balance as needed. 5) To investigate a stationary account for the purchase of office supplies and sundries to ensure regular stock is available for the use of the Clerks in time for the next committee meeting.

Actions RFO 1) To ensure the expense account is opened and a time line of its progress is kept up-to-date for all members. 2) TO investigate stationary and sundries account.

There being no further items to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 10:55am

Signed:
Chair

Date:.....