# Brundall Parish Council

Advisory and Scrutiny Committee Meeting Minutes

**13th July 2021 held online via Zoom**

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| Present: Chairman J Warne, Cllr J Mickelburgh, Cllr G Springett, Parish Clerk: S Smyth, Deputy Clerk: C Dickson | | | |
| *Minute* | *Details* | *Action* |
| **AC191** | **Apologies for Absence**  None. |  |
| **AC192** | **Declarations of Interest**  None received. |  |
| **AC193** | **Minutes of the Last Meeting 6th April 2021**  The minutes wereunanimously **approved**. |  |
| **AC194** | **Matters Arising**  None. |  |
| **AC195** | **Public Participation**  None received. |  |
| **AC196** | **Revision of the Gifted Benches Policy**  The following amendments were made:  In line with the aims of the Land Management Committee to only use recycled materials for future benches the policy has been amended to remove the option for Hardwood benches at 4.1 and 4.2.  4.2 - charges for the preferred recycled benches were amended to the current prices and the disclaimer ‘correct as at July 2021, please see preferred supplier Glasdon’s website for details’ inserted.  4.2 - the Maintenance Charge was changed from £100 to £50 as recycled benches should not need as much maintenance as wooden ones.  The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Gifted Benches Policy to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC197** | **Staffing Committee Terms of Reference**  No amendments were suggested. The Committee **resolved** to put forward the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC198** | **Employment Policy**  The following changes were recommended to the policy:  Recruitment and Appointments:   * ‘with 2 substitutes to also ensure gender balance’ was removed and ‘plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman’ was inserted after ‘(which has a gender balance within)’.   Disciplinary Procedure (Employer):   * ‘For the purposes of day to day to management of employee duties, the Clerk (or in their absence the Deputy Clerk) is delegated as management authority on behalf of the Council.’ as a second paragraph. * ‘or another Councillor’ was inserted in the, now, third paragraph after ‘Clerk to the Council’. * ‘This list is not exhaustive’ was inserted at the bottom of each of the Examples of Misconduct, Gross Misconduct, and Unsatisfactory Work Performance * ‘Any employee of the Council attending such a hearing may be accompanied by a representative of the trade union (who may or may not be a work colleague) or by a work colleague, friend or advisor. if the accompanying person is an employee of the Council the appropriate (and proportionate) time off will be granted’ was inserted as a first paragraph under Disciplinary Action against the Clerk to the Council. * The first paragraph of Disciplinary Action towards an employee was amended to read ‘If it appears there are performance issues the Clerk to the Council will attempt an informal resolution. For example, to encourage and support best practice’. In the second paragraph ‘decide’ was amended to ‘make a judgement’ and ‘misdemeanour’ amended to ‘issue’. * In the first paragraph of Verbal Warning ‘and this be recorded’ was added at the end. ‘misconduct’ was amended to ‘issues’ in the second paragraph. * ‘or further misconduct’ was removed from the end of the second paragraph in Further Action (written warnings). ‘first and’ was inserted in front of ‘final written warning’ in paragraph 6. ‘misconduct’ was amended to ‘relevant issues’ in paragraph 7, and ‘behaviour’ in paragraph 8. ‘Council’ was amended to ‘Staffing Committee’ in paragraph 9. ‘of both the Clerk to the Council and the employee’ was removed from the end of paragraph 11. Paragraph 12 was amended to ‘Any employee of the Council attending such a hearing may be accompanied by a representative of the trade union (who may or may not be a work colleague), friend or advisor. If the accompanying person is an employee of the Council then appropriate (and proportionate) time off will be granted.’ Paragraph 13 was amended to ‘The Staffing Committee shall decide whether dismissal is justified. The decision of the Staffing Committee will be conveyed in writing within 5 working days’. ‘parties concerned’ was amended to ‘employee’ at the end of paragraph 14. ‘In any event, the decision of the Staffing Committee will be conveyed in writing within 5 days’ was removed. ‘date’ was amended to ‘ receipt and ‘(which should be sent by recorded deliver)’ added to the end of, now, paragraph 15. ‘parties concerned’ was amended to ‘employee’ at the end of paragraph 16. * Gross Misconduct - ‘concluded’ was amended to ‘judges’, ‘misdemeanour’ amended to ‘concerns’, ‘Council’ amended to ‘Staffing Committee’, and ‘(without prejudice)’ inserted after ‘full pay’.   Grievance Procedure (employee)   * The disclaimer ‘NB: Any issues relating to an elected/co-opted Councillor are not dealt with in the scope of this policy and shall be immediately referred to the Monitoring Officer’ was inserted as the first paragraph. * ‘line manager or if not appropriate,’ was inserted before ‘Staffing Committee’ on, now, paragraph 3. * ‘An’ replaces ‘The Staffing Committee’ at the beginning of paragraph 4, and ‘will be made’ was inserted at the end of the first sentence. * ‘expected’ was replaced with ‘hoped’ in paragraph 6. * ‘of both the employee and the person who has sought to resolve the matter’ was removed from paragraph 9 after ‘…shall consider the case’. * ‘Any employee of the Council attending such a hearing may be accompanied by a representative of the trade union (who may or may not be a work colleague) or by a work colleague, friend or adviser. If the accompanying person is an employee of the Council then appropriate (and proportionate) time off will be granted.’ was inserted for paragraph 10. * Paragraph 11 - Any employee of the Council attending such a hearing may be accompanied by a representative of the trade union to which he or she belongs (who may or may not be a work colleague), or by a work colleague, friend or advisor not acting in a legal capacity - was removed. * ‘”in camera”’ was removed from, now, paragraph 11, ‘parties concerned’ was amended to ‘employee’ and ‘if the parties so wish’ was removed from the end of the paragraph. * ‘The notice will be sent by recorded delivery’ was inserted at the end of paragraph 13. * ‘subject to employment law’ was inserted at the end of paragraph 16. * ‘Should the complainant still not be satisfied, employment’ was removed from paragraph 17.   The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Employment Policy to full Council for approval.  The Committee discussed a suggested Bullying and Harassment Policy. A draft will be proposed to full Council with the expectation it will be delegated to this Committee to scrutinise. |  |
| **AC199** | **Review of the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Control Procedures 2021**  The Internal Auditor commented that the Council does not have this policy. Therefore the following was agreed by the Committee. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003: “(1) The relevant body shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.   (2) The relevant body shall conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control” Internal Control: The system of internal control is designed to reduce the financial risk of the Parish Council to an acceptable level. Financial Management: The Parish Council has approved a set of financial standing orders which set out the way that Council’s finances are to be managed. These are reviewed and approved once a year.  Two Councillors, out of four named signatories, must sign all cheques and other financial documents. Online payments may be made by the clerk or RFO following authorisation by the full Council.  The clerk or RFO may carry out transfers within the Parish Council’s bank accounts.  The cheque signatory shall check and initial the supporting document at the time of signing to ensure that the cheque agrees with the amount of the invoice and the payee named on the invoice. The cheque stub should also be initialled to record that the name on the cheque stub is the same as that on the cheque.  The list of online payments will be agreed to supporting documentation before payment, to ensure that the online payment agrees with the amount of the invoice and the payee named on the invoice. The list of authorised **online** payments will be checked by a non-signatory Councillor to the bank statement at the following meeting to ensure that payments were made to the correct person or company.  The deputy clerk is the responsible financial officer and is responsible for the day-to-day financial management of the Council. The duties of the responsible financial officer are reviewed and approved once a year. The RFO shall report all payments to the Council.  On or before the January meeting, the Council shall review the budget in detail and shall decide on the precept for the forthcoming year. Internal audit: The Council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor and carries out a review of the effectiveness of the internal audit twice a year. The auditor reports their findings to the full Council and completes the Annual Internal Audit Report section of the Annual Return. External audit: The Council’s external auditors are PKF Littlejohn, who complete Section 3 of the Annual Return; their comments and recommendations are reported to the full Council. Review: This review shall be carried out once a year and recorded in the Council’s minutes.  The Committee **resolved** to put forward the Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC200** | **To consider the Armed Forces Covenant**  The Committee discussed Broadland District Council’s suggestion that Parish Councils should adopt the Armed Forces Covenant. It was not felt that there was much support the 1st tier of Government could offer those mentioned in the document. The Committee’s **resolved** to propose to Council: this Council supports Broadland District Council’s commitment to this Covenant. |  |
| **AC201** | **Donations Policy**  The following amendment was proposed:  ‘Donations will not be awarded to individuals’ was removed from the Conditions.  The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Donations Policy to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC202** | **Grants Awarding Policy**  The following amendment was proposed:  ‘Grants will not be awarded to individuals’ was removed from the Conditions.  The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Grants Awarding Policy to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC203** | **Risk Management Policy**  The following amendments were proposed:  ‘To provide as risk free an environment for staff, councillors and volunteers as much as is practicably possible’ was added as the first line of the Objectives.  Responsibility for Risk Management   * ‘the Clerk’ was amended to ‘all members of staff’ in the first paragraph. * ‘and its staff’ was inserted after ‘...the Council’ in the second paragraph, and ‘and that Brundall is as healthy and safe as possible a place to live and work’ was added at the end.   Risk Management Strategy   * ‘The leader or deputy leader will ensure at the start of each working party that all present are informed of the Council’s duty of care to all staff and volunteers’ was inserted as the second bullet point. * ‘No’ was amended to ‘Under no circumstances should there be any’ before ‘lone working’, and the sentence underlined. * ‘in use’ was amended to ‘must be used’ after ‘Protective clothing and equipment’.   The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Risk Management Policy to full Council for approval. |  |
| **AC204** | **Risk Register**  2 amendments were proposed:  ‘Subscriptions to Norton and Currys ensure files are automatically backed up every few days’ was inserted into the Actions Taken of the Electronic Records of the Council.  ‘Key deeds are stored in a secure metal box’ in the Actions Taken of the Paper Records of the Council.  The Committee **resolved** to put forward the amended Risk Register to full Council for approval.  The Clerk was asked to get fire safety advice for the office from Cllr Warns.\* | \*Clerk |
| **AC205** | **Items for the next Agenda (not for discussion)**  Bullying and Harassment Policy  Risk Management Policy (if the Sports Hub land or LEMH has been transferred to the Council) |  |
| **AC206** | **Calendar Dates for the Year Ahead:**  **12th October 2021**  **11th January 2022**  **Meeting Closed at 6.27pm** |  |
|  | Signed as a true record…………………………………………….. Date…………………………… |  |