



Thurcroft Parish Council

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk

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Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held Thursday 28th March 2024

Present Councillors: B. Clark (Chair), H. Bell, D. Brown, R. Butler, A. Copeland, D. Fretwell, C. McCartan, T. Murphy, P. Owen, D. Oxley & A. Winsborough (11 councillors present).

Apologies were received from Councillors: C. Alsop, M. Howis, E. Humphreys, J. Richardson, J. Ronksley, N. Ronksley & C. Walker

Officers: Thomas Collingham

There were two members of the public in attendance.

The meeting started at 6.30pm

9621. To receive and consider reasons for absence

The Clerk shared with council the reasons for absence that were received from C. Alsop, M. Howis, E. Humphreys, J. Richardson, J. Ronksley, N. Ronksley & C. Walker.

Resolved:- That the reasons for absence be approved for C. Alsop, M. Howis, E. Humphreys, J. Richardson, J. Ronksley, N. Ronksley & C. Walker.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9622. To receive declarations of personal and pecuniary interestⁱ for members and officers

No declarations raised.

9623. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any)

No written requests received.

9624. To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

No requests for dispensation to grant.

9625. To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29th February 2024

No matters raised on the minutes.

Resolved:- That the minutes for the meeting held on Thursday 29th February 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record, and that the chairman signs the bottom of each page to verify the approval of the minutes.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. 8 councillors voted in favour. 3 councillors abstained.

9626. To identify any agenda items which may be considered following the exclusion of the press and public, due to the confidential nature to be discussed. Under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, S1 (2))



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The council discussed that Item 26 be considered in confidential session due to discussing staffing matters, and that Item 27 be considered in confidential session due to discussing contracts that are yet to be awarded.

Resolved:- That Item 26 & 27 be considered in confidential session.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9627. Public Participation Session

A member of public asked why members of the council abstain from voting without giving an explanation. The Chair informed the member of public that the procedure does not require a reason for abstention to a vote.

9628. To note the minutes for committee meetings held since the last full council

a) Facilities Committee held on Tuesday 12th March 2024

The council noted the minutes of the Facilities Committee held on Tuesday 12th March 2024.

b) Internal Audit Committee held on Thursday 14th March 2024

The council noted the minutes of the Internal Audit Committee held on Thursday 14th March 2024.

c) Finance & General Committee held on Monday 18th March 2024

The council noted the minutes of the Finance & General Committee held on Monday 18th March 2024.

9629. To receive correspondence and consider whether the parish would like to support a family fun fair on parish land

The council were presented with correspondence received from a local fairground operator wishing to use the land behind the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall. The Clerk shared the details of the proposed event and dates to be considered.

The council considered the event and asked for the follow up to be made to ensure that the fairground is part of the Showman's Guild, whether they had adequate insurance. The council would like for it to be in a summer slot where the ground is hardened, and for thought to be given to the football pitches.



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Resolved:- That the council support the fairground taking place, and that the Clerk contacts the local fairground operative to ensure that he has the necessary insurance and that he is a part of the Showman's Guild.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9630. To note an issue with cremated plots within Thurcroft Cemetery and the immediate action taken to resolve the matter

The Clerk shared a matter arising with the cremation plots within Thurcroft Cemetery. The Clerk had sold an exclusive right of burial (EROB) to a resident for a specific number and plot based on the plans that the parish hold.

The councils grave diggers have changed the numbers of the plots from the original plans due to the loss of plots with increased plot sizes over the years. The issue had been highlighted previously a number of years ago, but this wasn't highlighted to the Clerk at the time of booking a plot and it has resulted in the plots being misaligned and the plot being taken.

The Clerk has worked with the resident that had booked the plot and resolved the matter with them. To ensure that this problem is addressed further work is taking place with the grave digger to re-map the cremated plots area to ensure that the numbers match and the plans are the same between the council and the grave diggers.

Resolved:- That the council note the update to the plans for the cemetery and the reasons behind the decision.

9631. To discuss and consider quotation for the repair of the wall in the playground at Brampton en-le Morthen

The Clerk raised with the council that the wall at Brampton en-le Morthen playground is still in need of repair. The Clerk shared a quote for completing the work; The quote is based on 3 hours labour with the cost of materials included in completing the repair to the wall. The total cost is £1041.00 exc. VAT

Resolved:- That the council approve the work of building up the wall in Brampton en-le Morthen playground for the value of £1041.00 exc. VAT

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9632. To receive and note the outcome to a complaint referred to the Standards and Ethics board at RMBC

The Clerk has been informed that a resolution is agreed by the Standards and Ethics Committee for Rotherham Council regarding the complaints received to the Monitoring Officer.



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The complaints made followed the extraordinary meeting held by the council on 13th April 2023. This was namely for comments made during the co-option of new members to the council. The resolution is to be noted by the council. The Findings of the Sub-Committee were as follows;

“In considering all the evidence and verbal submissions made before them the Sub-Committee considered, in consultation with the Independent Person, the key issues in relation to the complaints.

From their deliberations the Sub-Committee concluded that having listened carefully to all the evidence of the Subject Member and witnesses they agreed with the Subject Member’s immediate reaction that the way in which the question to a candidate was put was inappropriate. This was a breach of Thurcroft Parish Council’s Code of Conduct and it was likely to bring the Parish Council into disrepute.

The Sub-Committee acknowledged that the Subject Member immediately apologised. In terms of sanctions the Sub-Committee was satisfied that the apology immediately issued discharged any recommendation that the Sub-Committee would be minded to make.

As a consequence the Sub-Committee directed the Monitoring Officer to engage with the Parish Council to offer training that would include duties of the Parish Council and Councillors under the Equalities Act.”

Therefore, the decision by the Sub-Committee is as follows -

Resolved:- That, in the light of their findings, the complaints be upheld and the following sanctions should be applied to the Subject Member:-

(1) That the apology immediately issued by the Subject Member would discharge any recommendation that the Sub-Committee would be minded to make.

(2) That the formal decision notice setting out the findings of the Sub-Committee be reported to the forthcoming meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee.

(3) That the Monitoring Officer be directed to offer training for all Thurcroft Parish Council to include duties of the Parish Council and the role of Councillors under the Equalities Act.



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(4) That this decision be reported to Thurcroft Parish Council.

The Clerk is in contact with the Monitoring Officer who has suggested that it would be appropriate to attend a meeting of the Council to talk through the relevant training elements so that these will be a part of formal meeting and so recorded to enable all the actions to be dealt with.

Resolved:- That the council note the outcome of the complaint.

9633. To note the update of completed actions on the Internal Audit report and receive and consider the recommendations from the Internal Audit Committee

That the council received an update on the progress of the Internal Audit report that was completed for the financial year 2022/23.

ACTIONS	COMPLETE				IN PROGRESS				NOT STARTED			
	SEP	NOV	JAN	MAR	SEP	NOV	JAN	MAR	SEP	NOV	JAN	MAR
RED	11	18	21	22	5	4	4	6	12	6	3	0
AMBER	9	13	22	25	4	11	6	3	15	4	0	0
GREEN	1	6	12	14	3	8	6	4	14	4	0	0
% COMPLETE	28%	50%	74%	82%	16%	31%	21%	18%	55%	19%	4%	0%
ACTIONS	21	37	55	61	12	23	16	13	41	14	3	0

The council's commitment remains strong to improving the councils procedures and the council recognise that it has been a challenging year. There are a few actions which still remain in progress as the council would like further time to ensure the council can be confident with the new processes.

The council were presented with the completed and in progress actions in the back of the minutes provided for the Internal Audit Committee. The council considered accepting the recommendations made by the Internal Audit Committee.

The Chair wished to put on record that he felt the committee had serves its purpose in correct many of the errors and lack of procedures.

Resolved:- That the council approve the recommendations of the Internal Audit Committee from the meeting held on Thursday 14th March 2024.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9634. To receive a recommendation from the Finance & General Committee to approve the review of the effectiveness of Internal Controls

The Clerk shared a report on the review of the effectiveness of the Internal Controls following the review that was carried out by two councillors that are non-signatories.



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The report recognises the internal procedures and the transparency of reporting the figures and the improvement in the Internal Controls. The Internal Control check didn't highlight any major issues.

Resolved:- That the council approve the review of the effectiveness of Internal Controls completed.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9635. To discuss and consider the pricing structure for venue hire of the Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall

The Chair of the Facilities Committee wished to defer the item, and for the item to be referred back to the Facilities Committee for consideration first.

Resolved:- That the council refer the item back to the Facilities Committee and a recommendation be made back to the council.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9636. To consider the following policies for the council as recommended from the Finance & General Committee;

a) Asset Register policy

The Finance & General Committee have considered the Asset Register policy. This now includes an extensive section for the disposals of assets reviewed the Asset Register policy with the updates including the disposals process.

Resolved:- That the council accept the recommendation from the Finance & General Committee to approve the updated version of the Asset Register policy.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9637. To receive a recommendation from the Finance & General Committee to approve the updates to the Asset Register including purchases made within this and last financial year

The Clerk presented the updated Asset Register including updates for any purchases made throughout the year.

The Clerk sought advice on the Asset Register not including purchases for previous years. The advice stipulated that there is no legislation outlining the year that Assets should be registered, and that it is more important to add in the Assets to show a true reflection and include all assets of the council. The Clerk has added the Assets purchased in the previous year and will attempt to go further back for any other assets that can be identified.



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A query was raised what a Charles Arnold Barker book was. The Clerk clarified that this is a book that belongs to the council which highlights Local Council Administration and procedures that are needed to perform the role. It is vital, all councils should have a copy and any person in the role as Clerk should know what a Charles Arnold Baker is.

Resolved:- That the council approve the updates to the Asset Register.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9638. To receive a recommendation from the Finance & General Committee to apply for a Charge Card to help manage the expenses incurred by the council

The Finance & General Committee have considered a Charge Card for the council. This would reduce the number of transactions being paid out by employees, with long waiting periods for reimbursement.

The Committee recommended that a credit limit be set at £1500 to ensure that the credit covers increased eventing periods in the run up to Christmas. The card will be used for stationary spends, event spending or emergency expenditure. Any large purchases through the council will be paid via raising a Purchase Order and completing through BACS payment. The card would be paid off by Direct Debit in full each month to not incur any additional costs to the council. The card would have a monthly charge of £2 per month.

Resolved:- That the council approve the use of a Charge Card from The Co-Operative bank, for implementation after the Finance Regulations have been updated to incorporate the new procedures.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9639. To receive and note any price increases to contracts held by the council

a) BT Group

That the council note from 1 April 2024, the price of services from BT will increase by 7.9%, as outlined in the terms and conditions of our contract.

b) RMBC (Grounds maintenance)

That the council note the planned price increase for Grounds Maintenance as per our current works schedule for 2024/25 is 6%. The full years charge will be £1377.30 and the invoice is expected to be raised the beginning of April.

c) Everflow Ltd

That the council note Everflow Ltd will not be increasing the cost of the services provided; however, they will pass on the increase in cost from the wholesaler – in our case Yorkshire Water. The increase will be 6.9%.



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9640. To discuss and consider quotations for the annual council insurance

The council secures their insurance on an annual basis. The council has been with Zurich Insurance for several years, this was highlighted in the Internal Audit report that it would be wise for the council to test the market and see what quotes they can receive from other providers.

- £3937.85
- £2737.82
- £4,298.03

Resolved:- That the council appoint Clear Council Insurance as the provider for insurance for 2024/25.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. 9 councillors voted in favour. 2 councillors abstained.

9641. To discuss and consider renewal of the antivirus protection subscription

The council should protect our technology assets. The council currently have a subscription with McAfee which is quoted as £97.99 for another one-year subscription. The Clerk has researched other options and has found a cheaper option which include a VPN protection from Bitdefender for £64.98. This will also cover up to 3 devices.

Resolved:- That the council approve the purchase of Bitdefender Antivirus Plus package including Bitdefender Premium VPN for one-year for the price of £64.98.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9642. To discuss and consider the renewal of the Microsoft Office subscription

The council currently have a Microsoft 365 Personal subscription for £59.99 and this is due for renewal on April 19th. Due to the increase in staffing, collaboration on documents is becoming increasingly necessary to ensure that we can work on one document and cover each other in case of holidays or share information securely.

Microsoft 365 Business Standard is available for £10.30 per person to enable us to meet the needs of the council. This would be £123.60 per user annually. The total cost to ensure that we have the computer package available is £247.20 per year for two employees.

Resolved:- That the council approves the purchase of Microsoft 265 Business Standard for £247.20 per year.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9643. To approve accounts for payment and note contractual payments made under the clerk delegation (attached)



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A query was raised with the same person approving payments. The Clerk shared that payments are loaded onto Scribe and onto the Banking system ahead of checking by a signatory to check the amounts match and that payments are then approved for payment. No issues were raised with payments.

Resolved:- That the payments be approved for payment and note payments made under the Clerk delegation.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9644. To note expenditure outside of the meeting between the Clerk and the Chair in line with Financial Regulation 4.1

- Amazon - Cigarettes Bin - £22.08
- PARRS - Chair Transporter - £136.79
- Amazon - Flags - £57.98
- Glendale - Grass cutting – £270 exc VAT

Resolved:- That the council note expenditure outside of the meeting between the Clerk and Chair in line with Financial Regulation 4.1

9645. To consider relevant planning applications as published on RMBC's weekly lists along with any associated submissions received and any reports on previous planning applications/issues

DATE	LIST NO.	P/A NO.	CASE OFFICER	PLANNING DETAILS	Decision
20/03/2024	12	RB2024/0399	Louise Hudson	1 Ivanhoe Road, Thurcroft Erection of gates and wall/fence on front boundary https://planning.rotherham.gov.uk/detail.asp?AltRef=RB2024/0399	No Action
13/03/2024	12	RB2024/0400	Emily Ushewokunze	44 Sawn Moor Avenue, Thurcroft Double storey side extension https://planning.rotherham.gov.uk/detail.asp?AltRef=RB2024/0400	No Action

Resolved:- That the council wish to take no action on the planning applications listed.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9646. **CONFIDENTIAL SESSION** – To review the fixed-term employee contract and to consider an extension to the contract term

The council considered the role but believed that this should be referred to the HR Committee for full decision and come back as a recommendation. The Clerk informed the council that a decision needs to be made to allow for the council to provide one months' notice if required.



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The Council agreed to extend the role by 6-months to allow for this to take place and to be brought back to the council with sufficient time.

Resolved:- That the council wish to extend the position of Assistant Clerk by 6-months and that the item be referred back to the HR Committee for consideration on whether the role becomes permanent role.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9647. Extension to the time of the meeting by 15 minutes

Resolved:- That the council agreed to extend the meeting by a further 15 minutes to finish considering council business.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9648. **CONFIDENTIAL SESSION** - To receive and consider contract quotations for the published tender adverts;

a) Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024-2028

The Clerk shared that we had received a large response to the advert for Grounds Maintenance contract. The Clerk advised the council that there needs to be a procedure in place for selecting what is most important to the council that can be scored against each of the applications received.

The council approved a scoring matrix that would be ranked on the price, information provided in the application, the required insurance and risk assessments, waste licences as well as the equipment and size of the business.

The council agreed that a panel meet the day after the council meeting to discuss the applications and use the scoring matrix to decide which company should be awarded the contract, and that this be brought back to council the next week.

Resolved:- That the council agree to use a scoring matrix, with a panel consisting of the Clerk, R. Butler, A. Copeland, T. Murphy and D. Oxley to consider the applications and make a recommendation to be considered by council to award the contract.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

b) Flowers and Horticultural Contract for 2024-2028

The council agreed with the process that had been considered as part of the previous agenda item. The council wish to follow the same process and report back the recommendation made by the panel.



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Resolved:- That the council agree to use a scoring matrix, with a panel consisting of the Clerk, R. Butler, A. Copeland, T. Murphy and D. Oxley to consider the applications and make a recommendation to be considered by council to award the contract.

Voting:- 11 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

9649. To notify the clerk of matters for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting

No matters were raised for inclusion on the next agenda.

9650. To confirm the date and time of the next ordinary meeting on Thursday 25th April 2024 at 6.30pm

The Chair confirmed that the next ordinary meeting will be held on Thursday 25th April at 6.30pm, but that an extraordinary meeting will be held on Thursday 4th April 2024 to discuss the outcome of the scoring matrix for the council's grounds contracts.

The meeting closed at 8.36pm.