



FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of the Council

held on Monday 15 May 2023 at 6.00 pm

at the Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak

P – present, Pt – part of the meeting, Ab – absent, Ap – apologies.

P	Cllr Anderson	P	Cllr Douglas	Ab	Cllr Smith
P	Cllr Barrett	P	Cllr Forfar	P	Cllr Stupple
P	Cllr Bird	P	Cllr Marsh	P	Cllr Tennent
Ab	Cllr Chivuchi	P	Cllr Meech		Vacancy
Ap	Cllr Couldrey	P	Cllr Scott		Vacancy

Officers in attendance: Melanie Stephens, Clerk, Michelle Leadbitter-Allen, Deputy Clerk, & Joanna Cahill, Responsible Finance Officer

PART 1 - PUBLIC SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Marsh moved that Cllr Douglas be elected Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year. The motion was seconded by Cllr Tennent. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Douglas be appointed as Chair for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Douglas took the Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office, formally witnessed by the Clerk.

Cllr Douglas took the Chair and accepted the declaration of office.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Meech moved that Cllr Couldrey be elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year. The motion was seconded by Cllr Bird. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Couldrey be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Couldrey would sign the declaration of office in the presence of the Clerk before the next meeting of the Council.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4 MINUTES (PAPER A)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17 April 2023, be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES & OUTSIDE BODIES (REPORT B)

RESOLVED:

- a) That the members appointed to Committees, standing Task & Finish Groups and Outside Bodies as set out in Report B to the Council be approved; and
- b) That the remaining vacancies on Committees and Groups be filled at the next meeting of the Full Council.

6 STANDING ORDERS (REPORT C)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the refreshed Standing Orders for Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish Council, for implementation with effect from Tuesday 16 May 2023 be approved; and
- (b) That the Clerk be given delegated authority, to make further minor editing changes, corrections, and updates to the document prior to publication.

7 CODE OF CONDUCT (REPORT D)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the refreshed Code of Conduct for Councillors, for implementation with effect from Tuesday 16 May 2023 be approved; and
- (c) That the Clerk be given delegated authority, to make further minor editing changes, corrections, and updates to the document prior to publication.

8 PROTOCOL FOR CLLR/OFFICER RELATIONS (REPORT E)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the protocol for Cllr/Officer Relations, for implementation with effect from Tuesday 16 May 2023 be approved; and
- (b) That the Clerk be given delegated authority, to make further minor editing changes, corrections, and updates to the document prior to publication.

9 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (REPORT F)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's Complaints Procedure, for implementation with effect from Tuesday 16 May 2023 be approved; and
- (b) That the Clerk be given delegated authority, to make further minor editing changes, corrections, and updates to the document prior to publication.

10 FINAL ACCOUNTS (REPORT G)

The Council considered the Final Accounts for the 2022/23 financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the Final Accounts for the year ending March 2023 be approved for submission to the external auditor and the annual return completed.

11 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE RETURN (SECTION 1&2) 2022/23 (REPORT H)

The Chairman expressed the Council's thanks to the Finance Officer for all her hard work in preparing the reports.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 (Section 1) be approved and signed by the Chair and the Clerk for submission to the external auditor; and
- (b) That the Accounting Statement 2022/23 (Section 2) be approved and signed by the Chair for submission to the external auditor.

12 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (REPORT I)

The Council considered the report of the Internal Auditor following her visit on 27 April 2023.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments received be noted; and
- (b) That the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer be given delegated authority to carry out actions as necessary

13 FINANCE REPORT (REPORT J)

Members considered the report of the Finance Officer.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) That the BACs payments be approved.

14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

RESOLVED:

“That, under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, the public and the Press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information which would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature (staffing matters)”

PART II – PRIVATE SESSION

15 STAFFING UPDATE (VERBAL REPORT)

The Clerk circulated the current organisational structure including pay grades and updated members on the recent staffing issues.

Despite undertaking two rounds of recruitment for the vacant Community Development Officer post, the Council had not been able to find a suitable candidate. After discussion with the Chair and Local Area Manager, it was felt that the salary offered should be increased to £35k per annum to attract a higher calibre candidate.

The Responsible Finance Officer had confirmed that with the post being vacant for six months and the adjustment of the allocated project funds to support the work of the post holder, the Council would be able to fund this increase.

The Clerk praised Kirsty Evans, Grounds Operative, for facilitating several community events/initiatives, in the absence of a Community Development Officer.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be given authority to re-advertise the Community Development Officer post at a salary of £35k per annum.

CHAIR’S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair thanked Councillors and staff for their participation in the Coronation event, which had been a great success despite the weather. All members joined the Chair in paying special thanks to Kirsty Evans, Linda Greenslade, and Cllr Stupple for their hard work and dedication in supporting the event.

Signed Chair