

ANSTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ANSTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH
HALL, 15A RYTON ROAD, NORTH ANSTON ON WEDNESDAY 28th JUNE 2023

Present: Councillors: Shaun Concannon (Chair), Diane Graham, Alan Scholey, John Ireland, Marie Wilkinson, Kay Wright, Colin Tawn.

Public: None

62/0623-QUESTIONS FORM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

63/0623-APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence received and considered from Cllr Bentley & Cllr Jepson.

RESOLVED: to accept apologies for absence.

64/0623-DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

(a) To receive disclosures by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and any other relevant interests under the Members' Code of Conduct; None

(b) To receive and decide upon request for dispensations to councillors to take part in discussions and votes where they have declared disclosable pecuniary interests; None

65/0623-ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

To identify agenda items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public; No public present.

66/0623-MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: to accept the minutes of the meeting of Anston Parish Council of the 19th June 2023 as a true and accurate record.

67/0623-GOVERNANCE REVIEW

It was stated that there is a Borough wide plan to form an independent panel to assist with Grievance and Disciplinary procedures, the Clerk was instructed to inform the group looking at this that Anston Parish Council wish to consider this option when further developed.

(a)-The Council's Grievance Policy as adopted on the 20th January 2020 has been reviewed and is current and meets the Council's needs- **NOTED**

(b)- The Council's Disciplinary Policy as adopted on the 20th January 2020 has been reviewed and is current and meets the Council's needs- **NOTED**

(c)- The GDPR Toolkit for Local Councils August 2018 as adopted, has been reviewed and is current and meets the Council's needs- **NOTED**

68/0623-UPDATE FROM THE CLERK

(a)- Parish Council Vehicle (Appendix item 1)

The report to Council, Theme – Grounds Maintenance- regarding the purchase of a vehicle was presented to the Council; It was noted that this paper has been through the Finance Committee prior to this meeting.

RESLOVED: to approve option one- To purchase a drop sided vehicle as a replacement to the one formerly owned by the Council at a cost not to exceed £35,000. An additional cost will be incurred to fit a tail lift.

(b)- Complete application form for training support- Clerk Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA)

RESOLVED: that the paperwork be completed and submitted with a view to the Clerk starting the training in September. It was noted that this is a contractual obligation for the Clerk.

(c)-Sundry Payments- Printing & Stationary (Appendix item 2)

The report to Council- General administration was presented to Council.

RESOLVED: to approve the following amended option one; To allow Councillors to present receipts for printing and stationary items to the Clerk who will inform the Chair; for reimbursement by the Council, from the Councils Printing & Stationary budget up to, but not exceeding £50 (Fifty Pounds) per Councillor per year.

(d)-General Administration- Permanent Administrative Support (Appendix item 3)

The report to Council - Permanent Administrative Support was presented to Council.

It was agreed that permanent part time administrative support was required and this this should be for up to 25 hours per week.

The Clerk was asked to work with the Chair of the Staffing Committee to formulate a job specification, person specification and employment contract and that the vacancy should be advertised internally in the first instance.

69/0623- To consider the maintenance of land at the front of the Lychgate

The Council requested the Clerk to contact Borough Councillors to ask if they had any plans to fund any works at this area. Once this information has been received the item to be sent to the Amenities Committee for consideration.

70/0623 ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Extra to the current standing items the following was requested:

- IT review

71/0623 MEETING DATE

The next meeting of Anston Parish Council will take place at 7:00pm in the Parish Hall on Monday the 17th July 2023.

The meeting closed at 8:00pm

CIRCULATION

Councillors: S Concannon, C Jepson, D Graham, M Wilkinson, B Bentley, P Bowers, J Ireland, D Tarmey, C Tawn, K Wright, A Scholey.
Andrew Woodhead

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30/06/2023

Anston Parish Council

Report to Council

Theme- Grounds maintenance

Background

The Council manages large areas of land across the Parish and much of this can only be serviced by our grounds maintenance staff using a large drop sided vehicle to get the machinery required to undertake work to site. A larger vehicle saves time as it also allows for bigger loads to be moved in one go and it also allows three staff to be safely and legally driven around; We have had the small hire van we are currently using having to make three journeys to collect all the plants need for planting up, wasting time and fuel and money. The Council previously owned a larger vehicle and although the number of miles covered is very low compared to more ordinary users of such vehicles, it is an essential piece of equipment as clearly demonstrated recently when the Councils old van was put out of service; Resulting in grass not being mowed and litter bins not being emptied, a sizable amount of the litter being dog waste.

Issues identified

If the Council wish to continue cutting grass on land it owns or services, planting areas with seasonal flowers and moving bulky items from one place to another (Including two lawnmowers at a time or waste to the local tip) it is essential that the Grounds Maintenance team have the right equipment to do the job right. We are fortunate in that we currently have two very experienced staff who understand the work, the area and what is required in order to maintain this to an acceptable level, however they need to have the proper equipment to undertake the work.

Proposal

To ensure that the staffing team has the capacity to undertake the works identified by the council, they need to be properly equipped. The proposal here is to purchase a 2 door drop sided van and to have this fitted with a tail lift. Replacing the vehicle we recently lost on a near like for like basis.

Rational

Until recently the Council had a drop sided van, this enabled lawn mowers and other necessary equipment to be moved around the parish. The hire van we currently have is too small and some of the tasks set for the maintenance team can not be undertake as a result.

The Staff have been asked what vehicle would be best suited to the needs of the work they undertake, and this paper is based on the information they have supplied, they being in the best position to determine what is best to undertake the works required.

Financial implications

We are currently hiring a small van which is allowing the team to empty bins and dispose of refuse, to collect and move plants and undertake checks, it is not sufficiently large to allow the transportation of lawnmowers. This is costing the Council £125 per week. The Council has a budget allocation for a replacement vehicle in preparation for a replacement.

Options

Option 1 To purchase a drop sided vehicle as a replacement to the one formerly owned by the Council at a cost not to exceed £35,000. An additional cost will be incurred to fit a tail lift.

Option 2 To purchase a smaller vehicle and trailer to enable works to be undertaken.

Option 3 To purchase a smaller vehicle and hire a larger one as required.

Option 4 To hire a larger vehicle on a long-term basis.

Option 5 To consider Quadbikes or similar alternative solutions.

Options considered.

Option 1 To purchase a drop sided vehicle as a replacement to the one formerly owned by the Council at a cost not to exceed £35,000. An additional cost will be incurred to fit a tail lift; This option has been tried and tested and is the option that is preferred by the staff team, it is a simple replacement. The Tail lift is required as ramps are too unstable and prone to accidents, a tail lift removes the need to manhandle large heavy items up a steep incline. The Storage of the vehicle within the Councils Compound is straightforward and this is a known quantity. If the vehicle is serviced regularly and well maintained with the low milage it will have it should have a better resale value if the Council wished to sell the asset.

Option 2 To purchase a smaller vehicle and trailer to enable works to be undertaken. The trailer would need to be quite large and would require ramps, which are always problematic. The Depot area is very small and getting the trailer in and out would not be easy. A trailer would also not be as stable when having to park on verges and on curb sides. Many areas visited require reversing for access or egress and a trail would require highly skilled drivers to manoeuvre in such circumstances.

Option 3 To purchase a smaller vehicle and hire a larger one as required. Because of the nature of the work undertaken, more time would be lost in arranging, collecting and dropping off a larger vehicle than would be practicable, we would also need to change our insurance cover as it is currently not flexible to allow this on a regular basis.

Option 4 To hire a large vehicle on a longer-term basis; This approach is often taken by business, it is more expensive than a simple purchase but there are tax advantages (Which I don't believe we can take advantage of) The overall cost is more but this off sets the need for the Council to service and repair.

Option 5 To consider Quadbikes or similar alternatives; The issue with untested ideas is that they may not be a solution and do not all works to be undertaken as required, which brings this unresolved issue back to us, but wastes time and resources without finding a resolve.

Recommended Option

Option 1 I recommend to the Council Option One; This is tried and tested and is known to work, the Council do currently have an allocation within the current budget for this, although it will require increasing. A tail lift will be required extra to this. This option will address all the issues and was the preferred option last time consideration was given to changing the vehicle.

End of report

Appendix item 2 68/0623 (c)

Anston Parish Council

Report to Council

Theme- General Administration- Sundry payments- Printing & Stationary

Background

The role of Councillors is more complex than previously computers and the internet have changed their way of working for everyone. This paper recognises the needs of the modern Councillors at the present time and addresses issues that could be a barrier to participation.

Issue identified.

Printing and stationary are not cheap items and whilst there are always methods to address costs the Council needs a simple method to ensure that Councillors are not left out of pocket and that this is not a barrier to participation for anyone considering becoming a Councillor.

Proposal

The Council has a Printing and Stationary budget and there is no reason why Council related printing and stationary costs should not be covered using this budget allocation.

Rational

There is no reason why the Council can not cover this cost and it will also ensure that people are not discouraged from being Parish Councillors.

Safeguards

All Council budgets are closely monitored and if the budget is coming under strain due to the extra call put upon it, the finance committee can determine a solution or ask full Council to consider options.

Financial Implications

These are expected to be under £500 per year and are covered through current budgets.

Options

Option 1, Allow Councillors to present receipts for printing and stationary items for reimbursement by the Council from the Councils Printing & Stationary Budget.

Option 2, Do nothing.

Options considered.

Option 1 This will allow Councillors to reclaim money spent in order to exercise their duty as a Councillor is a simple and easy resolve to an issue identified.

Option 2 The current system has worked well, but issues have been identified and at a time when the Council has several vacancies it would be wise to remove as many possible barriers to participation as possible.

Recommended Option.

Option 1 is recommended to the Council, this issue has been identified, taking advantage of the option is not mandatory, but having it open for those who wish to use it should be an option. If the system becomes unmanageable the finance committee can address or refer to Full Council.

Appendix item 3 68/0623 (d)

Anston Parish Council

Report to Council

Theme- General Administration- Permanent Admin Support

Background

Our current temporary administrative assistance started in October 2022, this was originally for a period of three month, the period has been extended three times since the time.

Issues identified

The Council is now running smoothly, with a reviewed although in part untested committee structure. Several projects have now been authorised and work is starting to deliver these over the coming weeks and months. The Council has a basic Project plan and we are going to be looking at future planning soon, so that we know what we want to do, what is in process, what timescales and what budgets are expected. There is still the day to day administration of the Council which required attention to make it more effective and efficient over the medium term. In short there is a huge volume of work required over several years.

Proposal

To ensure that the Council has the capacity to review, identify and improve administrative processes; To add the additional workload required to ensure identified projects can be undertaken in a timely manner, including proper planning of projects, oversight, community consultations, budgeting and effective communication and administrative record keeping all required to ensure the Council is able to deliver projects and services proposed and/or delivered require support staff time to undertake all planning, producing reports to Council, general administration, building a firm evidence base to justify spend (which can be also used to seek external funds where available)

This proposal is that the Council should employ a permanent administrator to assist the Council perform its functions.

To increase the current 15 hours per week to 24 hours per week (Three-day equivalent) as the workload justifies this degree.

Rational

Former Clerks have been employed full time hours; it is apparent that full time hours have not been sufficient to maintain the require degree of administration to ensure this Council and its services are run to the best available.

The number of projects, and amount of work extra to the ordinary administration of the Council is sufficient to employ the administration team- Myself, Our RFO and the admin post. This will ensure that projects can be undertaken in shorter timeframes and that all Consultations can be undertaken and properly recorded and that all projects have a degree of oversight.

Financial implications

Our budget for 23/24 includes £22,000 for additional staff (i.e. admin staff) and it has been an objective for several years to fill that position. After one month of operation in 23/24 our

employment costs are £5,188 under budget. £1,833 is attributable to the fact that we haven't dipped into the additional staff budget line (mentioned above) and the other £3,355 is partly attributable to the reduced ground staff. However, there is ample scope for employing/remunerating a permanent administration officer.

Other considerations

Our current temporary administrator has proved themselves more than capable, works well with staff and understands the nuance of the work required; they are very good with members of public and they are a perfect fit for the role.

Options

Option 1 To employ the current administrative officer on a permanent contact for 24 hours per week (Three Days equivalent) This will ensure that the additional works required can be adequately undertaken in a timely manner ensuring that the bottle neck that has been apparent for several years is addressed and projects can move forward. Our current admin officer knows and understands the organisation and (in my opinion) is one of the best administrators I have worked with throughout my 33 years of work.

Option 2 To dispense with the services of the admin officer in the short term; considering the need for this post again at some future date if required.

Option 3 To dispense with admin support completely, reverting back to the system traditionally used by the Council.

Option 4 To dispense with admin support over a set period and establish the post at a later date advertising and recruiting to post or employing via an agency in the first instance.

Options considered.

Option 1 Our current admin support is exceptional, the Council and the projects it wishes to undertake will benefit from the skill set and expertise held by the current admin officer. They require minimal supervision and understand the background and reasoning of the Councils projects. Staff and Community links are well established, they have been made party to this paper and they are happy with the proposal.

Option 2 Dispensing with the admin in the short term would effectively slow any future progress that this Council has been making recently; Should the Council determine that the post of Admin Officer is required, the process of finding and recruiting would be an added cost and finding someone of the same calibre, unlikely with a similar unknown outcome.

Option 3 Dispensing with admin completely is to return the Council to its former structure, this would restrict the Councils ability to progress with new projects and ideas, the Council requires degree of admin that has to be undertaken and the extra capacity needed to drive projects is limited as demonstrated over the last few years.

Option 4 Breaking service, whilst desirable would not ensure our current administrator would be available or willing to return; extra expense and time to recruit may be the outcome and if a new administrator were found they would need time to build links and establish, setting the Council back.

Recommended Option

Option 1 is recommended to the Council, granting a permanent 24hr (Three-day equivalent) contract to our existing administrator. This would ensure that all the projects the Council has can be properly considered and administered, there would be no need to catch up or develop links and contacts, saving time and money.

End of report