

NORTON CANES PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Audit & Governance Committee held on 21st July 2011 at Norton Canes Parish Office

Present: Cllrs.P.Gilbert, A.Gilbert, J.Bernard, J.Davies. L.Florence
(Clerk)

1. **Election of Chair**

Nominations for election of Chairman of the Committee were considered.

Cllr.P.Gilbert was nominated as Chairman.

Proposed: Cllr.A.Gilbert
Seconded: Cllr.J.Bernard

It was agreed that the frequency of this Committee should be quarterly.

2. **Apologies** Cllr.Z.Stretton

3. **Budget Monitoring Systems**

As this was the first meeting of the Committee the Clerk presented documentation of the budget monitoring systems that were in place. Discussion ensued on the systems and some minor amendments suggested. It was agreed that the Committee would meet quarterly to receive budget monitoring information to ensure compliance in respect of Financial Orders.

As part of the overall budget monitoring It was agreed that Cllr.A.Gilbert should have responsibility for signing off the petty cash procedure on a regular basis.

4. **Risk Assessments**

The Clerk highlighted that the current Risk Assessments required to be reviewed particularly with regard to the Skatepark. It was suggested that a template be implemented to enable the Lengthsman to record each time he undertakes a check of the skatepark and record any issues or actions that need to be addressed. It was agreed that photographs of the skatepark should be taken which would support the assessment process.

The risk document (which is attached to these minutes) for business purposes was agreed and to go before the next Council meeting for adoption.

Risk Assessments will regard to the Parish Office also need to be implemented.

Action: Clerk to implement risk assessment for Skatepark and Parish Office.

5. SPCA Guidance

The Clerk highlighted the changes to the audit process now that the Audit Commission has been disbanded. Some advice and guidance has been received from the Staffordshire Parish Council Association with regard to future monitoring particularly with regard to smaller Parishes. It was agreed that the internal audit procedure on an annual basis should still be followed and that the SPCA advice should be adhered to.

6. Unit 13 2011-12 payments

The Clerk presented a financial statement relating to the status of the payments for Unit 13 from March 2011 until the expiry of the lease in September 2012. The schedule showed that there will be a shortfall of £5,600 which would be the responsibility of the Parish Council as they are responsible for the Headlease. This shortfall has arisen due to the payment of £16,000 from Koncas being the last year's rent which is part of the Management Agreement between the Parish Council and Koncas. Koncas have already paid the agreed sum of £16,000 but when consulting the Auditor for SPCA who specialises in VAT he had advised that the Parish Council would not be able to reclaim the VAT on the rent as they had received this payment from Koncas who they could not pass the VAT on to.

Some discussion took place about the legalities of the reclaiming of the VAT and it was suggested that we explore the issue of using the £16,000 as contribution to the delapse of the Lease rather than the rent which would then mean that the Parish Council are still paying the rent and can reclaim the VAT.

The meeting was informed that funds have already been ringfenced for repairs and maintenance when the Lease expires in September 2012. However, if Koncas continues after this date and they themselves take out a new Lease then the Parish will not be responsible for the repairs. It was suggested that in June 2012 we should commence negotiations with Koncas with regard to the expiry of the Lease.

**Action: Clerk to explore this issue with the Auditor.
Clerk to diary June 2012 to commence negotiations with
Koncas.**

7. Parish Plan

The Clerk raised the issue of a Parish Plan for Norton Canes. It was agreed that this is something that should be looked at and the Committee gave authority to the Clerk to research this issue with SPCA and Staffordshire Community Council.

**Action: Clerk to research Parish Plan and feedback to future
Committee meeting.**

8. Policies

The Clerk referred to a number of policies that need to be reviewed and some new one implemented which include:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Policy Statement
- Freedom of Information
- Equal Opportunity
- Power of Well Being

Discussion ensued about the content of these policies. The Clerk informed the meeting of the up to date Standing Orders issued by NALC and it was agreed that Norton Canes Parish Council should adopt these in the format provided and taken to full Council for adoption. The meeting was informed that previously there had been a Constitution for the Parish Council which was in the form of a printed booklet that included the Standing Orders. Cllr.J.Davies agreed to ascertain if she still had a copy which could be forwarded The Financial Regulations, Equal Opportunity and Policy Statement need to be updated and adopted by full Council.

Cllr.J.Bernard referred to the Power of Well Being Policy and thought that to enable this Policy to be adopted there was a requirement for both Councillors and the Clerk to be trained. It was agreed that the Clerk to follow this up and feedback to the Committee.

**Action: Clerk to review and update Policies to be adopted at next
full Council meeting.**

Clerk to explore the issues relating to Power of Well Being Policy and feedback to next Committee meeting.

9. County Council Service Level Agreement re Legal Services

The Clerk informed the meeting that previously they had entered into a Service Level Agreement with Staffordshire County Council regarding the drawing up of a Management Agreement with Koncas. The Legal Dept have forwarded a further Service Level Agreement for signature for any continued services they can provide. It was agreed to ascertain whether we could just purchase the service as and when required rather than incur charges for a Service Level Agreement that remains in situ.

10. Date of Next Meeting: To be arranged.

Meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

SIGNED **DATED**