



## Worplesdon Parish Council

### Minutes of the Extra-ordinary council meeting held 1 February 2018 in the Small Hall, Worplesdon Memorial Hall, Perry Hill, Worplesdon at 8.30pm

#### 67-2018 – Present:

**Councillors:** Chairman Cllr P Cragg, Cllr G Adam, Cllr S Fisk, Cllr J Messinger, Cllr S Morgan MBE, Cllr E Nagle, Cllr D Snipp, Cllr P Snipp, Cllr N Mitchell, Cllr C Venables and Cllr J Wray.

**Staff:** The Clerk to the Council and the Assistant Clerk were in attendance.

#### 68-2018- To accept apologies and reason for Absence in accordance with the LGA 1972, Sch12, para 40

Apologies and reason for absence had been received from: Cllr D Bird and Cllr H Unwin-Golding. Apologies and reason for absence were accepted.

Cllr Bryan and Cllr Wright were absent from the meeting.

#### 69-2018- Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) by Councillors in accordance with The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. (SI 2012 No. 1464)

No declarations were made.

#### 70-2018 - Parish Office – Potential Office Space

As resolved at the full council meeting held 11 January 2018, enquiries had been made regarding potential office space currently available in the Parish.

Two offices were available, both of which had been viewed by the Chairman, Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

The offices are located at Frosbury Farm in Gravetts Lane, a relatively recent purpose-built barn conversion, and in the main building at Merrist Wood College.

- The offices at Frosbury Farm are secure, clean and are located on the ground floor and include a DDA toilet, with provision for up to 5 parking spaces and plenty of space for storage.
- The offices at Merrist Wood College were on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with no lift, the facilities are communal, and no reserved parking spaces were available – parking at the College outside the main building is particularly problematical. The storage cupboard was far too small to accommodate the requirements of the Council.

The offices in Gravetts Lane, which have only been on the market for two weeks, are available on a five-year lease with effect from 1 April 2018.

The costs of renting the offices are:

- Rental £15,000pa.
- Rates £5,359 pa (2017/2018) – the rateable value being £11,000pa.
- Electricity estimated at £3.51 per day.
- Insurance contribution of £250 towards the buildings insurance.

The Parish Council has been planning to move into offices for the past two years and has therefore accrued sufficient funds to meet these costs.

The offices were viewed by Cllr P Cragg, Cllr C Venables the Clerk and Assistant Clerk on 19 January 2018.

On 1 February 2018 Cllr N Mitchell, Cllr J Messinger and Cllr D Snipp also viewed the offices.

Cllr D Snipp gave the following report:

- We were impressed with the offices, which offer good security and a good space.
- The offices have just come on the market. The current tenant has occupied the premises for ten years with no problems.
- The offices are centrally located in the parish.
- Whilst the office space is larger than needed, in that it can accommodate eight desks, this will provide much needed storage space and will provide adequate space for the Council's growing needs.

Members then discussed the following matters:

- The current office facilities within the officers' homes are not fit for purpose. There is inadequate space for both members of staff to work together, which is detrimental in terms of the health and safety and well-being of the officers, as well as impacting on efficiency as only one computer can be used at a time. In addition, it is the Council's intention to employ Mr Trevena as permanent part-time Groundsman from May 2018, this must also be factored into the Council's decision.
- Whether the staff were happy with the proposed offices.
- The offices are not sufficiently large to accommodate council meetings, nor is there sufficient parking available. All evening meetings of the Council would therefore still need to be held at the Worpleston Memorial Hall.
- Appropriate security measures will need to be put in place to protect the staff (lone working), including that visitors to the office must be by prior appointment only.
- The current tenant is downsizing and is looking to sell the majority of the office furniture and the phone system. The Council should consider negotiating with the tenant.
- Signage would be required on the external wall of the offices on the main board outside the courtyard.
- All existing issues with the building to be raised with the landlord as soon as practicable.
- The long term aim of the Council is to have a purpose-built community facility of sufficient size to accommodate all meetings/functions of the Council. Whilst in the short term there is a need to rent office space, the Council should press for a community building as part of any new development within the Parish. This should be secured by virtue of a S106 Agreement. The building can then be sold to the Parish Council for £1 (as per Frensham and Shere Parish Councils). There is no reason to think the Parish Council can't secure a permanent community facility within the next five years. It was agreed that an immediate approach should be made to Ashill and Guildford Borough Council in respect of the land north of Keens Lane.
- Utility bills have been factored into the budget.
- These offices have also been viewed by other interested parties.

The following resolutions were then made:

It was then proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr G Adam and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council wished to proceed with leasing the Frosbury Farm offices.

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr J Wray and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council approve the costs associated with renting the office at Frosbury Farm for the duration of the lease - £15,000 rent p.a. with no rent increase during the five-year term, rates, a contribution of £250 towards the buildings insurance and electricity.

*Power to spend: LGA 1972 s111.*

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr G Adam and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the revised Heads of Terms be agreed and approved. These had been circulated to all members via email in advance of the meeting.

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr G Adam and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Mr Ian Davison, a specialist solicitor with a wealth of experience in the Parish and Town Council sector, be appointed as the Council's solicitor to act on the Council's behalf in this matter – the cost of £1,000 & VAT was duly approved.

*Power to spend: LGA 1972 s111.*

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr G Adam and unanimously **RESOLVED** that a set of searches: water and drainage, environmental, local authority was not necessary as the offices are being rented.

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr N Mitchell and unanimously **RESOLVED** that it was not necessary to have a structural survey carried out, as the offices are being rented and the landlord is responsible for the structure of the building.

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr G Adam and unanimously **RESOLVED** that due to time constraints, the Clerk be authorised to approve the lease on behalf of the Council, under delegated authority, subject to appropriate advice being received from Ian Davison.

It was proposed Cllr P Cragg, seconded Cllr C Venables and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised, under delegated authority, to spend up to £3,750 & VAT on the rent deposit.

*Power to spend: LGA 1972 s111.*

It was agreed that the Parish Council ask for the offices to be taken off market with immediate effect.

Meeting closed 9.25pm