



BRENCHEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2024, AT 12 NOON AT MATFIELD PAVILION

Present: Cllr Buttery (Chair), Cllr Dewdney, Cllr Churchill, C. Brooks (Clerk)

1. To accept apologies for absence

Cllr Anderson was unable to attend due to work commitments and the Committee agreed that Cllr Churchill would attend in her place to ensure quoracy.

2. To record declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda

None.

3. Review of the Minutes of the last meeting

There was no meeting in April as had been previously diarised. The minutes of the meeting of 24 October 2023 were approved by the Full Council in November 2023, no matters are outstanding.

4. Policies for biennial review

All policies are updated with the new logo. The Clerk outlined comments on how each of the policies had been used and the Committee discussed suggested amendments.

- **Section 106 Funding Policy**

This policy has not been used for several years. The last time this was a drawdown for the Scouts to obtain funding for replacement heating/Windows/Blinds at the scout Hut. The PC does occasionally promote the availability of grant/donation funds and has not recently promoted the possibility of organisations applying for s.106 funds of which currently approximately 33k remain. It was agreed that the policy would be publicised in the New Year to bolster awareness.

Action Clerk

RECOMMENDATION: To re-adopt the Section 106 Funding Policy unamended

- **Scheme of Delegation**

The power to delegate functions by local councils is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 S.101. It can be very useful in giving Clerks delegated authority to undertake a number of actions and certainly helps with recording where delegation has been previously given (it remains in place passing from Council to Council unless it is revoked/amended). BMPC first created a S.101 during COVID and this was useful at the time so that the Council could still be effective.

In short there's no requirement to have one but they can be useful.

RECOMMENDATION: To re-adopt the Scheme of Delegation unamended

- **Procedure for Co-Option**

The Clerk advised that there is no statutory process for Co-Option, however this procedure is used several times a year so it does need to be in place. The Committee discussed the varying views on whether an applicant must be appointed and noted that there is actually no restriction on Cllrs voting "No" on any matter put before Council and you can also "abstain". Neither are minuted unless the Cllr requests, per the Council's Standing Orders.

Furthermore, the Clerk outlined:

LGA 1972 sch. 12 para 39(1) ...all questions coming or arising before a local authority shall be decided by a *majority of the members of the authority present and voting* thereon at a meeting of the authority.

and..

para 6.15 on page 34 in Arnold-Baker, 13th edition states "In the event of there being a single candidate, that candidate must receive an *absolute majority of those present and voting*."

It was agreed that the policy should be clarified.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the Procedure for Co-Option as amended

- **Protocol for Meetings with Developers**

With the new Call for Sites imminent it seems that it would be prudent to maintain a policy of this nature. The Council discussed concerns that a closed session purely due to a Developer requesting it would comply with the categories for exemption, this has not yet been tested.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the Protocol for Meetings with Developers as amended

- **Protocol for Meetings with Local Organisations**

This policy was created to deal with the emergence of Matfield's Future and given the recent request, albeit made by the PC, to meet with Matfield Village Hall Management Committee it was agreed that a policy should remain in place.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopt the Protocol for Meetings with Local Organisation as amended

- **Environment, Sustainability and Climate Emergency Policy**

TWBC are still aiming for the 2030 carbon neutral position and Cllr Reynolds is working on the carbon audit. The Committee discussed various amendments, particularly to the declaration of intent, to recognise the limits on the Parish Council's activities to address environmental issues. It was recognised that the Working Group was not currently active and therefore some of the intentions would require progress.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopts the Environment, Sustainability and Climate Emergency Policy as amended

- **Equality and Diversity Policy**

The original policy was based on an extensive template version and this is a policy that PCs are encouraged to adopt, but as with some other policies, there are limited avenues for Parish Councils to address the matters it covers. The Clerk would endeavour to use images in publications and on social media that recognised the tenets of Equality and Diversity.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council adopts the Equality and Diversity Policy as amended

- **Website Privacy Notice**

This is a template statement and the Clerk does not harvest email addresses from the Website, the Council also has a Data Protection Policy which addresses these points. The Notice would remain in place unamended.

5. Risk Management and Risk Assessment Review

The Finance and Governance Risk Assessment was reviewed by the Finance Committee on 23rd October and received by the full Council on 4th November.

The Auditor suggested that the Council should elaborate on a Risk Management strategy/policy as well as the actual Risk Assessments, a section has therefore been added to outline this process. Some items were listed as 4-5 instead of between 1-3 and these would be amended. Committee also noted that “lone-wolf” attacks would be added to the Events Risk Assessment as well given the unrealistic expectation that these could be mitigated.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Risk Management Policy and Schedule be approved

6. Emergency and Resilience Plan – to consider draft

Cllr Buttery had attended the training on this and a draft plan has been produced, it requires completing with contact details and would only need to be reviewed annually to ensure they are up to date, it was noted that the Council would not hold a list of vulnerable people. The Chair and Clerk would continue to draft a plan for review in due course.

Action Cllr Buttery, Clerk

7. Council Management

The Clerk would enquire as to the popularity of the sessions at Paddock Wood Town Council for meeting Parish Councillors, given that BMPC sessions were not attended by residents.

8. Date of next meeting: Spring 2025