



## **Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of North Hinksey Parish Council held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 via video conference**

**Those Present:** Cllr Kay (Chairman), Cllrs Allen, Bastin, Berrett, Blase, Bolder, Dowie, Dykes, Fairclough, Jones, MacKeith, Rankin and Potter

**In Attendance:** Sharon Henley

**Members of Public:** 2

**20/87: Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Church.

**20/88: Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda:** Cllr Dykes declared a non pecuniary interest as a client of Knights Solicitors but with no connection to the partner employed by NHPC. Cllrs MacKeith, Blase and Bolder declared a non pecuniary interest as members of the Louie Memorial Pavilion Trust.

**20/89:** Resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 1, extended by the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100, that the following item is confidential as it involves consideration of advice from NHPC's solicitors and a response to a letter regarding a Judicial Review from a parishioner, and as such the press and public are excluded from this part of the meeting.

The Chairman explained that the above resolution would require members of the public to leave the meeting in order for Council to discuss confidential advice. Proposed by Cllr Kay, Seconded by Cllr Rankin and all councillors voted in favour, except Cllrs Dowie and Allen who abstained. The motion was APPROVED and members of the public were asked to leave the meeting, which they did.

**20/90 To approve cost of legal advice on proposed Judicial Review at £1,900 plus VAT authorised by 3 Council Chairmen in advance of the meeting, in accordance with Financial Regulations 3.4:** The Chairman explained that this item had already been approved by three Committee Chairman, Cllrs Rankin, Church and Fairclough, so it was only necessary for the Council to note the expenditure .

**20/91 To review advice and draft response prepared by Knight's Solicitors**

The Clerk reminded councillors that no decisions taken at this meeting could overturn any decisions made in the 15<sup>th</sup> October Council meeting. Reference was made to the terms of Standing Orders number 35 on Rescission of Previous Resolutions.

The Clerk also advised that the complaint by the Scouts to the Ombudsman solely related to planning approval for the proposed new Pavilion and only involved the Scouts, the Ombudsman and the District Council in the process, not NHPC.

The Chairman referred to Standing Orders which stated that councillors could only speak once on each debate for a maximum of 5 minutes. The majority of councillors agreed by a show of hands not to implement this rule for this meeting in order to facilitate open discussion.

**20/92 To agree on response to a Letter Before Claim from a parishioner concerning a Judicial Review.**

Councillors reviewed the draft response prepared by Knights Solicitors and Cllr Kay Proposed the following resolution:

Council resolves that the Clerk is to write to Knights, confirming that they should send the proposed draft response, as circulated to Councillors in advance of this meeting, to the parishioner concerned, but subject to the addition of the following information:

- a. On page 3, sections (1) and (7.1), the planning permission date of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019
- b. On page 4, under the 'alternative dispute resolution proposals' an appropriate summary of the current position, which notes that the resolution passed by NHPC on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 still stands, and that under that resolution the Scouts are still able to return a signed copy of the new 1 year lease to Knights by 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 in order to avoid being told to vacate the premises by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

This was Seconded by Cllr Dykes. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote with all councillors voting in favour, except Cllrs Allen, Dowie and Jones who voted against so the motion was APPROVED.

There were further discussions on writing an open letter to the Secretary of the Scout group to reiterate the offer of the lease.

The following resolution was Proposed by Cllr Berrett:

Council resolves that the Clerk is to write to the Secretary of the 4<sup>th</sup> Oxford Scout Group asking them to pass the following message on to the other Trustees, members and parents. This message is also to be placed as an open letter on the NHPC website and in the December edition of the Sprout.

The wording of the letter as follows:

**Open Letter to the Trustees, Members and Parents of the Fourth Oxford Scouts**

I am writing on behalf of North Hinksey Parish Council to remind Trustees of the offer of a one-year peppercorn rent lease as originally offered on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, with a deadline for signing this lease of 26th November 2020.

We hope that the Scouts do sign that lease, allowing for continued use of the Louie Memorial Playing Fields as your Group headquarters after 31st December 2020.

We would also like to reiterate our offer to meet with Scout representatives to restart discussions towards a mutually acceptable longer-term solution.

This was Seconded by Cllr MacKeith. Cllr Dowie requested a named vote with all councillors voting in favour, except Cllrs Allen, Dowie and Fairclough who voted against so the motion was APPROVED.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.04 hours.