

Strumpshaw Parish Council

Report of the meeting held on **Wednesday 5th May 2021 at 7.30 pm.** by Zoom video conference.

Present: Maureen Hammond (Chairman), Shelia Ashford, Paul Dexter, Tina McAulay, Eric McCormick, Olly Page

In attendance: Sarah Cartwright, (Chair of the Community Hall Committee), Bob Hunt, Lynda Hunt, (both members of the Community Hall Committee). Hilary Hammond, Deputy Clerk

Apologies for absence: David Varley, Megan Wilby (Clerk)

1. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

There were none

2. Electricity contract for Strumpshaw Community Hall

At its meeting on 26th April 2021 the Finance and Building Committee had considered a proposal from the Community Hall Committee that a new contract should be undertaken for the supply of electricity to the Community Hall from 18th August 2021 when the current contract expires. As the estimated cost of any new contract was significantly greater than the current contract, and exceeded the estimate that had been made in September 2020, the Finance and Building Committee referred the decision to a full Parish Council meeting.

Bob Hunt carried out a further market analysis with Utility Aid and Switch My Business and produced a financial report (attached to the report of the meeting). Bob Hunt pointed out that the penalty for leaving a multi year contract would be the equivalent of the cost of running the contract for the full term.

In the course of carrying out this analysis it became clear that it would be necessary to change the electricity meter to be able to sell the surplus electricity generated by the solar voltaic system, through the Smart Export Guarantee. Utility Aid offered to change the meter free of charge. British Gas Lite would not support a change in meter.

Bob Hunt pointed out that the actual cost of electricity would depend on the amount used, but for pricing purposes he had assumed that the Community Hall would be likely to use 7,845 units a year. This was based on the use in the first year.

The Clerk and RFO had advised that in her opinion it would not be prudent to undertake a contract for longer than three years in view of the significant penalties that would follow if electricity prices fell in the later years of a contract.

The assessed annual prices, including standing charges, ranged from £1,370 to £1,531 for a three year contract, or £1,382 to £1,534 for a two year contract. The assessed British Gas Lite price amounted to £1,382 for a two year contract and £1,370 for a three year contract, via Switch my Business. The lowest assessed annual price

through Utility Aid was from EDF, and was £1,398 for a two year contract or £1,427 for a three year contract.

The Council considered that the benefit of being able to sell the surplus solar PV energy outweighed the assessed price differences between British Gas Lite and EDF.

Tina McAulay proposed and Eric McCormick seconded a proposal that the Parish Council should contract with EDF via Utility Aid. This was carried.

Olly Page proposed and Paul Dexter seconded a proposal that the contract with EDF should be for three years, or 36 months. This was carried.

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.