

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 1st December 2022 at 6.30pm at the Bodle Street Green Village Hall

PRESENT: Councillors Steve Williamson, Andy Long, Charlie Saunders and Buster Ansell

Also present: Jackie Cottrell – Parish Clerk
4 members of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Graham – family commitments
Cllr Saunders – work commitments

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Williamson – Item 7.1. Grant applicants – Personal interest - Bodle Street Green Village Hall
Cllr Long – Item 7.1. Grant applicants – Personal Interest – Parish Council representative for the Dunn Village Hall

MINUTES

To resolve that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6th September 2022 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

00587 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 6th September 2022

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the Dunn Village Hall Committee spoke on behalf of their grant application. She informed the PC of the different groups who use the hall and as a registered charity they were trying to keep their hire charges as reasonable as possible. The hirers of the hall were their only source of income. The hall was compliant with health and safety regulations and was maintained to a high standard. Any contractors used were local tradesman. The Village Hall Committee was seeking 50% of the costs of the maintenance work carried out, this was largely due to the loss of three regular customers and less party bookings since Covid. Their revenue had decreased by approximately £3,500 which had forced them to use their reserves. She clarified the latest set of accounts had been provided. The Chairman of F&GP thanked the village hall representative and clarified the reserve levels.

A member of the Big Lunch Committee spoke on behalf of their grant application which would be used to cover some of the increases in their overhead costs. She explained the Big Lunch was formed in 2009 to help strengthen the community and to prevent local people from feeling isolated. She reported that 300 people had attended the Jubilee lunch and the numbers were continuing to grow. As a result, there had been an increase in the cost of insurance cover for their events as well as their hire charges for more tables and chairs etc. The Big Lunch was free of charge for attendees.

TO REVIEW THE PARISH COUNCIL RISK REGISTER

5.1. To review and recommend to Full Council re-adoption of the Risk Register

The Clerk had circulated the amended risk register prior to the meeting. There were no further suggested amendments.

It was **AGREED** to recommend the changes to the Full Council for re-adoption.

FINANCE AND BUDGET 2022/23

6.1. To receive and discuss a report from the Chairman of the Finance & GP Committee - projected expenditure vs budget for 2022/23

All Members noted the report circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman of F&GP clarified there was a projected budget overspend on the Clerk's salary and the payroll costs.

The increase in the Clerk's salary costs was due to the 30 extra hours that had been agreed by the Full Council to complete outstanding projects. The majority of these hours had not yet been used. Added to this was the Clerk's national pay award which had equated to a 6% increase to her pay point. The size of the award had been underestimated. The Clerk would also receive an extra day's annual leave from 1st April 2023.

The increase in payroll costs were due to the previous payroll provider charging a year in arrears whilst the new provider charged monthly.

Other budget lines had a small projected underspend:

- The Full Council had agreed a new 3-year insurance deal which had decreased the annual premium.
- All current Councillors had access to a computer resulting in the Clerk not needing to use stamps.
- There had been a one-off reduction in the current year ESALC subscriptions.

The Chairman of F&GP clarified any remaining funds in the infrastructure budget that had not been spent by the end of the financial year would be moved to an ear marked reserve.

He projected there would be a potential overspend of £690 by the end of the financial year. These figures would be presented to Full Council in December.

6.2. To receive an update on application for VAT refunds for 2021/22

The VAT refund was **NOTED** by members. The clerk was instructed to submit the claim.

6.3. To receive and note the projected council reserves as at 31.3.2023

The Chairman of F&GP clarified that the VAT refund would go back into the general reserves. There would also be a small adjustment to the CIL reserve figure as the Clerk had received clarification from WDC that this figure should be net of VAT. The Clerk still needed to verify the current figures circulated.

It was noted the projected general reserves would be 64% of the budget which was within the parameters of 50-80% agreed by the Full Council in the adopted Reserves Policy.

The Chairman of F&GP clarified to Members If the budget next year increased the level of reserves would still fall within the agreed parameters. He requested Members to note however, that although the reserves were adequate the actual monetary amount was small.

6.4. To receive and note the projected council ear marked reserves as at 31.3.23

Noted. The Chairman of F&GP asked Members to note that although the CIL reserves had not decreased several projects, which would be using CIL funds, had been agreed at Full Council.

GRANTS

7.1. To review grant applications, payable in 2023/24, submitted by local groups, societies and organisations and make recommendations to the Full Council

The grant applications were reviewed in detail. All Members were supportive of the grant applicants and noted the importance of each group within the parish.

However, all Members felt concerned with potential increases in the precept request to WDC especially in the current economic crisis.

It was AGREED that the F&GP Committee would recommend to Full Council that each applicant would be rewarded 50% of grant request.

Name of applicant	Sum requested £	Grant use	F&GP Recommended grant awards £
Bodle Street Green Village Hall	949.00	Costs for the new boiler	474.50
Dunn Village Hall	705.00	General expenses towards the upkeep of the village hall	352.50
The Big Lunch	200.00	Expenses to be used for the 2023 Big Lunch	100.00
Villages Lunch Club	400.00	To meet the rising costs of running the Lunch Club	200.00
Total	2,254.00		1,127.00

00588 It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the above grant awards

BUDGET FOR 2023/24

8.1. To discuss and recommend to Full Council the budget for 2023/24

Each budget line was discussed in detail along-side the budget report produced by the Chairman of the F&GP Committee.

He stated the parish council faced a unique situation. The Full Council had previously AGREED to increased costs by awarding the Clerk additional hours but unfortunately there had also been an unexpected increase in external costs in addition to the poor economic climate of the country.

00589 It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council a budget of £23,790.55 for the financial year 2023/24, a 15.96% increase from the previous year.

8.2. To discuss options for funding the 2023/24 budget. To recommend to Full Council the 2023/24 precept requirement

The Chairman of F&GP clarified the options for funding the budget and reiterated the level of general reserves and the parameters recommended by the parish council's reserves policy. A discussion took place. All Members AGREED that the budget should be funded wholly by the precept.

00590 It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council a precept requirement of £23,790.55 for the financial year 2023/24

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING and/or INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBC

The meeting closed at 20.28

DRAFT