

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the Resourcing Committee meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 3rd December 2024, 7:00pm

Present: Cllrs Beveridge, Cochrane (Committee Chair), Hagan and Thomas; Caroline Levett – Clerk/RFO

1 Apologies	No apologies.	
2 Election Of Committee Chair And Vice Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Thomas proposed Cllr Cochrane as Chair and this was unanimously agreed. Cllr Thomas proposed Cllr Hagan as Vice Chair and this was unanimously agreed. 	
3 Declarations Of Interest	No declarations of interest.	
4 Minutes Of Previous Meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 8 th July 2024 were unanimously approved and signed by the Chair of the Committee.	
5 Committee Terms Of Reference	<p>Circulated prior to meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual review of the Terms of Reference was carried out and unanimously agreed. 	
6 BPC Financial Regulations	<p>Circulated prior to meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parish Council's Financial Regulations were reviewed and agreed in July following the publication of the new Model Financial Regulations by NALC. There have been no further changes. <p>The Resourcing Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the Financial Regulations to the Parish Council for approval.</p>	
7 BPC Standing Orders	<p>Circulated prior to meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Model Standing Orders were last updated in April 2022 by NALC and provide a comprehensive framework of procedural rules for local councils in England. These standing orders are essential for regulating the conduct of council meetings, ensuring orderly and efficient governance. They include mandatory legal requirements and optional guidelines that councils can adopt or modify to suit their specific needs. By adhering to these standing orders, councils can ensure transparency, accountability, and consistency in their operations. A review of BPC's Standing Orders was carried out with changes made to Items 18a. and 18c. Financial Controls and Procurement - amended from £25,000 to £30,000 in line with amended Financial Regulations July 2024. <p>The Resourcing Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the Standing Orders to the Parish Council for approval.</p>	
8 BPC Risk Assessment Management Plan	<p>Circulated prior to meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual review of the Risk Management Plan was carried out and agreed with no changes made. Cllr Thomas advised that at a recent KALC Area Meeting the issue of Emergency Action Plans was raised. The Clerk to research this. 	CL
9 Financial Support Request From BVT	<p>Benenden Village Trust, which operates with a sizeable annual financial deficit, had discussed approaching BPC for financial assistance with the maintenance and running costs of Benenden Village Hall and Benenden and Iden Green Recreation Grounds. Trustees thought this not unreasonable as these are community assets. BVT's discussions focused on either applying for an ongoing annual grant (a sum of £10k was mentioned), possibly through an increase in the precept, or S137 grant funding for specific projects.</p> <p>Trustees thought that a possible way forward was to apply for a specific grant in this financial year to help with the provision of a new Village Hall heating system and ancillary insulation measures, and in subsequent years help with a specific area of village hall operations and grounds maintenance.</p> <p>Martin Dickson, as Chair of BVT, and Cllr Thomas, as Chair of BPC, met informally to explore this further and agreed that it would not be in the PC's best interest to just pay a lump sum every year to BVT and that any financial assistance should be for specific community-based spaces/areas/projects.</p>	

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These minutes are not a verbatim report of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

	<p><u>BVT/BVH Finances</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BVH income 2023/24 was £36,083 and expenditure (running costs and capital) £51,815; BVT grounds maintenance costs to end of November 2024 (Benenden and Iden Green Recreation Grounds and Village Hall mowing and hedge cutting) was £5,802; There is no income from the recreation grounds; additionally there are costs incurred for tree maintenance and playground maintenance, which average £1,500 pa. ➤ The deficit for these public facilities is annually in excess of £20,000 ➤ BVT receives income from its investments of around £20,000 pa, of which £10,000 can be set against VH and grounds maintenance, leaving a shortfall of approximately £10,000. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>BVT request to BPC</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant funding towards BVH Heating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This fiscal year BVT would like BPC to consider grant funding towards the costs of the new heating equipment at BVH totalling approximately £10,000. ➤ The cost of the new heating system was £8,790. BVT has fundraised £1,000 towards this project and would like to submit a grant application for the balance of £7,790. ➤ Ancillary work has been approved by Trustees to complete the heating project and includes fitting a new full height fire door in the foyer at the base of the steps leading to the stage door and fitting blackout/thermo blinds instead of curtains to ground floor windows in the main hall. Total cost approx £2,500. ○ Grounds Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ BVT would like BPC to consider meeting the costs of grounds maintenance (as detailed above) from the precept. <p>The Resourcing Committee acknowledged BVT's financial constraints and difficulties, and considered the best way in which BPC, within its own remit, might be able to help BVT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BVH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Resourcing Committee recommends a grant of £5,000 from S137 monies 2024/25 towards the new heating project. ➤ The Resourcing Committee felt that BVH/BVT could seek grants from other sources and carry out further fundraising of its own, and asked what reviews take place of hire charges. ➤ BVH/BVT would be able to apply for specific project S137 funding annually for consideration by BPC. ○ Grounds Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Resourcing Committee recommends supporting BVT by taking on the grounds maintenance contract. If this is charged directly to BPC it will be able to reclaim the VAT and the cost to BPC will be approximately £5,000. ➤ The Resourcing Committee recommends this is put in place for a period of 5 years from 2025. ➤ The Recreation Grounds will remain the responsibility of BVT. ➤ An agreement to this effect must be drawn up. 	
10 Budget Monitoring 2024/25 And Budget Proposals 2025/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full details of income and expenditure and the Parish Council's budget position to 30th November were circulated prior to meeting, and these were considered and discussed. • The projected bank balance to 31st March 2024 was £43,310. The actual balance was £69,467. The difference was primarily due to the outstanding insurance claim for Benenden Well being received during the 2023/24 financial year, which was higher than anticipated. • Gross forecast income to 31st March 2025 is £68,878 and expenditure £67,455. 	

- Bank account balances on 30th November 2024 £83,688; forecast bank account balances on 31st March 2025 £70,890. This is a little below the recommended one and a half times precept kept in reserves.
- The Resourcing Committee agreed it would be prudent to start building the PC reserves again following expenditure in recent years on the Parish Wells, public toilets, noticeboards and flagpole.
- The current Section 137 spending limit is £10.81 per elector.

The Resourcing Committee unanimously agreed the 2025/26 budget for approval by the Parish Council.

2025/26 Proposed Budget

INCOME	PROJECTED TO 31/03/25	PROPOSED 2025 - 2026	Notes
Precept	49750	52000	
WI Printing	20	20	
Server Recharge	120	120	
Bank Interest	800	800	
KCC Wildflower Meadow Grant	7000		1
Flagpole Grants and Donations	2000		
Telephone Kiosk Donation	200		
Bank Charge Refund	15		
INCOME	59905	52940	
VAT	8973	9000	
TOTAL INCOME	68878	61940	
EXPENDITURE (net)	PROJECTED TO 31/03/25	PROPOSED 2025-2026	
Audit	690	700	
Bank Charges	75	100	
Staffing Costs - salary, pension, contributions	15500	17000	
Defibrillator	180	200	
Flagpole	3190		
General Maintenance	700	2000	2
Grounds Maintenance - Cherryfields, The Green	2500	3000	
Grounds Maintenance – BVT		5000	3
Hall Hire/Meetings	250	300	
Insurance	1341	1400	
Office Costs/Website	1200	1200	
Payroll	212	300	
S137/grants/donations	6000	10000	4
Subscriptions	803	900	
Toilets	9000	9500	5
Training/Councillor Expenses	0	100	
Village Tidy	253	300	
War Memorial	740	700	
Wells	15621		
Wildflower Meadow	200		

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	Miscellaneous	0	240		
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	58455	52940		
	VAT	9000	6000		
		67455	58940		
	<p>1. Assumes one payment of £7,000 will be received before year-end. Once received this must be ringfenced.</p> <p>2. Any further Wells expense included within General Maintenance.</p> <p>3. Assumes PC agreement to meeting BVT Grounds Maintenance costs.</p> <p>4. The Allotment Association continues to apply for grants etc but MAY approach BPC for help towards the creation of a parking area. This could be met from S137 funds.</p> <p>5. Costs include cleaning, water and electricity. Cleaning costs - £147.50 net per week for attendance 7 days per week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neighbourhood Development Plan will be due for review. The Resourcing Committee agreed that this would likely not incur costs. The Clerk to carry out a review of the grounds maintenance contract. 				CL
11 2025/2026 Precept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The taxbase figure is 964.82 - a variance of 7.17. The current precept figure is £49,750, current Band D equivalent £51.95. The Resourcing Committee unanimously agreed to recommend a precept of £52,000 to the Parish Council. The Band D equivalent of a precept of £52,000 represents an increase of 3.8 % from £51.95 to £53.90 per annum. An increase of £1.95 for the year. 				
12 Clerk's Salary	CONFIDENTIAL ITEM				

The meeting closed at 9pm