



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 4th January 2022 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: Adi Davis; Jo Davis (Vice-Chair); Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe (Chair); Conor Ogilvie-Davidson.

Cllrs. Jonathan Rich and Kathy Thomas were also present at the meeting, in their capacity as Chair and Vice-Chair of Full Council. As the Committee was quorate, they did not utilise their voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk.

The meeting actually commenced at 7.07pm.

Public Session

There was one member of the public present at the meeting who did not wish to make any comment.

F&A041 – 04/01/2022 Attendance Roll Call and Declarations of Interest

The attendance roll call was undertaken (those present are detailed above).

No further interests to those already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer were declared.

F&A042 – 04/01/2022 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Fraser; no reasons provided. This apology was duly noted.

F&A043 – 04/01/2022 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 12th October 2021 had been circulated in advance of the meeting but not in sufficient time for them to be reviewed by all councillors. It was therefore agreed their approval should be deferred to the January Full Council meeting.
- ii. The Clerk advised that the outstanding actions from previous meetings and the Planner board for Finance & Amenities had been amended and was fully up to date.

F&A044 – 04/01/2022 Items for Urgent Report

Cllr Kathy Thomas drew attention to the recent Budget Setting presentation held by B&NES Council which can now be viewed on YouTube, with the associated consultation closing today. The proposed budget had been significantly increased on the previous year and as a result of this, residents will get a higher Council Tax bill for 2022. Councillors should keep this in mind when setting the Parish Council precept for the coming year.

F&A045 – 04/01/2022 Review of Current Finances 2021/22

A Balance Sheet; a breakdown of the Reserves and a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2021/22 financial year had been published to councillors for information.

The documents were reviewed and discussed, and the following points were raised:

- i. There is significant underspend with the budgets for '604005 – Contracted Amenities Works' and '602900 - Infrequent Operational Expenditure' both are linked to issues encountered with outside services and the impact of Covid. This is currently being addressed by the Personnel Committee.
- ii. The move to monthly payroll is having an impact on budgeting review. This issue is logged as an action with the Personnel Committee; the Clerk to follow up accordingly.
- iii. That the review of debtors and creditors is returned as a regular agenda item now that meetings are back to being face to face.
- iv. That a breakdown of the '602900 - Infrequent Operational Expenditure' budget is included as an addendum to this report for future meetings to assist with reviewing and future budgeting.

It was **resolved** to instruct the Clerk to update the Finance & Amenities Committee, by 13th January 2022, on the VAT claim for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 of the 2020/21 financial year and for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of the 2021/22 financial year and for the associated actions to be updated in Planner, including attachments.

It was **resolved** that the VAT claim is included on the Annual Governance Cycle to be claimed half yearly, and no later than one month after the end of each half year.

F&A046 – 04/01/2022 Review of Committed Expenditure and Ear Marked Reserves

Councillors reviewed the report of the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) and the Committed Expenditure for the agreed, but uncompleted projects and non-operational activities.

The Clerk was asked to remove the completed projects from the list on future reports.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the remaining £1,202.87 from the Street Lighting Upgrade project be moved from Committed Expenditure back to General Reserve.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the remaining £4.73 from the Braysdown Allotments Boundary Fence Repairs project be moved from Committed Expenditure back to General Reserve.

F&A047 – 04/01/2022 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

Pre-reading provided a report on the regulations surrounding the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies. The following points were noted:

- The CIL Regulations require the neighbourhood portion of CIL (NCIL) to be used to support the development of the local area by funding:
"The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or Anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area"
- Decisions on the expenditure of the 'neighbourhood portion' funds are at the Parish Council's discretion, provided that it is in accordance with the CIL Regulations. Approval for spending of NCIL is not required from B&NES Council, however parish councils are accountable for spending their NCIL money.
- An annual report must be published setting out a statement of receipts and expenditure and summarising the projects which utilised NCIL funds.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the £1,730.54 CIL money, already awarded to the Parish Council, be allocated to the Jubilee Garden Project (formerly known as the Philosopher's Area).

F&A048 – 04/01/2022 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the **Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel** from their meeting held on 7th December 2021 (for items not already covered on this agenda).

The 'Infrequent Operational Expenditure' budget was reviewed. From the new financial year, it was agreed to incorporate any expenditure that would have previously been allocated to the '601006 - Death of a senior national/local figure' budget.

The 'Contracted Amenities Works' budget was reviewed. Due to the current situation with the Caretaking staff, it was agreed there needs to be some fluidity with the allocations to any budget relating to outside services labour (whether being internal or external). It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the budget allocations between the Caretaking Staff costs, Contracted Amenities Works and any other outside services budgets be able to be reallocated between the budget codes, so long as the overall total is not increased. Those budgets to be included under this umbrella to be identified accordingly.

F&A049 – 04/01/2022 Budget Preparations for 2022/23

Councillors received an update on the Tax Base, reviewed the figures discussed at the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting held in December and discussed responses to queries raised at this meeting along

with any additional items to be included within the operational budget for the 2022/23 financial year. The following points were noted:

- The Tax Base has increased from 2117.31 to 2139.35.
- The operational budgets for fuel/energy have been increased due to rising fuel costs.
- There are now separate budgets for councillor training and staff training.
- The Village Events budget has been renamed a the 'Civic Events' budget and now covers events hosted by the Parish Council. Funding for any other village events will be covered by the 'Community Grants' budget.
- The various budgets for waste collection and removal have been reviewed and a new budget for 'General Waste' has been created to cover the cost of waste disposal from litter/dog waste bins around the village.
- That £200 is added to the '602002 – Winter Support' budget to cover the purchase of some rock salt each year to replenish the grit bins. Anything else for winter support, such as new grit bins and larger amounts of rock salt will be covered by the '602900 - Infrequent Operational Expenditure' budget.

8.38pm – It was **resolved** to temporarily adjourn the meeting to allow the member of the public to address the Council on their thoughts regarding the budget and precept setting.

They requested the Parish Council does not increase the precept, due to the known significant increases to fuel/energy costs and National Insurance etc. this year which will impact on the 'ordinary' people.

8.42pm – It was **resolved** to reconvene the meeting.

Project suggestions, larger operational expenditure and items for earmarked reserves were discussed. The following points were noted:

- The priority should be to finish projects currently underway.
- Three options with the current projects; 1. To complete them; 2. To postpone them; 3. To cancel them. How to proceed on each of the projects will be determined by councillors likely to be at the February or March Full Council meeting.
- The surplus from the predicted income against the predicted expenditure should be put towards larger operational projects and operational items as an ear marked reserve, to commence once the current projects are completed.
- Any operational budget remaining at the end of the current year should be allocated to new projects, determined by councillors as the most popular, from the suggested list provided.
- Potentially there will be funds from the Persimmon land transfer which should be considered.
- A list of the most popular new projects (as selected by councillors) to be circulated.

Councillors carefully considered whether there was justification to increase the precept this year due to the anticipated underspend from the current financial year and the likelihood that less project work will be undertaken. This was counterbalanced with the need for forward planning and budgeting for larger projects to be completed in future years.

It was agreed for the proposals to be presented to Full Council as the operational budget for 2022/23. It was also resolved to submit the following motion to Full Council:

To resolve to set the Precept at £251,452 for the 2022/23 financial year, which is a freeze of the precept on the previous year, to allocate £40,000 to operational Ear Marked Reserves and that any underspend from the 2021/22 financial year be allocated to future projects.

Proposed by: Cllr Adi Davis

Seconded by: Cllr Simon Kidd

Cllr. Larcombe and the Clerk to meet to finalise the presentation of the proposed budget to Full Council.

F&A050 – 04/01/2022 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received a report on bank signatories/mandate and bank charges/fees. The following points were noted:

- The paperwork to remove an ex-councillor as a signatory from the Nat West bank account has been submitted.

- The paperwork for one councillor to become a signatory for Unity Trust Bank had been prepared for signing after the meeting.
- Three councillors still need to access online to Unity Trust Bank, so their access rights do not expire. The Clerk to 'tag' them on the next payments run as a reminder.

F&A051 – 04/01/2022 Internal & External Audits

The Clerk reported that the Auditor had recently informed they would be undertaking remote audits again this year, although, as they are based locally, they may be able to provide an on-site audit. The Clerk was asked to arrange for an on-site audit and Cllr. Andy Larcombe advised he wished to attend.

It is noted the Internal Auditor appointment should be reviewed on a regular basis. The Clerk to raise an action to obtain some quotations and to include on a future agenda.

F&A052 – 04/01/2022 Insurance Broker and Cover

An update was provided on the insurance claim for business interruption. The Clerk to supply dates to the insurance company in order to progress the claim and will continue to add any updates onto Planner.

F&A053 – 04/01/2022 Finance & Amenities Policies – Tree and Hedge Management

The Clerk advised that unfortunately she had been unable to complete the changes to the draft Tree and Hedge Management Policy over the Christmas break. It had therefore not been possible for councillors to review it prior to the meeting in order to make any necessary decisions. The responses to residents' tree queries had also been delayed as a consequence. The Clerk to ensure the policy is completed for sign-off at the January Full Council meeting and to contact the residents to advise on the reasons for the delay.

F&A054 – 04/01/2022 Community Grants

Councillors received an update on the Community Grant and Village Event awards for 2021/22 and considered the two remaining applications that were subject to conditions.

At the October Full Council meeting it was resolved to award a grant to Peasedown Residents Association, subject to their constitution, and relevant paperwork being ratified as satisfactory at the next Finance & Amenities Committee meeting (minute C122 – 19/10/2021 refers). A copy of their constitution had been circulated as pre-reading but there were some queries raised about the content. Cllr Simon Kidd offered to assist the Residents Association, in his own time, to work through the anomalies, to prepare it to be reviewed again at the next Full Council meeting.

The application from Peasedown Scouts was previously agreed to be deferred until the new garage storage unit is in situ. Although the concrete base has been installed, the garage is yet to be erected, so this application will continue to be deferred.

Cllr Larcombe provided the Clerk with some large presentation cheques to be used whilst a Parish Council branded presentation cheque is being produced.

The Terms and Conditions of the Community Grant scheme were reviewed in preparation for the release of the grant scheme in 2022/23.

It was **resolved** to remove the line stating: '*All community grants will be subject to Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time*' and to make the following additions and amendments to the Terms and Conditions:

- *A non-profit making organisation has its own bank account with at least 2 authorised signatories.*
- *Grants cannot cover costs that have already been incurred.*
- *The organisation must be non-party political.*
- *Profit making businesses/organisations may apply, however, this is dependent on how, and the number of residents to benefit from the grant.*
- *All applications will be reviewed on their own merits and must be covered under Parish Council powers.*

F&A055 – 04/01/2022 Christmas Related Activities

Councillors received an update regarding Christmas-related activities and made any associated decisions, as follows:

- i. **Christmas hampers, cards, and calendars** – All had been delivered in December and were very well received by residents.
- ii. **Christmas lights and trees and to review quotations for the 2022 scheme** – Quotations had been obtained from the existing supplier to continue with the same 10x motif lights for 2022 on a 1-year

agreement and for 2022 and beyond on a 3-year agreement. These were discussed and it was **resolved** that Christmas motif lights for 2022 are the same as those for 2021 and are hired from Blachere Illuminations at a cost of £3,947.45 +VAT.

F&A056 – 04/01/2022 Annual Independent Play Inspections

The annual independent play inspection was undertaken in November and the reports generated from these visits had been circulated as pre-reading. The following points were noted:

- Most issues identified were either 'low risk' or 'very low risk'. A few were 'moderate' risk.
- The two Caretakers qualified to undertake the checks and repairs are currently reviewing the document and will be working through the issues identified.
- All the issues will be listed on Planner [a separate bucket has been created under F&A Plan] so councillors can review progress.
- Most costs involved in the repairs are within the Clerk's sign off and operational budget limits, others may have to be deducted from the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget.

F&A057 – 04/01/2022 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

A report from the Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel had been issued to councillors as follows and it was agreed to be further reviewed at the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting in February:

- i. **Waiting list numbers** - 16 in Peasedown St John, 5 outside Peasedown St John, 7 existing plot holders. There are 17 quarter plots available that will be issued in the next 1-2 weeks.
- ii. **Plot fees for 2022 and issuing of associated invoices** - Invoices for 2022 were issued before Christmas and plot-holders are currently paying their fees (mainly by BACS).
- iii. **Plot inspections, probation period and letters** - In addition to those plot holders who had already agreed to give up their plots, two who have not responded to letters will be given notice for the coming year and their plots will be re-allocated (these are included in the vacant plots above).
- iv. **Replacement boundary fence** - Works to replace the stock fencing to the rear and side of the allotment site have been completed. New fencing may also be required along the boundary with the road at the front of the car park, where the wooden fence is collapsing. It has been suggested that stock fencing may be more appropriate in this location. This may be actioned in 2022.
- v. **Signage improvements** - Signage to indicate a disabled parking bay (close to the accessible allotment plots) will be actioned in the next few weeks.
- vi. **Future operational works to the entrances and extension to the Accessible Allotment plots** - An additional field gate may be added to the unused entrance in the car park, as a security measure. One of the quarter plots recently vacated by Shoscombe School could be used to extend the accessible allotment plots and would provide space for a further two C-shaped beds (four quarter plots). However, as one of the existing accessible plots is currently vacant, councillors may wish to keep the situation under review before proceeding with this work.
Funds for both of these projects could be taken from the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget.

F&A058 – 04/01/2022 Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel

To receive a report from the **Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel** had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and the following points were discussed:

- i. **Inspections of the changing rooms and improvements to facilities and associated budgets.**
There is some maintenance works required to be undertaken with the benches. Also, the legionella checks are ongoing.
It was reported there is some graffiti in one of the dugouts. The Clerk to investigate and arrange for it to be attended to accordingly.
- ii. **Consideration of quotations for proposed improvements to the dugouts.** A quotation to dig out and install timber edging, stone base and artificial grass to the front of both dugouts was considered. It was **resolved** to proceed with the improvement works to the dugouts at the football pitch for a total cost of £695.00+VAT to be deducted from the '606003 - Recreation Ground - Football Facilities Related' budget.
- iii. **Signage improvements.** Some of the new signage should be installed early January. The replacement large sign on the changing rooms still to be actioned. Updates to be provided on Planner.
- iv. **Review of the planning application for the proposed Football Club's Tea Hut proposals.** A copy of the planning application documents had been circulated to councillors as pre-reading. Several queries and concerns had been raised by councillors, particularly as the plans had not been provided to the Parish Council prior to it being submitted to B&NES Council Planning Department. It was noted that

even if planning permission is granted by B&NES Council, permission for the proposed development to proceed will need to be obtained from the Parish Council as the Charity Trustee. In order for these queries to be answered, it was agreed that a Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel meeting would need to be held as soon as possible. The Clerk to arrange.

F&A059 – 04/01/2022 Floral Displays

Councillors received an update regarding the floral displays as follows:

- The existing supplier had emailed earlier that day to inform they will not be able to fulfil any further orders because they are having difficulty obtaining stock and staff and have decided to retire.
- Investigations to find a new supplier are already underway; B&NES Council have been contacted and have offered to provide a quotation.
- It was noted that it may be necessary to increase the suggested budget for floral displays from the £3,000 allocated for 2022, as a different supplier may not be as competitively priced. It was agreed that any additional funds required, would have to be deducted from General Reserve if and when the need arises.

F&A060 – 04/01/2022 Review of New Actions

The Clerk provided a summary of the new actions generated from the meeting and advised they would be captured on the Actions Register in Planner after the meeting.

F&A061 – 04/01/2022 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 26th April 2022 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Committee Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 8th February at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 9.37pm

Signed..... Date.....