



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 11th October 2022 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: John Bailey; Jo Davis (Vice-Chair); Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe (Chair); Ray Love. Cllr. Kathy Thomas was also present at the meeting, in her capacity as Vice-Chair of Full Council. As the Committee was quorate, she did not utilise her voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO.

Public Session

Excepting two parish councillor non-committee members, there were no members of the public present at the meeting. Cllr Larcombe invited both councillors to take part in the discussions at the meeting but as they were not committee members, they were unable to vote.

Cllr Gill Auld was in attendance as part of the new parish councillor induction training and because she has an interest in volunteering for the Christmas Tea Party.

Cllr Barbara Bailey was in attendance as she questioned when the canteen would be available for public hire and wanted to know where the funds for the furnishing of the canteen had come from. Cllr Larcombe explained that the Terms and Conditions of Hire for the canteen would be covered as an agenda item and that Peasedown Miners Football Club had provided several chairs and a table and the remaining items had been funded by the Parish Council.

F&A045 – 11/10/2022 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. However, in the interests of transparency two non-pecuniary interests were raised; Cllr Jo Davis advised that her daughter is a member of Bath All Starz cheerleading team who have applied for a community grant, and Cllr Kathy Thomas advised that she is a member of the Women's Institute, who have also applied for a community grant.

F&A046 – 11/10/2022 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Conor Ogilvie-Davidson due to work commitments and Cllr Jonathan Rich due to being away. These apologies were duly noted.

F&A047 – 11/10/2022 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 12th July 2022 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was **resolved** that they be accepted as a true and correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair accordingly.
- ii. The Actions Register on Planner was not fully up to date. The Clerk to update and to review the outstanding actions with the Chair when next undertaking the bank reconciliations.

F&A048 – 11/10/2022 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&A049 – 11/10/2022 Community Grants

Four Community Grant applications had been received under the second phase of awards. Redacted copies of the applications had been circulated as pre-reading and a summary of those grants awarded under the first phase, along with any remaining budget was tabled at the meeting. The applications were considered in turn, and it was **resolved** to make the following recommendations for consideration by Full Council:

- To award £250 to Swan Community Transport to help cover costs of journeys made by Peasedown St John residents over the course of the next 12 months (currently 43 residents registered).
- To award £59.98 to Peasedown St John Women's Institute to purchase two pull up roller banners to display at events.
- To award £250 to the Mini Police towards the cost of coach hire for a trip to the Police training centre in March.
- To award £640 to Bath All Starz Cheerleading to fund the coach travel to Wales for the southwest championship competition in March 2023.

It was noted this would leave £9.76 community grant budget remaining.

The Clerk will continue to liaise with the 2022/23 grant receivers regarding feedback required under the Terms and Conditions of the grant. Several have already been included within recent newsletter. In future years, the Clerk to continue to provide redacted versions of the application forms along with a front summary sheet, as the councillors found this to be more useful when making decisions.

F&A050 – 11/10/2022 Review of Current Finances 2022/23

A balance sheet; a breakdown of the reserves and committed expenditure; a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2022/23 financial year including a full breakdown of the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget had been published to councillors for information. The following points were raised:

- Staff training and councillor training budgets do not appear to have much expenditure being halfway through the year. The Clerk advised some training has been booked or is in progress, although not yet invoiced. This will be covered at the next Personnel Committee meeting.
- The Civic Events budget is likely to show an overspend at the end of the year, however, although charged to this nominal code, the Jubilee event had additional funding allocated, which was reported via the nominal code '9997 - Transfer from Reserves for Unbudgeted Operational Expenditure'.
- Some invoices are not due until the latter part of the financial year and so those nominal codes do not show any expenditure, e.g., school crossing patrol; Beacon Hall PHS contract; GDPR Audit costs etc.
- The utility bills for all the sites are likely to overspend if they have not already exceeded their budget.
- Beacon Hall cleaning budget was discussed. This used to be undertaken in house but has been contracted out for a while. The matter to be investigated further by the Clerk and Personnel Committee.
- A new nominal code had been created '606004 – Recreation Field – Canteen and Toilet Related' and expenditure relating to these items have been allocated to it, e.g., microwave, fridge, tea urn etc. however, it will be shown as an overspend as there is not any budget allocated to it for the current financial year.
- The entire operational expenditure against budgets will be very tight this financial year.

It was noted that the **VAT claim** for October 2021 to March 2022 had now been received and paid into the bank. The claim for the next period is due to be actioned by the end of October 2022. It was **resolved** to instruct the Clerk to add the response from HMRC, to the Planner task, from the submission of the April to September 2022 VAT claim.

Cllr Andy Larcombe explained about the **legal fees relating to the Persimmon land transfer**. The Parish Council have not paid anything to the solicitors since an invoice for £500+VAT was paid in February 2020. Consequently, a second invoice, for £2,000+VAT has now been received covering legal work undertaken since February 2020 to October 2022. This was discussed and it was **resolved** to accept and pay the invoice of £2,000+VAT from Thatcher and Hallam solicitors with the value being deducted from the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget.

F&A051 – 11/10/2022 Review of Debtors and Creditors

A report of the financial debtors and creditors was tabled and reviewed at the meeting. The Clerk provided explanations for the aged creditor invoices and advised of progress undertaken in resolving them.

F&A052 – 11/10/2022 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

No Community Infrastructure Levy or external funding payments had been received since the last meeting. However, grant applications were due to be submitted later in the year for funding for the signage project and tree planting.

F&A053 – 11/10/2022 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received an update on bank signatories/mandate and bank charges/fees. It was acknowledged that due to the bank fees, the Parish Councils preferred method of making and receiving payments is by bank transfer, this being the cheapest option.

It was reported that the letter to the bank requesting the monthly **credit card limit** be increased to £5,000 had been signed by the relevant signatories and had been sent to the bank for processing.

Following discussions at the Advisory Panel meeting, **card payment options** (for receiving payments) had been investigated. Nat West Bank had advised they were unable to provide the Council with this service, although were unable to inform of the reason why. Unity Trust Bank had referred the request to their partner company, Elavon Merchant Services, who had issued a payment solution proposal, which had been circulated to councillors. It was noted there was a one-off fee for the card reader device of £29.00, which can be used with mobile telephones, and there is a 1.75% transaction fee for most payment cards, and 1.9% for Amex cards. There are no subscription fees. The proposal was discussed, and Cllr Gill Auld advised she had recently done some research on card payment devices and the percentage transaction fees were all very similar from each supplier.

It was considered that it provides another payment option for hall hirers etc., although the preferred option will still be by bank transfer. It was therefore **resolved** to purchase a card reader device for £29 from Elavon Merchant Services and link it to the Unity Trust Bank account.

An update on the migration to monthly payments through B&NES Council payroll was provided. It was **resolved** for the task that has been created on Planner for this matter, to be itemised to include all the necessary steps involved for moving to monthly payroll so councillors are kept informed of progress at each stage.

F&A054 – 11/10/2022 Internal & External Audits

The Clerk advised she had spent considerable time providing the necessary additional information and explanations to queries raised by the External Auditor on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2021/22 financial year. The External Auditor had subsequently advised they were now satisfied with the explanations, but the Conclusion of Audit and External Auditor report has yet to be issued. It was **resolved** that when the Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been received, along with the External Auditor report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022, the Clerk to provide copies to the members of the Finance & Amenities Committee to enable them to discuss the findings prior to the report being included on the Full Council agenda.

Following the appointment of Bridget Bowen as the Internal Auditor, a date of 18th November 2022 had been set for the interim internal audit for the 2022/23 financial year. Cllr Andy Larcombe advised he would attend for part of the audit.

F&A055 – 11/10/2022 Budget Planning for 2023/24

Councillors considered the process for budget planning for the 2023/24 financial year. It was **resolved** that the below listed six-step process be applied for the budget planning for the 2022/23 financial year.

1. Clerk prepares spreadsheet of operational costs and updates as much as possible.
2. This is reviewed initially with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the F&A Committee and amendments are made.
3. The revised operational budget is reviewed line by line at an F&A Advisory Panel meeting to which all councillors are invited to attend. This meeting has been ear marked for 13th December 2022. The information at this meeting will not be printed but projected onto the large screen for all to view.
4. The queries from this Advisory Panel meeting are investigated and any amendments are made.
5. The revised document is again reviewed at the F&A Committee meeting on 10th January 2023 and a recommendation on the precept setting is usually formulated.
6. The Clerk and Chair of the F&A Committee put together a presentation on the budget for Full Council to consider at the meeting on 17th January 2023.

The Clerk to arrange a date to meet with Cllrs Andy Larcombe and Jo Davis to undertake step 2.

A list of proposed future projects had been circulated, some of which already have ear marked reserves allocated, but are likely to require further funding. The Clerk to add events related to King Charles III

Coronation to the list, some of which may have to be spent during the current financial year, considering the date has now been set for 6th May 2023.

Councillors were reminded to inform the Clerk about suggestions for additional projects but to bear in mind the current economic climate and that the local elections are due in May 2023.

F&A056 – 11/10/2022 Insurance Broker and Cover

No update was available on the insurance claim for business interruption. The Clerk to follow up.

Following a meeting, earlier that day, with representatives of Persimmon Homes, the Council were advised that Persimmon's solicitors are due to have finished their plan of all the titles to transfer by the end of November. Once this information is received, the Clerk and Cllr Larcombe will work together on submitting a request to the insurance brokers for a land search indemnity quotation. This will be reported to Council for approval in due course.

F&A057 – 11/10/2022 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the **Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel** meeting on 20th September 2022 (for items not already covered on this agenda) and made associated decisions as follows:

- i. The **ash die back report** (presented at the last Advisory Panel meeting) detailed **seven trees that required to be felled**. The report was sent to three tree surgeons and three quotations for the works were received. The quotations were presented as the price only from each supplier, without identifying the name of the supplier or any further detail.
It was felt that a decision on which contractor to use should be made by all councillors. It was also requested to see the full quotations, rather than a summary. It was therefore **resolved** to defer the decision on these quotations to the November Full Council meeting, with full details of each quotation provided in the pre-reading.
- ii. At the last meeting, it was requested to obtain three quotations to replace the existing wooden fence with **bow top galvanised fence at the Recreation Ground play area**. Three quotations were obtained for supply only of galvanised fence panels and posts (all the same size and materials). The quotations were presented as the price only from each supplier, without identifying the name of the supplier or any further detail.
It was noted that additional materials for concrete etc. would also be required. Furthermore, a quotation for a contractor to install the fence had been received that afternoon, to consider this option versus Caretaker workload. It was thought that a decision could not be made without seeing full details of the quotations, and it was therefore **resolved** that the issue should be deferred until the November Full Council meeting.
- iii. Following discussions at the Advisory Panel meeting, Cllrs John Bailey and Andy Larcombe had met with the Caretaker to review the state of the **wooden steps at Ecewiche Green**. It was thought that other than superficial caretaking work (trimming the surrounding bushes and replacing a few pieces of timber), no further work was required. It was **resolved** to delegate the organisation of these tasks back to the Clerk, as part of the Caretaker's routine winter jobs.
- iv. It was noted that the **Parish Council's utility providers had been changed to EDF**, on a fixed rate contract for one year. This was on the advice of Utility Aid who are the energy supplier broker working in partnership with NALC. They also recommend reconvening in 6-9 months' time, to review the contract and state of the market. They advised the following:

You will receive government discount on the electricity tariff between October and March 2023 – moving down to 21p per kwh but will incur non commodity costs on top moving it to around 35p per kwh.

You will receive the discount on the gas tariff for the next 6 months – moving down to 7.5p per kwh but will incur non commodity costs on top moving it to around 11.5 p per kwh between October and March.

You may receive further support moving forward from March – this will be reviewed by the government in December.

This change needed to be ratified by Council. The daily fluctuations in pricing due to the volatile market meant that pricing could not be held and thus could not be prior approved. It was therefore **resolved** to ratify the change of the Parish Council's utility provider to EDF on a fixed rate contract for one year, as detailed above.

F&A058 – 11/10/2022 Recreation Ground and Charity Trust

Councillors received a report on those items delegated to the Finance & Amenities Committee at the last Full Council meeting and the following points were discussed:

Scout Garage – The draft User Agreement and report on payment for electrical installation works had not been completed by the Clerk and so could not be considered. It was therefore **resolved**, once complete, it be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance & Amenities Committee with the Clerk and a recommendation for approval be presented at the November Full Council meeting.

Internet Provision – It was noted that an order had been placed with Truespeed for the installation of the free internet provision at the Canteen. As yet, an installation date had not been provided.

Canteen and Accessible Toilet – The draft Terms and Conditions of Hire were tabled at the meeting which had not provided sufficient time for councillors to review them in advance of the meeting. It was therefore **resolved** they be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance & Amenities Committee to work with the Clerk and make a recommendation for their approval at the November Full Council meeting.

Canteen and Accessible Toilet – The materials for the boxing in of the pipework were still being sourced.

F&A059 – 11/10/2022 Christmas Related Activities

Councillors received a report on Christmas related activities and made associated decisions, as follows:

i. **Senior Residents Christmas Tea Party – 4th December 2022** – Following delivery of the newsletter, residents have already started to register for the Tea Party. A list was being compiled including any dietary and transport requirements.

Cllrs Gill Auld, Andy Larcombe, and Kathy Thomas to be the lead councillors to work with the Parish Office staff on the organisation of the event.

In addition, the following ideas were **agreed**:

- a. Entertainment at the party would follow the usual format of musical entertainment, quiz, and bingo.
- b. Volunteers to organise and undertake the catering and to help in the kitchen have been received.
- c. The WI to be asked to help with cake making in liaison with catering volunteers.
- d. A pianist to be asked to provide musical entertainment/Christmas carols.
- e. One councillor to host each table, as before.
- f. Quizzes (including a picture quiz) to be provided on each table, as before.
- g. Tables will be set up the day before, if possible.
- h. Parish Office to book buses for transport.
- i. A Parish Council Christmas card will be printed and given to each guest.
- j. A Parish Council calendar will be printed and given as a gift to each guest.

The Tea Party would be included on the agenda for the November Full Council, to determine which councillors were able to volunteer to help with the event.

ii. **Christmas cards** – As mentioned above, it was **resolved** that Council will be issuing a Christmas Card again this year which will be issued to the attendees of the Christmas party and they will also be issued to volunteers, various organisations within the parish, neighbouring councils etc.

An email would be issued to advise councillors and staff to attend the November Full Council meeting with Christmas jumpers/hats so that a photograph can be taken for the making of the 2022 Christmas card.

Quotations had been obtained for the printing of 150x A5 Greetings cards printed both sides with envelopes. The order to be placed as soon as possible to ensure that it is ready to meet the deadline.

iii. **Calendars** – As mentioned above, it was **resolved** that a calendar featuring photos of Peasedown St John will be issued to the attendees of the Christmas party and to any volunteers, advertisers, regular hirers of hall etc. Quotations had been obtained for printing, and the Clerk would ensure that the calendar is completed and sent to the printers by mid-November in order that 150 copies can be printed in time for the Christmas party.

iv. **Christmas lights and trees** – The following arrangements were noted:

- a. Following the decision at the September Full Council, arrangements had been made for Blachere to provide delivery and collection of the lights from storage, and Volker to install them. This was the cheapest option that complies with B&NES Council requirements.
- b. Brand Electrical Services would be carrying out a refit of the two power pillars that supply the Christmas trees at either end of the village. They would also be installing a lockable external socket on Beacon Hall.
- c. The external socket would be used to provide mains power to the Christmas tree outside Beacon Hall, which should provide a much better display. The LED lights which were put on the cemetery

pergola last year would be moved to the Jubilee Garden where they could be used with mains power from the Beacon Hall socket.

- d. The switch-on date for the lights would be Monday 28th November. The usual councillor photo would take place next to a Christmas tree and the Clerk would be in touch nearer the time with details.
- e. The Christmas lights Advisory Panel would be meeting with representatives of B&NES Council on 28th October, to discuss possible Christmas lighting options for 2023.

9.22pm – Cllr Ray Love left the meeting during the Christmas Tea Party discussions.

F&A060 – 11/10/2022 Beacon Hall & Field

Councillors received a report on Beacon Hall and Field and made associated decisions, as follows:

- i. Following the leaving of Southside, no regular Friday daytime bookings have been secured. However, a Wednesday morning booking has been accepted, on a weekly basis until March 2023.
Some hall maintenance works have been undertaken this financial year; however, more are required, including repair works to the windows and doors which is likely to overspend the operational building maintenance budget.
Furthermore, since the lights have been installed in the main hall, reports from the NHS Blood and Transplant Service have been received, stating that the lights are not sufficiently bright enough for their blood donating sessions as they cast shadows and create dark spots in the room. Some initial quotations have been obtained to try and resolve this issue, however there was insufficient time to discuss them at the meeting and so temporary additional lighting to be provided for any interim bookings.
Bookings for 2023 were discussed, and the availability of the hall during the weekend of the King's Coronation is to be checked, as it is likely the Parish Council will require it for an event. Other bookings were discussed, and the use of the field and hall were discussed along with regulations about people entering a public open space. It was noted that non-standard booking applications may require further consideration.
It was **resolved** for the Beacon Hall booking form to be amended to include a section for hirers to specify compliance with regulations for charity collections and linking to the amendment to the terms and conditions of hire as agreed at the last Committee meeting.
- ii. The replacement toddler swing is due to be delivered later this month and will be installed by the Caretaker once received. Replacement parts for the climbing net that has also been removed are currently being sourced.
The play surface has been repaired and the recently appointed Advisory Panel will investigate longer term options.
The annual independent play equipment inspection is due to take place in November 2022.
- iii. The Clerk is providing information requested by the Valuation Office Agency as part of their review of rent, lease, or ownership details for Beacon Hall.

F&A061 – 11/10/2022 Braysdown Allotments

Councillors received a report from the **Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel** prior to the site inspection due later in the month. The following points were noted:

- i. There are currently two plots that have just become vacant (one not available until January).
- ii. There are twelve people on the waiting list from inside the parish; six from outside the parish; four plot-holders wanting additional space.
- iii. One person is waiting for an accessible plot.
- iv. At the inspection, the Advisory Panel will need to consider whether to put up the allotment fees again this year (they were increased last year). The rent paid to the farmer for the site is due for a review this year, so may well increase.
- v. When setting budgets for the coming year, the following potential projects at the allotment site should be considered:
 - a. Extension of the accessible plots to cover another quarter plot.
 - b. Replacement stock fencing along the front of the allotment site.
 - c. Works to add an additional gate to the second (unused) site entrance which could be actioned with the stock fencing.

F&A062 – 11/10/2022 Winter Planting

Councillors were advised that the hanging baskets, planters, and beds will be cleared of plants later this week and prepared ready for the winter planting to take place on Monday 17th October 2022. Several residents have volunteered to assist with the planting.

F&A063 – 11/10/2022 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&A064 – 11/10/2022 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 13th December 2022 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.31pm

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

