



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 10th January 2023 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: Jo Davis (Vice-Chair); Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe (Chair); Ray Love.
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 & RFO.

Public Session

There were three members of the public present at the meeting which included two parish councillor non-committee members Cllrs Mandy Clarke and Richard Clarke. All three advised they were present to observe only and did not have any matters they wished to raise.

F&A065 – 10/01/2023 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, Cllr Jo Davis advised of a non-pecuniary interest in the fact she is a volunteer with Somer Valley FM; an organisation that is being discussed under item F&A069 – 10/01/2023 for Community Grants.

F&A066 – 10/01/2023 Apologies for Absence

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

F&A067 – 10/01/2023 Minutes & Actions

The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 11th October 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.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.a.vi, it was **resolved** to amend the order of the agenda as follows:

- To move the review of the Actions Register to the end of the agenda, prior to agenda item *F&A083 – 10/01/2023 - Review of New Actions*.
- To defer agenda item *F&A076 – 10/01/2023 - Banking Arrangements* to the March Advisory Panel meeting.
- To defer agenda item *F&A082 – 10/01/2023 - Floral Displays* to the January Full Council meeting.

F&A068 – 10/01/2023 Items for Urgent Report

The Clerk reported that Truespeed had requested a 25-year wayleave access to Ecewiche Green to enable them to connect and maintain broadband connections to properties within Morgan Way. The matter will be included on the January Full Council meeting agenda for consideration.

F&A069 – 10/01/2023 Community Grants

Councillors considered an out-of-cycle application for a Community Grant for 2022/23 from Somer Valley FM due to the loss of their original advertising banner. Cllr Larcombe explained that Somer Valley FM had provided a banner to the Parish Council asking for it to be displayed on the gate at Beacon Field. Unfortunately, this banner had gone missing around the time of the Queen's Jubilee and was unable to be located. It was therefore suggested that the Parish Council purchase a replacement banner using any remaining Community Grant funds (or funds within the same cost centre code). It was commented that the banner should be replaced on this occasion as a gesture of goodwill but that in future, organisations that request to display their banners on Parish Council owned or maintained property, are made aware they do so at their own risk and if they go missing, they are to be replaced at their own expense. It was consequently **resolved** to get in contact with Somer Valley FM to obtain the design, dimensions, and specification of their banner for the Parish Council to order a replacement.

F&A070 – 10/01/2023 Parish Office Boiler

Councillors received an update on the existing boiler located in the Parish Office at Beacon Hall; during the past few years the boiler had regularly broken down and at recent callouts the plumber had advised that it needs replacing. The Council had ear marked £5,000 for this project as it was expected it would need to be replaced with a heat pump, however, a quotation had been received to replace with an Alpha boiler complete with 13-year warranty. This was reviewed and in the interest of office staff time, and because the one quotation received was felt to be very competitive, it was **resolved** not to obtain additional quotations but to proceed with the works and place an order with JEM Heating to replace the Parish Office boiler for £2,518+VAT. The transferring of the money from ear marked reserve to committed expenditure to be included on the January Full Council agenda.

F&A071 – 10/01/2023 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:

- It is anticipated that the income and expenditure budgets will be very close at the end of the financial year, with several budgets being overspent.
- That the services and facilities provided by the Parish Council are assisted by hirer contributions etc. and to acknowledge that they do not actually cover the entire running costs.
- The VAT claim is up to date; the new process is being followed and the claim payment has been received.
- Smart meters are in the process of being fitted to all the Parish Council run buildings. It was suggested that smart plugs are installed for certain appliances so they can be set on timers to help reduce energy consumption.
- Future budget monitoring reports should provide an explanation for the public on 'Expenditure Funded from Earmarked Reserves'.

Cllr Larcombe explained about the issues encountered with the Isuzu finance companies not lending to councils or local authorities. It appears that most local authorities purchase their vehicles outright. This could be actioned by using reserves or taking out a Public Works Loan. The advantages and disadvantages of purchasing of the vehicle versus lease and contract hire was discussed at length.

It was eventually **resolved** that the Parish Council progresses obtaining a new vehicle under contract hire for a period of three years (subject to Isuzu supplier and finance) at a cost of up to £600+VAT per month. This resolution to be reported to Full Council and the Clerk to confirm the details and what, if any, deposit is required and if VAT is chargeable on the lease.

F&A072 – 10/01/2023 Review of Debtors and Creditors

The report on the financial debtors and creditors was not tabled at the meeting. It was agreed they would be reviewed by Cllr Andy Larcombe when he was undertaking the bank reconciliation with the Clerk.

F&A073 – 10/01/2023 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

No Community Infrastructure Levy or external funding payments had been received since the last meeting.

F&A074 – 10/01/2023 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the **Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel** meeting on 13th December 2022. This meeting was the third step of the six-step process agreed for the budget planning, with the purpose of the meeting being for all councillors to review the operational budget on a line-by-line basis. All parish councillors were invited to attend, and it was noted that eleven, out of fifteen councillors, attended. The comments and queries that were raised at this meeting are covered under agenda item F&A075 – 10/01/2023.

It was noted that the Parish Council would like to recruit a full time Caretaker, however, it was noted that this may take some time to advertise and find a suitable person and in the interim works may need to be covered by the Contracted Amenities Works budget. Consequently, it was acknowledged that the 'Caretakers Salaries'; 'Contracted Amenities Works'; and 'Beacon Hall Cleaning' budgets are required to have some fluidity between their budget allocations.

F&A075 – 10/01/2023 Budget Preparations for 2023/24

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 2023/24 financial year.

The following points were noted:

- The Tax Base has increased from 2139.35 to 2153.93.
- The operational budgets for fuel/energy have been increased due to rising fuel costs.
- New operational budgets for '606004 – Recreation field – Canteen and Toilet Related' and '608005 – Beacon Field Jubilee Garden Maintenance' have been created.
- New operational budgets relating to the new vehicle have been created: '502023 – Vehicle Lease Costs; 502024 – Vehicle Insurance Costs; 502025 – Vehicle Maintenance Costs'. Furthermore, the operational budget for Petrol & Oil has increased due the requirement of having to fuel the new vehicle, although the mileage budget has been reduced accordingly.

Councillors considered the fifth step in the six-step process being applied for budget planning of the 2022/23 financial year. The budget document discussed at the Advisory Panel meeting in December was reviewed again at this meeting with any further amendments highlighted.

Councillors considered that there were too many variables to feel comfortable in formulating a motion to be considered for the setting of the precept and think it will be easier to open and allow for debate if there is a recommendation instead. It was therefore **resolved** to recommend setting an operational budget of £251,452 with an additional £19,000 being precepted so the Parish Council can continue to make improvements on the services and facilities it provides.

9.09pm – Cllr Jo Davis left the meeting.

F&A076 – 10/01/2023 Banking Arrangements

To receive an update on banking arrangements and make any associated decisions. To include:

- *Signatories and bank mandate.*
- *Bank charges and fees.*
- *Credit card limit increase.*
- *Card payment facility.*
- *B&NES payroll – update on processing of the bank form and next steps for implementation.*

Due to time limitations and lack of updates; this item was deferred until the next meeting.

F&A077 – 10/01/2023 Internal & External Audits

The report from the interim Internal Audit for the 2022/23 financial year had been circulated as pre-reading. Cllr Larcombe advised that report was very positive, and that the conclusion of the report stated: "*Based on the tests I have carried out at this interim internal audit visit, in my view, the internal control procedures in operation are adequate to meet the needs of Peasedown St John Parish Council.*" The next visit has been scheduled for May 2023, when further checks will be undertaken.

There were some recommendations relating to the Risk Assessment and various policies. The Clerk to obtain the required details for councillors to review at the Advisory Panel meeting due to be held in March 2023.

Councillors acknowledged an email had been received from the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments advising that BDO LLP had been appointed at the Parish Council's External Auditor for the 5-year

appointing period from 2022-23 until 2026-2, following a procurement exercise to appoint auditors to each contract area from 1 April 2022. An associated scale of fees had also been provided.

F&A078 – 10/01/2023 Annual Independent Play Inspections

Councillors received, for information, the annual independent play inspection reports for Beacon Field and the Recreation Ground. It was noted that one moderate risk had been identified; all the other points were low or very low risk.

The Caretaker had reviewed the reports and made some comments and suggestions on the resultant works required; this had been circulated as pre-reading. Any necessary replacement parts will be sourced and then fitted by the Caretaker in due course. Planner/Teams will be updated to keep councillors informed of progress. The Clerk advised that the Beacon Field Play Equipment Maintenance budget had already overspent, so additional funding from other areas will be required.

It was also reported that the play net had been received back from the company that were undertaking the repair and it will be refitted by the Caretaker in due course.

F&A079 – 10/01/2023 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the **Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel** as follows:

i. **Waiting list numbers (including those for accessible plots).**

- a. There are currently twelve people on the waiting list in Peasedown St John;
- b. Six people on the waiting list outside Peasedown St John;
- c. Four existing plot-holders looking for extra space;
- d. One person on the waiting list for an accessible plot.
- e. There are nine plots available which will be issued in the next few weeks, which will leave three people on the waiting list in Peasedown St John from the end of January.

ii. **Plot fees for 2023 and issuing of associated invoices.**

Invoices were issued before Christmas by email where possible (to save postage and paper). Around half of these have been paid so far – plot-holders are supposed to pay by February.

iii. **Plot inspections, probation period and letters.**

Following plot inspections last year, four plot-holders were sent letters advising them that they may not be offered their plot the following year unless they carried out some work on their plot. Two did not respond and their plots will be reallocated (and are included in the nine available plots above). One carried out some work. One requested a meeting with a committee member and has been sent a letter confirming the details of that meeting.

iv. **Replacement boundary fence.**

At the last inspection it was suggested that there may not be a need for a replacement boundary fence on the roadside of the car park, because there is already a hedge on that side – it was suggested that the old (broken) fence should be removed. If any gaps are identified, hedging whips could be used to fill them in (which are able to be obtained free of charge). This work could be carried out over the winter period.

v. **Signage improvements.**

A sign designating a disabled parking space has been ordered and will be installed over the winter period.

vi. **Future operational works to the entrances and extension to the Accessible Allotment plots.**

This would need to be included in project works for 2023 with an allocated budget (the budget will need to allow for increased labour costs because the work can no longer be completed “in house”).

F&A080 – 10/01/2023 Recreation Ground and Charity Trust

Councillors received an update on the Recreation Ground and made associated decisions in accordance with delegations applied at previous Full Council meetings, as follows:

- i. **Internet Provision** – An appointment has been made with Truespeed who will be installing the new broadband at the Recreation Ground Canteen on Thursday 12th January 2023, between 12 and 4pm.
- ii. **Canteen and Accessible Toilet** – The draft **Terms and Conditions of Hire** had not been circulated in advance of the meeting and so a decision was unable to be made. This item will be deferred until the January Full Council meeting.
- iii. **Canteen and Accessible Toilet** – The materials to be used for the **boxing in of the pipework** were awaiting delivery to enable these works to be actioned.
- iv. **Felling of the ash trees as identified on the ash die back report** – A definite date to undertake these works is awaited from the contractor, however, they are due to take place during January 2023.

- v. Councillors considered the quotations, which had been circulated as pre-reading, for **labour and fixings to remove the existing wooden fence and to install** the previously ordered **bow top galvanised fencing** for Recreation Ground play area. it was **resolved** to place an order with JM Tree Services to undertake these works for £1,725, to include the removal of the existing fence and with any resultant waste being taken to Ashgrove Cemetery.
- vi. **Memorial tree** – A crab apple tree has been delivered and is awaiting planting. It has been suggested that this should be planted by Parish Council staff to avoid any delay, and then a ceremony held to install a plaque in the spring (rather than waiting until the spring to plant the tree). A response is awaited from the donor.

F&A081 – 10/01/2023 Beacon Hall & Field

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

- i. Since the October meeting there had not been any changes to the regular hall hirer booking slots and Friday daytimes remain outstanding, although is currently being used for any works and cleaning.
- ii. An update on the Beacon Field play equipment had been received under agenda item F&A078 – 10/01/2023. Cllr Andy Larcombe also advised that he was following up, in conjunction with the Clerk, regarding the donation of some of the old play equipment taken from Beacon Field. A final report and decision will be presented to a future meeting.
- iii. There were no further updates regarding the request from the Valuation Office Agency as part of their review of rent, lease, or ownership details for Beacon Hall.

F&A082 – 10/01/2023 Floral Displays

To receive an update regarding the floral displays for 2022 and to consider recommendations and make associated decisions for the summer 2023 display.

Due to quotations pending receipt, this item was deferred to the January Full Council meeting.

F&A083 – 10/01/2023 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.

Councillors briefly reviewed the outstanding actions as detailed on Planner.

F&A084 – 10/01/2023 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 14th March 2023 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 25th April 2023 at 7pm at Beacon Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.29pm

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