



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

The Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, Bath BA2 8SN
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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 30th April 2024 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: Jo Davis (Vice-Chair); Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe (Chair); John Ogilvie-Davidson. Cllrs. Conor Ogilvie-Davidson and Jonathan Rich were also present at the meeting, in their capacity as Vice-Chair and Chair of Full Council respectively. As the Committee was quorate, they did not utilise their voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk & RFO.

Public Session

Excepting Parish Councillor, Kathy Thomas, who was a non-committee member, there were no members of the public present at the meeting. Cllr Larcombe invited Cllr Thomas to take part in the discussions at the meeting but as she was not a committee member, she was unable to vote.

F&A083 – 30/04/2024 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&A084 – 30/04/2024 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Gill Auld (no reason provided) and from Cllr Daniel Walker due to personal commitments.

The Clerk to issue an email to all councillors to remind them of the process for submitting apologies to send to the Clerk and copy the Chair and to provide a reason for absence.

It was assumed that Cllr Jo Davis would be arriving late to the meeting as she had not made contact to advise she would not be attending.

F&A085 – 30/04/2024 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 23rd January 2024 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 Clerk advised the majority of the outstanding tasks on the Actions Register on Planner had been updated on their progress. There were a few tasks still to be checked; the Clerk to ensure these are actioned before the next Full Council meeting. It was reported that the crack in the surface of the pathway of the Jubilee Garden had been raised again to the contractors but as yet, a response had not been forthcoming. It was suggested that a 'tracked', signed for paper letter be sent to their registered office and if this does not work, to report the matter to Contracts Finder stating the pathway is still under warranty. The Clerk was also asked to check if the contractor was still trading.

7.07pm – Cllr Jo Davis arrived during the Actions Register updates.

F&A086 – 30/04/2024 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&A087 – 30/04/2024 Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel

Councillors reviewed the draft agenda in preparation for the next meeting of the Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel due to be held on 14th May 2024 at 7.30pm at Beacon Hall. Some questions were raised in relation to the item regarding pitch maintenance, for which answers will be provided at the meeting. The Clerk was also requested to ensure a breakdown of the Parish Council's expenditure on the football facilities was available for this meeting. No further items were added to the draft agenda.

F&A088 – 30/04/2024 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the **Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel** following the site inspection on 25th April 2024 and made associated decisions as follows:

- i. **Waiting list numbers** - There are currently no residents from Peasedown St John on the waiting list for a plot. A number of existing plot-holders have requested additional space and there are 7 people on the waiting list from outside the parish. There are two vacant accessible plots and nobody on the waiting list.
- ii. **Plot inspections, probation period and letters** – Several letters to plot holders are due to be issued following the plot inspection. These are in relation to clearing weeds and rubbish from plots or blocking of pathways etc.
- iii. **New Plot Holders' Probationary Period** - It was **resolved** to extend the probationary period from 3 months to 6 months until the end of June as it is frequently too cold/wet for plot-holders to start work on their plot by March/April.
- iv. **Skip** - It was **resolved** not to proceed with the funding of a skip to facilitate rubbish clearance from the site.
- v. **Annual Braysdown Allotments BBQ** - It was **resolved** to hold the Allotments BBQ on the suggested date of Friday 19th July 2024 (weather permitting).
- vi. **Future operational works to the site entrances and extension to the Accessible Allotment plots** – It was **resolved** to accept quote from JM Tree Services for £1,565+VAT to undertake the works to block up the second entrance at Braysdown Allotments.
As there are currently vacant accessible beds and no waiting list, it was considered prudent to delay any works to extend the accessible allotment plots. However, as the two lower-level accessible beds are now vacant, it is good timing to raise the sides of the beds to the same level as the others. It was noted this could be actioned as operational works (if within budget and sign-off levels) and so quotations to be obtained and the Committee be kept updated accordingly.

F&A089 – 30/04/2024 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received an update on banking arrangements and made any associated decisions as follows:

- **Bank mandates and progress on signatories.**
 - It was reported that Cllrs John Ogilvie-Davidson and Daniel Walker had now been removed as signatories from the Nat West bank accounts but their removal from the Unity Trust bank accounts was still pending. The Clerk required a third signatory to complete the paperwork so it could be submitted. Cllr Jonathan Rich to complete this directly after the meeting.
 - It was noted that from May, under the new Standing Committee structure, the bank signatories would be members of the new Finance & Governance Committee. The Clerk to ensure the Financial Regulations are amended accordingly.
- **Bank charges and fees** – It was acknowledged that the interest rate on the Nat West 95-Day notice account would reduce from 4.25% AER to 3.75% AER from 15th July 2024.
- **Monthly payroll and set up of associated direct debit** - The new payroll provider, DCK, has undertaken the processing of the staff salaries, pensions and HMRC submissions since October 2023. They are currently paid via Standing Order which means the account must be reviewed at the end of every quarter to balance out any overpayment. However, they are now able to take payment via direct debit and have asked if the Parish Council would like to amend their payment method, so the correct amount is deducted from the bank account each month. DCK Payroll have a limit set on their direct debit initially so will have to take several payments against one invoice, but the limit will increase in due course once they are established. This was discussed and it was **resolved** that the staff salaries and associated payments to DCK Payroll are paid by variable direct debit going forward in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

F&A090 – 30/04/2024 Internal & External Audits

Councillors received an update on both the Internal and External Audits for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Internal Audit is scheduled to take place on Friday 24th May 2024. Cllr Larcombe to advise the Clerk whether he will be attending and if so, at what time. It was noted that some of the recommendations raised at the last Internal Audit visit still require to be completed. The Clerk to ensure these are actioned over the next couple of weeks.

Pre-reading provided details from the External Auditor, BDO LLP, as to what information is required to be submitted to them and by what dates. The information from BDO also reminded of the requirement to annually review and minute the appointment of the External Auditor and detail any conflict of interests this may arise with councillors. The Clerk to ensure this is included on the Annual Full Council meeting agenda for May.

F&A091 – 30/04/2024 Review of Current Finances 2023/24

A balance sheet; a breakdown of the reserves and committed expenditure; a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2023/24 financial year including a full breakdown of the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget had been published to councillors for information. The following points were raised:

- As there were still purchase invoices to be received for waste collection undertaken earlier in the financial year, it was **resolved** to set up an accrual of £1,162.80 for the '605003 - Cemetery Waste Disposal' budget for the coming year.
- It was noted there were invoices totalling £8,875+VAT for tree works on Persimmon land for which credits were due as the cost had been paid directly by Persimmon. It was suggested to leave them on the system for the time being and for the Clerk to continue to keep chasing up credit notes for them.
- However, as these invoices impacted on the VAT claim, it was **resolved** to instruct the Clerk to submit the VAT claim for quarters 3 and 4 of the 2023/24 financial year, less the VAT relating to these invoices, so the actual claim will total £10,742.42.
- It was noted that the end of financial year net surplus was on target to be significantly more than anticipated, however, it was noted that the income was approximately £13,000 over budget and staff costs were approximately £6,000 under budget due to an ongoing staff absence.
- It was noted that some payments (that had not previously been authorised/paid) were ratified in advance at the last Full Council meeting.

Cllr Larcombe explained that he and Cllr Davis had undertaken a full bank reconciliation with the Clerk on 24th April 2024. The bank reconciliation report with balance details and both reconciled and unreconciled entries reviewed can be found as appendix F&A091i. Eleven checks had been undertaken on all the bank accounts, including closure of the old bank accounts. The following queries were raised:

- It was noted that a recent staff absence, due to sickness, had not been recorded on the individual's payslip (the sickness absence was within the full pay limits and so the payroll provider had not been informed). It was **resolved** that the payroll provider should be informed of any sickness absences during April and all future occurrences, so that any staff absence due to sickness can be recorded on their payslip. It was further **resolved** to raise with the Personnel Committee the fact that, although sickness absence was informally recorded, there was no official system being used to record/monitor staff sickness.
- It was noted that all petty cash receipts were present, and everything was in order. However, Cllr Jo Davis explained that due to a timing issue with the current system, there was a discrepancy between the amount showing on the spreadsheet and the cash in the petty cash box (the system included the date detailed on the cheque and not the date it was actually cashed). It was **resolved** to amend the petty cash process so that the spreadsheet shows the true cash balance at all times, and that staff/councillors should, where possible, avoid the practice of using their own money and getting reimbursed from petty cash at a later date.
- It was noted that one recent payment was for an (entry-level) Apple iPad, which had been issued to a councillor in place of a laptop. It was suggested that care needs to be taken to ensure that the correct process is followed when councillors return any Apple equipment, because Apple products cannot be reset by anyone other than the account holder. The Acceptable Usage Policy to be updated to reflect this. Following discussion, it was **resolved** to put forward a recommendation to the next Full Council meeting that each councillor can be offered an iPad or laptop according to their personal preference and in line with the updated Acceptable Usage Policy, noting that those councillors who already have a laptop can be offered an entry level iPad as an alternative to the laptop if preferred.

F&A092 – 30/04/2024 Review of Debtors and Creditors

The report on the financial debtors and creditors was tabled and reviewed at the meeting. It was noted that overpayment on the payroll provider account requires to be balanced prior to the setting of the direct debit. There were no debtors or creditors listed that raised any significant concerns.

F&A093 – 30/04/2024 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

No further Community Infrastructure Levy payments had been received. However, funding of £4,477.00 from the Active Way project for the Parish Map and Signage Project (Peasedown Heritage Trail) had been received. Furthermore, in May, the first instalment of £9,500 is due to be received from the total £36,893.00 grant awarded from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority Rural England Prosperity Fund Community Grant for funding of the rooftop solar PV panels and roof insulation at Beacon Hall.

F&A094 – 30/04/2024 Budget & Income/Expenditure for 2024/25

A report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2024/25 financial year had been published to councillors for information. The following points were raised:

- No budget had been applied to the '604005 – Contracted Amenities Works' however due to having to use external contractors to cover due to staff absence, expenditure for this nominal code will have to remain fluid between the '501003 – Caretakers Salaries' budget.
- The final invoice for the pathway works at the Cemetery had been received and was included under the projects budget funded from ear marked reserves.
- It was queried as to which new Standing Committee should cover the '602900 - Infrequent Operational Expenditure' budget, and it was recommended this be allocated to the Finance & Governance Committee with the other Standing Committees requesting funds as required. The matter would be discussed at the next Council Structure Review Advisory Panel meeting; the Clerk and Cllr Kidd had already briefly reviewed this; the Clerk to include a report on the nominal budget codes in the relevant folder in Teams for this meeting.

F&A095 – 30/04/2024 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

The notes from the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting held on 12th March 2024 had been circulated as pre-reading. Councillors considered the recommendations and made associated decisions as follows:

- i. **Delegate microphones** – The Clerk had checked the existing amplifier and confirmed there were three microphone outputs currently not in use. Consideration was given a suggested interim solution of obtaining three additional wireless microphones to use with the existing two microphones. It was felt this would provide an interim solution until the cork spray insulation has been installed on the ceiling of the hall so as to establish what difference this may make to the acoustics.
It was **resolved** to purchase three new wireless microphones to link to the existing amplifier for use at Council meetings. It was raised that councillors need to be encouraged to use them and for the matter to be reviewed again in due course.
- ii. **Community Grants** – Four applications had been received to date the community grants scheme for 2024/25. The Clerk advised these will be scanned, redacted and uploaded to Teams so councillors can start to review them prior to their formal consideration at the first Finance & Governance Committee meeting. Any queries on the applications should be raised to the Clerk in order to obtain answers prior to this meeting.
- iii. **Outstanding Actions** – It was **resolved** that the remaining outstanding actions raised at the Advisory Panel meeting on 12th March 2024 will be added to Planner by the Clerk by Friday 3rd May 2024.

F&A096 – 30/04/2024 Beacon Hall & Field

Councillors received an update with a view to making associated decisions on Beacon Hall bookings, requests from hirers and any works required, including giving consideration to replacement lighting in the main hall.

Following an investigatory visit to the hall by Cllr Jo Davis and her electrician husband, it was suggested to use a company called Dextra Lighting who would carry out a lighting survey of Beacon Hall free of charge. Cllr Conor Ogilvie-Davidson advised he had a contact within Dextra and so would ask them to contact the Clerk to contact them to arrange this, and to provide additional information such as the dimensions of the hall.

It was noted that PHS had just installed three new hand dryers in the toilets at Beacon Hall. New mats had also been ordered and would arrive shortly.

F&A097 – 30/04/2024 Asset Register & Risk Register

Councillors received an update on the Asset Register and the Risk Register including software options available from Scribe Accounts.

The verification of the existing asset register would take place over the coming weeks. Cllr Kathy Thomas offered to check assets in Bath Road, Ashgrove and Carlingcott and Cllr Howard Hartley the assets at Ashgrove Cemetery. Other areas would be checked by staff in the Parish Office.

9:23pm - Cllr Jo Davis left the meeting.

The Clerk explained that Scribe Accounts were offering a free trial of their new asset management software, Civicy, to the first 100 councils to sign up. It was **resolved** for the Parish Office to try Civicy software for a year (free of charge), and for Cllr Kathy Thomas and other councillors to work with the staff to ensure that there is a functioning system for recording and registering Parish Council assets going forward.

F&A098 – 30/04/2024 Sponsorship of Floral Display on Roundabout

Councillors received an update on a request to sponsor the roundabout on the A367 and reviewed associated draft documents.

It was noted that the offer had come via B&NES Council, who had received a request to sponsor the roundabout from a business based at Bath Business Park. A holding email had been sent to advise the company that their request had been received and was being considered by councillors.

Some suggested sponsorship fees had been included in pre-reading, based on the actual costs of planting and maintaining the roundabout.

After some discussion, it was **resolved** to offer sponsorship of the whole roundabout for a fee of £1,000 per annum. An email to be sent to the business in question advising them of this amount and recommending next steps.

F&A099 – 30/04/2024 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The next meeting of the next Finance & Amenities Committee is to be determined. This likely being the last Finance & Amenities Committee meeting, due to a proposed forthcoming Standing Committee restructure, Cllr Larcombe thanked everyone for their efforts over the past year.

The meeting closed at 9.32pm

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

Appendix F&A091i – Quarter 4 bank reconciliation report for year ending 31st March 2024 accounts.

A/C	Name	Balance	Frequency	Actioned	Checked By
1200	Unity Trust Current Account	£19,621.31	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1200	Unity Trust Current Account - Unreconciled	£1,691.55	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1210	Unity Trust Deposit Account	£76,356.37	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1210	Unity Trust Deposit Account - Unreconciled	£150,000.00	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1220	Nat West 95-Day Notice Account	£80,813.92	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1220	Nat West 95-Day Notice Account - Unreconciled	£0.00	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1225	Nat West Current Account	£7,843.90	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1225	Nat West Current Account - Unreconciled	£249.18	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1230	Petty Cash - Total of receipts	£249.18	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1230	Petty Cash - Cash remining in tin	£0.82	Quarterly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1240	SumUp Card Machine - Paid to Current Accnt - Jan 24	£336.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1240	SumUp Card Machine - Fees Paid on Above	£5.66	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1240	SumUp Card Machine - Paid to Current Accnt - Feb 24	£70.50	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1240	SumUp Card Machine - Fees Paid on Above	£1.19	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1240	SumUp Card Machine - Unreconciled	£0.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Jan 24	-£2,632.47	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Payment	£2,632.47	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Feb 24	-£442.78	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Payment	£442.78	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Mar 24	-£1,265.19	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Lloyds Corporate - Payment	£1,265.19	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
1250	Credit Card - Unreconciled	£3.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
N/A	Payroll - January 2024	£13,389.87	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
N/A	Payroll - February 2024	£11,987.55	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
N/A	Payroll - March 2024	£10,832.54	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL, JD & TW
N/A	VAT Claims - Submitted	£0.00	6-Monthly	N/A	N/A
N/A	VAT Claims - Received	£0.00	6-Monthly	N/A	N/A
N/A	Allotment Fee Payments vs. Allotment Plots	N/A	Annually	N/A	N/A

Also:

A/C	Name	Balance	Frequency	Actioned	Checked By
N/A	Nat West - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Dec 23	£4,604.01	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Nat West - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Unreconciled	£0.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Jan 24	£5,469.01	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Unreconciled	£0.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Feb 24	£5,394.01	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Unreconciled	£0.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Mar 24	£3,041.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW
N/A	Unity Trust Bank - Recreation Ground Trust Account - Unreconciled	£0.00	Monthly	24/04/2024	AL & TW