



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 18th June 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; Kathy Thomas; Daniel Walker.

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

There were not any members of the public present at the meeting.

F&G001 – 18/06/2024 Attendance Roll Call and Declarations of Interest

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

Cllr Kathy Thomas advised she was a member of the WI, who had submitted a grant application. It was noted this was not a pecuniary matter but raised merely for transparency.

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

F&G002 – 18/06/2024 Apologies for Absence

There were not any apologies for absence.

F&G003 – 18/06/2024 Election of Vice-Chair

One nomination for the position of Vice-Chair had been received and so it was resolved to elect Cllr. Jo Davis as the Vice-Chair of the Finance & Governance Committee.

7.06pm – Cllr Jonathan Rich arrived at the meeting.

F&G004 – 18/06/2024 Minutes & Actions

This being the first meeting of the newly appointed Finance & Governance Committee there were no previous minutes for review.

However, any outstanding actions from the past Standing Committees that now come under the Finance & Governance Committee Terms of Reference and Delegations were reviewed. One outstanding task on the Actions Register Planner board related to the insurance claim for business continuity. It was **resolved** to instruct the Clerk to find out whether the claim has been settled and to report back by the next Committee meeting of this committee.

F&G005 – 18/06/2024 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&G006 – 18/06/2024 Community Grants

Redacted copies of all the Community Grant applications received by the Parish Office had been circulated as pre-reading. Cllr. Andy Larcombe reminded the Committee that a budget of £4,000 had been allocated for Community Grants for the 2024/25 financial year.

The councillors considered all the grant applications individually and after lengthy discussion selected those, they felt should be awarded a grant along with outlines for any terms and conditions to be applied. It was **resolved** that £3,221.60 of Community Grants are awarded, subject to various conditions as detailed on appendix F&G006i. The clerk to inform all applicants accordingly by Friday 28th June 2024.

Councillors also discussed the feedback from the 2023/24 grant receivers. It was noted that the Mini Police would be returning their grant of £181.00 towards travel costs for a trip to the Police horse and dog section in Clevedon, as unfortunately the trip had to be cancelled. It was considered that this money, along with the £677.78 remaining budget from the 2023/24 financial year be rolled forward to the 2024/25 financial year.

It was therefore **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the remaining budget balance of £778.40 be topped up to a balance of £1,500 to be used for additional grant applications to be considered throughout the rest of the year. The closing dates for which to be in line with future meetings of the Finance & Governance Committee.

It was reported that the Peasedown youth worker based at The Hive had provided a video update on open access youth sessions. The Clerk to circulate the weblink for councillors to view in their own time.

F&G007 – 18/06/2024 Finance & Governance Advisory Panel

It was **resolved** to appoint a Finance & Governance Advisory Panel to investigate specific projects/matters and make recommendations in line with the agreed Terms of Reference.

F&G008 – 18/06/2024 F&G Committee Related Policies & Procedures

A copy of the new NALC Model Financial Regulations had been circulated as pre-reading. It was noted there were significant differences in this new version to the previous version. As the document was too large to review at a committee meeting it was considered more appropriate to undertake this task at an Advisory Panel meeting. It was **resolved** that the Financial Regulations are reviewed at an Advisory Panel meeting to be held on Tuesday 16th July 2024 at 7pm at Beacon Hall. The Clerk to ensure a full list of policies, as detailed on the Strategic Documentation Register, and that have been allocated to the Finance & Governance Committee is also available for this meeting, so as to make plans for the review of each policy throughout the forthcoming council year.

F&G009 – 18/06/2024 Risk Register

It was noted that the Clerk and Cllr Howard Hartley were currently updating the Risk Register and the sections of the document associated with the delegations for the Finance & Governance Committee would be brought back to a future meeting for further review and comment.

F&G010 – 18/06/2024 Insurance Cover & Policy Renewal

Councillors were reminded that the insurance cover renewal is due on 1st October 2024, and it will be the third year of a three-year term agreement. It was therefore noted that three quotations for insurance cover must be obtained in sufficient time for them to be properly considered prior to the renewal date of 1st October 2025. The current broker should not be relied upon for obtaining these, but other options should be fully investigated, although it was noted that many insurance providers are no longer willing to cover parish councils. It was reported that this task will fall with the newly appointed RFO and should be actioned by June 2025.

Following discussions at the May Full Council meeting, the evidence of the correct year of the vehicle insurance cover had been provided and was duly acknowledged at the meeting.

F&G011 – 18/06/2024 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received an update on banking arrangements, signatories and bank mandates, banking charges and fees.

It was noted that Cllrs Jo Davis, Simon Kidd, Andy Larcombe, Conor Ogilvie-Davidson, and Jonathan Rich were able to remain as signatories, having previously all served on the Finance & Amenities Committee.

Cllrs John Ogilvie-Davidson and Daniel Walker both wanted to remain as they were and not be signatories. Cllr Kathy Thomas agreed to become a signatory.

It was therefore **resolved** to add Cllr Kathy Thomas as a signatory to all the bank accounts [Parish Council and Trustee accounts] to remain consistent with all the other signatories and bank mandates.

It was reported that the interest rate on the Nat West Bank 95-day notice account has recently reduced by 0.25%

F&G012 – 18/06/2024 Review of End of Year Finances 2023/24

The draft end of financial year reports on income and expenditure against budgets for the 2023/24 financial year had been circulated as pre-reading in preparation for their presentation for sign off by Full Council. The following points were raised:

- It was noted that the end of financial year net surplus was significantly more than anticipated, at approximately £46,000. It was noted this was generated by approximately £13,000 more income than budgeted, staff costs being approximately £6,000 under budget due to an ongoing staff absence, and a significant underspend, of approx. £13,000 in the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget. This surplus has been moved to General Reserve now the accounts for the year have been closed down.
- The income from bank interest was substantially more than the previous year and expected budget.
- The electricity costs generated by the streetlights is significantly lower than in previous years, which demonstrates having the lights updated to LEDs will provide good value for money for residents in the long run.
- There was no budget allocated to the Persimmon land transfer costs, which had an expenditure of approximately £10,000. This will be offset once the funds have been transferred from Persimmon Homes on completion of the transfer.
- The play equipment maintenance budget for Beacon Field had overspent. It was acknowledged that as the equipment is getting older, it would be prudent to start considering setting up an ear marked reserve to build up over some years in order to prepare for the replacement of it in due course.
- It was agreed to recommend to Full Council, the end of year accounts is a true reflection and ready for sign off.

F&G013 – 18/06/2024 Internal & External Audits

The end of the 2023/24 financial year Internal Audit report had been circulated as pre-reading. This was reviewed by councillors and discussed at the meeting. It was generally felt that the report was very positive and much improved on the report from last financial year. Cllr Larcombe explained the report and provided further details on the changes made to the quarterly bank reconciliations in order to make the process more robust and transparent. He also advised that the quarterly reconciliation report now being presented to Full Council will be revised so it looks similar to the end of year bank reconciliation report.

Cllr Jonathan Rich requested it be minuted that Cllr Jo Davis, Cllr Andy Larcombe, and the Clerk are thanked for their work involved in making improvements to the processes and the bank reconciliations in order to obtain such a glowing report.

It was **resolved** that the recommendations suggested by the Internal Auditor should be formally adopted, they are:

- To amend the report to Full Council summarising the quarterly bank reconciliations undertaken by councillors and the RFO, to ensure the overall cash position is easy for councillors to read.
- To set up a standing order making a minimum quarterly payment to the Nat West Current Account to trigger a statement being produced on this account for reconciliation purposes.

The Internal Audit report will also be presented to the Full Council meeting in June as part of the end of financial year reports and practices as required for the External Audit.

F&G014 – 18/06/2024 Review of Current Finances 2024/25

A balance sheet; a breakdown of the reserves and committed expenditure; a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2024/25 financial year including a full breakdown of the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget had been published to councillors for information. The following points were raised:

- No budget had been applied to the '604005 – Contracted Amenities Works'. Cllr Thomas requested clarification on whether this will remain as is, or if budget will be moved from the '501003 – Caretakers Salaries' budget, as the Facilities & Amenities Committee require some indication of budget to avoid an

ongoing overspend. It was suggested to continue as is at present, but to regularly monitor the expenditure and balances.

- It was suggested that the best approach in this case would be to keep making the payments for contracted amenities works, but to regularly monitor the expenditure. It should be acceptable to spend the underspend equivalent to the caretakers' salary each month on contracted amenities works. The exact figures would be calculated by the Clerk so that they can be used as a guide.
- A suggested solution was to transfer money from the Staffing budget to the Facilities & Amenities budget, to cover these contracted works. It was anticipated that the overspend would be more than the caretakers' salaries, and the situation would need to be monitored going forwards.
- Cllr Larcombe advised he would raise the matter at the next Full Council meeting as any virements must be agreed by Full Council.
- It was noted that the '605001 – Cemetery Rates' budget will underspend and that the '607002 – Beacon Hall Business Rates' budget will overspend.
- It was also noted that the '607015 – Beacon Hall PHS Contract' budget will overspend, due to the additional contract for the branded floor mats, which was not in place when the budget was set.
- It was noted that the '605003 – Cemetery Waste Disposal' budget has an accrual allocated for works undertaken during the previous financial year, which have not yet been invoiced.
- The Finance & Governance Committee agreed to support the request from the Amenities & Facilities Committee to recommend to Full Council that £3,000 is deducted from the Infrequent Operational Expenditure budget for a tree survey on Parish Council owned and maintained land.

F&G015 – 18/06/2024 Review of Debtors and Creditors

The report on the financial debtors and creditors was tabled and reviewed at the meeting. It was noted that one hirer was late paying two invoices, however, this was being investigated and although an invoice had been raised, the booking was not until later in the year.

It was noted that overpayment on the payroll provider account will be offset against the next salary payments and the remaining balance will be paid. There were no debtors or creditors listed that raised any significant concerns.

F&G016 – 18/06/2024 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

To receive update on Community Infrastructure Levy and other external income and expenditure. There had not been any Community Infrastructure Levy payments received. However, funding of £9,500.00 had been received, which was the first instalment of the £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&G017 – 18/06/2024 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The next meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee Advisory Panel is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 16th July 2024 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall.

The next meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 6th August 2024 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.29pm

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

Appendix F&G006i – Summary of Community Grant applications and associated decisions

Project Name	Organisation	Funding to be Used For	Number of Peasedown Residents to benefit	Total cost of project	Value of grant applied for	Percentage of application vs. total cost	How much already raised	Comment
Village Firework Display	Peasedown St. John Cricket Club	For firework display November 2024. The funding would be used to give all children at PSJ primary school a free pass to attend. Also, to help keep prices down to benefit all those who attend.	Approx. 600 PSJ school children and their families	£2,500	£1,000	40%	£1,500	To award £1,000 on the condition a free ticket is issued to all the children of Peasedown St. John Primary School.
Peasedown St John Family Play Day	Bath Area Play Project	The funding will be used to go towards the cost of running a free family play day on Beacon Field on 24th July 2024. This will provide a range of play opportunities facilitated by play workers for children, parents/carers to enjoy together including den building, water play, construction and creative play as well as lots of physical play including an inflatable.	Approx. 350 children and their parents/carers	£2,920	£1,000	34.2%	£1,919	To award £500
The MIND diet 4-week course	Appleton Nutrition	To run a MIND diet course in PSJ, free to participants (9 participants; 5 grant funded)	5	£1,700	£1,000	58.8%	£0	Not to award for this application. The funding amount in relation to the number of beneficiaries does not align with the objectives of the Community Grant Scheme, to ensure that allocated funds provide a maximum impact.

Project Name	Organisation	Funding to be Used For	Number of Peasedown Residents to benefit	Total cost of project	Value of grant applied for	Percentage of application vs. total cost	How much already raised	Comment
Forest School Family Activities (events)	Creative Roots Outdoor Learning	Family forest school session - 3 events anytime over summer holidays	15 adults & 15 children	£600	£500	83.3%	£100	Not to award for this application. Uncertainty about the requested funding amount in relation to the number of PSJ residents that would benefit. The application did not state that the activities would take place within the parish, nor did it give detail on if the activity were to take place outside of the parish, exactly how Peasedown St John residents would be involved. Did not provide sufficient information to evidence the project aligns with the objectives of the Community Grant Scheme.
Great Western Air Ambulance Charity's Mission Costs in Peasedown St John	Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC)	If awarded, the grant will help pay for one potentially lifesaving mission in Peasedown St John. Each call-out in our community costs roughly £2,000, which covers equipment, drugs, our clinical team, fuel costs, premises costs, and other support costs. This allows our Critical Care Team to bring the A&E department to anyone in our community on their worst day. It is this lifesaving care that we need your help to fund. Any amount awarded will be spent straight away on mission costs.	Anyone in PSJ	£2,000	£1,000	50.0%	Applied for other grant funding but not yet notified if successful	Not to award for this application. It was felt that supporting events or activities that fundraise for the charity, rather than directly giving taxpayer money to the charity itself, is a more effective use of resources.

Project Name	Organisation	Funding to be Used For	Number of Peasedown Residents to benefit	Total cost of project	Value of grant applied for	Percentage of application vs. total cost	How much already raised	Comment
Hillcrest Patient Participation Group Launch of Patient Forum	Hillcrest PPG	Awareness events at The Hive to create a crucial link between patients and the Hillcrest medical team as a channel for communication, collaboration and influence. Purchasing IT tools e.g. Survey Monkey to enable this for the year 2024/25 to start asap.	All those registered at Hillcrest Surgery	£540	£390	72.2%	None	Not to award for this application. SurveyMonkey offers free basic services, and it was not evident why additional funds are required for this tool. A more detailed explanation of the need for paid services, including specific features and how they will be utilized, would help the application. Also more detail on how the surgery intends to support the group.
PSJ Social Group	MHA Communities covering Mendip & B&NES	MHA Communities Mendip is a charity that supports local older people to live their later life well, our aim is to provide social opportunities, befriending, clubs, activities and outings to support people's wellbeing within their own communities and helps to prevent isolation and loneliness. People face many barriers to accessing our offer, for example financial constraints and transport, we aim to break down those barriers by subsidising costs through funding applications, as each community scheme raises their own funds for their area. Mendip scheme current offer extends to Wells, Midsomer Norton, Street and Peasedown St John and we have telephone befriending matches more widely across Mendip. Funding will be used for venue hire and subsidizing transport for our PSJ Social group members, at the Methodist Church.	30	£1,880	£960	51.1%	£920	Not to award for this application. The application stated funding was for venue hire and subsidising transport, however, as councillors were not familiar with the group, they were uncertain as to whether the transport was to collect residents and take them to the Methodist Church in the village, or to take them elsewhere. In addition, as to how regularly the group meets and details on attendance numbers of PSJ residents. Queries were raised about how the national organisation of the Methodist Homes Association links into this local group and the activities they provide. Nationally MHA has substantial funds but there was no clear definition as to whether these funds are accessible to this local branch/group or whether you are totally separately funded.

Project Name	Organisation	Funding to be Used For	Number of Peasedown Residents to benefit	Total cost of project	Value of grant applied for	Percentage of application vs. total cost	How much already raised	Comment
New flag bags and Guide flag and Union flag	1st PSJ Guides & 2nd PSJ Brownies	Purchase of new bags in which to keep the flags, poles and harness. Existing bags are held together with tape and string.	Members of Brownies/Guides and PSJ residents that attend Remembrance and other events in the village	£142	£142	100.0%	£0	To award £141.60
PSJ WI Winter Fayre - Sunday 3rd Nov 2024	Peasedown St John WI	Two adverts in the MNR Journal to promote the Winter Fayre which is held at Beacon Hall, the WI Poppy display and collecting tins for the RBL will be in the hall.	100+	£230	£80	34.8%	Hopefully £300 from table spaces at the event	To award £80
SJs Little Ones	SJs Little Ones @ SJs Group	Contributing to create creative opportunities for parents and their little ones at our groups, weekly craft activities throughout the year.	60+	£6,717	£200	3.0%	Those who attend pay a £2 contribution each session	Not to award for this application. Confusion surrounding the funding of the group. It is believed that the SJ's Little Ones is a group hosted/run by St John's Church and if St John's Church funds other events and activities within the village there was some uncertainty as to why the Church was unable to fund SJ's Little Ones directly and for the full amount. It may well be there is a valid explanation for this, but it was not clear in the application and hence the reason for the decision.
Avon & Somerset Mini Police	Avon & Somerset Police	Mini Police coach travel to the annual trip to Police dogs/horses in spring 2025.	20 children this year, and 20 children every year, ongoing	£500.00	£500.00	100.0%	£0	To award £500. This grant is subject to the £181 being refunded to the Parish Council, for the 2024 planned visit that did not take place.
Travel to Cheerleading Championships	Bath All Starz Cheerleading	To secure/pay for travel to a regional championship in the new season	70 - Taking 50+ children and coaching staff, parents. Help financially for all families involved.	£800	£600.00	75.0%	Funds will be raised closer to the event	To award £600

Project Name	Organisation	Funding to be Used For	Number of Peasedown Residents to benefit	Total cost of project	Value of grant applied for	Percentage of application vs. total cost	How much already raised	Comment
Allotment Holders' Barbeque	Braysdown Allotments Committee	To provide food for the BBQ an annual event held in July for all allotment holders, councillors and families. A great time to celebrate what we have grown and get to know each other better. A real community event.	50-60	£150	£100.00	66.7%	None	To award £100
Summer Holiday Club	Bath All Starz Cheerleading	To host summer holiday club in the school summer holidays. The grant for activities, craft materials, etc.	Max. 20 children. Plus, work experience for older girls. Parents of children that attend.	£300	£300	100.0%	Will be a fee to attend	To award £300

Application Total £7,771.60

Award Total £3,221.60