



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee held on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present: Councillors (Cllrs) Jo Davis; Simon Kidd; Andrew Larcombe (Chair); John Ogilvie-Davidson; Kathy Thomas; Daniel Walker, Conor Ogilvie-Davidson; Jonathan Rich.

In attendance: Joy Luxford, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Apologies: Cllr Simon Kidd

The meeting started at 19:08

Public Session – There were no members of the public attending. Helena Midgley was in attendance for the first 30 minutes to take film footage for the video to be presented at the Annual Village Meeting.

F&G046 – 21/01/2025 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&G047 – 21/01/2025 Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Simon Kidd was absent with apology. The apologies were duly noted and accepted.

F&G048 – 21/01/2025 Minutes & Actions

The minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee meeting held on 15th October 2024 and the Finance & Governance Advisory meeting held on 17th December 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 it was agreed that these would be signed by the Chair accordingly.

Councillors received a verbal update on the actions raised from the last meetings and it was confirmed that all actions had either been completed or were on the agenda for discussion within this meeting.

F&G049 – 21/01/2025 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&G050 – 21/01/2025 Utility Contracts

The RFO provided an update on the solar panel installation which was performed during w/c 13th January 2025 and set out next steps to allow for export of energy to the grid to offset utility charges and potential to provide an income stream. The work of Cllr Auld to complete this project was highly commended.

F&G051 – 21/01/2025 Website Arrangements

Cllrs received and discussed quotes for a website refresh and resolved to:

Action: Form a working group consisting of Cllr Davis, Cllr Ogilvie-Davidson, the RFO and Administration Officer to scope out a website update including a rebrand, data migration and obtain more detailed quotes before proceeding including one from Aubergine.

Action: Propose to ICT Vision that they continue web hosting for 6 months (with the option to extend for another 6 months) to allow the Parish Council time to make a decision on next steps for the website upgrade.

Action: Pay the 6-month invoice for ICT Vision for web maintenance and support.

F&G052 – 21/01/2025 Banking Arrangements

Cllrs received an update on banking arrangements, including signatories and bank mandates, banking charges and fees. It was confirmed that the Unity Trust bank and Natwest bank mandates are up-to-date and correct. It was noted that Natwest Online access has been granted for the RFO, Cllr Davis, Cllr Larcombe and Cllr Ogilvie-Davidson (still to be activated).

It was resolved to add Cllr Thomas, Cllr Rich and Tracey Edge to the Natwest bank online access and to authorise the RFO to transfer £220 from Natwest to Unity Trust Bank (in relation to a cheque paid in during January 2025).

Action: RFO to add Cllr Thomas, Cllr Rich and Tracey Edge to the Natwest bank online access.

Action: The RFO to understand what the admin access is for Unity Trust bank and add the RFO and Tracey Edge as necessary.

Action: RFO to investigate whether Natwest has applied the mandate rules to the online access and report back to the F&G committee.

F&G053 – 21/01/2025 Financial Regulations

In line with the financial regulations, Cllrs resolved that the RFO should act as deputy clerk in the case where the clerk is absent. They also formally noted that, in the absence of the Clerk, the RFO is given all of the financial powers of the Clerk, to ensure normal Parish Council business can continue as set out in the Financial Regulations.

It was also resolved to recommend the Financial Regulations to Full Council at the next meeting.

Action: It was agreed that the previously agreed action to review all policies and procedures can be paused and the action reviewed again in 6 months to determine optimal timings.

F&G054 – 21/01/2025 Internal & External Audits

Cllrs noted and accepted the Internal Audit report from November 2024 and reviewed the quote from Bridget Bowen for Internal Audit for the next three financial years ending 2027/28.

Cllrs resolved to appoint Bridget Bowen as Internal Auditor for an additional 3 years and to advise Full Council of the decision.

F&G055 – 21/01/2025 Review of Current Finances 2024/25

Cllrs considered the report on financial spend against budget for the 2024/25 financial year covering both operational and capital projects budgets [in full and committee allocation formats].

Cllrs noted that we were unlikely to meet the Beacon Hall income target and that the Amenities & Facilities Committee could discuss better ways of promoting Beacon Hall for hirers.

Cllrs discussed likely spend between now and the year end which will include costs for a Locum Clerk (as approved by the Staffing Committee), hedge work, school crossing patrol, the new General Maintenance Manager etc. Based on the assumptions known at this time, it is estimated that we will finish the year with approximately £100,000 to £105,000 surplus which would be rolled over to general funds in FY2025/26.

Cllrs resolved to order and pay for the Tree Survey from Wildwood Tree Surgeons out of Infrequent Operational Expenditure as recommended by the Amenities and Facilities Committee up to £4,000 (quote is £2,250 + VAT).

Reports reviewed by Cllrs included:

- Review of 'Contracted Amenities Works' and Staff Salaries budgets.
- Review of 'Infrequent Operational Expenditure.'
- Review of Persimmon land transfer income and expenditure.
- Review of the Balance Sheet for bank account balances, credit card and petty cash.
- Review of the Reserves, Ear Marked Reserves and Committed Expenditure.

It was noted that an updated VAT claim was likely to be submitted at end of January to cover the additional VAT paid by the insulation and solar panel project. Cllrs also noted that the quarterly bank reconciliations had been reviewed by Cllr Larcombe on 21st January 2025.

Action: In relation to the school crossing patrol, the RFO should make B&NES aware that if the person changes the Parish Council would like the option to consult on the role and covering costs before they re-appoint to the position.

F&G056 – 21/01/2025 Review of Debtors and Creditors

Cllrs reviewed the financial debtors and creditors reports (reports tabled at the meeting).

Action: It was noted that further work was needed by the RFO to investigate older balances in light of recent activity and this was to be reported back to the F&G Committee in due course.

F&G057 – 21/01/2025 Community Infrastructure Levy and External Funding

Cllrs received an update on WECA Grant funding and resolved to accept the additional grant money negotiated by the RFO, bringing the total grant to £37,721.33 – an increase on the original amount to cover additional costs not in the original proposal. **It was resolved to delegate the RFO to sign the grant award letter on behalf of the Council. It was also resolved to move the additional costs for legal and surveyor fees from Infrequent Operational Expenditure to Capital Projects – Solar Panels.**

Cllrs noted the additional £750 that was to be received from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

F&G058 – 21/01/2025 Budget Planning 2025/26

Cllrs reviewed budget planning for the 2025/26 financial year, in light of the budget review advisory panel meeting on 17th December 2024 and made plans for the budget discussion and decision making at Full Council on 28th January 2025.

It was resolved to recommend to Full Council a zero based budget with an precept of £362,271 which would result in an increase of £0.87 per month for an average Band D property (based on a tax base of 2168.25. This would allow for more investment in youth services, improvements in Beacon Hall and pathway improvements to Beacon Fields. It was also noted that additional contingency (£90,600) would be needed to meet the requirement of a quarter of precept being held in a contingency fund.

Alongside the possibility of investing in LUX youth services at the Hive, there is also the possibility of funding the Youth Council which aims to be representative of the wider Peasedown St John Community. It was noted the need to manage messaging around funding for this alongside B&NES Cllrs.

F&G059 – 21/01/2025 F&G Committee Related Policies & Procedures

Cllrs reviewed progress on the policies review schedule and resolved to adopt the updated Investment Strategy Policy as provided in the pre-read. As mentioned above, it was agreed that the previously agreed action to review all policies and procedures can be paused and the action reviewed again in 6 months to determine optimal timings.

F&G060 – 21/01/2025 Laptop and Ipad Purchases

Cllrs reviewed progress on the laptop and ipad purchases for Cllrs. **It was resolved to purchase 4 x ipads for Cllrs Thomas, Davis, J Ogilvie-Davidson, C Ogilvie-Davidson and 1 x laptop for Cllr Walker.**

F&G061 – 21/01/2025 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

It was noted that the next meeting of the next Finance & Governance Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall.

Meeting finished – 21:18

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