



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 7th January 2020 at 7.00pm at Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John

Present:

Councillors: Jo Davis (Vice-Chair), Gavin Heathcote; Simon Kidd, Andrew Larcombe (Chair); Conor Ogilvie-Davidson; Claire Parfitt.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk.

Public Session

Two members of the public were present at the meeting.

The first expressed his concerns regarding the number of football teams now playing on the pitch at the Recreation Ground and the damage this is doing to the pitch being unsustainable. The resident had provided some photographs of the pitch evidencing some of the issues.

The second raised issues around overgrown hedges on Keels Hill/Hillside View/Firgrove Lane and asked if the Council could assist with getting them cut back, furthermore, he wished to listen to the budget discussions. The Clerk advised that she believed the overgrown hedges had already been reported to B&NES Council to follow up as a highways issue and would follow up on a response.

F&A040 – 07/01/2020 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jonathan Rich due to work commitments and Cllr Kathy Thomas due to personal commitments. These apologies were duly noted.

F&A041 – 07/01/2020 Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Claire Parfitt confirmed that she has a dispensation regarding Braysdown Allotments, which means she can be involved with the discussions under item F&A056-07/01/2020.

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

F&A042 – 07/01/2020 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 8th October 2019 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was **resolved**, subject to the dates in some of the minute references being corrected to '08/10/2019', that they be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.
- ii. The Chair reported that he had spent time with the Clerk reviewing the outstanding actions from previous meetings and updating Planner. Most of the remaining outstanding items will be worked on for their discussion at the next Advisory Panel meeting due to be held in February.

F&A043 – 07/01/2020 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&A044 – 07/01/2020 Review of Current Finances 2019/20

A Balance Sheet; a breakdown of the Reserves and a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2019/20 financial year had been circulated to all Councillors as pre-reading for the meeting.

The documents were reviewed and discussed, and the following points were raised:

- i. The balance sheet shows the General Reserve as being approximately £17,000.
- ii. The Caretakers were in the process of buying new Personal Protective Equipment which would be deducted from the '502001 – Staff Expenses H&S Clothing' budget.
- iii. Staff Salaries are only for two quarters; the breakdown of charges for the third quarter is yet to be received from the payroll provider so the charges cannot get be input onto Sage.
- iv. It was noted that the budget '502017 – IT Software & Hardware' will now not all be spent within the current financial year, as previously the Microsoft licence subscription had been paid annually but going forward would be paid monthly.

It was **resolved** to accept the accounts presented as a true reflection of the Council's finances.

F&A045 – 07/01/2020 Review of Committed Expenditure and Ear Marked Reserves

Councillors reviewed the report of the Committed Expenditure and the Ear Marked Reserves for the projects and non-operational activities either being actioned during the current year or planned for the future.

F&A046 – 07/01/2020 Review of Debtors and Creditors

A report of the financial debtors and creditors was tabled and reviewed at the meeting.

It was resolved for the Clerk to go ahead and pay the invoice for the repairs to the boilers at Beacon Hall.

The invoice for £544.97+VAT being above the Clerk's sign-off limit.

It was resolved for the Clerk to pay the invoice from Lightmain for £2,494.93+VAT, the 2.5% retention on the new MUGA and Recreation Ground play equipment project. The recent issues relating to the basket swing will be resolved as a separate matter arranged between the Caretakers, the Clerk and Lightmain.

The Clerk was requested to follow-up on the debtors that had outstanding invoices for regular hire of Beacon Hall and to report back to the Committee within 30 days.

F&A047 – 07/01/2020 CIL & Community Empowerment Fund

It was noted that, to date, no monies had been received from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) nor from the Community Empowerment Fund for the 2019-20 financial year.

F&A048 – 07/01/2020 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

The **Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel** had met on 3rd December 2019 to discuss the operational budget for 2020/21. This meeting was open to all members of the council to attend and the results from this meeting form the basis of the budget discussions under item F&A049 – 07/01/2020.

F&A049 – 07/01/2020 Budget Preparations for 2020/21

Councillors reviewed the planned operational budget for the 2020/21 financial year and noted the amendments made following the points raised at the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting in December. Further changes to the budget were agreed at the meeting as follows:

- 502004 – Telephone and Broadband – Reduce the budget from £1075 to £800
- 607007 – Beacon Hall Telephone and Broadband – Reduce the budget from £1100 to £800

Both reductions are as a result of a better deal being negotiated with the supplier. Based on this budget, it was **resolved** to proceed with revised 24-month contracts with BT to cover line rental, calls, broadband and a £5 per month mobile phone contract for both the Parish Council Office and Beacon Hall.

- 604001 – Floral Display – Increase the budget from £2600 to £2750 to allow for increased plants with the anticipation the mining carts floral planters being agreed as a project.

It was noted that the Tax Base had increased slightly from 2135.93 to 2143.16, which, if the monthly fee for the Parish Council element of the Council Tax remained the same, would generate an additional £956.

The suggested future project list was reviewed as this had been ranked by councillors in their order of importance at the Advisory Panel meeting. The total estimated cost of the projects that had already been investigated and costed came to a total of £46,500. However, it was noted that there are several longer-term projects that will also need to be funded, over several years, subject to a successful feasibility review being undertaken.

If the Precept was to remain the same as last year it was reported there would be approximately £37,000 surplus, which combined with approximately £17,000 in General Reserves would provide about £54,000 that could be spent on projects. A further £29,000 is held as Ear Marked Reserves for projects already being worked on.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the General and Ear Marked Reserves and how best to fund the long-term projects. It was noted that until projects are fully costed and agreed, and the budget is transferred to Committed Expenditure, any funds allocated as Ear Marked Reserves can be reallocated to other projects. However, the time spent investigating these projects also needs to be factored in when determining any reallocation of funds. It was generally felt that increasing the Precept steadily over several years to fund longer term projects was a better option than large increases in the Precept in one year or the reallocation of Ear Marked Reserves.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council to set the Precept at £251,452, an increase of 1.5% on the previous year, in line with the national rate of inflation. A recorded vote was taken as follows:

Councillor	For	Against	Abstain
Jo Davis	✓		
Gavin Heathcote		✓	
Simon Kidd	✓		
Andrew Larcombe	✓		
Conor Ogilvie-Davidson	✓		
Claire Parfitt	✓		

9.12pm – It was resolved to adjourn the meeting for a comfort break.

9.15pm – It was resolved to reconvene the meeting.

F&A050 – 07/01/2020 Avon Pension Fund

Pre-reading had included various documentation from Avon Pension Fund regarding the pension deficit actuarial valuation results. This was discussed at the meeting and it was resolved to pre-pay the deficit for the three-year period 2020 to 2023 to include the McCloud Impact for a total value of £11,948. It was noted that by selecting this pre-pay option it would save the Council £760.

F&A051 – 07/01/2020 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received an update on the bank signatories. Cllr. Claire Parfitt confirmed that she would not be progressing her access to online banking as it was unlikely she would continue serving on the Finance & Amenities Committee from May and it was therefore not considered worthwhile to spend time arranging this when there was already a sufficient number of councillors with online access to authorise payments. Cllr. Gavin Heathcote confirmed that he would arrange a mutually convenient time with the Clerk, prior to the next Full Council meeting, to complete his paperwork to become a signatory.

The bank fees and interest for the third quarter of the financial year were reported as follows:

- Processing charges £13.70
- Service charge £38.10
- Interest generated £147.03.

F&A052 – 07/01/2020 Internal Audit & External Audit

The report generated from the interim internal audit for the 2019/20 financial year had been circulated as pre-reading. Councillors reviewed the observations raised. The Clerk confirmed that the previously agreed amended Financial Regulations would be published on the Parish Council website by the end of the week and that she would liaise with the relevant Chairs regarding the outstanding minutes that had yet to be signed.

F&A053 – 07/01/2020 Community Grants

There are two organisations still to undertake a photograph and publicity for the receipt of their Community Grant. Since the last meeting Cllr. Audrey Gillard-Sprake has met with the Social and Wellbeing Group to receive feedback on how their grant had been spent.

The existing Community Grant and Village Event Terms and Conditions were reviewed, and it was **resolved** to continue with the same, but with the application deadline date set as 12 noon on Friday 3rd April 2020.

F&A054 – 07/01/2020 Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel

Pre-reading provided various documents relating to an historic lease between the Parish Council and Peasedown Athletic Football Club which had recently come to light being sent to the Parish Council from Peasedown Miners' Welfare Football Club along with correspondence from their solicitor about whether the document is legally binding. The solicitor had raised several questions to the Parish Council. The pre-reading had provided some initial draft responses to these questions but there was insufficient time to consider them fully. It was therefore **resolved** to instruct the members of the Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel to work with the Clerk to compose and send a letter to Peasedown Miners' Football Club, copying in their solicitor, and to arrange a meeting with Peasedown Miners' Football Club to discuss the matter further.

Due to time limitations the following items were not discussed:

- i. *inspections of the changing rooms and improvements to facilities;*
- ii. *update on keys and locks and donations from the football clubs for the 2019/20 season;*
- iii. *boot scraper;*
- iv. *check list for changing rooms;*
- v. *provision of water supply for cleaning of the white lining machine;*
- vi. *update on new and old goal posts including update on Football Foundation grant application;*
- vii. *request from Peasedown Miners' Welfare FC for an alternative option for a tea hut.*

F&A055 – 07/01/2020 Floral Displays

Councillors discussed the floral displays for summer 2020. It was noted that an order is required to be placed as soon as possible in order to secure the plants needed with enough time for them to be brought on prior to planting out in May. It was further noted that if the suggested Mining Cart planters are agreed, additional bedding plants will be required, at additional cost, but these will have to be ordered at a later date. It was **resolved** to purchase bedding plants from Meadow Farm Nurseries for a sum of up to £1,500+VAT for the summer 2020 floral displays.

F&A056 – 07/01/2020 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

Councillors received a report from the Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel and made associated decision as follows:

- i. The December allotment check is normally a follow-up of those plots that may potentially be re-allocated due to lack of work. Because there was only one in this category from the last inspection, 10D, and the plot-holder has given up the plot, it was agreed not to have a December allotment inspection.
- ii. The allotment rents were considered and because there was a fairly big increase last year it was **resolved** for the allotment rents for 2020 to remain at the following rates:
Full plot - £24, Half plot - £12, Third plot - £8, Quarter plot - £6.
- iii. A request had been received from a plot holder to be co-opted onto the Allotments Advisory Panel. There is no specified maximum number for the Advisory Panel in the Allotment Rules and there are currently 7 non-councillor members. It was **resolved** to co-opt Andrew Fraser as an additional member of the Allotments Advisory Panel.
- iv. The next inspection/Advisory Panel Meeting will take place in March 2020.

F&A057 – 07/01/2020 Review of New Actions

It was noted that new actions generated from the meeting were correctly captured on the Actions Register.

F&A058 – 07/01/2020 Date and Time of Next Meeting & Future Agenda Items

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 28th April 2020 at 7pm at Beacon Hall. The date of the next Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 7pm at Beacon Hall. No future agenda items were raised.

The meeting closed at 9.33pm

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