



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Thursday 30th April 2020 at 7.00pm **Held Remotely via MS Teams**

Present:

Councillors: Jo Davis (Vice-Chair), Gavin Heathcote; Simon Kidd, Andrew Larcombe (Chair); Conor Ogilvie-Davidson; Claire Parfitt
Cllr. Kathy Thomas and Cllr. Jonathan Rich were also present at the meeting, in their capacity as Chair and Vice-Chair of Full Council respectively providing them with full voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk.

Public Session

There was one member of the public present; they did not have any items to raise.

F&A059 – 30/04/2020 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&A060 – 30/04/2020 Apologies for Absence

With all members of the Committee present there were no apologies for absence.

F&A061 – 30/04/2020 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 7th January 2020 had been circulated in advance of the meeting; it was **resolved** that they be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.
- ii. The Chair signed the minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 7th January 2020 accordingly.
- iii. The Clerk provided updates on the outstanding actions from previous meetings and Planner was amended accordingly.

F&A062 – 30/04/2020 Items for Urgent Report

The Clerk reported issues with the mowing of Beacon Field. B&NES Council were due to proceed with the mowing contract this summer, but had advised that they could no longer undertake the works due to resource issues as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Clerk had consequently made temporary arrangements with another contractor for a one-off cut, but in the meantime B&NES Council had turned up unannounced and mowed the field. They had advised the Caretaker that they had under-priced their quotation and so would be unlikely to mow the field this year.
Concerns were raised by councillors about irregularity of mowing and that the Council could result in paying B&NES Council and another contractor for mowing in the same week.
The Clerk to contact B&NES Council for clarification on the situation and report back to the Committee so alternative plans can be made if necessary.

F&A063 – 30/04/2020 Community Grants

A summary document of all the Community Grant and Village Event applications received by the Parish Office had been circulated as pre-reading.

Cllr. Andy Larcombe reminded the Committee that a budget of £2,500 had been allocated for Village Events and £2,500 for Community Grants for the 2020/21 financial year. It was further noted that the Village Events budget was also required to cover costs for the Remembrance Event 2020; Commonwealth Day 2021; VE Day 75-yrs Anniversary 2020

The councillors considered all the grant applications individually and after lengthy discussion selected those they felt should be awarded a grant along with any outlines for any terms and conditions to be applied. It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council to accept the grant applications in full for the Village Fireworks; Bath Area Play Project; Peasedown Social and Wellbeing Group; Mini Police - Litter Picking Equipment; Scout Group – Giant Games & Activities; and 50% for Music for Miniatures and Southside Family Project. All of which totals £2,500.

The release of all grants is subject to receipt of the grant applicants confirmation that the events are going ahead and specifying a date. The money will be released once they advise accordingly.

It was considered that as there was money remaining in the budget and due to the lower number of applications there would likely be a second phase of grants later in the year.

During the above discussions:

7.59pm – It was resolved to adjourn the meeting to allow members to ‘Clap for the NHS & Key Workers and for Captain Tom Moore’s 100th Birthday’.

8.04pm – It was resolved to reconvene the meeting.

F&A064 – 30/04/2020 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. It was noted that the General Reserve was approximately £900, the Contingency Reserve remains at £65,000 and the Ear Marked Reserve is at approximately £58,000 allocated for various future projects.
- ii. The income is approximately £11,000 more than expected due to increased income from Beacon Hall and Ashgrove Cemetery. Also, because of the selling of some assets.
- iii. Staff salaries budget is approximately £16,000 underspent; this is due to the Caretakers salaries still to be negotiated when the budget was set, and the budget being calculated on the Clerk being qualified.
- iv. Professional Fees were expected to be greater as it was anticipated the Persimmon land transfer would be further progressed.
- v. The IT Software & Hardware budget was significantly underspent due to the MS365 licences now being paid monthly rather than a year in advance.
- vi. The School Crossing Patrol budget was underspent due to receiving a credit from the previous year when the position was still vacant.
- vii. The General Tree Works budget was more or less totally not spent. The value was originally allocated due to more tree works expected due to Ash die-back. The budget for 2020/21 has been reduced to £1,500, however, the tree works still need to be undertaken and so some of this budget is still required.

The Clerk is currently reviewing the tree surveys and will present a report to Council in due course.

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

It was **resolved** to recommend to Full Council that the operational budget of £5,000 for General Tree Works is carried forward to the 2020/21 financial year, along with the £1,500 existing operational budget for the 2020/21 financial year, so the overall new total is £6,500.

The remaining surplus from the end of the year will move to General Reserve to be reallocated in due course.

F&A065 – 30/04/2020 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&A066 – 30/04/2020 CIL & Community Empowerment Fund

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

F&A067 – 30/04/2020 Banking Arrangements

Councillors received an update on the bank signatories.

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

- Processing charges £14.00
- Service charge £42.00
- Interest generated £92.32.

It was noted that Unity Trust Bank have advised that with effect from 21st May 2020 the interest rate on savings would reduce to 0.00% due to the Bank of England reducing the Base Rate to 0.25% to support business and consumer confidence in response to the economic shock of Coronavirus pandemic.

F&A068 – 30/04/2020 Review of Debtors and Creditors

A report of the financial debtors and creditors was reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, with the Clerk, before the meeting [it was actioned as such to ensure confidentiality of business sensitive information which could not be actioned within a remote public meeting].

There was one debtor issue identified; which had subsequently been paid a few days later.

If councillors wish to have sight of the reports, they should contact the Clerk directly.

It was **resolved** to note the above and move on to the next agenda item.

F&A069 – 30/04/2020 Carrying Forward of Remaining Budget Balances

To consider recommendations regarding the carrying forward of specific budget balances from the 2019-20 to the 2020-21 financial years.

This item had already been covered within discussions under minute F&A064 – 30/04/2020.

F&A070 – 30/04/2020 Budget for 2020/21

Councillors received an update on the operational budget figures for the 2020/21 financial year.

The income for Beacon Hall was estimated to be £20,000 for the 2020/21 financial year and this income helped to form the basis of the precept demanded by the Parish Council.

Due to Coronavirus, Beacon Hall has seen a cessation in all but a couple of bookings. Those that remain provide required services to the community e.g. food parcels and blood donors.

As a consequence, the anticipated income is already reduced. The predicted loss of income for Beacon Hall for March 2020 equates to £1,022.50 and for April, May, June 2020 is £5,026.25. These figures are based on regular hirers and bookings already received; they do not account for any bookings that were likely to be received month on month, so the actual total amount is likely to be greater.

Unfortunately, the expenditure figures are not equally impacted. There has been a rebate on the business rates, and the utilities usage costs will be slightly less, but the bulk of expenditure will remain the same.

A claim for loss of income from the Government schemes was discussed and it was considered that it was taking taxpayers money to cover taxpayers money. Also, being a local government body, claims were currently not permitted [ALCA investigation pending].

Consequently, this reduction in income was noted and it was considered that these losses should be covered by the General Reserves.

It was noted that VAT claims need to be submitted more frequently and that the money from the claims need to be more appropriately budgeted/allocated throughout the year and not considered as a bonus at year end.

F&A071 – 30/04/2020 Ear Marked Reserves Accruals & Amendment to Operational Budget Planning

Councillors discussed items that could be included as Ear Marked Reserves funded on an accrual basis for works/activities which take place bi/tri annually etc.

The following operational budgets were identified as items for which expenditure significantly fluctuates year on year:

- 502013 – Professional Fees
- 502017 – IT Hardware (should be separated from IT Software)
- 502019 – Covid19 Related Matters
- 601006 – Death of a Snr National/Local Figure
- 602001 – New Machinery / Tools
- 602002 – Winter Support
- 604003 – General Tree Works
- 607009 – Beacon Hall Building Maintenance (the main hall floor should be separated out)

It was acknowledged that further operational budgets may also be included.

The Clerk to investigate into the expenditure on these items over the past few years to help determine how to budget for them in the future.

It was **resolved** that the Finance & Amenities Committee recommend to Full Council for moving irregular operational expenditure budget lines into a new fund [name to be determined]. To be established in time for the next round of budgeting for the 2021/22 financial year.

F&A072 – 30/04/2020 Internal Audit & External Audit

Pre-reading provided a summary for the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the changes to that process and dates due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It was noted that the AGAR must be submitted to the External Auditor by 31st July 2020 [rather than the usual 30th June deadline].

The Internal Audit had not yet been undertaken and measures were in place for this to be actioned remotely so may take longer than normal.

F&A073 – 30/04/2020 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

A report from the **Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel** meetings held on 11th February and 12th March 2020 had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and can be found as appendix F&A073i and F&A073ii. Any actions outstanding from these meetings will be added to the Actions Register on Planner.

F&A074 – 30/04/2020 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

A report from the **Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel** had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and can be found as appendix F&A074i.

The following points were agreed:

It was **resolved**, that in line with advice from the National Allotment Society, the quarterly plot inspections should be suspended until further notice so that social distancing measures can be adhered to, and out of consideration for plot-holders in the vulnerable category who may not be able to leave their homes to work their plot.

For those plot-holders who cannot currently work their plots due to being in the vulnerable category it was raised that others requiring additional space or those on the waiting list could perhaps help on a temporary basis. This was briefly discussed, but it was agreed that it should be down to the individual plot-holders to come to any such agreements.

With regards to the establishment of an Accessible Allotment Plot it was queried whether the toilet is Equality Act compliant. To be investigated by the Administration Officer and reported back.

F&A075 – 30/04/2020 Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel

A report from the **Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel** meeting held on 24th March 2020 had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and can be found as appendix F&A075i.

It was noted that the season has ended early due to Coronavirus, and so it was requested that the keys are returned from the teams as soon as possible and the deposits refunded accordingly. Also, that the end of season maintenance works are started.

A letter to the teams had been drafted by Cllr. Davis and reviewed by Cllr. Larcombe, it was due to be circulated to the members of the Advisory Panel for comment, but in order to prevent any further delays, it was **resolved** that the letter compiled off the back of the last Advisory Panel meeting, to inform the teams of

the new fee structure and User Agreement, should be sent out to each of the Football Teams at the earliest opportunity to enable as much time as possible to prepare for the forthcoming season.

F&A076 – 30/04/2020 Review of New Actions

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

F&A077 – 30/04/2020 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 7th July 2020 at 7pm, subject to the Calendar of Council Meetings being approved at the Full Council meeting on 12th May 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.39pm

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

DRAFT