



PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee held on Tuesday 5th January 2021 at 7.00pm **Held Remotely via MS Teams**

Present:

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

Cllr. Kathy Thomas was also present at the meeting, in her capacity as Chair of Full Council. As the Committee was quorate, she did not utilise her voting rights.

In attendance:

Tanya West – Parish Clerk.

Public Session

There were two members of the public present at the meeting; they did not have any matters they wished to raise.

F&A115 – 05/01/2021 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&A116 – 05/01/2021 Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Jonathan Rich had submitted his apologies for absence due to work commitments.

Cllr. Andrew Fraser was absent from the meeting, but had not been summonsed to attend, as he had only just been elected as a committee member at the Full Council meeting held immediately beforehand.

F&A117 – 05/01/2021 Minutes & Actions

- i. The minutes of the Finance & Amenities Committee meeting held on 13th October 2020 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was **resolved** they be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting.
- ii. It was noted that the Chair did not have printed copies of the minutes and so they would have to be signed after the meeting.
- iii. The Clerk provided updates on the outstanding actions from previous meetings and Planner was amended accordingly. Points of note were as follows:
 - a. To arrange for the Internal Auditor to attend an Advisory Panel meeting in the near future to cover the current financial year in the near future.
 - b. That a new action is created for appointing an Internal Auditor for the new financial year; quotations will need to be obtained.

F&A118 – 05/01/2021 Items for Urgent Report

There were no items for urgent report.

F&A119 – 05/01/2021 Review of Current Finances 2020/21

A Balance Sheet; a breakdown of the Reserves and a report on income and expenditure against budget for the 2020/21 financial year had been published to councillors for information.

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

- i. Beacon Hall income is going to be approximately £18,000 short in achieving the estimated budget for the current financial year.
- ii. There will continue to be some significant operational expenditure items over the next few months e.g., Staff/Councillor Training; IT Software & Hardware; Staff Wages.
- iii. The budget for Youth Work Provision has not yet been requested for the current financial year.
- iv. It was noted there is likely to be a significant budget underspend for the current financial year due to Coronavirus.

It was **resolved** to accept the accounts presented as a true reflection of the Council's finances for the year to date for the financial year ending 31st March 2021.

F&A120 – 05/01/2021 Review of Committed Expenditure and Ear Marked Reserves

Councillors reviewed the report of the Committed Expenditure and the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) for the projects and non-operational activities either being actioned during the current year or planned for the future. It was noted that the Committed Expenditure report generally reflects the Order of Known Business and considering the issues that all have faced this year the Council has done well to be more or less on track in actioning the Order of Known Business this year.

F&A121 – 05/01/2021 Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel

A report from the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting held on 8th December 2020 had been made available. This meeting was attended by ten councillors and a full review of the previous years' operational income and expenditure, along with the actual and budgets for the current year was undertaken. From this, it was noted that there were four main principles of budgeting being applied for the next financial year:

- a) Most of the operational budget lines are being kept the same as the previous year due to 2020 being such an unusual year. Only those items that were confident should be amended have been changed.
- b) An 'infrequent' operational expenditure line has been created to cover a group of expenditure items that are unlikely to be compatible with an annual budget.
- c) The project list was considered after the councillors had advised their preferences. The results tended to be a continuance of upgrading and enhancing our open spaces and key assets.
- d) It was not known whether the tax base will change either up or down, however, the Council requests a precept amount to cover the cost of the operational budget and projects rather than a calculation based on the tax base.

F&A122 – 05/01/2021 Budget Preparations for 2021/22

Councillors received an update on the Tax Base, reviewed the figures discussed at the Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting held in December and discussed responses to queries raised at this meeting along with any additional items to be included within the operational budget for the 2021/22 financial year.

To also consider suggestions for projects and items to be included for earmarked reserves to include audio-visual equipment for Beacon Hall. To determine any recommendations to Full Council for the setting of the precept and the process for presenting to Full Council at the meeting on 19th January 2021.

Cllr Larcombe presented a brief summary to the Committee on:

- a) Estimated income and the estimated operational expenditure for the 2021/22 financial year and the resulting favourable balance between the two.
- b) The proposed projects to be undertaken during 2021/22, in the order of the councillor appointed priorities, along with any ear marked reserves and estimated costs to complete.

The balance of item a) against the requirements of item b) was discussed and as a result, the following motion was raised to be voted on at the next Full Council meeting:

To resolve to set the Precept at £251,452 for the 2021/22 financial year, which is a freeze of the precept on the previous year.

Proposed by: Cllr Andy Larcombe

Seconded by: Cllr Gavin Heathcote

8.19pm – It was resolved to adjourn the meeting for a comfort break.

8.25pm – It was resolved to reconvene the meeting.

F&A123 – 05/01/2021 Internal Audit & External Audit

Councillors received the following updates in relation to the External Audit and the Interim Internal Audit.

- PKF Littlejohn had returned the External Audit report for the 2019/20 financial year. No matters of concern were raised.
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2019/20 financial year had subsequently been published, along with a Notice of Conclusion of Audit, on the Parish Council notice boards and website.
- PKF Littlejohn advised that they are expecting the AGAR submission dates for the 2020/21 financial year to revert back to those set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and that the instructions should be sent out in March 2021 but any changes arising from updates to the statutory requirements, will be notified in good time.
- The Interim Internal Audit for the 2020/21 financial year has not yet been completed. The report will be presented in due course.

F&A124 – 05/01/2021 Community Grants

Councillors received an update on the Community Grant and Village Event awards for 2020/21.

It was noted the second phase of grant applications as decided at the last meeting had not really progressed. There had been two further enquiries for community grants, however, due to lockdown restrictions it was felt it was more prudent not to award any additional grants during the current financial year but to roll over the remaining funds to the following financial year.

It was therefore **resolved** that any underspend of the Community Grants and Village Events budgets from the 2020-21 financial year is earmarked as a 'Community Covid Recovery Fund'. The details for which will be determined at a later date.

The Clerk was asked to write a press release about community grants and the Community Covid Recovery Fund but for it to be published closer to when the grant application window will open.

It was noted that the allocated budget for the VE-Day event that had to be postponed due to Coronavirus had already been agreed to be carried forward to the next financial year still being allocated to this event.

A brief update was provided on the Christmas hampers for the senior residents; it was noted that they were very well received, and several thank you letters, and cards had been received from the recipients.

F&A125 – 05/01/2021 Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel

Although they had not recently met, a report from the **Football Club Liaison Advisory Panel** had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and the following points were discussed:

- i. **inspections of the changing rooms and improvements to facilities.**
 - a. Upgrading of the external changing rooms doors was discussed. The doors are old and warp with the weather and require regular maintenance. If they were replaced with composite doors, they would require very little maintenance. It was therefore **resolved** to replace the existing wooden external doors with new composite doors, up to a value of £3,000+VAT to be taken from the wider Recreation Ground operational budgets.
 - b. The internal toilet doors may be replaced, if required, under the Clerk's sign off with any remaining operational budget.
 - c. It was also suggested that a future improvement could be the laying of astro-turf, or similar, to the edges of the pitch in order to make this surface a bit harder and not become churned up by the linesman etc.
- ii. **update on fixtures for the 2020/21 season and how this will impact on potential donations from the football clubs.**

It was noted that due to the new Coronavirus national lockdown measures grassroots football matches have been suspended until further notice.
- iii. **review and ratify the instructions/use of the changing rooms under Coronavirus regulations.**

It was noted that the changing rooms had been measured and plans/documents commenced for the social distancing marking and usage of the changing rooms. However, since the last meeting national lockdown measures have been put in place under Coronavirus regulations and so it was agreed this matter would need to be revisited at a later date.

F&A126 – 05/01/2021 Floral Displays

Councillors received an update on the 2020 floral summer displays. It was noted that including bedding plants, hanging baskets and additional casual labour to assist with planting out, the total cost was approximately £1,500 net.

The petunias had not performed so well and so the nursery had suggested that they are replaced with geraniums or fuchsias for 2021.

It was noted that for 2021 additional plants will be required to fill the three new coal mining cart planters and the telephone kiosk on Bath Road. The order for plants will need to be placed in sufficient time for them to be grown on before planting out in May.

It was suggested to increase the budget and create additional floral displays to help bring some cheer to the village following such a difficult period under the Coronavirus pandemic.

It was therefore **resolved** to purchase bedding plants from Meadow Farm Nurseries for the summer 2021 floral displays, to include some additional displays in other areas of the village e.g., Orchard Way, for a sum of up to £2,500+VAT.

F&A127 – 05/01/2021 Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel

There was no allotment inspection in December, however, a report from the **Braysdown Allotments Advisory Panel** had been issued to councillors as pre-reading and the following points were noted:

- i. **Update on plot inspections.**
 - a. Two plot holders have given up.
 - b. One plot holder was sent a letter asking them to remove some of the wood/plastic from the plot. This now requires a further check to see if it has been actioned.
 - c. Shoscombe School Allotment Plots:
There is a new contact person and co-ordinator for the school plots, who has said that they have plans to tackle the plots in the coming year. They would like to keep both half plots.
 - d. The person who was previously dealing with the school plots, wishes to continue working the plots with a group of Guides. They have been put on the waiting list until a plot is available and advised that the rules give priority to community groups. To date no response has been received.
- ii. **Update on Accessible Allotment plots.**
 - a. Eight accessible plots are available and have been offered to five people on the waiting list.
 - b. One person requested a double plot, so there are two single plots remaining if any further requests are received.
 - c. The communal shed is likely to be managed by allocate a shelf in the shed for each of the accessible allotment plot holder so that their equipment is in a clearly defined area. It is suggested that no lock is put on the door, but instead there should be a notice stating that no power tools or petrol will be stored in the shed.
- iii. **Update on issuing of plots and plot renewals.**
 - a. Invoices for all existing plot holders have been sent out together with a new version of the Allotment Rules incorporating the new rules on bonfires.
 - b. Eight "standard" plots (7 quarter plots and 1 third plot) are available for re-allocation and have been offered to people on the allotments waiting list.
- iv. **Review of the waiting list.**
 - a. Following the reallocation of plots there remains 12 people on the waiting list from within the parish and 3 from outside the parish.

F&A128 – 05/01/2021 Annual Independent Play Inspections

Councillors received a progress update on works identified on the annual independent play inspection report. The following points were noted:

- Since the last meeting the replacement parts for the Low Rotator on Beacon Field have now been fitted.
- The carpet under the Low Rotator and the tyre swing both require attention, and a quotation has been requested from B&NES Council to action these works. Due to the Christmas break this quotation is yet to be received.
- The Caretakers will continue to work through the list of issues identified and so far, the repairs continue to be within the Clerk's sign off and operational budget limits.

F&A129 – 05/01/2021 Beacon Hall Bookings

It was noted that new Coronavirus national lockdown measures had come into effect from today and this has resulted in Beacon Hall being closed except for a limited number of exempt activities which includes

hosting blood donation sessions and food banks. It was therefore noted there is unlikely to be any significant income generated by Beacon Hall for the remainder of the financial year. The blood donors will be at Beacon Hall on 8th January 2021 and Southside Foodbank will return on 15th January 2021. The Police are also due to hold a free tool marking service for the community at Beacon Hall car park on 9th January 2021.

F&A130 – 05/01/2021 Tree Survey and Tree Works

Councillors received a report on progress undertaken on the tree surveys and works following the decisions made at the last meeting. The Clerk demonstrated to councillors how to access the online folder where the quotations and information is being held on this matter; not all quotations had been received. The Clerk will continue to progress, and additional information will be added as and when received. It was **resolved** to delegate to the Clerk, to apply discretion once the three quotations are received, and appoint one of the firms to carry out the survey, under the best value of money, up to a value of £1,000+VAT.

F&A131 – 05/01/2021 Telephone Kiosks

Following the decision at the December Full Council meeting to proceed with the refurbishment and improvement works to the telephone kiosks at Bath Road and Carlingcott [minute C499 - 15/12/2020 refers] councillors received a progress update. The internal shelves and containers for the Bath Road box are being measured up by the Caretaker ready for the materials to be purchased. Cllr Ogilvie-Davidson and the Clerk will work together regarding the plants required for this display.

F&A132 – 05/01/2021 Review of New Actions

The Clerk provided a summary of the new actions generated from the meeting and advised they would be captured on the Actions Register in Planner after the meeting.

F&A133 – 05/01/2021 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 27th April 2021 at 7pm.

The date of the next Finance & Amenities Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 9th February 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.23pm

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