

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday 9th April 2019

Present: Mr P Drummond (PD), Mr A Jackson (AJ), Mr H True (HT)

Apologies: Mr M Newell (MN), Finance Committee Chairman

In Attendance: Mrs L Davies, Clerk

Held in: The Committee Room, Village Hall

Members of Public: None

In the absence of Mr Newell, it was agreed that Mr Jackson would chair the meeting, which was opened at 8.00 pm.

1. Apologies for Absence:
Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Newell.
2. Declaration of Members' Interests:
No interests were declared.
3. Public Participation:
No members of public present.
4. Review of Year End Position (31st March 2019):
The actual expenditure against budget report was circulated in advance of the meeting and displayed. The individual budget headings were reviewed and explanation given to variances.

Income:

- The Parish Council was in receipt of unbudgeted £4,199 grant funding for the telephone box, Neighbourhood Plan and World War One Commemoration.
- The donations of £1,933 primarily related to the World War One Commemoration.
- The Public Toilet donations were down due to a promised payment from Kirdford Parish Council not received by the year end.
- It was explained that the budget for the Village Hall Lease payments had been set prior to the finalisation of the Lease and members were reminded that the Parish Council received £12,600 on signing at the end of the previous financial year, hence only the one October payment was received.
- Overall, the income was slightly up on budget.

Expenditure: Significant variances related to:

- Clerk's Salary: Provision had been made to increase, but this increase was with effect from 1st April 2019.
- Legal & Professional Fees: The budget figure of £1,500 had been included to conclude the Scout Hut Lease update, but in fact expenditure related to the Village Hall, advice relating to the Green and new Pavilion, and Pavilion Lease, being over budget by £1,122. (The Scout Hut Lease was not progressed.)
- Publicity: Allowance made for any additional newsletters but not undertaken.
- Section 137: Over budget as this included the donation relating to the World War One Commemoration.
- Allotment Maintenance: Slightly up due to additional maintenance items required in the year.
- Allotment Water: As discussed at the full Council Meeting in February 2019, the water charge had reduced in line with previous years, so the unusually high charge last year potentially related to an undetected water leak. Allotment holders were now taking measures to save water and the meter was being read monthly.
- Churchyard Maintenance: Slight increase as a result of World War One commemoration donations.
- Green Maintenance: Slightly over budget but included the donation to Wisborough Green Sports (WGS) for the early season additional grass cutting.

- Unbudgeted Expenditure: £3,724.48 spent on the tree survey and decay detection, remaining wheel stops for outside The Three Crowns (yet to be installed), traveller legal costs, the Horse Chestnut tree and donation to WGS for the Stable Field application.
- Winter Management: £228 related to gritting in the previous year and £147.40 for the car park grit bin and shovel.
- Other Projects: An over-spend was shown which primarily related to the Mortuary Shed as unexpected work was required which took the project over budget by £1,153. Members were reminded that grant funding for the telephone kiosk was received so the actual project cost was £1,559. Grant funding and donations for the World War One Commemoration meant that the overall cost to the Parish Council was just over £1,000 as budgeted.
- Paths and Roads Projects: Budget provision had been made but as it now appeared that WSCC would be funding the Community Highways Scheme, and with budget pressures, it was not proposed to transfer to the reserve.
- Pond Project: Noted that lily clearance was not undertaken but pond to be monitored this year.

5. End of Year Reserve Transfers:

The year-end bank balances and reserve funds were reviewed. The Clerk confirmed that the final VAT repayment of £1997.51 had been submitted.

It was noted that the year-end Net Balance showed a deficit of £2,091.99 (excluding the Allotment deposit refund). The use of reserves to balance the budget was discussed. The Clerk highlighted that over the past three financial years, a total of £5,904.58 had been spent on legal advice in relation to the Old Workhouse (residential element) and the new Village Hall Lease. Although the Workhouse Reserves had been entirely used for the refurbishment project, the Village Hall Reserve currently held £18,623.22.

AJ explained that the Village Hall Reserve had been held should the Management Committee require grant funding for maintenance issues. Although the Parish Council may wish to make future donations, with a well-used hall, active management committee and the planned refurbishment project, he felt that updating the Lease, which had provided long-term security for the Hall, was a legitimate use of this fund.

Proposal to Full Council: The Finance Committee recommends that no transfers to reserves should be made and that £2091.99 be transferred from the Village Hall Reserve Fund to balance the budget for year-end 31st March 2019; this transfer is £582.67 more than originally budgeted.

6. Budget for Year-End March 2020:

The Clerk highlighted that in addition to the budget overspend for the last year, there were outstanding items totalling £1,969 which were not included in this year's budget (Pavilion Lease £1,269, Parking Stoppers £240, Map £60, Pond Willow work £350 and Glebe Barn entrance hump £50, although the latter was a legitimate Watershed expense). In addition, £1,250 path repairs had been identified in the Risk Assessment and the Parish Council had also agreed to spend an additional £1,180 over budget on works to the Green. This unbudgeted expenditure totalled £4,399. AJ also advised that WGS had made a request for a donation towards architects' fees. The current budget was therefore reviewed and the impact of this expenditure discussed.

AJ explained that the revised Pavilion plans were being progressed to a stage that an architect's input was now required. The Parish Council's concerns had cost WGS additional funds and the WGS Chairman had since advised that revision work would cost about £3,500 with perhaps a £1,000 to update required reports, although this might be reduced; a Parish Council donation towards these costs had been requested.

The Clerk attended a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Workshop earlier in the day and updating the Infrastructure Business Plan to register projects for CIL funding was included on next Tuesday's agenda. She gave examples of items that could be funded which potentially included some projects allocated within this year's budget. CIL payments were made by developer instalments directly to CDC and 25% of the funds would be passed on to the Parish Council at the end of April and October each year. The first developer instalment was paid on initial earth works so it was possible that funding from Winterfold (Songhurst Meadow) could be paid at the end of October. CDC had confirmed that the Parish CIL contribution was likely to be in the region of £120,000 although this was still subject to amendment.

In terms of Great Meadow, Petworth Road, planning permission was granted prior to the introduction of CIL and as such, Section 106 funds would be made available. CDC had confirmed as:

Leisure £19,851.20

Community Facilities £41,776.25

Public Art £9,284.23

The Clerk believed that the Section 106 allocation was more tightly controlled, eg, Community Facilities could not be used for sport. However, these funds could again help deliver projects within the budget and perhaps the Leisure element could be used to progress the Pavilion plans. With the properties now being occupied, the Clerk would enquire when this funding would be made available and the process involved. She also reminded that grant funding was another option, particularly for the playground surfacing and toilets.

It was noted that last year the Parish Council made donations to WGS for extra grass cutting (£300) and the Stable Field planning application (£232). The Parish Council was also financing the Lease Transfer at a cost of up to £2,500 and had authorised additional work to the Green of £1,180 over budget this year; in total £4,212. Although wishing to make a contribution to show support and to ensure the project progressed, it was felt that the Parish Council was unable to make payment from the current budget at the present time but it was potentially a legitimate use of Section 106 or CIL funding.

It was also noted that if WSCC completed the Community Highways Application, it would allow the Lay-by Reserve Fund to be re-allocated.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **Parish Council to make a donation of £2,500 to the Pavilion Project later in the year. It is hoped that WGS will be in a position to fund this cost initially and be asked to make a formal request and provide annual accounts for last year in line with other donation requests.**
- **Donation to be made on receipt of Section 106 or CIL Funding, or later in the year when other projects had been progressed and the budget position was known.**
- **As the landowner there was justification for the Parish Council to submit the planning application which could be explored further.**
- **When plans have been agreed by all parties, WGS to provide a 'Business Plan' to demonstrate how the building will be financed to ensure long-term sustainability. To ensure due diligence, details of procurement process to provided.**
- **Virement to be undertaken – transfer of Funds from Village Hall Reserve into budget of £3000 as detailed in original budget**

7. Any Other Matters to Report:

- a. General Data Protection Regulations: It had been unclear when the new regulations were introduced in May 2018 if a Parish Clerk could act as the Data Protection Officer. This had now been confirmed and as such, it was potentially unnecessary to engage an outside company, at an annual cost of £350, to act on the Council's behalf should a data request be made. As an alternative, GDPR-Info, the company engaged last year, would charge a £150.00 one off fee to assist if required. Members agreed that protocols had been updated, assistance as needed was now the preferred option. Clerk to update website and policies accordingly.

Proposal to Full Council: As protocols had been updated and measures put in place to protect data, members recommended that the Clerk should now act as Data Protection Officer and seek additional support, if necessary, at a cost of £150.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

Full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 16th April 2019 at 7.45 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10 pm.