

Wisborough Green Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday 1st November 2022

Present: Mr P Drummond (PD) (Finance Chairman), Mr A Jackson (AJ),
Mr H True (HT), Mr M Watson (MW)

In Attendance: Mrs L Davies, Clerk

Held in: The Village Hall

Members of Public: None

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.32 pm.

1. Apologies for Absence:

All were in attendance.

2. Declaration of Members' Interests:

No interests were declared.

3. Public Participation:

There were no members of public present.

4. Draft Management & Financial Risk Assessment:

The document had been circulated in advance of the meeting; the risks were reviewed. The Clerk advised that she was now documenting procedures as the loss of the Clerk had been identified as the main risk last year. The Indemnity Insurance for the Council's funds had been increased this year.

No changes were proposed; the document remained current.

Proposal: That the Management & Financial Risk Assessment be adopted as tabled.

5. Objectives:

The 5-year Plan up to 2027 was circulated in advance of the meeting and reviewed. It was a working document and new objectives could be added when identified. The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council might consider holding a consultation event in the future to obtain ideas for future projects particularly as further development would generate Community Infrastructure Funding. Other village organisations could be included to promote volunteering and community cohesion.

Proposal: That Objectives Plan for up to 2027 to be reviewed by Full Council and other projects added if considered desirable.

6. Community Infrastructure Levy:

The CIL and S106 expenditure allocation, as agreed in January 2021, was reviewed. The expenditure to date was noted. The Clerk advised that the Village Hall Management Committee was now considering ideas for the use of the S106 art funding, which had to be used by March 2025. The Clerk highlighted that the use of CIL funding was restricted and that

the current funding was time limited (use by 31 March 2025) although Chichester District Council (CDC) had advised that there was some flexibility for longer term projects, such as the Pavilion.

Proposal: As it was unlikely that the storage garage would be progressed before March 2025, to use the £20,000 allocation to part fund the Songhurst Track and Youth Project. The Clerk to ascertain from CDC that both projects were eligible.

7. 2022/2023 Budget:

The budget and projected year-end position had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was also displayed. The individual budget headings were discussed, and the Clerk gave explanation to the items and anticipated income and expenditure for the remainder of the year. In some instances, the full budget had been included but small savings were anticipated. The budget currently showed a deficit. This was due to unbudgeted expenditure, unanticipated tree work and a small uplift in costs. The Clerk proposed that the allocated Reserves (Village Maintenance, Legal, Playground) be used where appropriate and that this was confirmed when the final year-end figures were known. No further income was anticipated.

The Clerk highlighted that the last Playground loan payment was November 2022.

Proposal: After year-end, the final accounts to be reviewed and the appropriate Reserves used to balance the budget.

8. 2023/2024 Budget:

A draft budget had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was displayed. Additional information had been provided in the supporting Excel sheets which provided a breakdown for the budget figures where more detail of calculation was required. Budget figures had been included in line with the current year and percentage increases applied at this stage, but the Clerk would obtain fixed quotations for the grass cutting and toilet cleaning.

Quotations were also being obtained for possible projects for next year.

It was agreed that costs for The Green and Songhurst Meadow should be combined for the following budget headings: Grass Cutting, CDC Litter Collection. Green Maintenance to be changed to Green Surface Maintenance (to give clarity) with a separate Songhurst Meadow heading for other costs relating to the area.

Clerk to ascertain from CDC if resurfacing the Kirdford Road pavement would qualify for CIL funding.

Proposal: That the budget, as tabled and adjusted above, should be presented to the Parish Council on 15th November 2022 for further consideration. To confirm 2023/24 objectives, and if any other projects are to be considered, for confirmation at the January meeting. Precept to be confirmed at the January 2023 meeting.

9. Allotment Rent Review:

The Clerk advised that the previously agreed charge from April 2023 was 27p per square metre. Members agreed that the allotments should not make money but should also not cost the Parish for the benefit of a small number, which also included some non-Parish residents. The increased water bill for this year was noted primarily due to the hot summer but also tree watering and increased cost. The Clerk advised that many new tenants were surprised at the small charge also included water. The plot sizes and impact of increasing were reviewed and discussed.

Proposal: To apply the following increases:

April 2024 – 34p per square metre

April 2025 – 37p per square metre

April 2026 – 40p per square metre

10. Bank and Investment Accounts:

The Investment Policy, adopted in 2019, was reviewed; no changes were proposed.

With the current bank balances and the likelihood of further CIL funding over the next few years, opening further investment accounts to spread the risk and to benefit from increasing interest rates was discussed. The Chairman also suggested that the £50,000 S106 funding from Songhurst Meadow could be invested to generate income to off-set costs and keep the capital intact. The Clerk advised that funds could be invested for a fixed term, perhaps a year, every 3 months, which allowed the Council in future years to access further funding on a 3 monthly basis, if needed.

The Chairman agreed to look at available options and to discuss figures with the Clerk to create an operating and reserves spreadsheet.

Proposal:

- **Re-adopt the Investment Policy as tabled.**
- **To invest £50,000 (or balance after the track installation) of Songhurst Meadow Funding. Exact figures would be known at year-end.**
- **To invest funds on a fixed term as described above. Figures to be discussed and agreed by Full Council.**

11. Clerk’s Appraisal and National Pay Award

The Chairman and Clerk had spoken earlier in the day. The Clerk had confirmed that she was happy in her work and that having monitored over the years, 24 hours per week was still appropriate.

Members expressed appreciation for the Clerk’s work.

The National Pay Award, backdated to 1st April 2022, and potential increase for next year, were noted and accepted.

12. Date of Next Meeting:

Full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 15th November 2022.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed by the Chairman: Date: