

DRAFT – TO BE AGREED ON 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

Date: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024

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

Apologies: None

In attendance: Mrs L Davies, Parish Council Clerk

Members of Public: None

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00 pm.

1. Apologies for Absence:  
All members were in attendance.
2. Declaration of Members' Interests:  
As a Harsfold Lane resident, MW declared his interest in any budget discussion relating to the resurfacing of the top section of Harsfold Lane.
3. Public Participation:  
There were no members of public present.
4. Management & Financial Risk Assessment:  
The 2024/2025 assessment had been circulated in advance of the meeting; the risks were reviewed. The Clerk advised that she had reviewed and updated the document to ensure that the procedures were worded correctly. The highest risk was identified as long-term sickness or resignation of the Clerk. The Clerk was unsure as to whether locum cover was or could be included in the insurance cover and would make enquiries for further consideration.

No further changes were proposed; the document remains current.

**Proposal to Full Council:**

- **That the Management & Financial Risk Assessment be adopted as tabled.**
- **Consideration to be given to insurance, if available, to cover a locum Clerk.**

5. Objectives:  
The 5-year Plan up to 2029 was circulated in advance of the meeting and reviewed. It was a working document and new objectives could be added when identified. The Clerk highlighted items that she had recently added as a result of Council discussion.

**Proposal to Full Council: That the Objectives Plan for up to 2028 be reviewed by Full Council and proposed amendments made. Other projects to be added if considered desirable.**

6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

The CIL and S106 expenditure allocation, as agreed in January 2021, was reviewed. The expenditure to date and balances were considered. The Clerk highlighted that the use of CIL funding was restricted. The new CIL Officer at Chichester District Council (CDC) had advised that there was some flexibility for longer term projects, for example the Pavilion; the 5 year time restriction was to encourage parishes to spend their CIL funds otherwise CDC would step in to assist. The Officer provided further clarification on capital *versus* revenue expenditure. The Clerk had previously been advised that the Kirdford Road resurfacing was maintenance and therefore not eligible for using CIL funds however, in view of the WSCC scheme and connectivity to the new Kirdford Road developments, was now eligible. Resurfacing to enhance the village hall car park to improve community benefit and disability access was similarly an eligible CIL project.

With future development, it was anticipated that the Parish Council would receive significant CIL funding. PD believed that a public consultation was required to provide guidance for PC allocation decisions. The Council has made a commitment to provide funding to the Pavilion but the figure had not been decided, it was agreed public consultation would help inform the decision. The details of the consultation would require careful planning.

Other projects were briefly discussed; public toilets, extending the cricket area to provide a further goal/basketball net combination and community storage.

**Proposal to Full Council:**

- **Vire the current allocation of £1,000 from the storage garage to Traffic Calming making this total £1,935.05. This was in view of the Durbans Road Speed Reduction as a contribution may be requested by WSCC.**
- **Noting that further CIL funding will be received following the development on Stable Field, possibly in the next financial year, consider partial use of the Pavilion allocation to fund the Kirdford Road pavement resurfacing.**

The available funds and proposed use are summarised below:

<b>Songhurst Meadow CIL</b>		
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Available Funds</b>
Traffic Calming	Durbans Road Speed Reduction 2024/2025	£1,935.03
Traffic Calming	Newpound Lane Hedge Realignment 2024/2025	£3,000.00
Pavilion	Improvements or rebuild of sports pavilion to create community sports facility £6,963 of the £24,000 allocation spent on planning/consultants' fees for the new pavilion	£17,037.00
<b>Remaining Funds for CIL projects</b>		<b>£21,972.03</b>

<b>Great Meadow Section 106 Funding (held by CDC)</b>		
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Available Funds</b>
Art Fund Spend deadline 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2029	Village Hall - The Management Committee was pursuing an idea to replace the entrance doors with etched glazing; the project had been approved by CDC. The funds would be released to the Village Hall on application with supporting documents.	Currently £10,213.32 (plus interest)
Community Facilities Spend deadline 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2030	Pavilion – Potential to consider use for improvements to the existing building if required by Wisborough Green Sports.	Currently £23,294.76 (plus interest)
<b>Remaining Funds for these projects only</b>		<b>£33,508.08 (plus interest)</b>

<b>Songhurst Meadow Section 106 Funding (£55,000 received by the Parish Council)</b>		
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Available Funds</b>
Legal Fees	Expenditure - £1,500 transferred into budget year end March 2023	-
Open Space	Expenditure - £5,818.36 transferred into budget for the path and bridge for year end March 2023	-
<b>Balance Invested but available for future SM projects if agreed</b>		<b>£47,681.64</b>

7. 2024/2025 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 Clerk was unsure whether a legal bill for the Pavilion Lease would be paid by the year-end; the current spending related to the Schedule of Dilapidations. The current projection showed a small year-end surplus. The anticipated year-end reserves were reviewed.

**Proposal to Full Council:**

- **Neighbourhood Plan: The grant funding through Locality had been exhausted and although some support packages may be available, the Parish Council should make provision to fund any consultants help and consultations. To transfer £2,250 of the budget surplus to the Neighbourhood Plan Reserve.**
- **After year-end, the final accounts to be reviewed and transfers made to the General and other reserves to balance the budget.**

8. 2025/2026 Budget:

A draft budget had been prepared and reviewed by the Chairman and the Clerk. It was circulated in advance of the meeting and displayed. Additional information had been provided in the supporting spreadsheets 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, the Clerk will obtain fixed quotations for toilet cleaning and grass cutting, the anticipated cost increase was noted. The Clerk's salary had been increased to reflect recent changes in the National Insurance contributions.

Having sought clarification on CIL projects, it was agreed that the village hall car park should not be funded from the Precept. It was noted that repair of the top section of Harsfold Lane would not be CIL eligible, so it was suggested it be included in budget to prevent further deterioration. There was just one small area for repair and MW agreed to obtain a quotation.

**Proposal to Full Council:**

- **That the budget, as tabled and adjusted above, should be presented to the Parish Council on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 for further consideration.**
- **To confirm 2025/26 objectives, and if any other projects are to be considered, for confirmation at the January meeting. Precept to be confirmed at the January 2025 meeting.**
- **To include in the budget provision to undertake further maintenance such as gully spraying/road sign cleaning noting that work outside the 30mph speed limits would require a specialist contractor. The Billingshurst Road gully had an accumulation of soil and debris requiring manual clearance and consequently traffic control might be required.**

9. Bank and Investment Accounts:

It had been the intention to open 1-year bonds on a quarterly basis, but delays in processing account opening had affected the interval period, with 3 opened in the year (January, May and October); new

bonds were being opened as existing bonds matured. Although there was perhaps an opportunity to increase the current investments, there was also a need to have access to sufficient funds. In all her time as Clerk, emergency spending had never been required, members appreciated that opening accounts for a Parish Council was often problematic. It was agreed that the Clerk should review the NatWest account and determine if a better interest option was available.

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.45 pm.

11. Clerk's Annual Appraisal and Salary Review

The Chairman and Clerk had spoken last week. The Clerk confirmed that she was happy in her work and that having monitored her hours over several years, 24 hours per week was still appropriate. Members expressed appreciation for the Clerk's work.

Members noted that the Clerk's salary had been set on SCP 32 and that this was increased by national awards. The National Pay Award, backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, and potential increase for next year, were noted and accepted.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.42 pm.

Signed by the Chairman: ..... Date: .....