

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 21st February 2024
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: I Clarke, A Grimes, L James (Chair), I Montgomery, D Peer

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), J Mason (Finance Manager)

24/FGP/1

Public Questions

- 1.1 There were no public questions.

24/FGP/2

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

- 2.1 There were apologies from Cllr Tatla for this meeting.
2.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

24/FGP/3

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 13th December 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr. James.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

24/FGP/4

Actions and Matters Arising

23/FGP/60

Clerk and Facilities Manager to develop a long-term maintenance plan

The Clerk advised that this would be completed in conjunction with the Facilities Manager before the latter left at the end of May 2024

ACTION - Clerk and Facilities Manager to develop the long-term maintenance plan



17/4/24.

23/FGP/60 Clerk to offer the school prize scheme to all schools in the parish

The Clerk advised that he would write to the schools in the parish to advise them that this scheme was being offered to them.

ACTION - Clerk to write to all the schools

23/FGP/62.1 Finance Manager to request a statement for the NS&I account for the next bank reconciliation.

This had been done.

23/FGP/64.2 Clerk to add Budgets to the agenda for the January Full Council meeting

This had been done.

23/FGP/65.2 Clerk to follow upon discussions regarding lease for Ryeish Playing Field with Craig Hoggeth.

This was on the agenda at Item 9.2

23/FGP/65.3 Clerk to investigate options for a community building on the ECMWF site with WBC

Chris Howard, WBC had advised that he would inform the owner of the site of our interest and make any applicants aware.

ACTION - Clerk to continue to follow up to Chris Howard

23/FGP/65.3 Clerk to investigate the feasibility of a mobile community space

As had been discussed at Full Council on 24th January the Clerk was to investigate the issues regarding such an approach and produce a Business Case for a future meeting.

23/FGP/65.4 Clerk to add the future of Ryeish Green pavilion to the agenda for the December Full Council meeting

This had been done.

23/FGP/65.5 Clerk to proceed with the formal extinguishing of the lease on the parish hall

This was on the agenda at Item 9.5.

23/FGP/66.1 Clerk to add the proposal for a Screening Facility at School Green Centre to the agenda for the December Full Council meeting.

This had been done and was also on the agenda at Item 10.1.

23/FGP/67.1 Finance Manager to arrange the movement of funds to CCLA and Lloyds Short-Term Deposit

This was on the agenda at Item 14.1.

24/FGP/5 Risk Register

5.1 Risk Register

The Clerk advised that he had reviewed the Risk Register and had no recommended changes to any of the risk items for consideration at this meeting.

24/FGP/6 Financial Reports

6.1 Bank Reconciliations

Cllr. James confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations to the end of January 2024 on 20th February and that all was in order. A copy of the reconciliation was presented to members, and this included the NS&I statement. Members **NOTED** the report.

6.2 Update on Bookings

The Clerk advised that he had produced a booking report to the end of January 2024 including advanced bookings already in the system for the remainder of the year. For prudence he had not included any additional future bookings for February or March 2024.

The Clerk advised that the School Green Centre continued to run ahead of budget (projected for the year was £124.3k up £4.3k/3.6% compared to a budget of £120k). Of this £101.8k (81.2% of the total projected income) was already achieved and the remaining £22.6k was confirmed bookings.

Spencers Wood Pavilion was also ahead of budget. Projected for the year was £50.1k up £2.1k/4.4% compared to a budget of £48.0k). Of this £41.6k (86.7% of the total projected income) was already achieved and the remaining £8.5k was confirmed bookings.

Members **NOTED** the report.

6.3 Actual compared to Budget and Forecast

Cllr James advised that the current forecast was now a favourable £83k for the year to 31st March and set out the main changes accounting for this. The surplus in the budget would be held in reserves against the anticipated shortfalls in 2025/26 and 2026/27 as been discussed at the previous meeting.

Cllr James thanked the staff for their efforts in establishing the Friday Fun Days as a successful part of what was on offer to residents.

24/FGP/7

Financial Reserves & CIL

- 7.1 Total CIL receipts for the parish were now £3,468.8k of which £2,136.4k has been spent leaving a balance of £1,332.4k.

The balance on current projects was £857.1k for Millworth Lane, £242.0k for Traffic Improvements and £54.8k for School Green with £178.5k yet to be allocated to a specific purpose.

There is approximately £563.8k anticipated in respect of future receipts. If these materialise this would result in a total of £742.3k yet to be allocated to projects.

It was anticipated that there would be some capital expenditure around High Copse (for example providing additional PV panels to reduce utility costs). Cllr Grimes suggested investigating grant schemes for both High Copse and other council buildings.

Members **NOTED** the report.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate potential grant funding for PV panels

- 7.2 The balance of reserves as at 31st January 2024 comprised CIL of £1,332.4k and other reserves of £226.2k giving a total of £1,558.6k

Members **NOTED** the report.

24/FGP/8

Review of Budget Setting process

- 8.1 Members agreed that the approach taken for setting the 2024/25 budgets including projecting for three years after that should be repeated for the next budget cycle with more involvement from councillors, and particularly the Chairs of Committees.

Cllr James had provided a briefing session for a fellow councillor on the budget process and suggested that a more formal session was provided for all councillors next year.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a budget briefing session for all councillors as part of the budget process for 2025/26

24/FGP/9

Internal Audit Review for 2023/24

9.1 SPC's Internal Auditor conducted their Internal Audit Review on 5th and 7th February. The findings were:

- There had been an incorrect treatment of VAT on the Dementia group at the Manor Ground. The Finance Manager had corrected this
- The creation of a CCLA account had been noted in the minutes but the account had not yet been opened. This was a delay on the part of CCLA and the Finance Manager has been chasing
- Not all employees had received a contract of employment when they started. This related to front of house staff, and all have been issued with a contract
- The notice on the Exercise of Public Rights was published on the 3rd July which was a day late. According to the AGAR statement note this will need to be noted in the audit report (assertion M). The auditor will state that this was an administrative error and not indicative of any problems at the council

Members **NOTED** the report

24/FGP/10

Land Issues

10.1 Land Registrations

There had been no change to the status of any of the land registrations since the last meeting.

10.2 Draft Heads of Terms for a lease of Ryeish playing fields

WBC have now prepared draft Heads of Terms for both the Ryeish playing fields and for Deardon Field. Approval had already been given in principle to mutual leases and members approved proceeding on this basis.

ACTION – Clerk to confirm approval of the Heads of Terms with WBC

This led to a more general discussion on infrastructure expenditure and Cllr James would work with the Clerk to ascertain the exact status of S106 funding within the parish

ACTION – Cllr James and Clerk to complete an analysis of S106 expenditure within the parish

10.3 **Provision of Community Space in the North of the Parish**

Members were disappointed to hear that the WBC flat at Frensham Green was no longer available as a community facility as it was required for housing stock. The Clerk was asked to convey this to WBC.

ACTION – Clerk to write to WBC to express disappointment at the closing of the Frensham Green flat

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council meeting

Members agreed that this increased the importance of SPC identifying a viable option for the provision of community space in the north of the parish. This may be via one or more of the following

- Investment in Whiteknights School
- Community Bus
- Potential for a community space within the ECMWF site
- Supporting groups at locations such as St Barnabas

ACTION – Clerk to develop business case and options for provision of community space in the north of the parish

10.4 **Future of Ryeish Green Pavilion**

We now have a clearer position regarding the Change of Class of Use but still need to confirm exactly what, if any, issues there are around access to the pavilion.

Once matters are resolved the issue will be put before Full Council again for a definitive decision on the pavilion.

ACTION – Clerk to continue to establish access requirements to Ryeish Green Pavilion

10.5 **Parish Hall Lease**

The Clerk had had not progressed this item

ACTION – Clerk to proceed with the formal extinguishing of the lease on the parish hall

24/FGP/11

Screening Facility in School Green Centre

- 11.1 Cllr Grimes advised members of the current proposal from Shinfield Studios which, due to structural challenges, would now need to be provided in the Ryeish Green room and not Pound Green room as originally intended. The Clerk had confirmed that this would be a viable arrangement.

Shinfield Studios have also confirmed that they would manage the work directly and all funding. The Studios had also produced a draft agreement for the provision of the facility.

Members agreed to support the proposal and recommend it to Full Council

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council

24/FGP/12

Provision of Public Art

- 12.1 At the ACE meeting on 8th February three members of Art4Wokingham had attended to discuss their involvement in the provision of public art in the area to the north of the School Green Centre. The discussions led to a consensus that the developer funds available £8k would not result in a piece of public art which would be a significant merit to the parish. The ACE committee was therefore asking F&GP to consider supporting a project for public art up to a total of cost of £50k. The actual cost to SPC would be reduce by funds from the developer, grants and sponsorship raised for the project and income from events such as the Art Exhibition planned for February 2025.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council

24/FGP/13

Annual Grant Awards Scheme

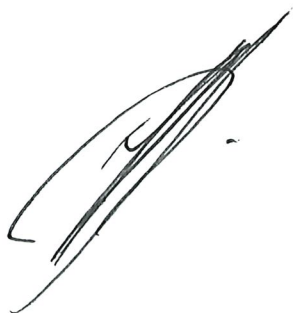
- 13.1 The Clerk had prepared a paper reviewing the 2023 Annual Grant Scheme and recommending reprising the process for 2024 with some revised wording and an emphasis on encouraging new initiatives. Cllr Grimes suggested one amendment to the wording. Members voted to accept the paper subject to the amendment proposed by Cllr Grimes.

Proposed: Cllr Grimes
Seconded: Cllr Clarke
Approved: Unanimously

24/FGP/14

Redecoration of the Grazeley Room at School Green Centre

- 14.1 This would be the first call on the Sinking Fund and is intended to provide an additional element of robustness to reduce the frequency of future redecoration works. Members agreed to approve the work and to delegate future redecoration work to the Clerk up to a limit of £10k per annum subject to the work being within budget and part of the overall long-term maintenance programme for the building. The Clerk would also advise the Facilities committee of any such work.



Proposed: Cllr Peer
Seconded: Cllr Grimes
Approved: Unanimously

Cllrs Grimes and Clarke asked for a note from the Facilities Manager on the details of the redecoration

ACTION – Clerk to arrange for Cllrs Grimes and Clarke to receive a note on the details of the proposed redecoration of the Grazeley Room

24/FGP/15

Investment Policy

- 15.1 The Finance Manager was chasing CCLA to expedite the opening of the new account. She had also moved funds to the higher interest Lloyds bank account as agreed previously.

24/FGP/16

Catering at the School Green Centre

- 16.1 Cllr Peer advised that there had been 31 expressions of interest followed by six site visits and finally four tender submissions received by the deadline of 16th February 2024 at 1.00 p.m. The submissions were then opened and reviewed by a working party led by Cllr Peer with Cllrs Johnson & Tatla, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk in attendance.

Each was reviewed and assessed against the published criteria and weighting set out in the tender documentation. This had resulted in each of the members of the panel separately identifying two clear front runners and two which they did not feel should be considered for the contract.

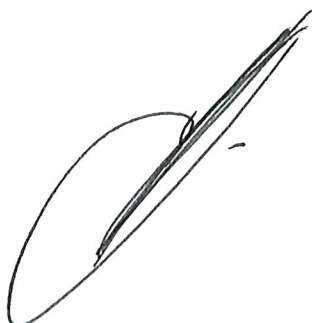
It was proposed to invite the remaining two parties to attend a formal presentation and question session. The presentation would ask them to set out their vision for how the café (and its associated activities including marketing) would look six months after it opened. They would be asked to provide some samples of items that would appear on their menus and answer questions regarding their presentation and tender documentation.

24/FGP/17

Date of Next Meeting

- 17.1 Next meeting was scheduled for 17th April 2024.

The meeting ended at 21.20



List of Actions

23/FGP/60	Clerk and Facilities Manager to commission a condition survey to establish long-term sinking fund requirements	Clerk Facilities Manager
23/FGP/60	Clerk to write to schools within the parish to offer funding for the school prize scheme	Clerk
23/FGP/65.3	Clerk to investigate options for a community building on the ECMWF site with Chris Howard at WBC	Clerk
24/FGP/7.1	Clerk to investigate potential grant funding for PV panels	Clerk
24/FGP/8.1	Clerk to arrange a budget briefing session for all councillors as part of the budget process for 2025/26	Clerk
24/FGP/10.2	Clerk to confirm approval of the Heads of Terms for Ryeish Playing Fields and Deardon Field with WBC	Clerk
24/FGP/10.2	Cllr James and Clerk to complete an analysis of S106 expenditure within the parish	Cllr James Clerk
24/FGP/10.3	Clerk to write to WBC to express disappointment at the closing of the Frensham Green flat	Clerk
24/FGP/10.3	Clerk to add to the closure of Frensham Green flat to the agenda for Full Council meeting	Clerk
24/FGP/10.3	Clerk to develop business case and options for provision of community space in the north of the parish	Clerk
24/FGP/10.4	Clerk to continue to establish access requirements to Ryeish Green Pavilion	Clerk
24/FGP/10.5	Clerk to proceed with the formal extinguishing of the lease on the parish hall	Clerk
24/FGP/11.1	Clerk to add the provision of a screening facility at the School Green Centre to the agenda for Full Council	Clerk
24/FGP/12.1	Clerk to add the provision of public art to the agenda for Full Council	Clerk
24/FGP/14.1	Clerk to arrange for Cllrs Grimes and Clarke to receive a note on the details of the proposed redecoration of the Grazeley Room	Clerk

