

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Thursday 27th October 2022
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)

22/FGP/26 Public Questions

26.1 There were no public questions.

22/FGP/27 Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

27.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.

27.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

22/FGP/28 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

28.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 8th June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr. James.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery

Seconded: Cllr Clarke

Approved: Unanimously

22/FGP/29 Actions and Matters Arising

4.4.4 WBC Asset Register

This was on the agenda.

3.3 Review of Financial Regulations

Clerk to arrange a review of financial regulations.

The Clerk had not yet been able to conduct a formal review of financial regulations but this would be carried out as soon as possible.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a review of financial regulations

21.2 Clerk to arrange a Working Party to review new format Risk Register

This is the next item on the agenda.

22/FGP/30

Risk Register

30.1 New format Risk Register

The Clerk advised that he hoped to produce a first full draft by the end of November.

ACTION – Clerk to prepare a first full draft for the next meeting.

22/FGP/31

Financial Reports

31.1 Bank Reconciliations

Cllr. James confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations to the end of September on 19th October and that all was in order. Members **NOTED** the report.

31.2 Room Hire Report for School Green Centre and Spencers Wood Pavilion

The Clerk advised that he had updated the booking report based on actual bookings completed to 30th September and including those provisionally booked for the remainder of the year. There was also a small element for additional bookings that could reasonably be expected to be achieved within the Financial Year. This was showing continual improvement and beginning to approach the original targeted income for the year. There is inevitably a “ramping up” of bookings after the opening of a new facility and the later than originally envisaged opening has had an impact within the financial year.

Members **NOTED** the report.

31.3 Actual vs Budget vs Forecast Expenditure as at 30th September 2022

Overall the forecast of outturn was an adverse variance of £23k against the approved budget.

There had been some savings on salary with the gapping of the Deputy Clerk post and the Clerk did not intend to replace the Jo Skidmore role.

It was noted that about 40% of electricity used at the School Green Centre was being provided by the PV panels but the unit rate for electricity was a significant concern.

Members **NOTED** the current position.

22/FGP/32

Budgets

32.1 There was a discussion of the main budget assumptions for 2023/24.

A pay rise of up to 7% would be assumed in the absence of any indications to the contrary. This was not an agreement to actually increase salaries by that much just an assumption to allow a salary figure to be included in the budget.

Rental income would rise to £100,000 + VAT for the School Green Centre reflecting the trend of bookings and the benefit of a full years trading.

The budget for grants would be reduced to £20k.

The budget for consultants would be £5k except for any specific project requirements which would make use of CIL as appropriate.

The intention was to restrict the overall increase in precept by 7% after allowing for the increase in the tax base which would be provided by WBC.

22/FGP/33

Financial Reserves & CIL

- 33.1 There are planning applications in process for approximately 740 houses the most significant of which was Stanbury House. Millworth Lane was the next expected call on CIL. Cllrs Peer and James noted the lack of provision for the arts and culture in the parish.

22/FGP/34

Land Issues

- 34.1 Land Registrations

Cllr Clarke provided an update on the current position regarding land registrations.

ACTION – Clerk to keep on the agenda

- 34.2 Current Position regarding Land Swaps

It was recognised that for SPC to make any effective use of Ryeish Green Pavilion a significant investment would be required and there would also be a significant cost (in the region of £30k) to demolish the building. It was proposed that the pavilion should be included in the proposed land swap with Wokingham Borough Council.

Proposed: Cllr Grimes
Seconded: Cllr Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to write to WBC on this basis

- 34.3 Any other potential area for inclusion in land swaps

There was a discussion about possible additional areas of land that might be included in a possible land swap with WBC but no firm proposals.

22/FGP/35

Investment Policy

- 35.1 The Finance Officer advised that the CCLA forms were still to be signed. The CCLA had sent a suitability questionnaire to SPC which had been completed and returned. CCLA felt that SPC needed to be prepared to keep the investments for a minimum of 10 years. It was agreed to keep this issue on the agenda.

ACTION – Clerk to keep the issue on the agenda

22/FGP/36

Spencers Wood Carnival

- 36.1 Members were concerned that the Carnival committee did not have its own charity bank account, did not meet the requirements stipulated by SPC for grant awards and they distributed any surplus from the carnival to stall holders. The Clerk was asked to meet with the organiser(s) and establish their intentions for the future and to discuss funding options with them.

ACTION – Clerk to meet with the organisers of Spencers Wood Carnival

22/FGP/37

California Country Park

- 37.1 Members discussed the request from WBC to make a contribution towards the proposed works at the country park. Members agreed that SPC should not make a contribution to this work due to other ongoing expenditure and new items planned for the parish. It was also felt that a large proportion of this work was repairs which most properly fell to WBC.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

22/FGP/38

Date of Next Meeting

- 38.1 Next meeting is 22nd December

The meeting ended at 21.20

List of Actions

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|------|---|-------|
| 3.3 | Clerk to arrange a review of financial regulations | Clerk |
| 30.1 | Clerk to prepare a first full draft for the next meeting | Clerk |
| 34.1 | Clerk to keep land registrations on the agenda | Clerk |
| 35.1 | Clerk to keep investment policy on the agenda | Clerk |
| 36.1 | Clerk to meet with the organisers of Spencers Wood Carnival | Clerk |