

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Thursday 22nd December 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/39 Public Questions

39.1 There were no public questions.

22/FGP/40 Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

40.1 There were no apologies for this meeting.

40.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

22/FGP/41 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

41.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 27th October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr. James.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr Clarke
Approved: Unanimously

22/FGP/42 Actions and Matters Arising

3.3 Clerk to arrange a review of financial regulations

The Clerk advised that this would be done in the early part of 2023.

30.1 Clerk to prepare a first full draft of the risk register for the next meeting

This was on the agenda

- 34.1 Clerk to keep land registrations on the agenda

This was on the agenda

- 35.1 Clerk to keep investment policy on the agenda

This as on the agenda

- 36.1 Clerk to meet with the organisers of Spencers Wood Carnival

The Clerk was intending to meet with the organisers in January.

22/FGP/43

Risk Register

- 43.1 New format Risk Register

The Clerk introduced the first full version of the new format for the risk register. Members said they would like to see Lone Working and Safeguarding risks more clearly in the next draft which would be considered at their meeting in February ahead of presentation to Full Council in March 2023.

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for the next meeting.

22/FGP/44

Financial Reports

- 44.1 Bank Reconciliations

Cllr. James confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations to the end of November 2022 on 22nd December and that all was in order. Cllr Grimes asked how much cash the council had and was advised that the figure was £1.7million. Members **NOTED** the report.

44.2 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 the end of November 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.

44.3 Actual vs Budget vs Forecast Expenditure as of 30th November 2022

Overall the forecast of outturn was an adverse variance of £15k against the approved budget.

This was due mainly to higher utilities costs, lower than expected rental income. 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.

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.

Members **NOTED** the current position.

44.4 Funds for essential repairs and renewal of fences and water troughs at various allotments

Members considered a request from the Facilities Manager to release funds from CIL for improving the infrastructure of allotments (fencing, entry gates, replacing water supply pipework and installing new water troughs). Wokingham Borough Council would pay for one third of the works from S106 funds leaving a balance of £26,000 from SPC CIL. Cllr Clarke confirmed he supported the proposed works.

The works were approved but only to proceed when WBC confirmed their element of the funding.

Proposed: Cllr Clarke
Seconded: Cllr Grimes
Approved: Unanimously

22/FGP/45

Budgets

45.1 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 as the figure is set nationally; it was a budget planning 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 to under 5% after allowing for the increase in the tax base which would be provided by WBC. The precept for a Band D equivalent would be £78.75 (up £3.66 or 4.9% from the previous year)

Members agreed to recommend the proposed budgets and precept to Full Council

Proposed: Cllr Grimes
Seconded: Cllr Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

45.2 Parish Council elections 2023

Members **NOTED** that the indicated costs from WBC for a contested election in one ward would be £7,743 (including poll cards) for a Shinfield ward.

45.3 Notice of Band D Equivalent Properties for 2023/2024

Members **NOTED** that the number of Band D equivalent properties for the calculation of the precept was 7,613.2.

22/FGP/46

Financial Reserves & CIL

- 46.1 Members **NOTED** that the balance of unexpended CIL was currently £1.3million with potentially a further £700k still to come.

22/FGP/47

Land Issues

- 47.1 Land Registrations

Cllr Clarke update members on the recent progress with Katherine Lamprell on land registrations. Arborfield Road, Pound Green and School Green were now ready for solicitor's signature. Katherine would hold the deeds at WBC until the Registration forms come through although this could take up to 21 months.

We still had to apply for Recreation Lane allotments and Spencers Wood Recreation ground. Haslams were preparing the plans for these areas.

ACTION – Clerk to keep on the agenda

- 47.2 The Clerk was asked to prepare a list of all properties and the status of each for ease of reference. This is to include Ryeish Green Pavilion.

ACTION – Clerk to prepare the list of properties

- 47.3 Current Position regarding Land Swaps

Cllr James provided an update on the current situation.

The Clerk was asked to investigate the position regarding the main car park at School Green with a view to asking WBC if SPC could take over the car park.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate the ownership of the School Green Car Park

- 47.4 Options for the acquisition of land adjacent to the Basingstoke Road

The Clerk advised that he had not received any response from the landowner he had written to on this matter.

22/FGP/48 Implementation of Investment Policy

- 48.1 The Finance Manager confirmed that £200k had been moved into the Lloyds Bank Instant Access Account. It was agreed that there would be no further movement of finances until the economic climate was more settled.

22/FGP/49 Annual Grant Award Scheme

- 49.1 Members consider the proposal from the Recreation & Amenities Committee to move to an annual awards scheme rather than consider applications as they are received. Separate arrangements were required for the Tea Club and Car Service as these were specific services SPC wished to see take place. It was **NOTED** that Standing Orders would need to be modified accordingly.

It was agreed that this proposal would be recommended to Full Council

Proposed: Cllr Grimes
Seconded: Cllr Clarke
Approved: Unanimously

22/FGP/50 Date of Next Meeting

- 50.1 Next meeting is 23rd February 2023

The meeting ended at 20.50

List of Actions

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| 43.1 | Clerk to ensure that Risk Register is on the agenda for February 2023 meeting | Clerk |
| 47.1 | Clerk to ensure that Land Registrations to remain on the agenda for February 2023 meeting | Clerk |
| 47.2 | Clerk to arrange a full list of all properties requiring land registration and their status | Clerk |
| 47.3 | Clerk to investigate ownership of the School Green car park | Clerk |