

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION**
Committee held at **GROOMBRIDGE OLD STATION** on **Monday 10th**
January 2022 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors Nick Anderson, Diana Kelly, Marcus Tarling,
Paul Watkins (Chair), Linsey Winter

In attendance: Deborah Siddle – Parish Clerk

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Council. There were no members of the public present.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING - none.

2. APOLOGIES - None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2021

002179 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2021, to be duly signed by the Chairman

4.2 Matters outstanding from these minutes

Cllr Winter agreed to continue as Vice Chair.

Completed actions from previous minutes

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 2256	Clerk	Place ornamental lantern on Newton Willows after structural testing undertaken – Council agreed to be done as part of Jubilee
Pg. 2257	Cllr Tarling	Cooks Corner noticeboard delivered to the Parish Office
Pg. 2304	St Thomas' Church	Update provided on why grant application is for more money than previous year
Pg. 2304	Clerks	Assistant Clerk helping with publicising Clued Up in the parish
002101	Clerk	Grant recipients of successful applications notified
Pg. 2307	Clerk	Grant payments made
002102	Council	Approval given to sign Management Contract with Martin & Co now delegated limit agreed
002103	Council	Approved updated Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation (Post Office letting)
002104	Clerk	Accepted tree quote from Gimbles Tree Services
Pg. 2309	Clerk	Items for inclusion on next agenda carried forward
Pg. 2309	Cllr Tarling	Borrowing and Investment Policy on agenda

Outstanding items not on this agenda

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1821	Clerk	Consider Sussex Resilience Forum proforma
Pg. 2002	Clerk	Pursue free opportunities for advertising the meeting rooms
Pg. 2002	F&A	Review meeting room hire when hirings resume
Pg. 1283	F&A	Review position and size of post office noticeboard when WPC take ownership
Pg. 2257	Clerk	Newly repaired Cooks Corner noticeboard to be relocated to Blackham Village Hall.

Actions from this meeting

Page No	Who	Action
002180	Clerk	Recommend budget and Precept to Council
Pg. 2413	Clerk	Recommend EMRs to Council
Pg. 2413	Cllr Watkins	Share any information about CDM Regulations relevant to Streetlights with the Committee
Pg. 2413	Clerk	Enquire whether Wealden District Council has any advice regarding streetlighting in villages/rural areas
Pg. 2413	Clerk	Ask other Wealden Clerks which streetlighting contractor
Pg. 2413	Clerk	Ask Wealden Clerks how they are approaching ES Highways' revised process
Pg. 2413	Clerk	Request a quote for the Lighting Design on Withyham Road and circulate by email to the Committee
Pg. 2414	Clerk	Seek feedback from grant applicants that had been in receipt of monies in 2021/22
002182	Clerk	Recommend the Pensions Discretions Policy to Council
002183	Clerk	Recommend the Risk Assessment & Management Policy to Council
002184	Clerk	Recommend the Petty Cash Policy to Council
002185	Clerk	Recommend the Carbon Policy to Council
002186	Clerk	Recommend the Payments Procedure to Council
002187	Clerk	Recommend the Borrowing & Investment Strategy Policy to Council

Pg. 2414	Clerk	Include 3-year grass cutting contract, St John's Preschool access path and maintenance works required at Old Station on next Agenda
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5. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2022/23

5.1 To consider the budget for 2022/23, and Precept required (to recommend to Council)

The Committee had received detailed papers prior to the meeting advising on each budget line for 2022/23, and a proposed budget. The Committee considered these and made a reduction of £200 to 4021 IT Support (to £2,400) as IT related training can be covered by 4007 Training (£2,500).

This resulted in budgeted 2022/23 expenditure of £299,593 and expected income of £136,340. This leaves a gap of £163,253 to find from Precept.

In 2021/22 the Precept was £156,053. The difference between £156,053 and £163,253 is £7,200 which represents a 4.6% increase. The 2021/22 the band D requirement was £117.59 and the provisional tax base for 2022/23 is 1,333.2 meaning that a precept of £163,253 would be £122.45, an increase of £4.86 (9p per week).

002180 RESOLVED to recommend the above budget and Precept of £163,253 to January Council.

5.2 To provisionally consider the Ear-marked Reserves for 2022/23

One of WPC's largest items of expenditure in 2022/23 will be the refurbishment of Phoenix House before its re-rental. To minimise impact on WPC's annual budget/Precept the Clerk made the following recommendations for EMRs to accommodate the anticipated one-off costs:

Budget Line	Budget Description	2021/22 Budget at Dec21	2022/23 Proposed budget	Notes
326	Balls Green Play area	5835	5000	Looking to provide further equipment
327	Gb Play area	28350.5	1440.49	& use CiL
328 NEW	Teasley Mead play equipment	0	2500	Swings requested by residents
329	Road safety projects	15000	3000	Looking to provide a further VAS site at A264
330	Work in progress	5470.58	0	No carry forward figures
332	WPV	2000	2000	Unspent WDC grant
333	Office associated repairs	5000.4	2000	Also budget 4500 £2,000
336	CiL	26910.01	26910.01	use for Groombridge playground with EMR 327 (fundraiser)
337	Parish Assets	5000	3000	Replacement bus shelter Withyham
338	Environmental Improvements	10000	5000	TBA
339	post Office convert **Rename Phoenix House works	0	52715.5	Also £15,000 in budget = £67,715.50
		103566.49	103566	

The Committee considered these provisional Earmarked Reserve allocations and AGREED to recommend them to Council, recognising that Earmarked reserves can be reviewed at other times during the year.

As part of this discussion the Clerk was asked under what authority the current works in progress to rectify the damp at Phoenix House were agreed. The Clerk clarified that the need was identified in the Building Survey and agreed under Delegated Authority when the property became vacant to avoid a lengthy void period/loss of rental income. Cllr Tarling asked it to be minuted that he has concerns about costs involved in works at Phoenix House.

6. STREETLIGHTS UPDATE

Further to the discussion at the June meeting, East Sussex Highways (WPC's contractors for streetlights) had notified the Clerk and Highways Coordinator that, as ES Highways would be classed as the Designer under CDM Regulations on any streetlight works and so be responsible for risks, then it will be necessary for a lighting design to be undertaken on any removal/replacement/new lantern and/or column (i.e. anything that is not maintenance).

On reviewing WPCs 39 streetlights there are 9 still needing straight forward LED replacement and 6 which would require column changes to become LED enabled. These are over 7 roads, all of which would require lighting designs under the new process.

The Clerk's and Highway Coordinator's suggestion was therefore that WPC suspends LED changes and instead prioritise a Lighting Design for Withyham Road with a view to getting the 2 lights (that are currently out) back working. This would allow us to test the system with regards the process, costs and options that might be available to WPC as a Parish Council with a limited budget.

The Committee considered this and the Chair noted that he would be meeting with the Highways Coordinator for further information about CDM Regulations. He would share any information relevant to Streetlights with the Committee.

The Clerk was asked to:

- Enquire whether Wealden District Council has any advice regarding streetlighting in villages/rural areas given the Dark Skies Policy.
- Ask other Wealden Clerks which contractor they use in order to seek quotes from alternative providers.
- Ask Wealden Clerks how they are approaching ES Highways' revised process
- Request a quote for the Lighting Design on Withyham Road and circulate by email to the Committee

- 002181 RESOLVED** to suspend LED replacements while further investigation is undertaken into a Lighting Design for Withyham Road, or alternative avenues.

7. REVIEW AND AGREE GRANTS POLICY & PAPERWORK FOR 2022/23

The Clerk had circulated updated paperwork. The Committee considered this and AGREED the amendments. The Clerk was asked to seek feedback from applicants that had been in receipt of monies in 2021/22.

8. POLICIES

8.1 Pensions Discretions

- 002182 RESOLVED** to recommend the Pensions Discretions Policy to Council, to be reviewed in 3 years or in the case of legislative changes.

8.2 Risk Assessment & Management

- 002183 RESOLVED** to recommend the Risk Assessment & Management Policy to Council, to be reviewed annually.

8.3 Petty Cash Policy

- 002184 RESOLVED** to recommend the Petty Cash Policy to Council, to be reviewed in 3 years or in the case of legislative changes.

8.4 Carbon Policy

- 002185 RESOLVED** to recommend the Carbon Policy to Council, to be reviewed in 3 years or in the case of legislative changes.

8.5 Payments Procedure

- 002186 RESOLVED** to recommend the Payments Procedure to Council, to be reviewed in 3 years or in the case of legislative changes.

8.6 Borrowing & Investment Strategy

- 002187 RESOLVED** to recommend the Borrowing & Investment Strategy Policy to Council, to be reviewed in 3 years or in the case of legislative changes.

9. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

9.1 To note expenditure against budget report to January 2022

Noted

9.2 To consider any virements and journals required

None required.

9.3 To receive interim Internal Audit report

The meeting received the internal audit and thanked the RFO for another successful Audit.

10. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

Matters for next agenda:

- St John's Preschool access path
- 3-year grass cutting contract
- Old Station maintenance works

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 28th March 2022 at 7.30pm (to be confirmed)

The meeting ended at 7.50pm