

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE** Committee held at **GROOMBRIDGE OLD STATION** on **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Nick Anderson, Andrew Fane, Robert Gordon-James, Diana Kelly, Penny Lawne, Linsey Winter (Chair)

**In attendance:** Natalie Brett – Assistant Clerk  
Member of the Public for item 5

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.

- 1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING** - none.
- 2. APOLOGIES** - Cllr Parekh-Jones - Family Commitment
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Cllr Gordon-James as the letting agent for Pheonix House.

**4. MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**002565** **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023, which were duly signed by the Chairman.

4.2 Matters outstanding from these minutes:

Completed actions from previous minutes

| <b>Page No</b> | <b>Who</b>                      | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                         |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 2413       | Clerk                           | Alternative streetlighting contractor details obtained from other Wealden Clerks                                      |
| Pg. 2691       | Clerk                           | Quotes to repaint Parish Office kitchen no longer required as Parish Maintenance Person to do this after roof repairs |
| Pg. 2692       | Clerk                           | Old Cook's Corner noticeboard sited at Teasley Mead                                                                   |
| Pg.2732        | Finance Committee               | Leaves cleared from hopper/drainpipe but leak still there                                                             |
| <b>002549</b>  | Clerk                           | Grant made to Dorset Arms Angling Club                                                                                |
| Pg. 2792       | PMP (parish maintenance person) | Actions found at play equipment inspections on PMP's action list                                                      |
| Pg. 2792       | Clerk                           | Roundabout provider has fixed loose banding                                                                           |
| Pg. 2792       | Clerk                           | Bin at Balls Green Community Space removed                                                                            |
| Pg. 2792       | Clerk                           | Top beam of swing at Balls Green Community Space being monitored at routine inspections                               |
| <b>002550</b>  | Clerk                           | Accepted the 5 year Sovereign playground compliance package                                                           |
| Pg. 2793       | Clerk                           | Consultation about dogs on leads on Groombridge Recreation Ground in progress                                         |
| Pg. 2793       | Clerk                           | October Council meeting to consider a dogs on leads policy                                                            |
| Pg. 2793       | Clerk                           | Groombridge Cricket Club reminded that the gate should be closed behind cars                                          |

|               |       |                                                                                     |
|---------------|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 2794      | Clerk | First Building Based Assets Working Group met in September                          |
| Pg. 2794      | Clerk | Repainting of the Ridge telephone box added to Maintenance person list              |
| Pg. 2794      | PMP   | PMP to block the gap beside the gate, confirmed that gate works ok                  |
| <b>002552</b> | Clerk | Accepted a three-year agreement with Mulberry & Co (auditors)                       |
| <b>002553</b> | Clerk | Recommended the revised Child Protection Policy to Council                          |
| Pg. 2795      | Clerk | Internal auditors confirmed bank statements cannot be obtained for the prepaid card |

**Outstanding items from previous meetings**

| <b>Page No</b> | <b>Who</b> | <b>Action</b>                                                                    |
|----------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg. 2002       | Clerk      | Pursue free opportunities for advertising the meeting rooms                      |
| Pg.2732        | Clerk      | Obtain quotes for repointing, to be considered at the next Finance Committee     |
| Pg.2733        | Clerk      | Produce 2 year budget after work is undertaken on the next Parish Plan 2024-2028 |
| Pg. 2792       | Clerk      | Order replacement goal for Teasley Mead                                          |
| Pg. 2794       | Clerk      | Replace bench at Youth Shelter with a memorial bench                             |

**Actions from this meeting**

- Having obtained details of another streetlighting contractor, Clerk to follow up
- Parish Maintenance Person to look at leak from drainpipe/hopper at parish office

| <b>Page No</b> | <b>Who</b> | <b>Action</b>                                                                                                          |
|----------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pg 2812        | Clerk      | Contact alternative streetlighting contractor                                                                          |
| Pg 2812        | PMP        | Look at leak from drainpipe/hopper                                                                                     |
| Pg 2814        | Clerk      | Confirm number of meetings remaining in financial year.                                                                |
| Pg 2814        | Clerk      | Promote the WPC grants programme                                                                                       |
| <b>002566</b>  | Clerk      | Pay a grant of £800 to wild Groombridge subject to an approved bank account                                            |
| <b>002567</b>  | Clerk      | Implement the updated Parish Maintenance Person Risk Assessment                                                        |
| <b>002568</b>  | Clerk      | Advise BAG that ToR agreed.                                                                                            |
| Pg 2816        | RGJ/Clerk  | Discuss leak at Pheonix with Clerk                                                                                     |
| Pg 2816        | Clerk      | Obtain costs for new goals at Groombridge Recreation Ground                                                            |
| Pg 2816        | Clerk      | Consider if PMP can do any works that would avoid the need for structural testing of the goal posts                    |
| <b>002569</b>  | Clerk      | Move to Income and Expenditure reporting and make payment of £535 to RBS to convert data                               |
| Pg 2817        | Clerk      | Next agenda to include quotes for hedge laying, cutting lime trees at Groombridge Recreation Ground and deferred items |

## 5. GRANTS

### 5.1 Review expenditure to date for 2023/24

It was noted that there was £4,119 remaining in budget to be spent. The Clerk was asked to confirm how many more meetings remained before the new financial year and to promote the grants programme through the usual means at their discretion.

*A member of the Public arrived at the meeting to speak on behalf of the Grant application for Wild Groombridge.*

**The Chairman closed at 7.14pm the meeting to allow the member of the public to speak:**

Wild Groombridge have been in contact with the scouts who are keen to be involved in the bird box project. This may involve working with Men in Sheds and learning about the species and their environment. Discussions are ongoing but very positive.

Moving forward the plan is to engage residents who house the boxes to work in a match funding format. This may take the form of direct purchasing of bird boxes from Men in Sheds to match the number Wild Groombridge provide, or in the case of land owners, the offer of a meadow to support the insect life needed by nesting birds.

Contact has already been made by two residents who have seen the number of house martins nesting on their property drop. They would be keen to work with Wild Groombridge on increasing the nesting with boxes.

Swift activity has been on the increase near the locations of sited nest boxes however it is not unusual for Swifts to take a few years to choose a nesting box.

Wild Groombridge are looking at the nesting boxes as a holistic project, considering the habitats that are required for the birds but also their insect prey. Looking to creating a fully working eco system. They are also working with the RSPB and Ashdown Forest on a wildlife corridor between the Ashdown Forest and the RSPB Wildlife reserve which is being funded by DEFRA.

A question was raised in regard to how electronic callers work.

Electronic callers work on a timed basis and broadcast a nesting call of the bird you are hoping to encourage to nest. Research has shown that this encourages the species to see this as a safe nesting site and begin nesting. This technology is also used by the RSPB and there is more information on their website.

**The chairman thanked the Member of the Public for the information provided prior to the meeting, for attending the meeting and for speaking.  
The meeting was reopened at 7.30pm**

*Member of the Public left the meeting*

### 5.2 Wild Groombridge application (deferred from August) - consider further information.

The information that had been provided in advance of the meeting answered a number of outstanding questions including the materials used and cost breakdown, the bank account that would be required and the priority list of

boxes. The Committee was pleased to hear that Wild Groombridge plan to involve the younger generation with the involvement of the Scouts.

The holistic approach of ensuring eco systems were also complimented, as was match funding and longevity of the project. The Committee asked that should the grant be approved Wild Groombridge provide feedback to the Climate and Ecology Advisory Group six monthly.

**002566 RESOLVED** to give a grant of £800 to Wild Groombridge, subject to the required bank account.

It was noted that £3,319 remains in the budget.

5.3 Consider any new applications received for the 2023/24 budget – No new applications.

## **6. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

6.1 Consider updated Parish Maintenance Person Risk Assessment

**002567 RESOLVED** to approve the updated Parish Maintenance Person Risk Assessment with the addition of “Online training provided where available” into each section.

## **7. PARISH ASSETS**

7.1 Building Based Asset Working Group (BAG) – update on first meeting – Noted

7.2 Building Based Asset Working Group (BAG) – agree recommended Terms of Reference

**002568 RESOLVED** to agree the Terms of Reference for the Building Based Asset Working Group with the amendment of the name to Building Asset Working Group (BAG)

7.3 Consider recommendations from Building Based Asset Working Group (BAG) - Old Station and Phoenix House roof.

The actions agreed at the BAG meeting were approved. It was further agreed that Robert Gordon-James would discuss the issues with regards to a leak directly with the Clerk.

7.4 Consider Phoenix House - cracking to plaster on ceiling.

This was noted and is being monitored by the tenant and the letting agent.

7.5 Consider cost for structural testing of goal posts at Groombridge Recreation Ground

It was felt that £500 was a significant amount of money. The Clerk was asked to go out for costings for a replacement goal post and to investigate if there is anything the Parish Maintenance Person could do to offset the issues raised in the ROSPA report. The Committee would like this information before making a decision.

## **8. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE**

8.1 Note expenditure against budget reports to August 2023 (including Earmarked Reserves) – Noted

8.2 Consider any Virements and Journals – None.

8.3 Consider draft cashflow 2023/24 - deferred to the next meeting.

8.4 Consider transferring from Receipts and Payments to Income and Expenditure reporting.

**002569 RESOLVED** to move from receipts and payment to Income and Expenditure reporting and to authorise the payment of £535 to RBS to convert the data.

**9. REPORT FROM RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER (RFO)**

Deferred to the next meeting.

**10. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA** to include quotes for hedge laying, cutting lime trees at Groombridge Recreation Ground and deferred items.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – agreed as Monday 4th December 2023 time to be confirmed by agenda.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm