



Meeting held via 'Zoom' video conferencing due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillors in attendance: Chairman: Gerard McCloskey (GM), Adrian Collins (AC) and Max Harwood (MH).

Clerk: Debbie Harknett.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Meeting started at 7.30pm.

Chairman: Gerard McCloskey

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Clerk: Debbie Harknett

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**1) Positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

- a) Clerk reminded the meeting of SW's desire to stand down as Chairman and sought nominations. AC's proposal of GM taking over, as previously noted, was seconded by MH so GM took the chair.
- b) GM's proposal that AC take over as vice-chair was seconded by MH and AC accepted.

**2) It was noted the meeting would not be recorded.**

**3) Apologies for absence were received from Steve Williamson (SW).**

**4) There were no declarations of interest.**

**5) The Minutes of last meeting held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 were approved to be signed as a true record.**

- a) GM sought an update on the land registration process - MH explained we are waiting on the land registry (who are inundated at the moment) for Rake Recreation Ground and WSCC Archives re-opening for access to documents for Fyning Recreation Ground. It was agreed that while we are frustrated with the service provided by MacDonald Oates, we would remain with them for the current registrations and outdoor gym lease as they have been started but would seek an alternative for any future land matters.
- b) GM noted over £1,000 funds are held to take the NP plan to the final stage which should involve a public meeting and referendum though some costs should be met by SDNPA; details to be sought from SW.

**6) There were no representations from the public.**

**7) Chairman's report was covered within the expenditure review.**

**8) Review of expenditure against budget 2020/21**

- a) GM went through the budget/expenditure and expected amounts to the year-end.
- b) Clerks salary is over budget for a number of reasons including the regularisation of neglected increase resulting in back-pay; additional hours worked; establishing of pension (to meet current regulations) and associated employer contributions; higher earnings incurring Employer NI contributions. He felt it was difficult to predict hours and the recent council transition is resulting in a more focussed, better informed and more active council which could create additional work for the Clerk though if we are more efficient it may help. Agreed to maintain awareness in next financial year.
- c) Staff training overspend occurred because the Clerk has registered for Cilca.
- d) Councillor training – GM is to join two webinars in the next few weeks and the Clerk is trying to arrange a planning training webinar specific for our council.
- e) All donations for the outdoor gym have now been received with the final cost to the PC of £1,549.50 plus an estimated £1,000 legal fees.

- f) There was some discussion about applying for grants and it was noted that Covid restrictions along with having reserves may have made the council a little complacent. It was agreed to ask the project group to establish what grants are potentially available as it may help to stimulate ideas. MH noted some grants are not available to Parish Councils but can be available for charities and other organisations so we may be able to work with other village groups.
- g) Clerk to see if any training available on grant funding.
- h) We have received £50,666 WSCC Operation Watershed grant for the current Sandhill drainage works; it is envisaged the invoice will be settled before the end of the current financial year as works are underway.
- i) GM noted reserve funds to carry forward to the next financial year are estimated to be £38,000 (approximately 25% over our precept requirement) though some of these funds are project specific for neighbourhood plan, RATA and woodland management.
- j) GM asked if there was a precept/population parish comparison – as this was unknown, he will ask his training session.

**9) Annual document review**

- a) Finance Committee Terms of reference – had been reviewed in September.
- b) Financial regulations – GM went through this document (previously circulate) which had been updated to match the current NALC recommendations before it was approved.
- c) Register of assets – this updated document (previously circulated) was approved by the meeting with the proviso that if payment for the additional SID or refurbishment of the Bull Hill finger post is made before the end of March it will be updated to reflect these additions.
- d) Banking procedures – this updated document was approved by the meeting. It was noted the council will need an online banking protocol for the new Unity Bank account when it has been opened.
- e) Risk register – this new document was approved by January full council meeting.

**10) The next Finance Committee Meeting was scheduled to be held at 7.30pm on Monday 26th April 2021.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.48pm.

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**Chairman**

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**Date**