

MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday 17th October 2023 7pm at Manor Hall red brick annex

Present: Cllr Lean (Chair of Finance Committee), Cllr Clark, Cllr McCullough, Cllr Goddard.
Clerk R Davis
RFO Sue Simmons

406. Apologies for absence
Received from Cllr Kelliher & Cllr Hill
407. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011
Cllr Clark stated his interest due to being on the DMC and that his views here may differ to the DMC decision
408. Pre-arranged items from members of public
NONE
409. Committee to consider any Planning Applications (necessary due to deadline dates) for comment/submission to SGC
[P23/02813/F](#) Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with associated works. Land At 363 Badminton Road Yate Bristol South Gloucestershire BS37 5JF

Confirmed as a Green Belt location - Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council OBJECTS to this application on the grounds that it is a contrived design constituting inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It conflicts with South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy policies CS34 – Rural Areas and CS5 – Location of Development, and also Policies Sites and Places Plan policy PSP7 – Development in the Green Belt. The proposed development does not fall under any of the exceptions identified in this policy.
A secondary issue is that the proposed new dwelling does not have adequate private amenity space and therefore conflicts with Policies Sites and Places Plan policy PSP43 – Private amenity space standards.
410. Committee to APPROVE Minutes of F & GP meeting held on 3rd July 2023
The Minutes were APPROVED and signed by the Chair
411. Committee to NOTE receipt and APPROVAL of all Bank reconciliation and statements for Q2 2023/24
NOTED with no questions arising
412. Committee to NOTE full list of payments for Q2 2023/24
NOTED with no questions arising
413. Committee to NOTE full list of receipts for Q2 2023/24
NOTED with no questions arising
414. Committee to NOTE net position information on 2023/24 Receipts & Payments vs Budgets and forecasts and discuss/approve any required decisions
The RFO talked the Committee through the current half year position on Income, Finance, Admin & E & L expenditure, and grants versus the 23/24 budget. All figures are where expected halfway through the financial year with no changes needed to budget or plans. All NOTED.
415. Committee to consider and approve Fishing Licence fee effective from 1st April 2024
The current fishing licence fee is £437.50 per month (£5250 per year)

From April 1st 2024 the options and costs were considered. Costs that will increase are the portaloo, and electricity for the aerator with associated maintenance requirements as well as general works at the lake. It was APPROVED to increase the monthly fishing licence fee to £460 per month (£5520 per year). This represents a below inflation increase of 5.1%.
The Committee also agreed that a request for a credit for disruption due to the outflow works would be considered on completion, although this is only expected to have a small number of days impact on fishing.

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Tuesday 17th October 2023 7pm at Manor Hall red brick annex

416. Committee to discuss first draft budget proposals prepared by the RFO and make necessary next step decisions

The Committee were taken through V1 of the 24/25 Draft Budget line by line and adjustments and additions made to projected costs and budget requirements.

It was noted that several things are not yet known – Council Tax Base figures, CIL/S106 expected in April 2024, NJS Pay scales for 2023 onwards, among others.

Taking discussions into account the RFO will now create V2 of the draft budget and issue to Cllrs in readiness for the next discussion in November when it is hoped more information will be available.

417. Committee to discuss initial proposals relating to 2024/2025 Precept request

It was NOTED that at this stage only the context and principles of setting the precept can be agreed and then further discussion when more information available.

It was agreed to consider:

- The increase in Council Tax Base
- The monetary gap indicated by the draft budget ie the shortfall of income vs expenditure
- Inflationary pressures on Parish Council costs
- Inflationary pressures on residents
- The need for Parish Councils to fund more as SGC tries to save money or charge more
- The removal of small grants from District Councillors via MAF and Area Wide Grants meaning Parish Councils may need to fund more local organisations
- The fact that for several years this Parish Council has kept a nett zero Precept for residents (only CTB & age applied)

It was therefore agreed that the 2024/25 precept will NOT aim for nett zero as that is unrealistic and the Parish Council needs to start to keep pace or reserves will dwindle fast.

The exact precept cannot be decided until further information is received. To be continued at next Full Parish Council meeting in November.

418. Committee to note any correspondence relating to Finance matters

(a) AGAR Completion documents from BDO LLP as noted at Full Parish Council meeting 9.10.2023
These are all available at www.westerleighcoalpitheathparishcouncil.gov.uk/annual-accounts/
NOTED

(b) SGC Special Expenses 24/25 £7115
NOTED

(c) New EON contract 1 year
1 year contract agreed as Standing Charge may reduce in near future and that is the max of our electric charge.
Start date 24/8/23 End date 24/8/24
Costs – Standing charge 56p per day (no increase) Day unit rate 30.5p per kWh (up from 16p)

(d) CIL report for financial year 2022/2023
Requested by SGC and submitted

419. Committee to discuss & consider committed spends & spread of funds across different bank accounts
Current fund spread across accounts. To approve any required movements of funds.

As shown on latest Bank reconciliation;

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Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
Petty Cash	30/09/2023	0.00	
Natwest Current	30/09/2023	132,870.05	
Natwest Reserve	30/09/2023	43.46	
Deposit Protection Scheme	30/09/2023	836.00	
Redwood Bank 35 day notice	30/09/2023	87,611.54	
Unity trust Bank Instant Access	20/09/2023	85,445.18	
			306,806.23

The spread of balances was NOTED. As per the Investment Strategy it was agreed to stick to the principle of £85000 max to ensure coverage within the FSCS in each savings account. So as large amounts are needed in coming months money will be used from Unity and Redwood to keep to this principle. The current account balance will reduce as the second half of year expenditure comes out whereas only a further £7000 of income is expected.

The Committee approved the RFO to make the transfers (authorised as per PC procedures) to achieve the £85000 principle.

420. Committee to consider any other items required by the RFO

Expenditure on Bitterwell Lake works; Ivel Aquatics quotation £53196.29

Go ahead not yet given as further detail still awaited as per Full Parish Council Minutes of October 9th.

421. Items considered urgent or exempt by the Chairman

NONE

422. Dates of future Parish Council meetings/Committee meetings

Full Parish Council meeting November 13th 7pm Newman Room, Manor Hall, Coalpit Heath

This meeting will include a Finance section and that will include V2 of the draft budget and consideration of the Precept assuming Council Tax Base data and other required info has been received.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm

A. C. Lean

25/3/24