

LANCING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 15 January 2020

CLLrs Present:- Robin Monk (Chair); Douglas Bradley, Danny Jackson, Geoff Patmore.

Officers:- Helen Plant, Clerk and Vally Fish, Assistant Clerk.

38. Apologies

Apologies had been received and, with the reasons outlined, were accepted from CLLrs Butcher, Clark and Purnell.

39. To receive nominations for, and the election of Office of Vice Chair for this Committee

Subsequent to Cllr Clark becoming Vice-Chairman of the Council the vacancy of Vice-Chairman for this Committee had subsequently arisen. Cllr Patmore was proposed and seconded.

Resolved – That Cllr Patmore be elected as the Vice Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year 2019/20.

40. Declaration of Substitute Members

None.

41. Declarations of Interest

None.

42. Public Forum/Questions

None.

43. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13 November 2019

Resolved – That the Minutes of the previous meeting be approved.

44. Accounts for payment

44.1 November Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. November Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £52,231.90
- ii. November Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £6.50

44.2 December Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. December Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £31,253.77
- ii. December Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £157.30

45. Approval of Cash Balances & Investments

It was **RESOLVED** that the cash balances and investments of the Council totalling **£516,776.24** as at 31 December 2019 was a true record.

46. Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading

Resolved – That the information be noted.

47. Clerk's Report

47.1 Damp in the Parish Hall corridor

Pursuant to Committee Minute 37.1/Nov/19, it was confirmed that the leaky waste pipe flexi hose connectors on the ladies toilets had now been replaced and the plaster on the corridor wall had been removed to allow it to dry out, then the wall would be re-plastered and painted accordingly.

Work to repair to the leak in the underfloor heating pipe in Green Room was also in hand.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

47.2 Installation of Solar Panels to the Parish Hall

Following Empower Energy being chosen as this Council's preferred company to supply and install a 29.4 Kwp solar panel system to the Parish Hall (Committee Minute 37.2/ Nov/19 refers), it was confirmed that the company's surveyor had now carried out a more detailed review of the building so the necessary scaffold requirements could be planned and to establish the best position for the inverter/cablings etc., prior to the actual installation works being started.

However, this had highlighted that there would be a high cost implication in respect of the scaffold hire required to access the eastern roof of the Parish Hall; a cost payable by the Parish Council. The Surveyor had therefore suggested that the southern section to the raised roof area above the Jubilee Hall be used instead.

While the use of any of the flat roof area being used for solar panel installation had been discouraged against during the initial investigations of the scheme, mainly because the additional weight would likely affect the general integrity of the roof structure, the Surveyor had been able to establish that this slightly pitched area was a steel structure, and as the weight load would be minimal and well distributed, it should not cause any structural issues.

That being said, it remained a firm recommendation that an overall structural survey be carried to ensure this was the case. The expense for such a survey only amounted to 2% of the overall cost of the scheme, so it was considered to be a worthwhile outlay.

It was noted that by using this roof area instead of the eastern and western aspects of the old Parish Hall, the system would produce 4,000Kwh more per annum than the previous design. Empower had also stated it would fully warrantee the roof following the fixing of the panels directly to it.

Resolved – (a) That a structural survey be carried out on the Jubilee Hall roof area to confirm it is adequate to take the weight of the proposed solar panel system.

(b) That, subject to the results of (a) above, the revised solar panel proposal be approved and progressed as soon as possible.

47.3 Draft Budget 2020/21 and setting the precept

Submitted - a report and draft budget detailing the proposed 2020/21 budget, following on from the previous considerations on the matter at Council Minute 43.2ii/Sep/19 and Committee Minutes 26.6/Sep/19 and 37.3/Nov/19. The draft budget detailed the list of income and expenditure by budgetary headings showing 2018/19 actual figures against budget, 2019/20 budgets and estimated end of year figures and the 2020/21 proposed budget, highlighting specific variations.

Members were reminded that as the precept request must be submitted to Adur District Council by 31 January 2020, this Committee had to agree the final budget and level of precept at this meeting, for resolution by Full Council on 29 January 2020.

It was noted at the last Committee meeting that a thorough scrutiny of the overall budgetary headings had been carried out again, with most increases due to general inflation. However, the Committee requested further analysis on specific items, and updates were provided.

Notwithstanding, while the existing IT Support costs had been compared against other providers which were commensurate, some Members still questioned the perceived high costs and considered the service should be reviewed again before the next budget.

It was also noted that the Gang Mowing contract had been reviewed and a subsequent change in service provider would be effected.

It remained the case that the only item that hadn't been taken into account within the draft budget was the sum of money required to retain the Compass Bus Service 16, should full Council decide to continue to subsidise the service.

The Council's current financial situation, including the 2020/21 proposed budget with the precept remaining at the same level as it was last year, was provided in the submitted detailed list, and summarised as followed:-

Detail	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Estimates	2020/21 Proposed
Balances brought forward	£224,073	£358,780	£273,052
All income including precept (£322,200)	£586,131	£566,029	£555,435
All expenditure including agreed projects	£451,424	£651,757	£550,765
Balance carried forward	£358,780	£273,052	£277,722
Less Earmarked Reserves & Minimum General Reserves (£90k)	£155,375	£184,701	£248,701
General Reserves balance	£203,405	£ 88,351	£ 29,021

Band D property effect

It was noted that the proposed budget did not necessitate an increase in the precept and continued to allow for £40,000 to be put towards the Monks Rec Improvement Project. Furthermore, the proposed budget had no effect on the Band D property figure, which should remain at £52 per annum.

Resolved - (a) That, notwithstanding any decision to be taken by full Council in respect of the future of the Compass Bus Service 16, it be recommended to full Council that the 2020/21 budget, as outlined above, with the level of precept remaining at £322,200, be approved.

(b) That the draft budget, as outlined in the attached Appendix, be approved.

(c) That it be recommended to full Council that the minimum level of General Reserves be increased to £90,000, with the aspiration to increase it to at least 50% of the precept in accordance with the Internal Auditors recommendation.

(d) That the annual sum transferred to earmarked reserves to account for ordinary Elections be increased from £4,000 to £6,000.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.