

LANCING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 16 January 2019 at 7.30pm

Clrs Present:- Geoff Patmore (Chair); Carol Albury, Robin Monk, Emma Purnell, Gina Scotting and Jean Turner.

Ex-officio:- Cllr Gloria Eveleigh.

Officer:- Helen Plant, Clerk and Nick Wiltshire, Assistant Clerk.

34. Apologies

None.

35. Declaration of Substitute Members

None.

36. Declarations of Interest

None.

37. Public Forum/Questions

None.

38. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 14 November 2018

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

39. Accounts for payment

39.1 November Expenditure

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

- i. November Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £28,527.51
- ii. November Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £5.50

39.2 December Expenditure

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

- i. December Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £98,750.56
- ii. December Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £20.50

40. Cash Balances & Investments

It was **RESOLVED** that the cash balances and investments of the Council totalling £410,061.34 as at the 31 December 2018 was a true record.

41. Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading

A request was made to vire £600 from Councillors Expenses to Training, to cover the costs of the new Assistant Clerk's training.

A further request was made for the Printing and Advertising budgets to be used towards the costs of producing Lancing Parish Youth Council recruitment leaflets to be distributed with the Council's newsletter to all Lancing households. Whilst it was unclear whether this recruitment method would be successful in targeting young people, it was confirmed that other methods were also being tried, including engaging with local schools.

Resolved – (a) That £600 be vired from Councillors Expenses to Training, to cover the costs of the new Assistant Clerk’s training.

(b) That the Printing and Advertising budgets be used towards the costs of producing and delivering Lancing Parish Youth Council recruitment leaflets.

42. Clerk’s Report

42.1 Review of Council Policies and Procedures

A review of the Council’s Policies and Procedures remained ongoing. The submitted policy had been updated, in line with a model.

Resolved – That the Information & Data Protection Policy, as submitted, be approved.

42.2 Draft Budget 2019/20 & setting the precept update

Submitted – A report setting out the draft 2019/20 budget and subsequent recommendations for the setting of the precept for onward recommendation to full Council. It was noted that the precept request made to Adur District Council had to be submitted by 31 January 2018. Therefore, the Committee had to agree the budget and level of precept for 2019/20 at this meeting, for resolution at the Full Council meeting on 30 January 2019.

It was noted that a thorough scrutiny of the overall budgetary headings had been carried out during the 2018/19 budget and other than those increases detailed in the report, most were due to general inflation.

It was noted that projects relating to existing budgetary headings, as identified by the Amenities and Environment Committee and this Committee had been included in the proposed budget.

However, it was reported that the Lancing Vision Group had only recently met to discuss a proposal that stemmed from the Village Centre Consultation, i.e. to install lamp post banners to act as additional signage to attract visitors into the centre in conjunction with the West Adur Capital Projects Group. It was confirmed that WACPG had already agreed to set aside some funds to work with LPC on this project, so LVG were recommending that an amount of £3,000 (the full amount being £6,000 but 50% being contributed by ADC) to be included in the 2019/20 budget. Albeit, this had not been included in the draft budget in case Members considered it worthwhile increasing this amount in anticipation of other regeneration projects with WACPG that might occur during 2019/20.

The Council’s agreed level of reserves was £60k (Council Minute 65.2(f)/Jan/18 refers) and it remained the recommendation from both the Clerk and the Internal Auditor that this level should not be reduced.

Members were reminded that the final amount of income from the Beach Green and Widewater car parks would not be known until the end of the financial year, in line with the Licence agreement. However, as the amount had been consistently more than £20,000 since the start of the agreement, the income amount had been increased to reflect this in the proposed budget.

The detailed list of income and expenditure by budgetary heading showing 2017/18 actual figures, 2018/19 budgets and estimated end of year figures and the 2019/20 proposed budget were discussed in detail and explanations for specific changes were given.

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 and, taking into account the recalculated 2019/20 tax base, the proposed budget had no effect on the Band D property figure, which should remain at £52 per annum.

Whilst some members felt that an increase in the precept should be made to cover the costs of pipeline projects, as the true costs of those projects were not yet known, it was appropriate for those items to not be included in the proposed budget.

Resolved – That the following recommendations in respect of the 2019/20 budget and setting of the precept be submitted to full Council:-

- (a) That £5,000 be included in the 2019/20 budget towards joint regeneration projects with West Adur Capital Projects Group for Lancing village;
- (b) That the level of General Reserves remains at £60,000.
- (c) That the budget, as summarised in the table below, with the level of precept remaining at £322,200, be approved:-

Detail	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Estimates	2019/20 Proposed
Balances brought forward	£115,340	£224,073	£282,867
All income including precept (£322,200)	£642,520	£547,143	£528,633
All expenditure including agreed projects (i.e. 2018/19 and 2019/20 projects)	£533,787	£488,349	£488,757
Balance carried forward	£224,073	£282,867	£322,743
Less Earmarked Reserves & Minimum General Reserves	£145,875	£196,875	£247,875
= General Reserves	£ 78,198	£ 85,992	£ 74,868

42.3 Internal Audit – Half-yearly Review

Members were advised that the Council’s Internal Auditor, Mulberry & Co, had carried out the half-yearly internal audit on 12 December 2018 and the subsequent report had been circulated to Members for information.

The Auditor had made a number of recommendations, including reviewing the internal finance process guide, receipt system and Financial Regulations and to add wording to the website to advise the public that documents associated with agendas were available on request.

It was confirmed that most of the recommendations had already been addressed, but all would be addressed by the time of the next review.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

42.4 Unpaid Beach Green Hire Fee – Charles Chipperfield Circus - Update

Pursuant to Committee Minute 33.5/Nov/18, it was confirmed that further advice had been sought in respect of attempting to recover the debt from the above company after it failed to pay the Beach Green hire fee and had subsequently stop trading.

The advice insinuated that the prospect of recovering the outstanding amount was small. To that end, it was suggested that any amount spent by the Council be kept to a minimum and the Council’s expectations to recover the funds be kept in check.

Although not trading, the company was still in existence, so it was possible for the Council to go through the small claims court to recover the funds at a cost of £455. However, if what the company's accountant said was correct, i.e. there were no funds or assets available, then the judgment would be rather pointless, albeit the Council would be able to say to the electorate that it had taken all reasonable steps to recover monies due.

If the Committee agreed that the Council should pursue the matter further, it was recommended that a solicitor be instructed to write a formal letter of claim, followed by the issue of proceedings, but the associated costs of this action was in the region of £350 - £650, assuming that the claim would not be defended. If the claim was defended, or enforcement of the judgment necessary, the costs were likely to be higher.

Resolved – That the Clerk writes a formal letter of claim as a start of the proceedings to recover the debt from Charles Chipperfield Circus.

42.5 Parish Hall Defibrillator update

Members were reminded that full Council had previously agreed to partner with the Lancing and Sompting Lions Club to assist with the ambition of installing two defibrillators, with one being installed on the exterior of the Parish Hall and had set aside £1,000 towards the project (Council Minute 36/Sep/17 refers).

It was confirmed that the project had finally taken off and a deal had been struck with The Sussex Heart Charity who were providing match funding. The Lions were co-ordinating the project, so a cheque had been issued to that organisation and it was anticipated that a defibrillator would be installed at the Parish Hall by the end of the municipal year.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

42.6 Beachside Montessori Nursery Garden – request to install artificial grass

It was reported that The Beachside Montessori Nursery had been successful in obtaining a small business grant to improve the condition of the nursery's garden at the rear of the Parish Hall. The area becomes very muddy after wet weather and the grant would allow the Nursery to replace the existing grass and paving with artificial grass if the Committee was minded to approve the request.

Resolved – That The Beachside Montessori Nursery be given approval to improve the garden area by replacing the existing grass and paving with artificial grass.

42.7 Community Cinema

Resolved – That the following film choices be approved:-

- 1 - Bohemian Rhapsody
- 2 - Mamma Mia: Here we go again
- 3 - Time of Their Lives
- 4 - The Theory of Everything
- 5 - The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.