

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH
COUNCIL HELD AT MATFIELD PAVILION AT 2.00pm ON TUESDAY 20th JULY 2021**

Present: Cllrs J. Buttery (Chair), A. Wells, A. Stout, P. Horn (RFO), C. Brooks (Clerk),

1. Appointment of Chair

Cllr. Buttery was unanimously elected as Chair of the Finance Committee.

2. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

3. Review of Minutes of the last meeting of this Committee 13.10.2020

The minutes had been previously agreed by the Full Council. Action points from the last minutes have been implemented. Clarification on some points was sought from the Clerk.

4. Declarations of interest on any item on the Agenda

No declarations of prejudicial pecuniary interest were received.

5. Year end 31 March 2021 Internal audit report

The audit report was discussed. The action point, related to the Disciplinary Policy, has been placed on the next agenda of the Policy and Management Committee.

Action: It was agreed that training in risk assessments would be beneficial for Councillors and Officers and that the Clerk would approach TWBC to determine if it was possible for them to hold a group session.

The use of the dedicated email for Councillors was discussed, having been recommended in the audit. Only Cllr Stout and Cllr Warner are not using these. Cllr Buttery reminded Councillors that from a GDPR perspective the use of dedicated email addresses would likely be mandatory in future.

Action: Cllr Wells requested a copy of accounting procedures and the Clerk would circulate these.

6. Budget Monitoring

6.1 Review current year spending and 5-year historical review

The 5-year history was discussed. Questions were raised about whether the amenity vehicle is returning.

Action: The RFO to investigate costs for the 2020-21 financial year which are paid in arrears and have not yet been invoiced and report back.

6.2 St Luke's Church consideration of future costs

The financial implications of taking on the maintenance of St. Luke's Churchyard were discussed. The FinCom are awaiting the official request and will recommend to the Full Council what they feel would be most beneficial to the parishioners once this has been received.

Action: The Clerk would request up to date information from the PCC on work undertaken on trees since the original report and questions raised in 2018.

6.3 Ear marking funds

It was discussed whether the grant money received (£11k) should be earmarked for the renovation of the Pavilion, given that the rates charges relate to the building. It was agreed that the FinCom would consider retaining funds in unspent cost centres and earmarking for use in 2022/23 when the first budget meeting is held in September.

RECOMMENDATION: that the grant funds received of £11,050 be earmarked for use on the renovation of Matfield Pavilion.

6.4 Rateable Value Grant

The implication of the Pavilion having been assessed for rates was discussed. The disparity between the discounts applied to the Matfield Village Hall and the Pavilion were noted.

Action: The RFO to check with TWBC if the discount is correct or whether it is affected by charitable status of The Memorial Hall and Village Halls, both of which receive greater discounts.

7. Draft Budget and Precept 2022-23 timeframes

Timeframes were discussed and the first working draft budget meeting is to be held on Tuesday 14th September at 11am, this meeting will only consider the budget. Given that Cllr Wells may not be able to attend this meeting the FinCom felt it would be prudent to increase the committee membership to four to ensure quorum is met (three members).

Action: Cllr Buttery to approach other Councillors to obtain a fourth member of FinCom, with this being agreed by the Council at its meeting on 6th September.

8. Income and Fees

The RFO appraised the meeting of current fees related to bookings and licences for Matfield Pavilion and these will be reviewed at the next FinCom meeting to set recommended fee levels for the 2022-23 financial year as well as discretionary free use. The allotment fees would be considered by the Working Group and presented to the Full Council for agreement in due course.

9. Insurance Contract

It was agreed that the RFO would investigate alternative brokers recommended by KALC and refer to the FinCom via email to determine which second broker the PC should go out to tender to, alongside Came and Co. It was agreed that the initial request would be on existing levels of cover for both 1 year and 3 year terms. An inventory of the Pavilion would be undertaken when possible however the sum currently insured for contents would be maintained.

Action: The RFO to approach our broker for recommendations of a surveyor and to obtain a report on whether the £368k sum insured is sufficient. The RFO is also to determine if our policy allows for the use of key box and code. The RFO is to ask the Cricketers to confirm that they have sufficient liability insurance for damage during their use of the building and request a copy of their insurance Policy.

10. Contracts

10.1 Renewal of Contracts and Suppliers

Various contracts were discussed.

Action: RFO to obtain two quotes for existing Telecom services.

Action: The tender for the Mowing Contract would be requested, with existing frequencies, to inform the budget setting on 14th September, the Clerk will take this forwards.

10.2 Appraisal of Contracts held.

A list of current contracts was supplied for information.

11. Direct Debits

A list of Direct Debits and Standing orders was supplied for information.

12. Asset Register

It was agreed that Cllr Stout would work with the RFO to review and update the Asset Register.

Action: The RFO to investigate training with KALC and advise.

13. Grant options

The principle of seeking grants for Council projects was discussed, including for bus shelters. It was determined that no project is currently ready for a grant application though the Council awaits reports on the Pond and Pavilion renovation which might prove suitable for grant funding applications.

14. Section 106 funds

14.1 Funds currently Held by TWBC

The use of the remaining funding currently being held by TWBC for Youth and Adult Recreation projects was discussed in consideration that these funds had been offered to the community twice before. It was noted that a project is already underway by Cllr Buttery and The Clerk, given that the building is nearly ten years old.

RECOMMENDATION: that the £1542 remaining of Section 106 Youth and Adult Recreation funds be used for renovations to Matfield Pavilion.

14.2 S. 106 from the Fernham Development

The FinCom acknowledged that costed projects in preparation for planning applications, such as at Matfield Village Hall, would be beneficial. The Clerk would circulate information on the various categories of s.106 (such as Childrens' Play, Youth and Adult Recreation) so that consideration could be given to projects with quotes obtained in readiness.

15. Bank Accounts

15.1 John Downer.

The RFO explained the background to this charity and that Trustees and administrators had become tied to the Parish Council. The possibility that Ready Call, who already undertake the purchasing and delivery of the food parcels could take over responsibility for the Charity and management of the funds was discussed.

Action: The RFO to confirm that Ready Call is willing to take this over and that it is an eligible entity to do so.

RECOMMENDATION that the management of the John Downer Charity, including trusteeship and bank account, be passed to Ready Call.

15.2 Unity Bank risk

The FinCom agreed that a second Bank account be opened to provide cover for risk outside the government protection, that is over £85k in consideration of the high level of reserves the Parish Council maintains. It was felt appropriate that the Parish Council consider the ethical credentials of organisations proposed.

Action: The RFO will research options for suitable organisations following further investigation into NSandl and recommendations from the auditor.

16. Date of next Meeting

A budget-setting working meeting would be held on 14th September 2021 at 11am.