

**LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**19:30, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017, Jubilee Pavilion**

Present:-

Ms S Hardingham - Chairman  
Mr M Harris  
Mr P Jackson (from 19:35)  
Mrs B Mackwood (from 19:42 to 19:55)  
Mr R Sterland  
Mrs J Pullin  
Miss M Uppington (from 19:59)

Absent:-

Mr C Cave  
Mr N Moorcroft  
Mr A Wilkinson

In attendance: The Clerk, Dr J Turp, and Mrs V Lacey (minutes).

F17.49 - Election of Chairman

Cllr Hardingham was elected as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) committee for the next municipal year or until such time as a new chairman is elected. There were no other nominations. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Pullin, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

F17.50 - Election of vice Chairman

Cllr Harris was elected as vice Chairman of the F&GP committee for the next municipal year or until such time as a new vice chairman is elected. There were no other nominations. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Mrs Pullin. All in favour.

F17.51 - Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cave, Moorcroft and Wilkinson. Cllr Miss Uppington had told the Clerk that she would be late.

F17.52 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

Interests to be declared during the meeting and no dispensations were requested.

F17.53 - Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F17.54 - Exclusion of the press and public

There were no matters necessitating the exclusion of the press and public.

F17.55 - Matters arising

a. F17.27a - Local Council Award Scheme. Now that the PC accounts have been approved by the external auditor, the Clerk can progress this matter, and will check that all the necessary information is on the Parish Council website. The matter will be added to the agenda of the council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

Cllr Jackson joined the meeting at 19:35.

b. F17.27b - Purchase of anti-virus software. This matter is ongoing.

c. F17.27e - Training Defibrillator. The cost of the training defibrillator being used in defibrillator training sessions in Long Ashton has been refunded to the resident organising the sessions. It will be the property of the PC.

d. F17.34 - Reinvestment of Triodos bond. It has been confirmed that the proceeds of the matured £73,000 bond have been reinvested into a 12-month Triodos account, paying 0.8% interest.

e. F17.05e - LULA. Light Up Long Ashton representatives will attend the 19<sup>th</sup> June council meeting to update councillors on plans for this year's Christmas lights display.

f. F17.48 - Community Grant. This year's community grant will go to a group intending to create a mural on the wall of the Co-op, subject to the PC's conditions, which include public consultation. Group representatives will come to the 19<sup>th</sup> June council meeting to update councillors and to answer their questions.

#### F17.56 - Payment of accounts and Payments to Council

A list of payments and receipts was presented to the meeting and the content noted and approved. It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure of **£35,221.52** and to note receipts of **£82,081.95** for the months of April and May 2017. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

#### F17.57 - Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation to the end of May 2017 was presented. The total amount in all accounts is **£554,312.70**. It was RESOLVED to approve the bi-monthly statement and bank reconciliation. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.

#### F17.58 - Review of Expenditure against Budget - Noted.

Cllr Mrs Mackwood joined the meeting at 19:42.

It was agreed that the following item should be brought forward on the agenda.

#### F17.59 - To consider ways of improving council meetings for those with hearing loss

It was noted that there are some Cllrs who wear hearing aids who may benefit if the hearing loop installed in the Jubilee Pavilion could be used. Cllr Mrs Mackwood described some options including personal solutions involving microphones and devices working in tandem with councillors' hearing aids. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate "whole room" solutions and report back to the next F&GP meeting. In the meantime, it was agreed that councillors should be encouraged to be more aware of those with hearing loss, and, in particular, should try not to speak over each other and enunciate more clearly.

#### F17.60 - Finance items

a. To agree to pay room hire charges for PACT meetings. It was RESOLVED that the PC will pay the room hire charges (currently £18 per session) for PACT meetings, which have been held at the Community Centre since the RBL building closed. Proposed by Cllr Mrs Mackwood, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

b. To agree to vire £500 from the Community grant to small grants. It was RESOLVED to vire £500 to the small grants budget to allow grants to be paid during the financial year. Proposed by Cllr Jackson, seconded by Cllr Mrs Mackwood. All in favour.

Cllr Mrs Mackwood left the meeting at 19:55.

#### F17.61 - Accounts for the year 2016/17

a. To review the draft Internal Auditor's Report and to recommend to Council an action plan to meet any actions arising from the report. Bishop Fleming, the auditor, noted that three of the PC's bank accounts have balances in excess of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit of £85,000. It is planned to transfer approximately £42,000 from HSBC to another investment. Given that the PC's assets are spread

across five institutions, with just 10% of its assets being over the maximum covered by the FSCS it was considered that the risk was at an acceptable level.

Cllr Miss Uppington joined the meeting at 19:59.

The auditor also recommended a change to the way that the PC records its fixed assets to make reconciliation between the asset list and the accounts easier and for the PC to consider including all assets in the annual return. It was agreed that this will be considered for 2017/18. The internal auditor will be asked to provide details of its charging schedule. Following this discussion, it was RESOLVED to recommend to full council that the internal auditor's recommendations be carried out next year. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

b. To recommend approval of the audited accounts for the year 2016/17 to the Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. The accounts were discussed. It was noted that the increase in income was due to an increased precept, increased receipts from the Burial Ground and a donation for a defibrillator and that general reserves have remained at around £108k. It was RESOLVED to recommend approval of the 2016/17 audited accounts to the council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

c. To recommend agreement of the Annual Governance and Accounting Statements to the Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. It was clarified that the decrease in the value of fixed assets shown on the return was due to the maturing of a long-term investment. There was a discussion on how the effectiveness of the PC's internal control measures should be reviewed; as there had been no incidents and the financial risk analysis, including internal controls, had been carefully drawn up and was reviewed annually it was thought that it was effective. It was RESOLVED to recommend agreement of the Annual Governance and Accounting Statements to the council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

#### F17.62 - External Audit 2015/16

a. To consider learning points arising from the process. It was noted that the External Auditor's investigation of a resident's objections to the PC's accounts required a considerable amount of the Clerk's time. The Chair thanked the Clerk for her efforts. It was noted that although the PC had seen and agreed to LACA's 5 year plan including the building up of reserves, in future LACA should be asked to provide an end-of-year report to the PC detailing how the PC grant has been used, how much has gone into reserves, the current state of each reserve fund and how the reserves have been spent.

#### F17.63 - To approve the list of frequent payments

It was agreed that as all cheques require the signatures of two Cllrs and these Cllrs are shown the invoices when signing it was not necessary to place a limit on the level of payments to the suppliers and organisations on the frequent payments list. It was agreed that 'LACA for electricity etc' was not specific enough so this was changed to 'LACA for office services'. It was RESOLVED to approve the list of frequent payments with that amendment, proposed by Cllr Miss Uppington, seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.

#### F17.64 - Investment Strategy

The committee reviewed the PC's investment strategy, removing the reference to the long term investment as it has matured and updating dates as appropriate. The potential investment in the CCLA's Properties Fund in the light of the investment strategy was discussed and thought consistent. It was RESOLVED to recommend the adoption of the amended investment strategy to full council on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

#### F17.65 - Banking

It was RESOLVED to agree the PC's list of authorised signatories for all bank accounts without change. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.

#### F17.66 - Taylor Wimpey Areas

- a. To receive update on the transfer of the Taylor Wimpey areas and lease to LACA. No information to report.
- b. Public Art. There has been no further information from Taylor Wimpey.

#### F17.67 - CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund

The Independent Financial Advisor employed by the PC to look at the suitability of the fund for the PC noted that the PC is willing to tolerate short-term fluctuations in the value of its investment but required stability in the longer term. The IFA concluded that the investment met the PC's objectives. Another external analyst who reviewed the fund for the PC did not raise any concerns, and it was noted that local government bodies have also invested in it. Following discussion, it was RESOLVED that the PC will proceed with a £41,600 investment in the fund, subject to the approval of Full Council on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Ideally, it should be viewed as a long term investment of at least five years. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

#### F17.68 - Village Club

- a. Update on valuation of building. This matter is ongoing. The Clerk is in discussions with the valuer about the possible impact of the listing of the village club as a community asset on his valuation. It was noted that the agent Alder King's planning appraisal strongly underlines the building's status as a community asset. The Chair has compiled a list of the activities formerly held at the building.
- b. Update on progress of community bids for the building. There was no update to give but RBL have asked for informal tender bids by 16<sup>th</sup> June.

#### F17.69 - Parish Council office working group report

In order for the PC to use the committee room it has been agreed that local groups will move their materials currently stored there into new cupboards in the lobby area. It was RESOLVED to agree to spend a maximum of £600, subject to detailed quotes, to buy storage for the lobby area of the Jubilee Pavilion. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. Cllr Mrs Pullin will provide the Clerk with the quotes. It was noted that further expenditure may be required to provide new cupboards for the PC in the room.

#### F17.70 - To consider issues around 'solo working'

The Clerk will discuss the community centre's emergency procedures with its manager, with a view to formalising and recording them.

#### F17.71 - LACA

- a. To consider further information from LACA and the releasing of the withheld funds. LACA's Treasurer has provided the PC with additional financial information relating to its charges to certain service users. Given this information, it was RESOLVED to recommend to Council that it releases the £1,000 held back by the PC. Proposed by Cllr Sterland, seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour. It was noted that increased transparency will be necessary in the future, to inform discussions about an appropriate three-year financial settlement. Although the PC is keen to create a sustainable funding model with LACA, where LACA holds overall responsibility for its expenditure and income, the PC - as its main funder - will continue to monitor LACA's performance. The Clerk will ask LACA's treasurer to meet members of F&GP to discuss these issues.
- b. Draft new constitution. LACA is still considering its status and trustees liability; therefore, it was decided to wait until they had reached a conclusion to discuss the

amendments required by the PC. Cllr Mrs Pullin to update LACA that the PC has still to detail these amendments to LACA.

c. To agree if any changes need to be made to the current lease before it can be transferred to the CIO. It was agreed to discuss these changes once LACA has decided on its new constitution.

#### F17.72 - Theynes Croft car park

The committee considered the draft lease provided by the PC's solicitor. The agreement is a 99-year lease, transferring responsibility for the car park from North Somerset Council (NSC) to the PC. The PC will not be responsible for maintaining the retaining wall alongside Long Ashton Road but NSC will retain responsibility as the body responsible for the highway. The Clerk will write to NSC before the lease is signed to obtain NSC's approval of a new sign for the car park. The committee approved the lease in principle and will recommend to full council that it is signed when the new signage is approved by NSC.

#### F17.73 - To consider how the PC should respond to items posted on 'nextdoor'

It was agreed that the PC will not respond to items posted on the nextdoor website.

#### F17.74 - Correspondence

a. From Triodos re updating information. In response to the response of the PC to an earlier enquiry saying that the PC has no directors or beneficial owners, Triodos has written to ask the PC to reconsider. It was agreed that the Clerk will contact Triodos to seek clarification as the PC is not subject to the money laundering legislation.

b. The Citizens Advice Bureau, Wellspring Counselling, MS Therapy Centre and St. Peter's Hospice have written to the PC to thank it for their respective grants.

#### F17.75 - Matters for information - None

Date of next meeting – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August

Meeting closed at 21:40