

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

19:30, 16th April 2018, Jubilee Pavilion,

Present: - Ms S Hardingham – Chairman
Mr P Jackson
Mr R Sterland
Miss M Uppington
Mr A Wilkinson

Absent:
Mr C Cave
Mr M Harris
Mrs B Mackwood
Mr N Moorcroft
Mrs J Pullin

In attendance the Clerk, Dr J Turp, and Mrs T Warren (Assistant Clerk, minutes).

F.18.22 - Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cave, Harris, Mrs Pullin and Moorcroft.

F.18.23 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations.

Interests to be declared during the meeting and no dispensations were requested. It was noted that Cllrs Hardingham and Jackson as PC representatives on the LA Children's and Young People's Network have a dispensation to discuss and vote on items relating to the Network.

F.18.24 - Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th February 2018 were considered. A correction to the EMR table was made so the 2018 Office Equipment figure was amended to £2,963 and the 2018 adjusted total to £3,963 and the total to £411,317. Following these amendments the minutes were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Miss Uppington and seconded by Cllr Sterland.

F.18.25 - Exclusion of the press and public – There were no items necessitating the exclusion of the press and public.

F.18.26 - Matters arising

- a) F18.05a - Anti-virus software. This should be included in the broadband upgrade.
- b) F18.05b - Issues around solo working. LACA have a policy on lone working which was circulated. A policy for the PC will be produced consistent with LACA's policy. It was noted that lone working applies to office and other staff non-office staff and this is reflected in all staff risk assessments.
- c) F18.05c - HMRC removing Transcash as a means to pay Tax & NI. HSBC will not allow direct debits to be raised on one signature. The Clerk is looking at other banks, however, in the meantime, payment to HMRC can be made through the HSBC branch system.
- d) F18.05d - Hedge at back of Paulman Gardens – No update
- e) F18.05e - Tree Protection, Chancellors Park. A quote of £8.82 a tree has been received from Idverde to clear areas around the trees to protect them from strimmer damage. It was RESOLVED to accept the quote. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson.
- f) F18.05f - Hearing Loop – no update
- g) F18.10a – Grounds maintenance contracts – All contracts have been renewed at the same rate as last year.
- h) F18.10b – Reinvestment of 12 month Nationwide bond. This has been done for a further year at 0.75%
- i) F18.10c - BT broadband upgrade. The BT hub is due to be installed this week.

- j) F18.18 – Staff Vacancies. The VO and Assistant Clerk vacancies have been filled. The Chair welcomed Tracy to the post.
- k) F18.21 – Extra clerk hours. Additional hours for February and March 2018 were previously agreed and approved by Cllr Hardingham.

F.18.27 - Payment of accounts and Payments to Council

It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure during February and March at £21,188.83 and to note receipts of £1,005 over the same period. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

F.18.28 - Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation

The bank reconciliation to the end of March 2018 and summary was presented. The total amount in all accounts is £525,744.55 including £41,600 in a long term investment. It was RESOLVED to approve the bimonthly statement and bank reconciliation. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Sterland. All in favour.

F.18.29 - Review of Expenditure against Budget

Noted. Following approved transfers in and out of Ear Marked Reserves it was estimated that general reserves would be £3,758 higher than last year at around £112,700 or 8.5 months of expenditure. The Chair thanked the RFO for her careful budgeting. It was noted that the grant for 'Battles Over' agreed in the last financial year has been accrued as payment has not yet been requested. The appropriate level of general reserve was discussed and it was RESOLVED that an appropriate level of general reserve was equivalent to six to nine months of the precept to meet the 'reasonable level' recommendation in the Practitioners Guide. The PC is aware that some local authorities such as Northamptonshire CC are facing financial difficulties. This level allows for unexpected expenditure and NSC either delaying or failing to pay the precept, so that the PC can continue to operate for a reasonable time. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.

F.18.30 Finance items Reinvestment of 12 month Triodos Bond.

It was RESOLVED that the bond of £73,846.06 maturing on 6th May 2018 will be reinvested into a new Triodos 1 year bond (currently quoted at 0.8%). Proposed by Cllr Sterland and seconded by Cllr Miss Uppington. All in favour. It was noted that about half the PCs funds are immediately accessible and that the bonds it holds mature at reasonably regular intervals throughout the year.

F.18.31 Earmarked Reserves

- a) S106 Taylor Wimpey areas earmarked reserve. The amount in this earmarked reserve has been finalised to take account of expenditure of £12,766 and income of £2,501 (bank interest), leaving **£189,733** at the end of March. It was RESOLVED to set the Earmarked Reserve for the Section 106 Taylor Wimpey areas at £189,733. All in favour.
- b) Christmas Lights earmarked reserve. Allowing for donations and the 2017/18 budget LULA had a net spend of £629 leaving the earmarked reserve at £1,381. It was RESOLVED to set the Christmas lights earmarked reserve at **£1,381**. Following these the total of the earmarked reserves was agreed at £411,118.

F.18.32 Review of documents

- a) Standing Orders – NALC has issued new model standing orders. The changes these would make to the current standing orders were discussed and the changes agreed except that amendments were made so that the review of the council's employment policies would be included as a responsibility of F&GP (5j xv), the authorisation of payment of monies would be kept under motions not needing written notice (section 10) and section 22 - Relations with the press and media - would not be changed. It was

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the changed Standing Orders be adopted with these amendments. All in favour.

- b) Financial Regulations - These were reviewed and it was RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the Financial Regulations be adopted without change. All in favour.

F.18.33 - Taylor Wimpey Areas

- a) Transfer of the Taylor Wimpey areas and lease to LACA – No update.
- b) Public Art – No update. The outstanding s106 issues need to be resolved before Taylor Wimpey will pay the agreed public art contribution to the PC: to be followed up at Highways.
- c) Replacement of trees. It was agreed that 3 new trees can be planted in Chancellors Park to replace trees that have died. The advice of Gordano Tree Services will be sought for recommendation on type of tree best suited.

F.18.34 - Parish Council office working group report

The new furniture purchased is in the committee room. It was agreed that this item will remain on the agenda so that the long term office needs are reviewed.

F.18.35 - General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

NALC has confirmed that it is likely that PCs will not need a DPO to be in place by the 25th May but is awaiting confirmation. The data audit will be carried out by the clerk soon and any issues addressed. The NALC toolkit and SLCC equivalent have useful privacy notices and will be used to aid compliance. PC email addresses have now been set up for all Cllrs and the details will be sent to all Cllrs soon. ALCA are arranging training for the 30th April, the clerk cannot attend but will ask for the handouts. Consent forms and privacy notices will be sent to Cllrs and staff as necessary. It was agreed that GDPR will be a standing agenda item.

F.18.36 - LACA

It has been agreed by Council that the grant can be paid in full. It is planned that the joint working group will hold quarterly meetings with LACA with the first planned for July. The agreed financial information from LACA will be supplied when ready at the year end.

F.18.37 - Youth Grants funding for second round applicants.

Grants have been awarded to the Guides (£300) and the Scouts (£100). An application for a grant (£241.05) has been received from the Cricket Club and agreed by the network and this will be paid via a cheque to the network from the remaining 2017/18 grant allocation accrued for the purpose. It was agreed that the arrangement whereby grants to youth organisations are made via the Long Ashton Children's and Young Peoples Network would continue.

F.18.38 - Village Enhancement Scheme

- a) Budget arrangements – Budget arrangements – It was agreed that, at the moment, the previously agreed budget should still stand. Further designs are to be prepared by NSC and once residents and businesses have been consulted, final recommendations will be made to Highways Committee. At that time, other pressures on the budget can be considered if necessary.
- b) Alternative sources of funding. It was agreed to prepare a bid to Bristol Airport's community 'Diamond Fund' the exact nature of the bid to depend on the fund's guidelines which have yet to be published.

F.18.39 - Library closure – Arrangements for transferring computers/printers.

It was agreed that being able to provide computers and printers for community use when the library closes is a high priority. It was thought that the Café may be a suitable location. Security issues would need to be addressed as would any cost for the equipment and

software. It was agreed that NSC should be asked if the computers and software from the library can be made available and at what cost and LACA should be asked if the equipment can be placed in the LACA café. Cllr Pullin had informed the committee that there was a cabinet in the library containing historic village archives and Cllr Miss Uppington proposed that these should be retained in the village. It was agreed that possible storage locations should be included in the discussions on the library's closure.

F.18.40 - Three year Budget

The draft three year budget was discussed. It includes an annual 2% increase in the precept. It was also noted that the Band D precept was lower than in many other equivalent PCs so there could possibly be an increase to take account of increased library costs, if supported by residents. It was agreed that the expenditure for the Taylor Wimpey areas should be separated from the other expenditure as it is funded from s106 earmarked reserves. With this change, it was agreed to recommend the draft three year budget to full council.

F.18.41 - Action Plan – The draft action plan was discussed. It was suggested that the achievement of Quality level in the Local Council Award Scheme could be added to the plan. It was agreed that the advantages of this would be investigated. It was also agreed that an item relating to GDPR should be added. With these amendments the draft action plan will be recommended to full council where a decision about the award scheme will be made.

F.18.42 - Community Grant

- a) It was noted that the deadline for grant applications is 8th May. An extra meeting of F&GP will be held at 19:00 on 14/05/2018 to review the community grant applications. It was noted that the PC has reserved the right not to award the grants if two or fewer applications are received. It was agreed that room availability for the Village Hall and Pavilion in October will be investigated for the public meeting.
- b) It was RESOLVED that if Transition LA, or similar organisation, is acting on behalf of other groups as a facilitator it can submit multiple applications for grants in one year and in consecutive years, providing that such grants are not in related fields or projects. All in favour.

F.18.43 - External Audit – It was noted that a new company is acting as Auditor and the deadline for the auditor to receive the annual return is the 02/07/2018. As the total expenditure for the 2017/18 is below £200,000 it will be a standard audit.

F.18.44 - Annual Parish meeting 23/04/2018

It was noted that NSC officers will address the meeting about the library service and the Gardeners Group will display boards to advertise their group. Cllrs will help with the refreshments.

F.18.45 – Correspondence

- a) From Tyntesfield Medical Group asking the PC to contribute to a moving LED display board for LA surgery. It was agreed that the PC was unable to meet the request as it did not meet the PC grant guidelines. It was noted that it would be unusual for the PC to make a grant to a business.
- b) CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund prices/yield. These were noted.
- c) NALC updated Governance and Accountability Practitioners Guide. It was noted that there was little change in the new guidance. It was agreed that Cllrs should be aware of the accounting practices relevant to the PC and it was agreed that it should be forwarded to all Cllrs highlighting that it is a document they should have regard to and in future will be included in Cllrs' packs.

- d) Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments. The document was noted and it will be referred to when the investment strategy is reviewed.
- e) NSC consultation on provision of School places. The consultation paper was discussed. It was RESOLVED that the PC will respond to the consultation to say that if, in future, extra school places are required in the Parish due to development NSC should plan for these extra places to be provided within the Parish.
- f) Resident re tree – A resident has asked if he can move a tree in his garden to somewhere within the public open spaces in Chancellors Park. It was agreed that the PC is happy for the tree to be moved at the resident's expense to a position to be agreed by the PC.
- g) NSC has made a confidential request of the PC to be informed of its planned response to the death of a national figure. The PC response was agreed and NSC will be informed.
- h) From ALCA re pay scales – a two year agreement has been reached on the national pay scales applicable to the clerk and assistant clerk. These will be brought to full council in May for approval once the scales have been published.
- i) From ALCA re Internal Audit – ALCA has provided useful information about the scope of internal audit and this will be discussed at the next F&GP meeting.

F.18.46 - Matters for information - None

Date of additional meeting – Monday 14th May at 7pm

Date of next ordinary meeting - Monday 18th June