

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

20:25 Monday 15th February 2021

Held remotely by video conferencing



Present: Mr M Harris (Acting Chairman) Absent:
Ms L Anderson Ms S Hardingham
Mr C Cave
Mr J D'Alesio
Ms C Fagg
Mr P Jackson
Mr C James
Ms R McAllister Kemp
Mr A Wilkinson

In attendance - The Clerk, Mr Scott Jacobs-Lange and two members of the public.

F21.001 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hardingham.

F21.002 Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations.

Interests to be declared during the meeting. No dispensations were requested.

F21.003 Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED: That the minutes of this Committee held on the 14th December 2020 (previously circulated) were approved as a correct record.
The minutes will be signed when practicable.

F21.004 Exclusion of the press and public

It was agreed that the press and public will be excluded from the final agenda item [18] on staffing issues.

F21.005 Matters arising

- a. F20.033 – Overhaul of the Parish Council's website including accessibility issues. The Clerk identified five potential providers this was reduced to a shortlist of two providers and following demonstrations to a group of Cllrs and staff, 2Commune is recommended as the preferred provider.
 - a. **It was RESOLVED to approve the recommendation and select 2Commune to develop a new, accessible website for the council. Clerk to progress.**
- b. F20.050 – Confirmation of the council's precept request. This has been passed to NSC who have confirmed receipt.
- c. F20.051 – Clerk to bring banking recommendations to FGP – this is in progress. **Clerk to bring recommendation to the next meeting.**
- d. F20.053 – TW areas: Clerk has written to TW about transfer of funds for public art – no response to date. **Clerk to continue to chase.**

F21.006 Payment of accounts and payments to Council

A report of expenditure for December and January had previously been circulated.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council approved expenditure of £23,987.48 December 2020 and January 2021 and noted receipts of £3,820.37 for the same period.

F21.007 Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation

a. Appointment of Councillor to review the bank reconciliation.
Cllr Harris was appointed.

b. Bi-monthly statement and bank reconciliation (Dec – Jan).

It was RESOLVED to approve the bi-monthly statement and bank reconciliation (Dec – Jan).

F21.008 Review of Expenditure against Budget

Cllrs noted the report of expenditure against the budget at 9th February 2021. Key categories of spend were reviewed.

F21.009 Earmarked Reserves

Cllrs reviewed Earmarked Reserves considering the risks & advantages of retaining them for their intended purposes.

A summary of the earmarked reserves, taking into account changes made throughout the year and year-end adjustments was reviewed.

Cllr James raised the need to progress road safety measures at Hollis Close with £9000 of funding that had been allocated for that purpose. Cllr Fagg to obtain update from Cllr McQuillan and share with all Cllrs. £9000 to be held in Earmarked Reserves for Road Safety to enable this to be progressed in the next financial year.

Cllr Jackson asked that the clarification over funding allocated to the skate park project was noted i.e. that the parish council will not provide any further precept funding to the skate park project without additional public consultation – this excludes funding allocated from s106 and CIL. £3000 has already been provided from the precept. Cllr Wilkinson noted that the skate park project has now received £9150 from a combination of precept, s106 and CIL funding and suggested that parish council CIL funding be included along with precept funding as requiring further public consultation before additional amounts are allocated to the skate park project. Cllr Jackson drew a distinction between North Somerset CIL funding and CIL funding that was under the control of the parish council and suggested that this exclusion would only apply to CIL funding under the control of the parish council. All Cllrs agreed to this clarification,

F21.0010 Volunteering

Cllrs noted the amended Volunteering Policy and associated Risk Assessment including changes made since the previous version to tighten up ambiguity around expenses.

It was RESOLVED to adopt the proposed Volunteering Policy and Risk Assessment template.

F21.0011 Small Grant Funding Awards

Cllr Harris asked whether there was a limit on the funding available. The Clerk clarified that the requests for funding exceeded the 2021-22 allocated amount but that there was about £700 of unallocated funding available from the current year's fund yet to be allocated. The Clerk also clarified that £500 had been deducted from the current year's youth grant (administered by the Children's and Young People's Network for Long Ashton) but the same amount would need to be considered in next year's funding round also. Cllr Jackson asked for clarification of the funds left available for the current financial year – to ensure the figure of £700 had taken the youth award into account. The Clerk confirmed that it had.

- a. Chicken Share – £1500 requested. Cllrs discussed the application for £1500 from LA Chicken Share. The Clerk clarified that whilst this group doesn't have its own constitution, it operates under the banner of Transition Long Ashton. Cllr Fagg elaborated on her knowledge of the group. Cllr Jackson supported the application in principle but not risk over allocating. £400 was suggested as a reasonable donation.
It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £400 to the Chicken Share group.
- b. CPRE Avonside Branch – £100 requested. The Clerk explained this wasn't a formal application but they'd written to the council requesting a donation of £100 and that this award was for the local branch. The Parish Council already subscribes to the national CPRE paying £36 per year.
It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £100 to CPRE Avonside.
- c. LA Together – £600 requested. Cllr Cave asked about the £600 funding granted in the current financial year. The Clerk explained that half of that grant had been paid to LA Together but the remainder was being kept until the group had confirmed items proposed within their grant application had been purchased before drawing down the remainder. The grant now being sought was for a different activity which related to the purchase of capital items to support a digital inclusion project. Cllr Cave enquired about a parallel group he thought operated locally and the costs of establishing that project – to ensure we're not at risk of duplication. Cllr Wilkinson helped to clarify what LA Together's initial project was intended for, including sharing of a Zoom license to a network of community activists to enable community groups to continue to meet which was working well. Cllr Fagg reminded the meeting that we needed to assess each application on its own merit.
It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £600 to LA Together.
- d. Nailsea and District Community Transport – £1000 requested. This would provide funding for the service covering the northern half of North Somerset. Cllr Cave enquired how much funding was awarded last year. Cllr Jackson clarified that an award of £1000 was made. Cllr Jackson elaborated on the services provided to the area by this organisation. C
It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £1000 to Nailsea and District Community Transport.
- e. St Peters Hospice - £2000 requested. Cllr Fagg spoke in favour of the application highlighting the impact that Covid-19 has had on their charity shops not being able to open and therefore a significant loss in funding.
It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £2000 to St Peters Hospice.
- f. Home Start North Somerset - £1000 requested. Cllr Jackson clarified that an award of £1000 was made in the previous year.

It was RESOLVED to approved a grant of £1000 to Home Start North Somerset.

- g. Youth Grant - £500. Cllr Jackson asked that the funding be earmarked for now until a process had been finalised as to how the funding would be distributed to local youth organisations i.e. whether that process be brought back into the parish council or to retain existing arrangements.
- h. **It was RESOLVED to approved allocating £500 towards the Youth Grant initiative, subject to clarification of the mechanism by which such funding would be distributed to applicants.**
- i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the allocation of the balance of £700 (approx.) from the current financial year's budget for small grants to fund applications that have been approved for the 2021-22 financial year.**

F21.0012 LACA Joint Working Group Update

- a. Cllr Cave advised another meeting was scheduled next week and one was held just one week prior so the joint arrangements are now well underway.

F21.0013 Skate Park Working Group Update

- a. Cllr Jackson updated the group that the Market Survey had been drafted by the Project Advisory Group identifying a three-step process. Cllrs to note that issues regarding drainage at Peel Park were well understood by the Skate Park Working Group and these would be built into the design brief so potential contractors were fully aware of site constraints and requirements to ensure these were addressed in the design and build process. The purpose of the Market Survey is to inform potential skate park designers of the council's desire to develop a skate park at this location and to begin exploring the market for potential providers but does not commit the council to delivering the project at this stage. In accordance with delegated authority provided at January's Council meeting.
- b. Cllr James sought clarification that the site in question was the correct location for the desired skate park. Cllr Jackson confirmed this site had been selected following extensive consultation but acknowledged the drainage issues remained an important consideration and this had been incorporated into the design brief.
- c. Cllr James enquired about the planting of trees adjacent to the skate park. Cllr Fagg confirmed that discussions about using trees to provide additional screening for the residents of Fenswood Road were being held and emerging plans indicated that trees could be planted to the south of the footpath at the Recreation Ground end. Cllr Jackson added that these plans could provide up to two season's growth prior to the skate park being constructed and following that further landscaping along the eastern edge of the skate park could be carried out.
- d. Cllr Cave updated the meeting about the meeting between LACA and the Skate Park Working Group and was hopefully this could be a useful way to iron out potential issues in future. Cllr Cave pointed out that access would need to be carefully considered to ensure access to the main drains wasn't compromised. Cllr Jackson explained that any design must provide suitable access with current preference being via Keeds Lane but this would need further exploration before a decision is reached. Cllr Jackson also confirmed that the skate park boundary to the west would not be extended further towards the sports pitch.

- e. Cllr Wilkinson confirmed the Market Research document was essentially an Expression of Interest and he was confident it provided enough detail to move ahead with the process of researching the market without necessarily answering all the detailed questions about drainage and access which would still need to be worked through and agreed.
- f. Cllrs were asked to approve the public release of the Market Survey.
It was RESOLVED to approve public release of the Skate Park Market Survey subject to confirmation that this process is in line with public procurement guidelines being sought by the Clerk.

F21.0014 Library Working Group

There was no update available.

F21.0015 Covid 19 Steering Group

Cllr Wilkson advised he had yet to organise a meeting of this group.

F21.0016 Finance items

- a. To agree virement of £250 from Admin Contingency to Telephone.
 - i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the virement from Admin Contingency to Telephone.**
- b. To agree virement of £600 from Highways to Dog Bins
 - i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the virement of £600 from Highways to Dog Bins.**
- c. To agree delegation to Clerk with Cllrs Hardingham and James for purchase of new safety sign/s for Gardeners Walk play area
 - i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the delegation of this decision to the Clerk in consultation with Cllrs Hardingham and James**

F21.0017 To review and approve the Health and Safety Risk Assessment, Asset Register and Insurance Cover previously circulated

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised H&S Risk Assessments.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Asset Register.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to approve continuation of Fidelity and General insurance cover.**

F21.0018 Update on Taylor Wimpey areas

- a. Clerk advised an email had been sent to TW and NSC have been involved as they need to confirm all s106 requirements have been met.
 - i. Clerk to enquire with Kevin Carlton at NSC to check they've completed this process.

F21.0019 Correspondence

- a. Cllrs had no queries about the correspondence circulated.

F21.0020 Bank Safeguarding Update

- a. Clerk advised that Safeguarding requests from HSBC and Triodos have been responded to – awaiting confirmation from Triodos
- b. Clerk confirmed all signatories to bank accounts have been updated and expired signatories have been removed.

F21.0021 Staffing Matters *(this item was held under private session).*

- a. Incremental pay rise for Assistant Clerk. The Clerk will obtain further guidance from SLCC/ NALC and bring this to next FGP meeting.
- b. Incremental pay-rise for all staff who are paid the Living Wage Foundation rates.
 - i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the increase from April 2021 as per Living Wage Foundation rates.**
- c. To consider office arrangements to cover Clerk's leave during half-term.
 - i. **It was RESOLVED to approve the arrangements proposed by the Clerk.**
- d. Delegation of urgent staffing matters
 - i. Cllr Fagg will take this forward with Cllr Hardingham and the Clerk to develop an HR/ Staffing Committee.
 1. **It was RESOLVED to approve this proposal with the group reporting to FGP.**

Date of next meeting: Monday 19 April 2021.