

LONG ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

19:30, 17th February 2020, Jubilee Pavilion



Present: Ms S Hardingham – Chairman
Ms L Anderson
Mr C Cave (to 21.11)
Mr M Harris
Mr P Jackson
Mr D Johnson
Ms McAllister Kemp
Ms C Sellars
Mr A Wilkinson

Absent:
Ms S Barnes
Mr A Cartman
Mr A Johnson
Mr O Lloyd-Jones
Mr S McQuillan
Mr T Weir

In Attendance: Dr Janet Turp (The Clerk), Mrs T Warren (Assistant Clerk, minutes)

F20.001 - Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Lloyd-Jones, McQuillan and Weir.

F20.002 - Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations

Interests to be declared during the meeting. A dispensation was requested by Cllr Cave to take part in the discussions for items relating to LACA and also the War Memorial and Churchyard Trust, because as a Trustee of each, he has a pecuniary interest. This was agreed to ensure the PC has the information it requires to make decisions.

F20.003 - Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2019 copies having been circulated and following the amendment to F19.143 – Budget 2020/21(a), to add to the end of paragraph 2, "At the 2019 Annual Parish meeting it was stated that funding would be from public fund raising, however, a new council has since been elected" it was RESOLVED to accept the minutes as a correct record and these were signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Jackson. All in favour.

F20.004 - Exclusion of the press and public

No press or public present.

F20.005 - Matters arising

- a) F19.137a - Youth network grants – The grant application closing date is 23rd February.
- b) F19.137b – Water Access point update - LACA have obtained an estimate of £2,500 from their usual contractor which is in excess of the £450 available. It was agreed to ask LACA if they could obtain further quotes and the PC to look at subsidies available from the water companies.
- c) F19.137c – Planters; on-going.
- d) F19.137d – Gardeners Walk Play Area; the post installation inspection results have been passed to Sovereign, who installed the equipment, who will carry out remedial works. They will also quote for the installation of grass tiles below the trim trail elements. Some parents have asked if a bench could be installed. This was part of the original scheme but was removed due to resident concerns about young people gathering in the evening.

- e) F19.137e - Alternative bankers – On-going; it was noted that it would be helpful for the PC to have access to online banking.
- f) F19.137f - Community grant - The Spitfire group are proceeding with their proposed build.
- g) F19.137g - Theynes Croft car park – The stone is still in place; it is hoped this will be resolved shortly.

F20.006 - Payment of accounts and Payments to Council

A list of payments and receipts was presented at the meeting. It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure during December and January of £24,389.93 and to note receipts of £1,635.96 over the same period. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Cave. All in favour.

F20.007 - Bi-monthly statement and Bank reconciliation

- a) Cllr Sellars was appointed to review the bank reconciliation.
- b) The bank reconciliation at 13th February 2020 and summary was presented. The total amount in all accounts is £592,449.51 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 Jackson. All in favour

F20.008 - Review of Expenditure against Budget

Total income was noted at £204,593 with total expenditure at £149,476 at 52.5% of budget. There are several large items in the budget that have yet to be completed.

F20.009 - Earmarked Reserves (EMR)

A summary of the earmarked reserves taking into account changes made throughout the year and year-end adjustments was reviewed. The following were noted:

- Highways – The recommendation that until the burial ground reserve falls below £10,000, no further addition is made was agreed. Cllr Cave noted that the War Memorial and Churchyard Trust have carried out a recent inspection looking at safety and damage and will provide the report to the PC. Cllr Cave confirmed that monies are available for spending on the closed churchyard. The Clerk clarified the PC inspection of the burial ground is a safety test only.
- NDP/VES – It has been agreed that an additional £6,500 may be taken from General Reserves.
- Leigh Woods - The provision of the £10,000 budget allocation was agreed to be amended to delete 'parking scheme' and replaced with 'enhancement in Leigh Woods'
- Library – It has been agreed in principle that additional funds should be taken from general reserves to be added to the current year's library budget to meet expected costs of £49,000. It was RESOLVED to agree that £12,000 should be transferred from general reserves to the library. Proposed by Cllr Wilkinson and seconded by Cllr McAllister Kemp. All in favour. Any monies unspent should be added to EMR.
- CIL monies at £7,216 include £5,400 allocated to the VES
- Bund Study at £1,000 and Hub Design at £1,500 allocated budgets are not expected to be spent in this financial year so have been transferred to Earmarked Reserves.

As there were many items that could not be finalised to the year-end it was agreed that the earmarked reserves will be finalised at the April F&GP.

The risk of holding earmarked reserves at £408,463 was discussed and it was agreed that each reserve had been properly justified, the largest reserves contain the s106 monies

received for the TW areas and are used for their maintenance; also the planning contingency, which given the uncertainty around NSC's local plan was considered prudent.

F20.010 - To consider forming a subcommittee to deal with staff recruitment and to appoint Cllrs to the subcommittee.

It was noted that in the next financial year, additional staff including a Community Engagement Officer and a full time Clerk will need to be recruited. It was agreed that a working group be formed and Cllrs Fagg, Hardingham, Jackson, D. Johnson and Wilkinson were appointed to the group together with the Clerk. Other Cllrs are welcome to join the working group if they so wish. An initial meeting will draw up the group's Terms of Reference.

F20.011 - Working groups

a) Skate Park – Cllr Jackson's report below was noted:

The points raised by LACA on the proposed site in Peel Park have been addressed; these cover drainage, maintenance vehicle access and agreement with the junior football club. A meeting between the Skate Park Working Group and LACA is arranged for 3rd March to confirm the agreement on the location. Following this, a soil survey will be undertaken and arrangements will be started to select a skate park designer. A resident questionnaire is being prepared; this will be reviewed at the Skate Park Working group meeting on 10th March and then brought to Council (on 16th March) for agreement.

b) Library – A meeting has been held with LACA and the site has been agreed with two larger containers being preferred to three smaller ones, with quotes now being obtained.

c) Joint LACA/LAPC Working Group – A report had been circulated which discussed the different approaches of the PC and LACA as to how the projected long term maintenance costs should be accrued. The PC is pleased that LACA is considering a review of its legal status, constitution and terms of its lease. LACA is willing to consider Cllrs attending its management committee meetings to discuss matters of common interest e.g. the library and skate park. There was a lengthy discussion when Cllr Cave stated that LACA felt disappointed about the tone of the PC's comments but Cllr Hardingham emphasised that no criticism whatsoever was intended.

It was noted that there are concerns around the 9.5% increase in room hire rate that LACA have requested from the Youth club and that they will have trouble paying due to the poor timing of the request which is after their grant application has been agreed with the PC. The Youth Club management committee have written to LACA to ask for justification of the increase with an offer of a 3% increase. Cllr Cave pointed out that the Youth Club has historically received two discounts which is being rectified.

21:11 - Cllr Cave left the meeting.

F20.012 - Finance Items

a) Screen for the Jubilee Pavilion – It was agreed that a fixed projector was a more suitable option than a screen and costs will be investigated.

b) VES; publicity expenditure – It was noted that NS schedule of works for March and April include the VES phase 1 and also that there is a balance of £602 held for the NDP/VES consultation. Cllr McAllister Kemp proposed publicity materials to include printed posters to be displayed in the villages prior to the works commencing, at approximately £20, and advertorials in the local press and social media. It was RESOLVED to approve expenditure on publicity materials for the VES up to £600

delegated to the Clerk with Cllrs Hardingham and McAllister Kemp. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and seconded by Cllr Anderson. All in favour.

- c) LA CAN; expenses – The request for expenses was noted and it was agreed by the PC that the previously agreed expenditure room hire can be reimbursed but retrospective expenses cannot. It was agreed that Cllrs Anderson and D Johnson meet with LA CAN to agree how expenditure can be authorised.
- d) NALC study tour - It was RESOLVED to agree that Cllr Anderson can attend the NALC study tour to Frome and to agree expenditure at £333 including VAT. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.
- e) PC computer purchase - It was RESOLVED to agree to delegate authority to the Clerk to purchase a new computer for the PC office for the Clerk's use and to agree expenditure up to £800. Proposed by Cllr Harris and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.
- f) NSC CIL community fund – It was noted that this is yet to be set up.
- g) Expenditure on promotional material (F19.120 - Publicity proposal) – The Committee confirmed that the items covered by the resolution passed on 21st October 2019, to allow expenditure up to £1000 on publicity materials included T-shirts and polo shirts.
- h) Virements – Burial ground salaries are higher than budgeted as the new gardener, as a qualified gardener, is paid more than the previous post holder and there has been a slight overspend on Birdwell Rec maintenance (which includes the unused part of the Burial Ground). It was RESOLVED to vire £800 from the Burial Ground contingency to Burial Ground salaries and £80 to Birdwell Rec. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.

F20.013 - Great British Spring Clean

It was agreed that the PC would like to take part in this initiative Cllr McAllister Kemp has contacted NSC re possible dates and a reply is awaited. Cllr McAllister Kemp and the Clerk will coordinate this once a date has been agreed with NSC.

F20.014 - Website accessibility

It was noted that the new accessibility requirements will apply to the PC's website from September 2020. It was agreed that the Clerk should allocate time to working on the website to meet these regulations.

F20.015 - Banking arrangements - Following Cllr Semple's resignation, it was RESOLVED that Cllr Jackson be appointed as a signatory on the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Harris. All in favour.

F20.016 - To review the following (previously circulated)

- a) Health and Safety and Risk assessment – this was reviewed and it was noted that the Theynes Croft car park and Gardeners Walk play area needed to be added, but otherwise was acceptable.
- b) Asset Register – it was noted that the register has been updated and no further changes were required.
- c) Fidelity Insurance Cover – it was agreed that the £500,000 fidelity cover is sufficient as it covers most of the PC cash balances.
- d) General Insurance Cover. It was agreed that the cover provided by the current policy is appropriate and that the Clerk should enquire as to the cost of insuring the proposed 23m x 10m skate park.
- e) Grievance Procedure – A new policy based on the NALC template which takes account of updates to legislation was proposed, it was RESOLVED to accept the grievance policy as drafted with the amendment to change each reference of 'staffing committee' to 'F&GP'. Proposed by Cllr Anderson and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.

- f) Disciplinary Procedure – A new policy based on the NALC template which takes account of updates to legislation was proposed, it was RESOLVED to accept the disciplinary policy as drafted with the amendment to change each reference of ‘staffing committee’ to ‘F&GP’. Proposed by Cllr Jackson and seconded by Cllr D. Johnson. All in favour.

F20.017 - Taylor Wimpey Areas

- a) Transfer of the Taylor Wimpey areas and lease to LACA – no update.
b) Public Art - Taylor Wimpey have confirmed that as soon as NSC has signed off the s106 obligations they will send the PC the agreed £24,000 for art installations in the two TW areas. It was agreed that a working group should be set up at the next Council meeting to make recommendations to full Council on the public art.
c) Replacements for logs in Chancellors Park play area – On-going
d) Annual play area repairs – The contractor’s repairs to the team swing will be completed when the weather allows.

F20.018 - Correspondence

- a) From CCLA; PSDF factsheets, market reports and LAPF prices – noted.
b) From Co-op funeral care Nailsea advising that they would no longer issue cheques for payments and would require an invoice. The clerk will have to wait until the statement arrives to verify receipt but as long as a remittance advice is sent it can be accommodated.
c) From Vision ICT offering to update the website so it is fully responsive and complies with the new accessibility regulations which will apply to the website from September 2020. It was agreed to defer this item pending the Community Working Group’s review of the website.
d) From ALCA re reuse of 2nd hand reference books - It was agreed that older versions of these could be donated to ALCA for use by smaller PCs.
e) From resident suggesting a book swap box outside Keedwell Church. The Clerk has replied to suggest that they approach the Church in the first instance. The proximity to the new Library was noted which may make an alternative site preferable.
f) From LACA re increase in the PC room hire rate to £23 per session.

F20.019 - Matters for information

Cllr James and D. Johnson attended the ALCA forum meeting with NSC. NS are consulting residents on a range of neighbourhood issues/services and there is a consultation event arranged on Tues 24/3 between 5 and 7 pm in the Jubilee Pavilion. It was agreed that the PC would partner the event with a welcome by Cllr D. Johnson.

F20.020 - Staff salaries

It was RESOLVED to agree an increment (to point 11) for the Assistant Clerk’s salary payable from April 1st 2020 following the completion of a further years’ service. Proposed by Cllr Hardingham and seconded by Cllr Wilkinson. All in favour.

Meeting closed at: 21:59

Date of next meeting – Monday 20th April 2020