

Minutes of the meeting of **Fowlmere Parish Council Finance and General Purposes Committee**
which was held online via Zoom
on Thursday 12th November 2020 at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr P Burge (Chair), Cllr Roberts, Cllr C Howe, Cllr S Mulholland, and Cllr R Lennon

Also in Attendance: Ms K Byrne (Clerk)

Actions

Before the meeting began Cllr Burge advised the attendees that the Zoom session was going to be recorded, but would not be widely distributed. There were no objections.

1 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr L Wragg (prior engagement), Cllr M Vinton (unable to attend via Zoom) and Cllr J Hobro (work commitment).

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 16th July 2020/ Matters Arising

The Finance Minutes of 16th July 2020 were reviewed, agreed to be a true record, and were signed by Cllr Burge on Zoom. He will deliver the signed copy to the Clerk.

Matters arising – regarding item 5, the Asset register still needs to be updated with costs.

3 Covid-19

The PC has received the £200 Covid grant from South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to support community groups helping vulnerable people or those who need to self-isolate during lockdown 2. Cllr Burge said that this is to be treated as Section 137 money so that it can be used to support awarding of grants, for which the Parish Council would not otherwise have powers.

If anybody knows of a resident, family or cause requiring emergency funds they should contact the Clerk. Cllr Roberts proposed that the Clerk in consultation with Cllr Wragg and / or Cllr Burge should have delegated powers to make a payment from the grant money to any suitable resident or cause. Cllr Howe seconded the motion, all concurred. This will also be noted in the PC minutes on 17 November.

4 Review of Income and Expenditure

The Committee reviewed the PC's accounts spreadsheet along with figures for expected spend and variance for the Financial Year (FY) 2020-2021 that Cllr Burge had prepared and circulated. By the end of the FY the PC is expected to be approximately £4,920 in deficit, mostly due to the unexpected extra costs involved in repairing the second section of St Marys wall. The earmarked reserves comprise the S106 money (of which £2,886 is left) and the PC's LHI contribution to the traffic calming scheme (£22,368, which has not yet been claimed by CCC). The general reserves should ideally be between 6 and 12 months equivalent of the precept, but at the end of the FY, once the need to hold at least 6 months of funds has been taken into account, the PC is likely to have just over £6,100, which will be lower than planned.

Planned projects for next FY include: tree work (schedule 2 & 3 from the survey, plus some additional and unanticipated tree work); further work on St Marys wall & the wall near Jacksons Way / the Green; work in the moat (dealing with ivy covering trees and

possible Dutch Elm disease); registration of land; and, possibly funds for community celebrations for the Queen's platinum Jubilee in 2022 (this to be discussed further).

5 Trees, Grass, Hedges and General Purposes

a) Quotes for tree work priority 2 & 3

The Clerk had obtained and circulated 3 quotes for the priority 2 & 3 (non-urgent) tree work from the tree survey. The Committee reviewed the quotes. It was decided that as there is not enough money in this year's budget to pay for the work, the quotes will be reviewed in the next Finance Committee meeting (in January / February) with a view to commissioning the work to begin some-time after April 2021.

ACTION – Clerk to ask tree surgeons to re-submit quotes for priority 2 & 3 tree work in Jan/Feb 2021

Clerk

6 Future Projects

a) Cemetery – shed

Money for purchasing and assembling the shed has been budgeted in this FY. Costs will be the remaining amount for the shed plus £778.04 quoted for removing the old shed and fitting the new. Cllr Mulholland said that the shed should be delivered in the next few weeks, and Ian Wilson has been commissioned to put it up.

b) Registering of parish land

Cllr Burge suggested that the expenditure to register the land at the cemetery and the Butts Recreation ground could be delayed for another year until 2022-2023; Cllr Roberts concurred, there were no objections.

c) Maintenance of bus shelters

The main bus shelter near the war memorial needs to be replaced. Cllr Vinton had said that he had trouble getting quotes for a new shelter during the Covid pandemic. Cllr Roberts said that the PC may require planning approval to replace it, and suggested that this work could be delayed until next year.

Due to Covid pandemic the Fowlmere Friendship club's Christmas Dinner will not go ahead this year, and therefore the PC will not be asked to contribute to this.

7 Precept

Cllr Burge said considering the planned activities for next year (mentioned in items 4, 5 & 6 above) as well as building up the PC's slightly depleted reserves to allow funds for future capital projects above the operating reserve of 6 months' equivalent of precept, the precept budget would need to increase. The committee considered what the budgets should be for each category, then a calculation was made indicating that the budget will need to increase to approximately £47,630, this would be an increase of around 14%. Cllr Burge will finalise the figures, and then make recommendations for the PC to consider at full council; there were no objections.

ACTION – Cllr Burge to finalise the precept budget proposal with recommendations on behalf of the Finance Committee, to be put before the PC in the 17 Nov meeting

Cllr
Burge

Cllr Burge said that applying for grants (as Cllr Hobro has been doing recently) is to be encouraged.

8 Review of FPC Policy documents

Before the meeting, the Clerk and Cllr Burge had updated the FPC Processing Register and the FPC Risk Assessment documents. The Committee reviewed the amendments in the FPC Processing Register. Cllr Burge proposed that the updated document is adopted and

recommended that it be approved at the PC meeting on 17 November. Cllr Roberts seconded, all concurred.

The Committee reviewed the amendments in the Risk Assessment. Cllr Burge proposed that the updated document is adopted and recommended that it be approved at the PC meeting on 17 November. Cllr Roberts seconded, all concurred.

9 Other Matters

a) Review of in-house check on play equipment

Cllr Burge and Cllr Mulholland had been regularly checking the play equipment on the Butts and the Village Hall. Cllr Mulholland had noticed an issue with the new equipment on the Butts – the Gymnastic Cube Max had lost a nut resulting in one of the ropes coming down; he had contacted Caloo to fix it as it is still within warranty. There were no further issues with play equipment not already reported in the RoSPA inspection.

Ian Wilson had installed the Covid-19 signs from SCDC, in the play areas.

b) Chairman's Allowance

Cllr Burge explained that as our internal auditor had picked up, the PC needs to justify the amount it pays the Chairman for his allowance. SCDC said that their parish remuneration committee was not meeting this year. If the PC requested that the committee meets then it would incur costs for the members' expenses in attending the meeting, which could be a considerable amount. In light of this, the Chairman had already agreed with Cllr Burge that he would forgo the allowance. Cllr Burge thanked Cllr Wragg on behalf of the PC for this generous act. Cllr Burge proposed that the Chairman's allowance be waived, but the situation be reviewed when a new chairman is elected, or should SCDC issue the PC with guidance on the appropriate level of allowance. Cllr Roberts seconded the motion, all concurred.

10 Date of Next Meeting

Date and location to be confirmed, likely to be in January or February 2021.

The meeting closed at 21.00