

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22nd June 2021 at 7pm in Scholes Pavilion

PRESENT: Councillor Graham Slater (Chair)
Councillors Claire Hassell Mike Brunt Stella Walsh
Jacqueline Ward

In attendance: The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1 APOLOGIES. Cllr. Maude.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST. There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

3 TO SIGN AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Committee meeting of 27th April 2021 be approved and that the Chair sign the minutes, all in favour.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 27-4-2021

• **Insurance Renewal**

The RFO had instructed the insurance company regarding renewal using delegated authority after taking advice from Committee members at an informal meeting. This had resulted in a saving of £100 on what had been originally quoted for renewal but was nevertheless about £100 more than the previous year's premium, mainly due to the addition of Barwick football pavilion for approx. an extra £80 + IPT.

• **Tree Inspection Reports – quotes for work**

The committee considered the tree report which recommended that three trees needed to be cut down. It was agreed that contractors be approached to provide quotations (a couple of names were suggested). They would be sent a copy of the report and asked to provide itemised quotations for cutting the three trees and a separate quotation for the other remedial work in the report. Two of these were ash trees infected with a fungal infection (ash dieback disease) and it was felt inappropriate to ask for onsite chipping to be part of the quotation. The quotation to include effective disposal. An article in the newsletter had advised residents of the findings of the report. Once the trees had been cut, the Parish Council (PC) would seek to plant replacement trees, although not necessarily at the same locations. In the case of the tree on Hall Tower field, English Heritage would be consulted, and residents of any properties close to the affected trees would be advised. The Leeds City Council (LCC) tree officer would also be informed.

• **Grant Applications from In Bloom Groups**

It was noted that the Bloom groups no longer automatically received £1,500 pounds from the PC but instead had to apply through the grant application process and it was noted that Scholes in Bloom were doing an envelope collection.

• **Scholes Lodge Lane**

The contractor doing the work was not able to come until October and therefore Cllr. Walsh had put down weed killer in the meantime. The contractor still had not advised what the cost of the additional work which had been requested would be. It had previously been agreed that Cllr. Remmer would contact the contractor. The Clerk would check on the progress of this and pursue accordingly.

• **New fence & gate at Barwick sports field.**

It was noted that a new fence & gate had been installed at Barwick sports field along the Verity Strip. There had been a subsequent query from the cricket club regarding a power outage. The club had advised that the electricity company might be invoicing the PC for the damage done to the cable due to the installation of the fencing. A subsequent communication suggested that the electricity company was unlikely to pursue this any further. They had also queried the lumps of concrete which had been left behind. These had been left deliberately in order to stop vehicles driving over the grass until such time as the soil around the cesspool had a chance to settle. More topsoil had been promised. Cllr. Remmer had been dealing with this. The Clerk would

check on the progress and pursue accordingly. It was agreed that the gate at £450 be added to the asset register.

- **New telephone contract with a BT Business line + 4G Internet.**

The Clerk's telephone line had been upgraded from a residential to a business contract, which had also resulted in a saving on the monthly line rental. This was part of a package with the mobile telephone network provider EE and included a 50GB dongle, which could be put in the pavilion (or elsewhere). This would enhance the appeal of the pavilion to potential hirers.

Password protection would prevent unauthorised usage. It was agreed that possible hirers be advised of the Wi Fi, only if they asked if it was available. Consideration was given to whether Wi Fi usage be part of the hire package or charged as an additional item. It was decided not to charge and to monitor usage over the next couple of months and then review.

5. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT – ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Internal Auditor's Report was considered. The Chair had produced a suggested reserves policy. There was a suggestion that the title be changed ("reserves" not "reserve") and that the draft policy be then presented to the PC for approval. The auditor's report had also noted the increase in income and expenditure caused by the Pavilion.

Historically, there had been two visits a year by the Internal Auditor (with an interim audit in September) but this had not been possible in the previous financial year due to the pandemic. The Committee wondered whether the way forward was just one visit a year. The Chair was attending a councillors' discussion forum later in the week and would ask councillors from other parishes about the frequency of audits in their parishes. The clerk was thanked for the work he had done.

It had been agreed by the PC that refund of deposits or bonds from Pavilion hirers could be made without having to refer back to the full PC each time, the financial regulations will be checked to ensure they reflected this resolution. Cllr. Hassell agreed to amend the cash book to show monies being held as bonds.

6. BARWICK PLAYGROUND UPDATE ON MEETING WITH LCC.

Cllrs. Brunt, Slater and Ward and the Clerk had had an on-site meeting with the LCC playgrounds and fabrications manager. He had agreed to supply paint for the playground and would leave Councillors to liaise with parents etc. to carry out the work. LCC inspect the playground and empty the bins, and do the grass cutting of the field. It was believed that this was due to a policy that had been put in place to this effect dating back to 1992. He had agreed that the PC would get a copy of the LCC playground inspections as a matter of course (these had previously only been supplied upon request).

Cllrs. Hassell and Ward had met with a supplier of playground equipment and received quotations for additional equipment on Jack Heaps field and for equipment for older youngsters on Hall Tower field. Cllr. Slater had been speaking to the supplier that day and, he (Matthew) was visiting that Thursday. A similar installation had been done at a site in Seacroft. There was a budget of £10,000 in the budget for playground equipment. The Chair suggested getting another quote and then maximising the budgeted amount by applying for matching funding grants and maybe aim to get something in place the following summer. The supplier had also looked at the wetpour and advised accordingly. English Heritage would need to be advised of any proposals for Hall Tower field. Regarding proposals for Jack Heaps field, it was suggested that alternatives be proposed and that Cllrs. Hassell and Ward then use school communications to point parents to a consultation form on the PC website. The Chair had booklets from equipment suppliers.

7. RISK ASSESSMENTS AND ANNUAL INSPECTION OF PC ASSETS.

Cllrs. Brunt and Ward had taken on board responsibility for risk assessments in Barwick. One or two anomalies on the asset register had been highlighted as a result.

There was also a query about risk assessments for the Pavilion. The Chair had produced a covid risk assessment but a risk assessment for the building was needed. Cllr. Remmer had produced risk assessment documents for the PC in 2016 and his expertise would be sought in producing an appropriate document for the Pavilion. Hirers do their own risk assessments. There was also a query

about the heaters in the pavilion and the fact that they presented a hazard, particularly to young children, and should ideally had a guard rail or similar.

8. DELIVERY OF SCALPING'S

- **Rakehill Road**

Scalpings had been delivered for Rakehill Road and spread out by a local farmer.

- **Verity Strip**

Cllr. Hassell had approached various people without success regarding scraping the strip. An allotment holder had advised against the use of scalpings as these only provided a temporary solution (they tend to spread out over time). The cricket club had filled the worst of the pot holes using limestone, they had mainly done this on the upper part of the Verity strip as far as the entrance gate for their car park but had used left over limestone to fill some of the potholes further down. The contractor who maintained allotment boundary hedges was suggested for doing the scraping. The Chair of the PC was negotiating with LCC regarding ownership of the Verity strip with the hope that if the negotiations were successful, the strip could be fully tarmacked.

- **Hall Tower**

Cllr. Brunt raised a query regarding the entrance to Hall Tower field and the steps up the mound. The steps need filling with gravel. This had been one of the jobs identified when he and Cllr. Ward had carried out their risk assessments (this was ongoing and once complete, a list of jobs needing doing would be produced). It was noted that the mound and flat needed cutting. The Clerk would chase the contractors.

9. SCHOLLES PAVILION

- **Out of School Club booking**

The Chair reported that the Pavilion had been booked for an Out of School Club. They would be charged £750 for three weeks, from 8am to 4pm (but maybe extended to 6pm). Regular users of the Pavilion had been notified and were happy with this arrangement. Risk assessments had been done and the possibility of erecting a gazebo was being considered.

- **Grant Applications**

The Chair reported an unsuccessful grant application had been made to the Prince's Trust. He also reported on an application for funding from the Emmerdale fund. Currently, that fund has no money but the next batch of funding is due in July and a revised application would be made in September. Having applied for £16,000 previously, the Chair proposed to apply for £6,000 on this occasion and hope for a positive outcome. Applications had also been applied for to landfill companies, one for £38,000 for £43,000. The Chair also receives a weekly bulletin (produced on a Friday) regarding availability of grant funding.

10. BEGIN THE REVIEW PROCESS FOR LEASES OF SPORTS CLUBS AND ALLOTMENT RENTS.

There was discussion about the review of the rents of the sports clubs, noting that the annual ground rent charged had not been increased for many years. There was a suggestion that this be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CIP), noting that they needed three months' notice before any increase could be introduced, and that would have to be done at the annual review, it was felt that each sports club should pay the same amount. The date of the last increase was unknown, the cumulative effect of a backdated CPI increase could raise rents to at least £250. The Sports Clubs could claim back costs from the PC by applying for a grant.

It was suggested that there be an agenda item at the next Playing Fields committee meetings to see how the PC could help them increase membership.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would therefore be **Tuesday 13th July 2021 at 7pm** in the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 9:25pm