

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

held on Monday 9th November 2021 at 7pm in Scholes Pavilion.

PRESENT: Councillor Claire Hassell (Chair)
Councillors Mike Brunt Paul Remmer Jacqueline Ward
Phil Maude Graham Slater

In attendance: The Clerk.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR.

It was noted that Cllr. Slater had resigned as Chair and therefore the Clerk chaired the opening agenda item to elect a new Chair. Cllr. Slater was thanked for the considerable amount of work he had done as Chair. Cllr. Hassell was proposed and seconded for the office of Chair and there being no other nominations, it was **resolved** that she be duly elected. In the absence of any other nominations, Cllr. Hassell was willing to be nominated but was not seeking to be Chair on a long-term basis.

Cllr. Slater was given opportunity to explain the reasons for his resignation. Firstly, he was concerned that the work on Scholes Lodge Lane had started but details of the Terms and Conditions and of what had been agreed had not been shared with him as Chair of F&GP (it would have to be repointed with lime putty to preserve the historic nature of the wall). Secondly, he was concerned that having spent time producing a budget, the Scholes Lodge Farm subcommittee had spent beyond the amount budgeted for them without any apparent explanation and had sought to resolve this by direct approach to the Parish Council (PC). Thirdly, he expressed concern that there had been an agenda item at the last PC meeting to consider a donation to the bugler for the Remembrance Day commemoration contrary to a recommendation of the last F&GP Committee (supported by a resolution at the January 2021 PC meeting) and that the agreed grants policy was not being followed. He concluded by wishing the new Chair well in her role.

Cllr. Remmer addressed the first concern advising that the contract had been shared with the Chair of the PC and the Clerk. The contactor had still not returned the signed contract and Cllr. Remmer would pursue this. Quotations had been circulated. Regarding the Scholes Lodge Farm budget, the subcommittee had revised their budget but hadn't aligned this with the budget set by the PC. They had not appreciated that unspent amounts from the previous year were not carried forward. Regarding the Remembrance Day commemoration, it was suggested that there may need to be a review of the grant policy. The event was organised by the local branch of the Royal British Legion with support from the churches, without these organisations, the PC might have to take a more active role to ensure the act of Remembrance continued.

2 APOLOGIES. Cllr. Walsh.

3 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST. None.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING. Item 5 iv should read "Cllr. Slater had *also* applied" (not *instead* applied). It was **resolved** that subject to this correction, the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12th October 2021 (41-43) having been circulated, be approved, all in favour.

5 BUDGET FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

A draft budget had been circulated following a discussion between Cllrs. Hassell, Maude, Slater and the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). There was a view that the Committee was not in a position to recommend the proposed budget, in particular the precept, to the full PC and therefore there would be an agenda item at the PC in January 2022 to approve the budget and precept and that the agenda item at the December meeting be to note the budget and give opportunity for comment.

Regarding precept, it was resolved that an increase of 4% be proposed, all in favour. This would take into account inflation. It was noted that the number of properties had increased by 24.

Regarding other sources of income, there was agreement with most of the suggested figures but income from allotments be set at £960 rather than £980. There was a suggestion that the Fair pay a deposit in addition to the rent refundable when the fly-posters are removed. This would be considered as an agenda item in the Spring. There would be an agenda item at the December 2021 PC meeting to consider increasing Sports Club rents from £75. Total expected income was just under £50,000.

Regarding expenses, there was a correction to the expected cost of the payroll provider, £250 (not £1,350). There was uncertainty about National Insurance contributions – government announcements suggested a large percentage increase. £900 was budgeted for insurance but there was likely to be additional premium for the “Vision for the Future” project once completed. The budget for office equipment was increased from £150 to £1,000, this was because the Clerk’s appraisal had identified the need for a new laptop and printer. It had been suggested that meeting room hire be £300 but this was revised to £500 as social distancing concerns meant larger venues were now being used. There had been plans to give notice to cancel the garage hire (£510 a year) but this was reinstated on the budget as alternative plans for its use were being considered. There would be three cuts of Hall Tower Hill instead of two (£800 extra). The budget for Scholes Lodge Farm would now be £3,435 based on ten cuts a year at £225.50 per cut. The weather in 2022 would determine how many cuts were actually needed, the budget allowed for ten cuts recognising that less might be needed. The budget allowed £500 for defibrillator maintenance. It was suggested that an exception be made for this item and that unspent amounts be allowed to be carried forward to future years to a maximum of £1,500 to create a sink fund. Allowing for these adjustments, the revised budget showed £96,122 expenditure (previously £94,217).

6 PAVILION AND “VISION FOR THE FUTURE” REPORT

Cllr. Remmer had taken on the role of primary contact for the grant providers and had met the Clerk earlier that evening to clarify matters. The finance agreement for Veolia had been signed and sent off and the first instalment of the grant of £19,000 had been received. It was noted that Cllr. Walsh had resigned from the Pavilion subcommittee. Cllr. Remmer reported that he was not going to make any changes to what had already been agreed with the grant funders.

7 UPDATES ON MATTERS PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED.

- i. Tree Inspection Reports. It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the tree on Jack Heaps field. The Clerk had written to the farmer of the field adjoining the allotments regarding the tree and was still waiting a reply.
- ii. Scholes Lodge Lane. It was noted that work commenced on 3rd November 2021 and was expected to take three weeks subject to the weather. The Clerk had an acer tree for this site.
- iii. Entrance gate to Hall Tower field. This had been discussed as part of the discussions regarding the budget.
- iv. A quotation for Hedge cutting in the Parish had been received. Cllr. Maude would ask his gardener if he could provide a quotation. Meanwhile, hedges due for cutting in 2021 would be cut as in previous years and the Clerk was in the process of getting a quotation for the allotments boundaries.

8. WORK REQUESTS

- i. **Purchase of chocolates for the playground painting team.**
There was a query whether it was fair that gifts are bought for newsletter delivery team members who are not Councillors whilst those who are don’t receive anything. The Clerk would ask the Yorkshire Local Councils Associations if a decision to purchase gifts for newsletter delivery team members necessarily excluded Councillors.
- ii. **To consider the report listing assets** and whether they are correctly identified as Parish Council assets.
This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.
- iii. **Grant applications**

Two applications had been received; one was from a lady asking for help with funding for her exercise group for the elderly. She had since withdrawn this application, but the next PC newsletter would carry an article to encourage membership. The other was from the Miner's Institute requesting funds for a new heater. Based on the evidence they had supplied, they had funds in their bank and although were showing an annual loss, it was **resolved** that the application be declined as they had enough in reserve to cover this cost themselves.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:25pm.

Signed

Chair
14 December 2021