

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee

held on Monday 11th December 2023 at 7pm in Scholes Sports Pavilion.

PRESENT:	Councillors	Kinga Ragg (Chair)		
		John Hayton	Stella Walsh	Gillian Williamson
		Paul Remmer		

In attendance: The Clerk.

1 APOLOGIES. Cllr. P. Walsh.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST.** None.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Committee meeting 6/2023 held on 13th November 2023 (97-99) having been circulated, be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign.

4. BUDGET REVIEW

The budget and recommended precept had been considered at the Parish Council (PC) meeting and a final decision would be taken at the extra-ordinary meeting due to be held on 15th January 2024. During the public participation, concern had been expressed that the precept increase could be less if there had been an increase in rents charged to tenants. In the case of the various sports clubs, they were on 99-year leases, most of which (though not quite all) contained a clause that rent be held for a minimum of three years following an increase and therefore an increase in 2024 was not possible within the terms of the agreement. These also had a clause that three months' notice be given of any increase (rent being due on 1st April). Mount Saint Mary's were on a licence running from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2030. The licence fee was £180 to be reviewed every three years and as such, such a review could be done (there was no clause requiring three months' notice to be given of a rent increase). There would therefore be an agenda item in February to consider this and the full PC would be made aware accordingly. There would be an agenda item in April to consider an increase in allotment rents, however, as these become due on 1st October and require a years' notice, any increase would not become effective until 2025.

Regarding precept, it was **resolved** to recommend to the PC an increase of 8%. The Clerk would try to find out what percentage increase other Parish and Town Councils had levied in February 2023 and similarly for 2024 (though for 2024, this information would be unlikely to be in the public domain until after the February deadline). The reserves policy was considered noting that it was PC policy to hold a minimum of six months' reserve (the 2021 Internal Auditor had suggested anything between three and twelve months). It was agreed that running costs of about £5,000 per month, plus six months reserves, benchmark any future calculations of precept (unless there was a specific project which needed to be budgeted for) and that the actual cost per household was more meaningful (rather than percentage increase). The draft minutes of the Committee meeting would be sent to the full PC (with the key points highlighted in bold) ahead of the extra-ordinary meeting so that Councillors could make an informed decision and they would be asked if they had any comments.

5. ACTION TRACKER

a. Legionella checks.

Since the last meeting, Cllr. S. Walsh and the Clerk had met with two representatives of a company who do Legionella checks and a quotation had followed. It was agreed to use the contractor who had quoted the best of the three prices obtained. The contractor had been notified and an appointment booked for 10th January 2024 at 10am.

- b. Contract for Barwick and Scholes Football Club
The football club would be contacted to say that the contract sent to them (but still not signed) was null and void. This would be replaced with a two-year agreement which would have an option to increase the rent within the contract term. They would be asked to clarify which day of the week matches are played and it would be made clear that the agreement did not give them exclusive access.
- c. Goal posts
A quotation had been received and the Clerk was in the process of getting a third quotation having spoken to a potential contractor earlier that day. Cllr. S. Walsh had emailed the Clerk a list of suggested contractors earlier that evening. The Clerk would contact the supplier to get specifications for installation.
- d. Lighting for the defibrillator at Scholes.
Cllr. Remmer and the Clerk had met with an electrician on Saturday 9th December (see also item 7a below) and a quotation was awaited.
- e. Alleged tree root damage to the garage of a property adjoining the Village Hall car park.
Following the last F&GP Committee meeting, the Clerk had contacted the tree surgeon as agreed and instructed him to carry out the works. In the meantime there had been an exchange of emails (copied to the Clerk) between the resident (who was getting frustrated at the time this was taking) and the loss adjuster and a report had followed confirming that it was the tree which had caused the damage to the resident's garage.
- f. Room Hire.
Meeting rooms had been booked and the Pavilion calendar updated as necessary.
- g. Goal posts on Jack Heaps Field.
These had now been cut up and disposed of.
- h. Allotment Association.
A meeting of plot holders with a member of the National Allotment Society and the Clerk had been held on Saturday 18th November 2023. It was believed that the primary school was built on the site of the original allotments and that the existing allotment land was given in lieu. There was therefore a concern that the associated agreement might be subject to certain conditions allowing the Education Authority to acquire further land in the future for expansion of the school and this would be checked before any plot holders committed to having their own association. Since the meeting, further research had suggested that both the land now belonging to the primary school and the land being used for allotments were part of a single plot of land entirely used for allotments until the school was built.
- i. Third-party payroll provider.
The third-party payroll provider had been notified that their services would not be needed after 31st March 2024. They had confirmed but asked to be re-notified nearer the time.
- j. Dead Cherry Tree on Jack Heaps Field
The contractor who had quoted for removal of the tree in the Village Hall car park had been contacted to see if he could improve his quotation if he also removed a dead cherry tree on Jack Heaps Field. He was not prepared to reduce his quotations even if he was awarded both jobs.
- k. Internal Auditor
The quotation from the Internal Auditor of £180 had been accepted.
- l. Christmas Lights.
There would be an agenda item at the February PC meeting to set up a working party to look at options for Christmas Lights.
- m. Bench on Belle Vue Avenue.
A second quotation had been received for making this level and a third would be sought.

- n. Fire extinguishers.
The local firm had been notified that their quotation for two CO₂ fire extinguishers had been accepted. Earlier that day, the supplier had delivered two CO₂ fire extinguishers, one for each changing room. He had recommended a foam fire extinguisher for the main room in the Pavilion. To avoid a call out charge, the Clerk had used delegated authority to agree to the foam fire extinguisher at an additional cost of £55. The Committee confirmed support of this decision. Fixing brackets had been supplied and these could be fitted when the electrical work was done (see item 7a). The fire extinguishers were subject to an annual check, the supplier had quoted £60 for doing this and would be in touch in twelve months' time.
- o. Table football, gazebo and display boards
The gazebo had been given to 1st Scholes Scouts and someone had been found to take the table football. The changing rooms were now almost clear apart from the display boards.

6. WORK REQUESTS

a. Asset register

The goal posts on Jack Heaps Field had now been removed. It was **resolved** to accept the revised asset register circulated by Cllr. Hayton.

b. Risk assessments

No risks requiring attention were identified this time. The "Nurse Bywater" bench had been repaired by Scholes in Bloom and Cllr. S. Walsh reported that they had done a brilliant job.

c. Barwick Village Hall car park lights and concerns that the markings had faded in the car parking spots reserved for the disabled.

Leeds City Council (LCC) would be asked for suitable contractors to deal with street light maintenance and for dealing with road markings. Cllr. Ragg had recently had her drive done and suggested that this contractor could be asked if they could do the road markings.

d. Christmas lights competition.

Attempts to secure Festival tickets from the Community Fund as prizes had been unsuccessful and an approach to Festival Republic themselves would be made. Cllr. S. Walsh agreed to judge Christmas lights in Scholes and Cllr. Williamson agreed to judge Christmas lights in Barwick in Elmet. It was **resolved** that gifts to the value of £25 be awarded as prizes to the winner in each village. This would be in the form of a credit note for a business (shop or public house) and the PC would arrange to pay the business and as such, the money could only be spent in the Parish.

e. Trees on Scholes Lodge Lane

Following the PC meeting, the Clerk had circulated a comprehensive history of all communications between the residents of 37 Main Street and the PC and actions taken. They had applied to LCC for the work and it was agreed that the cost of the work should be borne by the residents affected and that they notify the PC when the work is carried out. The PC would only pay costs where poor health of a tree created a risk to public safety.

7. PAVILION MATTERS

- a. Cllr. Remmer and the Clerk had met with an electrician on Saturday 9th December who was asked to quote for moving the switch for the car park lighting in the far changing room to the main room, to install another sensor so that those leaving the main room at night had light to see and also to address the issue with the spotlights flickering (replace with Light Emitting Diode lights). The quotation was awaited. See also item 5b (above)
- b. It was **resolved** to recommend to the PC that Pavilion hire charges be temporarily reduced by 50% starting in February as a special offer to encourage more people to use it. If agreed, this offer would be promoted in the February newsletter. It was decided to otherwise leave Pavilion hire charges unchanged for 2024.

8. DRAFT MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEES WHO REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

None of the subcommittees which report to the Committee had met since the last meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th January 2023 at 7:15pm in the Pavilion. There would be an agenda item to look at maintenance of fields and the March meeting would consider insurance renewal.

The meeting closed at 8:19pm.

Signed

Chair