

## Worth Parish Council

### **Minutes of the General Purposes and Finance Committee Meeting January 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 commencing at 19.30 hrs**

**Present:** Cllr Phillips (Chairman)  
Cllr Anscomb  
Cllr Gibson  
Cllr Hitchcock  
Mrs J. Nagy (Clerk)  
Mrs E. Smith (RFO)  
Cllr Coote  
Cllr Hollands  
Cllr Webb  
No members of the Public

**As both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee had given their apologies for the meeting, it was agreed by all present that Cllr Phillips would take the Chair.**

#### **69 Public Question Time**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, then highlighted the housekeeping rules – there is no fire drill planned this evening. Should an alarm sound, people should make their way to the car park via the stairs. Do not use the lift. Please put mobile phones on silent.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

#### **70 Apologies**

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Dorey, Lord and Scott

#### **71 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.

#### **72 Minutes of General Purposes & Finance Committee held on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2018**

It was proposed by Cllr Anscomb seconded by Cllr Hitchcock and RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of General Purposes & Finance Committee held on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 were accepted as true records of the meeting.

#### **73 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had no announcements

#### **74 Correspondence**

The Clerk apologised in that she had said that she would supply the updated correspondence list at the meeting, but due to time constraints and staff sickness she had been unable to do this.

Cllr Gibson asked if the response to the Gatwick consultation had been submitted; the Clerk confirmed that it had.

#### **75 Account & Financial Matters**

The Chairman referred Councillors to details of expenditure against budget, payments, bank balances and earmarked reserves up to end of December 2018 which were included in their meeting packs.

The Clerk reported that:

Receipts for December 2018 of £31063.10 plus £177.48 interest, giving a total of £31240.58, including transfer of £30,000 to open new Nat West bank account; net receipts therefore £1240.50.

Total payments for December 2018 of £38604.66 excl. VAT, which include bank transfer of £30,000 to new Nat West account; net payments therefore £8604.66

Bank Balances as at 31st December 2018 £324,677.18, including new Nat West account of which  
Earmarked reserves of £113,663

Cllr Gibson asked for the quarterly analysis predicting end of year income & expenditure. The RFO said that she had been unable to produce this report due to the absence of the Chairman, who had recently amended the formatting.

Councillors NOTED and APPROVED the financial information supplied to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 as a true and correct record of the Council's financial affairs.

#### Training requirements in 2019/2020.

It has been previously agreed that the Council will agree training prior to this being booked. The Clerk referred to her proposed schedule.

Due to Elections in May 2019, she has allowed for all 17 Councillors to attend Councillor Briefing and Awareness training at a cost of £1105, as a "worst case" scenario. This takes the expected expenditure over 2019/2020 budget with a £55 deficit. However, staff training will be under budget, so some monies could be vired from this cost code to allow for unanticipated training requirements.

It was noted that training courses that came up during the year would be approved on an ad hoc basis.

Councillors thought that the Chair of Finance should attend the Legal & Finance Day on 26<sup>th</sup> September, in addition to the RFO. This was AGREED

The training requirement schedule was AGREED with the above addition.

#### Replacement Lamp Column

Councillors will be aware that a street light column in the Memorial Car Park in Crawley Down was knocked down by a car before Christmas.

The matter has been reported to the Council's insurance company which in turn has referred it to a claims solicitor. The Clerk is preparing the documentation requested and will confirm that the insurance excess of £100 should be included in the claim. Also included will be the cost of reconnection to the electricity supply of around £730, plus the cost of the timer for the Christmas lights at around £350 and the materials and labour for the fence repair; all figures ex VAT. The solicitor warns that the action could result in court proceedings with the Council named as claimant. The Clerk will keep the Council informed as to progress in this matter.

The RFO, with the agreement of the Chair of this Committee, has ordered a replacement column at a cost of £2145.00 ex VAT.

This level of expenditure is outside the remit of the Clerk and RFO, in accordance with Financial Regulations, but after consultation with the Chair of this Committee it was agreed to order the column as this was deemed urgent and necessary expenditure.

The Clerk was asked to Minute the Committee's thanks to the Crawley Down groundsman for his work in repairing the fence.

Councillors NOTED and AGREED the action taken in relation to the insurance claim and ordering of new lighting column.

## **76 Council Budget & Setting of Precept**

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Council was unable to agree the recommendation from the December GP&F Committee that a precept of £285,000 be agreed. This was due to an error in the draft budget amounting to £5000, which would make the precept £290,000.

The Clerk and RFO met with the Chair of this Committee Cllr Scott to go over the figures in the draft budget to ensure that these were correct. Cllr Scott felt the possible precept of £290,000 was not well received by the Council at its December meeting.

He proposed that the RFO presents a budget with anticipated expenditure net of income of £290,000, but to ask for a precept of £275,000, with the balance of £15,000 to come out of general reserves. This will address the Internal Auditor's observation that the current reserves were high. A precept of £275,000 represent an overall increase of 9.56%, which equates to a Band D increase of 10p per week.

Cllr Gibson was of the opinion that his there should not be a large increase in the precept; he suggested a precept of £265,000, an increase of 6%.

In addition, Cllr Gibson had some last-minute queries, these being:

Lease/purchase of replacement van – Cllr Gibson asked for this expenditure to be brought forward into 2018/2019. It was agreed that this would not be possible, as there would be a cost implication of ending the lease early (due to expire in July)

Councillor allowances – Cllr Gibson asked for these to be reduced from £500 to £400 per councillor. It was agreed to keep these the same at £500.

Capital Purchases – Cllr Gibson asked for the 2018/2019 budgeted amount of £10,000 to be transferred to general reserves in case the intended expenditure on councillor tablets was not achieved in time. This was agreed. It was noted that £10,000 had been included in the 2019/2020 budget. This was reduced to £3000 to allow for, for example, the potential cost of a new computer or other such office equipment.

Vision – it was agreed that the £5000 from 2018/2019 would be transferred to EMR, with an additional budget of £5000 in 2019/2020 to add to the project.

Neighbourhood Plans – Cllr Gibson asked that neighbourhood plan EMR be transferred to the budget for these cost codes, otherwise any expenditure would show against a zero budget. Both the RFO and the Clerk was not sure that this was possible, whilst still meeting accounting legal requirements. After discussions, it was agreed that the RFO would seek advice from Mark Mulberry, Internal Auditor as to how to portray this in the accounts. Cllr Phillip would be present when the phone call is made and would report back to the Committee.

Combined Neighbourhood Plan cost code – Cllr Gibson said that monies from this cost code should be transferred as the Council had decided to progress two plans not one. The Clerk advised that this was the cost code from which the Neighbourhood Plan Assistant would be sourced. It was agreed that this sum be increase by £10,000 to £15,000.

After the above discussion, the draft budget was £293,000, with a potential precept request of £275,000, with £18,000 to be taken out of General Reserves to balance the budget. It was AGREED by all present that this is to be the recommended budget and precept to Full Council, but with the outstanding matter of the expenditure against zero budgets for the Neighbourhood Plan cost codes to be considered at Full Council, once advice has been sought.

## **77 Council Premises and Land**

### Landlord visit to Copthorne Pavilion

The Clerk visited the Pavilion this morning to see if internal decoration was being kept to a reasonable standard, as per the lease. She was accompanied by Cllr Coote. Cllr Phillips was in attendance in his role as Sports Association Committee member, along with the Association Chairman, Helen Reeve.

Some minor details were highlighted in need of attention; the Clerk will confirm these to the Association.

Some minor issues were identified on the outside of the building and in the car park; the Clerk has asked the RFO to seek quotes to rectify these.

Councillors NOTED this information.

## **78 Items for Future Inclusion on the Agenda**

Cllr Gibson said that he has previously asked for monies from Election EMR to be transferred into general funds to publicise the upcoming elections.

The Clerk advised that this had been refused at the October GP&F meeting at which Cllr Gibson had been present.

Cllr Gibson asked for updates on the following matters:

- Community Highways Scheme for Kiln Rd and Burleigh Way
- The reason behind the removal of trees at J10 of the M23

The Clerk will provide this information at a future meeting.

Cllr Gibson asked if a date had been arranged to discuss the possibility of a strategic site to the south of the parish at Crabbet Park.

The Clerk will put this matter on a future agenda

## **79 Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019

*Meeting closed at 8.35pm*

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_