



BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Matfield Pavilion, The Green, Matfield, Kent, TN12 7JU
Tel: 01892 723586 www.brenchleyandmatfield-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19th MARCH 2024 AT 9AM AT MATFIELD PAVILION

Present: Cllr J. Buttery; Cllr Amanda Wells (Chair); Cllr Andrew Stout; RFO Panetta Horn
In attendance: C. Brooks (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Dewdney.

2. Declarations of interest on any item on the Agenda

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Review of Minutes of the last meeting of this Committee 15.03.23

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 8.11.2023 were reviewed and it was concluded that all actions had been completed.

4. Budget Monitoring

4.1 The 2023/24 budget and projected year end spend were compared and the underspend and overspends were noted. It was also noted that the £6K underspend shown on Matfield Pavilion Refurbishment is committed towards the purchase of the new Pavilion Storage shed in the 2024/25 Accounts.

4.2 The following was agreed:

£6K will be earmarked (EMR) for Matfield Pavilion Refurbishment.

The underspend of £5K in the traffic budget will be EMR for 2024/25.

The existing EMR for Legal Services of £8K is to remain.

An additional £2K will be added to the existing £2K EMR for the Toilets repairs budget.

The List of Accruals were noted as:

Proposed Accruals		
Section 106 for Playground	Income in advance	£25,911
Allotment Fee	Income in advance	TBA
Cricketers Licence	Income in advance	£300
Insurance	Prepayment	£2039
March Pension Admin	Uncleared payment	£27
Feb and March Toilet Clearing	Uncleared Payment	£1240
SIDS March	Uncleared Payment	£47
Playground inspection March	Uncleared Payment	£138
Streetlight Electricity Jan–Mar	Uncleared Payment	TBA
Credit Card expenditure	Uncleared Payments	TBA
Brenchley Playground Deposit	Prepayment	£10,797

The RFO's suggestion that she produce a report separate from the Clerk's report for each Council Meeting, in order to provide regular updates of the Council's financial position and

highlight any potential overspends along with the cost centre budget position for any financial resolutions on the agenda, was welcomed.

Action: RFO

5. Income and Fees - information

It was noted that income in 2023/24 had increased due to the interest and dividends received. It was noted that there are currently six untenanted plots and this may have an impact on income from allotment fees.

6. Virements, Earmarking and Reserves

The Committee discussed the need to introduce a virement policy. It was agreed that a simple policy should be drafted. It was agreed that there is no need to introduce any virements at this stage.

Action: RFO

7. Contracts

The list of existing contracts were noted. The impact of the 9.8% increase in Toilet cleaning can be incorporated in the existing toilet budget for 2025/26 budget but it was noted that the contract had risen from £5900 in April 2022 to £8,173 for 2024/25 a 38% increase on the original cost. It was noted that the Insurance contract is due for renewal in November.

8. Direct Debits/ Standing Orders

A list of Direct Debits was provided as an update following the changes with utility suppliers. This list will be provided to the Full Council at the Annual Meeting in May.

9. Bank Signatories

It was agreed that two additional signatories will be sought for the CCLA account following the Council elections as two of the four current signatories are not standing.

10. Cyber Insurance

It was agreed that Cyber Insurance was not required if sufficient cover is provided within our contract with Microshade. Cllr Buttery to review the NALC cyber security guide and the RFO to quantify what is covered in the Microshade contract.

Action: RFO and Councillor Buttery

11. Asset Register Review

The updated Asset Register was reviewed and it was noted that many of the insurance values may need reviewing. The RFO is to review these prior to tendering for the new insurance policy in the summer. Specifically to look if the policy gives an automatic uplift on buildings value and to ask insurers for a First Loss figure for the posts on Matfield Green. Additionally, to consider the value of Village signs which appeared very low. It was also requested that maintenance of the signs should be undertaken within the next financial year and costings will be obtained.

Action: RFO

12. Financial Regulations

New model version of the Financial Regulations is due in March. A review of our regulations against the new model will be required by the Annual Meeting in May if possible. Cllr Buttery will review this prior to it being submitted to the Full Council.

Action: Cllr Buttery and RFO

13. Section 106 funds – information

An update on funds remaining from the Fernham Development was provided.

Initial Funds		£78,134.33
Drawdown	Porters Wood Playground	£16,054.91
Drawdown	Pavilion Refurbishment	£2,827.00
Drawdown	Brenchley Rec	£25,911.47
Current Balance		£33,340.95
Anticipated Drawdown	Pavilion Storage	£15,000.00

14. Parish Basic Allowance (PBA)

The Council discussed the process of establishing a Parish Council Allowance and future Policy including Expenses, following a request from a Councillor for reimbursement of Childcare costs. Payments would need to be processed through the HMRC tool but accounted for separately from staff salaries for the purpose of the AGAR. Some additional admin would be involved and it is suggested therefore that the allowances would be paid for annually or quarterly to reduce admin. The allowance is not paid by any of the local parishes within the three Boroughs covered by the Remuneration Panel, including TWBC.

The PBA is designed to allow elected councillors to receive some financial compensation for any costs they may incur as a result of their work as a councillor. It is payable to elected councillors only - co-opted councillors are not eligible to receive the PBA and it can be used for any means. If a District has a Remuneration Panel, then they will recommend the level and the Parish Council must take this into account when determining its own level. If the PBA is paid to any eligible councillor, it must go through payroll as it has to be assessed for tax and national insurance.

The request to establish a PBA will need to go through the TWBC Remuneration Panel and therefore BMPC is obliged to seek its recommendation on the suggested level of allowance. The cost of the panel meeting will be in the region of £300 (£100 per day per Panel Member). It is anticipated that the Panel may be able to meet within 2 months of a request to do so. Following receipt of their recommendation the Parish Council would resolve their position and issue a 14-day notice to inform the public that the TWBC recommendation has been sought in arriving at their decision, together with the sums agreed.

Given that it is not known whether the PBA can be rescinded once established; the process of establishing the PBA is both costly and cumbersome; that the administration of paying the allowance is not insignificant; and the cost of the allowance to the Council has not been precepted and is potentially going to be significant.

The Committee did not feel that they could recommend to the council that they adopt payment of the PBA.

15. Date of next Meeting

Autumn Budget setting