



BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRECHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2023 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

Cllr Dewdney did not attend.

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 15.3.2023 were reviewed and it was concluded that all actions had been completed.

4. Year End 31 March 2023 External Audit Report

The content of this report was noted, the Full Council having received this on 2nd October.

4.1 Review of 22-23 Year End Internal Audit Report recommendation re limits on accruals

It was agreed that all accruals over £50 will be processed and that those under £50 which form a significant percentage of the relevant cost centre budget will also be considered for inclusion.

5. Finance and Governance Risk Register

The Committee noted that the Finance and Governance Risk Register had been amended and approved by the Full Council on 6th November, following review by the Policy and Management Committee.

6. Review of Section 106 funds

It was noted that the final funds from Market Heath s.106 would be drawn down at the next opportunity for work on Brenchley playground and that funds for work on the Pavilion renovation had been requested from the Fernham 106 fund. It was agreed that any expenditure which could be apportioned to s.106 should be drawn down as soon as possible, due to the value of the fund reducing with rising inflation.

7. Contracts

7.1 Update on Contracts and Suppliers

A list of contracts and suppliers was reviewed. It was agreed that the Clerk and RFO have the authority to enter into contracts with utilities suppliers in order to gain the best prices for the Council. Concern was expressed that the unmetered electricity supply to the streetlights has not significantly reduced and the RFO is to investigate and confirm that the assessment for billing has been adjusted since the installation of LED bulbs.

Action: RFO

With reference to the change in supplier for the telephone and broadband, as previously resolved, the Committee agreed that the lease of the current router should be paid in full to end the contract.

Action: RFO

7.2 Update on Utilities and Public Toilets

The RFO, who had undertaken significant research into tariffs, advised that the Council had moved its electricity contracts to EDF for the pavilion and the toilets, It was agreed that the RFO move some but not all of the water contracts, where it is financially beneficial to do so. It was agreed that the water supply to the pond should be disconnected and Cllr Buttery is to make arrangements for this to occur and the RFO will give notice to Business Stream. It was noted that there are some essential repairs required in the toilets and the Clerk will instruct a plumber to undertake this work. It was agreed at the November Council Meeting that a water sensor be installed in both toilets to reduce water usage but that this cannot be instructed until the essential repairs have been carried out.

Actions: Cllr Buttery, RFO and Clerk

8. Review of Direct Debits / Standing Orders

The direct debits and standing orders were reviewed and noted. New direct debits will be set up for the new utilities contracts.

Action: RFO

9. Bank Accounts

9.1 Signing of Bank reconciliations

It was agreed that the credit card statements should be added to the bank reconciliation papers for signature.

Actions: Cllr Wells, RFO

9.2 Receive an Update on current position with bank accounts.

The meeting was advised that all three bank accounts are now operational and that the RFO is maintaining a cash flow forecast to predict when funds are required to be transferred between accounts. It was noted that funds will be required to be transferred back from CCLA in the last quarter of the financial year. It was also agreed that the RFO will process a mid-year VAT return to assist with the cash flow and enable interest to be received on these funds.

Action: RFO

10. Income and Fees

10.1 Income

It was agreed that the majority of the allotment site costs should be borne by the Allotment tenants (via tenancy fee income). A summary of the costs of maintaining the allotment site is to be included in the tenancy renewal letter, sent in March and the tenants will be advised that if they fail to maintain the pathways during the 2024-25 season that the cost of employing a contractor to do this would be added to the fees in 2025.

It was agreed that the cost of deep cleaning and electricity should be covered by hirers of the Pavilion.

Action: RFO

10.2 Fees and Licences

Cricketers fees to be increased from £280 to £300.

Allotment fees to be increased from 50p to 60p per square metre.

Pavilion hire costs: Summer Meetings (Beverages only) -May to September

2 hours £25

3 hours £35

Subsequent hours £10

Winter meetings (Beverages only) - October to April

2 hours £29

3 hours £41

Subsequent hours £12

Summer Parties (food and drink present) -May to September

3 hours £60

4 hours £70
Subsequent hours £10
Winter Parties (food and drink present) – October to April
3 hours £66
4 hours £78
Subsequent hours £12

Table Tennis (£25 for 2 hours) and Croquet (£15, toilet access only) users fees to remain unchanged.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council approves the suggested Allotment Fees and Pavilion Licenses and fees from 1.4.24.

11. Budget Monitoring

11.1 Comparison of 2023/4 budget to actual spend

The current position was reviewed and reasons for under and over spends noted.

11.2 Roll over of budget provision and accruals

A list of items to be accrued was discussed and the RFO will circulate a list for approval at the Council Meeting on 3rd March 2024. It is anticipated that the only major works likely not to be concluded in 2023/24 will be the installation of the new storage unit at the Pavilion.

Action: RFO

12. Draft Budget and Precept 2024/25

The draft budget was refined and the precept set at £140K an increase of 5.3% since last year (tax base figure awaited). All reference to costs associated with the Purchase of the Brenchley Post Office are excluded as there is no definitive plan of action for this work. The budget will be presented to Council at the December meeting.

13. Date of next Meeting – Spring 2024