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|   | PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL*Working together for a better future* |

 PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Swan View, Lower Street

Pulborough

West Sussex RH20 2BF

Telephone: 01798 873532

Email: hquenault@pulboroughparishcouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES OF A FINANCE & POLICY MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

**HELD** **ON THURSDAY 24th OCTOBER 2024 AT THE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Clarke (Chair), Campbell, Court, Ellis-Brown, Lee, Hunt\*

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Mr H Quenault (Clerk)

***The meeting opened at 7.30pm.***

***\*Arrived 19:33 pm***

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and reasons were received from:

Cllr Labuschagne (Personal Commitment)

1. **Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests**

There were no changes to Councillor’s register of interests.

There were no changes to the declarations of interests.

1. **Minutes**

It was noted that Jon Campbell name had been spelt incorrectly, the Clerk will amend this but committee were happy to accept the minutes.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting Thursday 26th September 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman sign them. Changed the Jon Campbell name incorrect.

1. **Public Speaking**

 There were no public speakers present, therefore the Chair moved onto the next item on the agenda.

1. **Parish Council Finances**

There was a question over the financial contribution of Horsham District Council for the village sweeping salary. This was clarified by the Clerk. It was mentioned that the new role of the biodiversity officer may have some time to sweep the village on occasion. A point was made the Barnhouse Lane steps off of the carpark were slippery. It was clarified that this is a responsibility for Horsham District Council.

The salary for the bio-diversity apprentice was clarified and the training costs associated to the apprenticeship.

Income code 1077 was clarified as grant money.

Event cost and event income was currently showing as a small loss rather than a small profit as thought, this is due to one of the sponsors not paying as of yet.

It was noted that repairs remain high for the S&SC building.

Allotment repairs also remained high; this would be referenced by the Clerk later in the budget.

The vehicle expenditure is much higher due to money being spent on the new blades for the mower.

The underspend on youth initiatives does not take into consideration the skate event invoice yet to be paid and the Chanctonbury Leisure bill for the Wednesday evening youth sports club.

There was some discussion over the cost of the wardens.

There was reference to the unspent highway’s equipment budget. The Clerk offered a brief summary of what could be spent in this column.

A small error was pointed out that £2,088 had been transferred to the wrong EMR code. An expense related to the new tractor and machinery EMR had ended up in the sports pavilion EMR. This would be corrected by the Clerk.

A question over whether repairs should be spent on the current building was discussed. It was stated that immediate repairs must go on, but no new capital expenditure would be needed.

The Clerk was thanked.

Members **NOTED** bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1, Cashbook 2, Cashbook 3 and Cashbook 4, a summary of Income & Expenditure and the statement of Earmarked Reserves as at 30th September 2024.

1. **Internal Audit**

The Clerk explained his recommendation.

A question was raised over why the company had only completed a full registration on Companies House this year. This was explained that the company had changed structure from an incorporated company into a limited company in April 2024.

It was noted that it is a good financial practice to change internal auditors, every three to four years. This stops familiarity.

The members **RESOLVED** to elect Mulberry & Co as the internal audit provider for the 2024/25 financial year.

1. **Grant – Recommendations**

Due to two of the members not being able to review the recommendations, the Chair proposed there should be more time.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to defer to next finance committee.

1. **S106/CIL Monies**

It was explained that Section 106 funds were allocated to the Weald Secondary School due to Pulborough being within its catchment area.

There was also discussion about using Section 106 funds for the redevelopment of the derelict youth club building at the primary school, potentially repurposing it for additional classroom space.

Additionally, Section 106 funds are being allocated for a feasibility study aimed at improving pedestrian access to the school, which includes significant planned modifications to Pidgeon Gate bridge. It was noted that this project is under time pressure to be completed.

One member clarified that Section 106 funding for Lower Street improvements should be returned directly to the Council, not just through the PCP partnership for further allocation and implementation. The Clerk noted that while the Lower Street project had previously been marked as complete, additional funds have remained unspent for 20 years. A PCP director shared plans for these funds and potential improvements for Lower Street. It was also mentioned that the arch on Barnhouse Lane had been abandoned. The Clerk highlighted that, in the past, PCP was the preferred channel for handling Section 106 funds due to the Council’s limited powers. However, with the Council’s new power of competence and increased resources, it is now better positioned to manage and expedite these projects directly. Given the shift in the village centre, there is potential to develop Lower Street as a specialist shopping area. The PCP directors agreed to review this feedback and provide a follow-up.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair and PCP create a task and finish group to collaborate with the Council to ensure this money is spent in a way that benefits Lower Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would question HDC over the 701K expected and the 226k that has not been received yet, which Pulborough PC are entitled 15% of. Other questions include how come this has happened, when we are expected to receive this and what is the overall resolution to this issue.

Members **NOTED** the HDC quarterly report of unspent & potential S106 and CIL monies.

1. **Allotment Rent Review 2024-25**

Last year, the Clerk mentioned that this topic had been subject to a substantial debate. It was explained that water bills were too variable, causing inconsistencies in billing and making it difficult to budget effectively. To resolve this, the Clerk recommended that the fees be consolidated into a single billable item, as per his previous year’s suggestion.

The sizing of the plots had been carefully measured, and categories were confirmed by the Deputy Clerk as follows: small plot, medium plot, large plot, and extra-large plot.

The current and proposed costs for each plot size are as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Plot Size  | Current Cost | Water Cost | Total Cost | Proposed Cost  |
| Small Plot  | £28.00 | £6.03 | £34.03 | £35.00 |
| Medium Plot | £37.00 | £7.96 | £44.96 | £45.00 |
| Large Plot | £45.00 | £9.69 | £54.69 | £55.00 |
| X-Large Plot | £72.50 | £15.61 | £88.11 | £90.00 |

Water charges, currently calculated as 21.50% of the plot cost, have a maximum this year of £15.61. The Clerk's proposal reflects the suggested increases in the plot fees, aiming to simplify billing and stabilise budget planning.

The cost of the shed would increase to £15.00 per shed.

The query was raised that there would be no incentive not to conserve water. However, another member explained that communication was key to announce that we are monitoring the water this year and that if it goes over the normal limit, the charge would be passed onto next year. Water capture should also be encouraged.

It was noted that the community allotment is funded in whole by grant money.

It was **RESOLVED** that the tabled increases be adopted for the allotment rent for next year, the abolishment of water charges and the increase of and annual charge of £15.00 per shed.

1. **Budget Review – 1st Draft**

The Clerk produce a 1st draft. This was interpreted by committee. The Clerk explained the budget.

Clarification over the warden cost was explained, they are currently locked into contract.

It was noted that the line sports club tenancies did not include snooker, which would be need to be inserted.

A proposal was made to sell advertising space, with the potential to sell up to 22 boards. Priced at £500 each, this could raise £11,000 initially, with a target to increase income to £15,000. Additional opportunities were suggested, including seeking annual sponsorships through similar advertising boards, like those in Horsham, potentially bringing in £25,000–£35,000 annually. Maintenance costs are estimated at £2,000, supporting the facility's longevity over its 25-year lifespan.

The Clerk was thanked for his hard work.

1. **Payments**

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| Travis Perkins | £19.58 |
| Royal British Legion | £725.00 |
| Business Stream | £247.08 |
| WSCC Financial Services | £286.92 |
| Shed Store | £254.99 |

***The meeting closed at 8.56pm.***

 ……………………………………..Chair

 ………………………………………Date