

Burwell Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2023

Present: Paul Webb (Chair), Gus Jones, Charlie Milner, Liz Swift, Michael Swift, Brenda Wilson, Ian Woodroofe, and Yvonne Rix (Clerk & RFO).

F&GP/28112023/01 Apologies for absences and declarations of interests

Apologies for absence had been received from Linda Kitching, and Chris O'Neill. There were no interests declared.

F&GP/28112023/02 Approval of the minutes of the meeting 26.9.23

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2023 were approved and signed as a true and correct record. The Clerk reported that the replacement photocopier has now been installed.

F&GP/28112023/03 Consideration of the Action Sheet

The group noted the following updates:

PROJECT	INFORMATION AND UPDATES
Local Council Risk System	Yvonne Rix reported that the review of most of the risk assessments has now been carried out. The following assessments still need to be reviewed: Manual Handling Use of electronic devices Code of Conduct Working at Height Further Assessments required: Community Garden – Volunteers Community Orchard Social Media
CCLA Investment	Funds at 31.10.23 £105,982.24

F&GP/28112023/04 Precept 24/25

Paul Webb explained that Burwell has one of the lowest Band D rate payments in the district and that there is a need to review the financial needs of the Parish Council through the Five-Year Plan. He continued to explain that to cover the financial requirements of the Council in the 2024/2025 financial year, a precept of £252,000.00 would be required. This would equate to a 22% increase which is something that the Council would not wish to ask the parish for. Any increase above 15% would need to be approved by the village. There are items such as addressing climate change issues with our buildings which we will need to build up funds to carry out the work, including an energy audit on the Mandeville Hall and Jubilee Reading Room. Wage increases also need to be taken into account. Yvonne Rix shared information with the group on the Council's financial situation at the end of October 23, expenditure, and income to date for the current financial year and a list of how much would be achieved in relation to various percentage increases, and a draft budget. A more detailed draft budget to be drawn up once the precept figure has been approved. It was clarified that for general expenditure, fundraising could not be carried out by a Parish Council. An initial suggestion was for the precept to be raised by 10%, however several members of the group indicated that they felt a slightly higher percentage should be sought, with a suggestion of 12% being made. This would result in a precept of £233,250.00. Proposed by Liz Swift, seconded by Ian Woodroofe and approved by the group, the following recommendation to be made to Full Council:

The Finance and General Purposes Group recommends to Full Council that the Precept for the 2024/2025 financial year is set at £233,250.00 which equates to a 12% increase on the 2023/2024 Precept.

F&GP/28112023/05 Review of the following:

The Group reviewed the following and make the following recommendations:

Financial Regulations

The Finance and General purposed Group having reviewed the Financial Regulations recommend to Full Council that no changes are made to the document.

Risk Management Policy

The Finance and General Purposes Group reviewed the Risk Management Policy and recommend to Full Council that no changes are required.

Direct Debits

The Finance and General Purposes Group reviewed and recommend for approval all payments made under current direct debit mandates:

Anglian Water Business, British Gas, British Telecom, Corona Energy, ECDC, Engie Gas, Engie Power, ICO, Lloyds Bank, Nest, Siemens Financial, and Vodafone Limited.

Safeguarding of Funds and Review of Internal Controls

Having considered the measures put in place for the safeguarding of the Council's funds and financial controls and recommends to Full Council that no changes are required.

F&GP/28112023/06 Issues with hirer payments

Yvonne Rix reported that there has been an issue with one of the regular hirer's payments. However, most of the debt has now been cleared. It was agreed that the situation should be monitored and if the full amount outstanding has not been cleared by the next meeting, the matter should be discussed further.

F&GP/28112023/07 East Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership – Request for Funding

A letter has been received from the Chair of the East Cambs Community Safety Partnership. They are asking for funding to support the continuation of the Community Safety Support and Anti-Social Behaviour Officer role for a further two years. The role covers the whole of East Cambs and has helped with issues in Burwell. It was agreed that the following recommendation should be made to Full Council:

The Finance and General Purposes Group recommends to Full Council that up to £1000 is donated to the Community Safety Partnership towards the cost of the continuation of the Community Safety Support Anti-Social Behaviour Office role for a further two years. The cost of the donation to be taken from the balance of the Safety Campaign Funding. Further consideration will be given next year for additional funding to be awarded.

Liz Swift discussed that any remaining Safety Campaign funding could be re-earmarked to the work required to make the entrance and exit safer at the Gardiner Memorial Hall.

F&GP/28112023/08 Engie – Energy Charges

The issues with the charges for energy supply for the allotments and the public toilet have not yet been resolved. The Clerk to contact Engie again.

F&GP/28112023/09 Website – SSL Certificate

Concern had been raised by one of the Councillors that the Council website does not have a secure status. This was thought not to be an issue other than for information held by Vision ICT on their network when people use the website contact form. The Clerk was asked to contact Vision ICT and find out for how long and how secure information such as names, email addresses and phone numbers are kept for.

F&GP/28112023/10 Recording of meetings

A suggestion has been made that parish council meetings should be filmed so that they can be shared in the public domain. There was a mixed feeling about this by those present. Paul Webb reported that he

had asked AED if they are able to provide a system to do this and it is. A vote was taken as to whether AED should be asked to provide a quotation to do this. Following a 50/50 vote, which led to Paul Webb as chair using his casting vote in favour of getting a quotation, the following recommendation to be made to Full Council:

The Group recommends to Full Council that a quotation is sought for the provision of a suitable system to film Parish Council meetings at the Gardiner Memorial Hall.

F&GP/28112023/11 Any other business

Skate Park lights

As a result of further outages of the skate park flood lights a quotation has been received from J J Drake to do a diagnostic check on the light system in the sum of £495.00 plus VAT. It was agreed that this should be carried out prior to replacing any of the light fittings. The Group agreed that the following recommendation should be made to Full Council:

The Group recommends to Full Council that a diagnostic check on the skateboard lights is carried out by JJ Drakes at a cost of £495.00 plus VAT.

Vandalised item of Playground Equipment

One of the items of gym equipment has been vandalised at the Recreation Ground. The damage has been reported to the Police. Unfortunately, CCTV footage does not give a clear indication of the offenders. It was agreed that the Parish Council would need to pay for a replacement if needed due to a number of insurances claims having to have been submitted over the past year or so. It may be worth replacing with a metal item if replacement is thought necessary. The group agreed that a notice should be put on the item of equipment stating that it is out of action and will cost £1945.00 plus VAT to replace. It was also suggested that a page should be included on the Council's website listing details with costings, of all incidents of vandalism.

A request had been received from 2nd Burwell Guides regarding allowing the Guides to sell refreshments at 'Carols around the Tree' to raise funds for their unit. It was agreed that on this occasion not to take them up on the offer as the event is run at no cost to the residents. It was suggested that the Guides may like to run a tuck shop at the pavilion during the school holidays, something that had previously been discussed by the Community, Leisure, Health, and Sports Group.

An email had been received from Gately Smithers Purslow regarding the end of the retention period for the work to the Pavilion. It was agreed that as there were no known defects identified the retention monies could be released.

F&GP/28112023/12 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting to be held on 30th January 2024.

The meeting closed at 9 pm.

Signed

Dated