Burwell Parish Council

Finance and General Purposes

24.09.2024

**Minutes**

Present: Paul Webb (Chair), Michael Swift, Liz Swift, Richard Jenkins, Gus Jones, Jim Perry, Yvonne Rix (RFO) and Katherine Hyett (Parish Clerk).

**F&GP/24092024/01 Apologies for absences and declarations of interests**

Apologies for absence had been received from Ian Woodroofe, Brenda Wilson, Linda Kitching, Charlie Milner and Chris O’Neil.

There were no declarations of interests.

**F&GP/24092024/02 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 30.7.24**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2024 were approved and signed as a true and correct record. Proposed by Michael Swift and seconded by Liz swift.

**F&GP/24092024/03 Consideration of the Action Sheet**

The following updates were noted:

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| PROJECT | INFORMATION AND UPDATES | |
| Local Council Risk System | Still to do:  Manual Handling  Use of electronic devices  Code of Conduct  Working at Height – George has now done this  Further Assessments required:  Community Garden – Volunteers  Community Orchard  Social Media | The Group agreed that these should be completed by the end of October if possible. |
| CCLA Investment | Funds at 31.8.2024 £110,721.61 | |

**F&GP/24092024/04 External Audit**

The Completed Annual Governance Form has been received from the External Auditors. They have highlighted an ‘except for matter’ regarding Council not agreeing a budget prior to setting the precept.

Council needs to acknowledge this when they consider the return at the meeting on 8th October. A plan also needs to be put into place to avoid this happening again.

The Group agreed that the following schedule should be taken:

* The draft budget should be drawn up by the RFO and Chair of F&GP on and around the 16th October 2024.
* The draft budget to then be considered, amendments made, and a recommendation for Full Council at a meeting of the F&GP Group on 22nd October (7.30 pm at the Jubilee Reading Room).
* Draft budget to be considered by Full Council on 12th November 2024.
* Precept to be considered by F&GP on 26th November 2024.
* Precept to be considered by Full Council on 10th December 2024.

***Following a proposal by Liz Swift, seconded by Michael Swift it was agreed by all that the above schedule should be recommended to Full Council.***

**F&GP/24092024/05 CCLA Mandate Update**

The new mandate has now been completed and is due to be sent to CCLA.

**F&GP/24092024/06 New Financial Regulations**

Paul Webb explained that some changes are required to the new model Financial Regulations and highlighted the main ones in Sections 4.3, 5.15, 9 and 10 so that they relate to Burwell.

***Michael Swift Proposed, seconded by Liz Swift that a recommendation is made to Full Council for the new model Financial Regulations with amendments relating to Burwell should be adopted. This was agreed by all.***

**F&GP/24092024/07 Appointment of Internal Auditor and Scope of Audit**

***Michael Swift proposed, seconded by Gus Jones that a recommendation should be***

***made to Full Council that Moore’s should be appointed as Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024/2025 with the same scope as previously. This was agreed by all.***

**F&GP/24092024/08 Budget 2025/2026**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting under the External Audit.

**F&GP/24092024/09 Staffing – Holiday Allowance and working hours Clerk and RFO**

The Group noted that concern had been raised by both the Clerk and RFO that there is a need for contractual hours to be increased for both posts to enable workloads to be carried out effectively. Both staff members have found the need to work more hours. The Clerk is currently contracted for 30 hours per week and the RFO for 5 hours per week. Increasing these to 35 and 7 hours per week respectively probably needs to be considered. Although no two parish councils are the same, similar councils within Cambridgeshire tend to have more administrative allocated hours than Burwell. Michael Swift spoke of how he felt that there is a need for the Council to review its structure including office opening hours. Following a proposal from Michael Swift, seconded by Richard Jenkins, it was agreed by all that this should be discussed further at the first F and GP meeting in 2025.

There is a need to make allowance for increasing staff working hours in the 2025/2026.

In the interim Paul Webb suggested that both the Clerk and RFO should be paid for additional hours worked and should keep a timesheet to support overtime claims.

***Richard Jenkins proposed, seconded by Liz Swift and approved by all, that a recommendation is made to Full Council that for the next three months the Clerk and RFO, based on a detailed timesheet, should be paid for any additional hours worked.***

It was noted that there has been a change in the recommended holiday entitlement for staff members (NALC Model Document and Green Book). Staff are now entitled to 23 days plus 2 statutory days and following 5 years’ service an additional 3 days. Katherine Hyett leave entitlement should be in line with this from the start of her contract and it was suggested that the remaining staff should be brought into line with the updated entitlement from 1st April 2025.

***Liz Swift proposed, seconded by Gus Jones and agreed by all that the following recommendation should be made to Full Council:***

***That Katherine Hyett’s leave entitlement for the current year will be based on the NALC Model Document and all other staff members leave entitlement will be brought in line with this from the 1st April 2025. All leave entitlement is pro rata.***

Yvonne Rix informed that group that on her leaving date from the role of Clerk she had around 40 hours overtime in hand.

***Richard Jenkins proposed, seconded by Liz Swift and agreed by all that a recommendation is made to Full Council that Yvonne Rix is paid for these hours following receipt of details of the hours worked.***

**F&GP/24092024/10 Social Media Policy and Communications Group – Update**

Paul Webb explained that a meeting is due to be arranged in November to move this forward.

**F&GP/24092024/11 Other Matters:**

Heaters for Pavilion roof area

It was agreed that the heaters to help prevent the pipes freezing in the roof space of the pavilion need to be purchased. Four heaters are required at a cost of around £42.00 plus vat per heater.

IT Systems

Paul Webb explained that a meeting is being arranged with Burwell Computers to look at the current IT system in the office and updates that are required.

Parish Online or similar software

Paul Webb explained that he intends to include some funding, probably £500, within the 2025/2026 budget to enable the Council to obtain the software if felt relevant.

The Group noted that due to the cessation of membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme, in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, Paragraph 64 of the Regulations provides that, at termination, an actuarial assessment is undertaken to establish within the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund any additional contributions are due from the Council. The cost of the valuation is £1750.00 plus vat and the Parish Council will be responsible for this.

**F&GP/24092024/12 Date of the next meeting**

An additional meeting will be held on 22nd October 2024 7.30 pm (JRR) to discuss the budget and the next working group meeting will be held on 26th November 2024.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Signed Dated