

Burwell Parish Council
Notes of the Finance and General Purposes
Held on 30th January 2024

Present: Michael Swift (Chair), Liz Swift, Chris O’Neill, Linda Kitching, Brenda Wilson, Ian Woodroofe, Jim Perry, and Yvonne Rix (Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer).

F&GP/30012024/01 Apologies for absences and declarations of interests

Apologies for absence had been received from Paul Webb, Gus Jones, and Charlie Milner. There were no declarations of interests.

F&GP/30012024/02 Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 28.11.23

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th November 2023 were approved. Proposed by Liz swift and seconded by Brenda Wilson.

F&GP/30012024/03 Consideration of the Action Sheet and updates on the following items:

Payment of Invoices by Hirer

Yvonne Rix reported that there are still a couple of payments outstanding. It was agreed that the situation should be monitored.

Anti-Social Behaviour Officer Role – Consideration of financial contribution towards additional hours

The Finance and General Purposes Group had previously agreed to recommend that the Parish Council makes a contribution towards the cost of maintaining the role. However, prior to the recommendation being considered by Full Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council reported that they had found the necessary funding without the need of assistance from Parish Councils.

Engie (Public Toilet and Allotments)

Yvonne Rix reported that Engie is still looking into the issue with the energy charges for the Public Toilet and the Allotments. Both accounts are currently on hold. Yvonne Rix said that she was minded to go to Ofgem if the matter is not resolved fairly soon,

Skate Park Lights (JJ Drake)

Yvonne Rix reported that J J Drake are due to carry out the diagnostic check of the lights at the Recreation Ground on Monday 5th February 2024. Ian Woodroofe asked to see a copy of the report from the check when received.

Website SSL Certification

Following a request at the previous meeting Yvonne Rix reported that she had contacted Vision ICT about personal data held by them as a result of individuals contacting the Council using the ‘Contact Us’ facility on the Council’s website, and that she had been informed by Vision ICT that no personal data is held.

It was noted that the Policies and Recording of Meetings will be discussed at the next F&GP meeting.

The following updates were noted:

PROJECT	INFORMATION AND UPDATES
Local Council Risk System	Still to do: 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 31.12.2023 £106,927.49

F&GP/30012024/04 Quarterly Finance Report to 31st December 2023.

Yvonne Rix presented the Finance Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2023 (Appendix1). No concerns were raised.

The Finance and General Purposed Working Group recommends to Full Council that the Financial Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2023 is accepted.

F&GP/30012024/05 Consideration of draft budget for 24/25

Yvonne Rix presented a draft budget for consideration, see Appendix 2. She explained that the draft budget now reflected the 12% precept increase. There is a balance of £16,611 left for capital budgets as shown in Appendix 3, however if all capital project amounts are taken into account there is a deficit of £15,889.00. If the grasscrete for the Mandeville Hall car park is removed, then the deficit is 10,889.00. Yvonne Rix suggested that the budget should be reviewed in September 2024, particularly with regards to the affordability of capital funding.

The Finance and General Purposes Group recommends to Full Council that the draft budget for the year 2024/2025 is accepted including capital expenditure. The budget to be reviewed in September 2024

F&GP/30012024/06 Review of Charges for Hall hire, allotments, cemetery, lock up.

Halls: The Group felt that it is necessary to ensure that any increases should reflect the higher energy costs but also the affordability of the halls for the community. The Finance and General Purposes Working Group recommends the following:

That hall charges for both halls are increased by £1.00 per hour. Non-profit organisation rates to remain at 75% of the full charge. Charges for Guiding, Scouting Groups, and the Farmers Markets to be increased by 5%.

Allotments: Allotment holders currently pay 25p per square metre. It has already been agreed that this will increase to 30p per square metre from October 2024.

It is recommended to Full Council that there is no increase in October 2025.

Cemetery Fees

It is recommended to Full Council that all fees apart from those that apply to Children under the age of 12, should be increased by £10.00.

Lock Up

The Finance and General Purposes Group recommends to Full Council that the annual rent for the Lock Up remains at £200.00.

F&GP/30012024/07 Staff Appraisals

The Group agreed that the staff appraisals carried out by the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair should be arranged for the first week in March.

F&GP/30012024/08 Energy Supply – Utility Aid

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by Utility Aid and had been asked if the Council wished to secure energy prices now for when the current contract ends in 2026. The Group agreed that they did not wish to take up the offer.

F&GP/30012024/09 Any other business

GMH Phase 2

A small group of Councillors have held a couple of meetings to discuss the way forward with the second phase of the Gardiner Memorial Hall. It is felt that the Council is not in the position to move forward with the original plans to provide a large extension to the rear of the building, but maybe in the position to construct a smaller extension to accommodate a room which can be used as a small meeting room or a back of stage green room when performances take place. At the second of the two meetings, Jeremy Lander, a retired architect, attended and has said that he would be prepared to carry out a feasibility study for the hall at a cost of £2800 plus expenses. It is thought that something could be built costing in

the region of £200,000. Following the feasibility study, the Council could obtain quotations from other architects etc. and funding sources explored.

The Finance and General Purposes Group recommend to Full Council that Mr Lander is asked to carry out a feasibility study for a small one room extension to the Gardiner Memorial Hall.

Payments by Card (Fees)

Yvonne Rix brought to the attention of the group the fees being incurred by the Council when payments are made using the card machine. The amount is 2.5% of the payment. She continued to explain that some thought needs to be given to the way that this is accounted for especially where deposits are concerned. Those wishing to use the card machine to make payments instead of using cash or the BACS system could be charged an additional amount to cover the fee. Yvonne Rix to find out how other Council's who have card payment machines deal with the fees.

Breach of Data

Yvonne Rix reported that there had been a breach of data which was being dealt with by the office as per official guidelines.

Mandeville Hall Car Park

It was noted that there had been a complaint about the revised location of the fence at Mandeville Hall. It had been agreed that the fence would be moved again to ensure that there is 2 metres between the fence and the boundary fence. The area in front of the fence is now very muddy and it had been agreed that the area should be cordoned off temporarily to prevent parking. The Clerk had agreed to find out how much it would cost for the area to have grasscrete installed similar to the remainder of the grassed car park. The Clerk reported that she now had a cost of £14180 plus vat to carry out the work. The Group agreed that the Parish Council is not currently financially in a position to carry out the work. The Clerk asked if the Maintenance Officer should go ahead and install a more permanent chain and post fence to stop cars parking and it was agreed that he should.

F&GP/30012024/10 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting to be held on 26th March 2024.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

Signed

Dated