

Burwell Parish Council  
Finance and General Purposes/Strategy Group

7<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Minutes

Present: Liz Swift (Chair), Lea Dodds, Joan Lonsdale, Michael Swift, Geraldine Tate, Paul Webb, Brenda Wilson, Ian Woodroofe, and Yvonne Rix.

F&GP/07022023/01 Apologies for absences and declarations of interests

An apology for absence had been received from Hazel Williams and Gus Jones.

F&GP/07022023/02 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 29.11.22

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved and signed as a true record.

Proposed by Ian Woodroofe and seconded by Michael Swift.

F&GP/07022023/03 Consideration of the Action Sheet

PROJECT	INFORMATION AND UPDATES
Local Council Risk System	Yvonne Rix reported that slow but steady progress is being made with the review of the Council's Risk Assessments.
CCLA Investment	Funds at 31.1.2023 £102,564.81

F&GP/07022023/04 Quarterly Finance Report – Oct 22 to Dec 22

Yvonne Rix presented the attached Quarterly Finance Report for the period Oct 2022 to December 2022 with the following comments being made:

The Council has total funds of £374,412.25 split between the Unity Trust Current Account and the CCLA Account.

The Bank Reconciliation is at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and does not take into account payments paid out of earmarked reserves after that date.

The Final Account payment for the Gardiner Memorial Hall was as estimate and had no increased impact on the Gardiner Memorial Hall Refurbishment costs. £24,477.20 retention monies are still to be paid.

When looking at the Payments and Receipts summary Yvonne Rix explained that the income for the Gardiner Memorial Hall includes a payment of £33,782.64 from ECDC towards refurbishment costs. Grant Funding income is money received from Grant funders for the Gardiner Memorial Hall. The invoice for the rent for the Lock Up has only just been sent out.

Mandeville Hall income is higher as it includes hall charges paid by those temporarily using Mandeville Hall during the Gardiner Memorial Hall refurbishment.

The income of £58.40 under the Priory Meadow heading is for income received for the erection of a memorial bench in the meadow.

Under the payments, the budget for Gardiner Memorial Hall does not include refurbishment payments. However, these amounts are included in the actual figure.

F&GP/07022023/05 Budget

Yvonne Rix reminded the group that at the previous meeting she had been asked to look at the proposed budget and try to produce a balanced budget based on the precept and other income likely to be received by the Council. She reported that she had done this. Initially the Council's income had been looked at carefully, starting with the hall hire. The previous figures had been based on the period April to October, which incorporated the period where the Gardiner Memorial Hall had been out of use. By using the period between September and December, with the Gardiner Memorial Hall back in use, and a greater demand for both halls. The estimated income was higher than previous. This new figure was used to calculate the expected income for the year, which in turn reduced the deficit within the budget. Two further potential payments were removed. These being replacing the hedge at the cemetery, which

could be deferred, not done or paid out of reserves, and the cost of the elections. Even if the Council does not require an election there will still be some costs, but this too, can be paid out of reserves. The increased level of income and removal of the election costs and the replacement of the cemetery hedge will reduce the budget leaving a surplus of £1257.16.

***The Group agreed that the attached revised budget should be recommended to Full Council for approval.***

It was also agreed that the Assets and Environment Working Group should be asked to revisit the replacement of the hedging at the Cemetery, looking at other options such as volunteers carrying out the work or fencing.

Concern was also shown about the cost of energy due to the massive increase in prices. Usage and availability of providers supplying energy at cheaper rates should be monitored.

#### F&GP/07022023/06 Cil Funds – Westhorpe Play Area

Yvonne Rix reported that the Council currently has £46,302.00 of unearmarked CIL funding. Liz Swift proposed that this funding could be earmarked for the Westhorpe Play Area. The proposal was seconded by Brenda Wilson and all members of the group were in favour of a recommendation being made to Full Council.

***The Group recommends to Full Council that the sum of £46,302.00 unearmarked CIL funding should be earmarked for the Westhorpe Play Area.***

The Council has an opportunity to apply to ECDC for a Facilities Improvement Grant of up to £10,000. The Clerk to arrange for an application to be submitted.

The project currently has the following funding:

- Earmarked by Parish Council £20,000.00
- EDF Renewables Community Fund £15,000
- Community Group £6,0000

With the earmarked £46,302 CIL Funding, the project will have £87,302 towards the costs. The Community Group is trying to secure further funding, but it is likely that the Parish Council may need to consider using reserves for the balance of the project. Four playground providers have been invited to submit a proposal for the refurbishment. All have now been met on site. One provider has informed the Council that they will not be submitting a proposal. All providers were informed that the Council had a budget of £100,000. One proposal has been received to date, costing in the region of £125,000. The cost to remove and dispose of the existing bark and the new surface is the most expensive part of the project cost. The Community Group is looking to see if volunteers could clear the bark from the site in order to save costs.

Paul Webb suggested that the Group should earmark CIL funding received in 2023 for the second phase of the Gardiner Memorial Hall Refurbishment. It was generally felt by the Group that this was a matter for the new Council taking over in May.

#### F&GP/07022023/07 Charges and Fees

##### Halls

Some discussion took place about the need for the hall charges to reflect the running costs of the hall, with others considering that the halls were a community facility with a need to be affordable. The charges have not been increased since April 2019. Some well attended business based groups could afford a higher charge and a suggestion was made that there could be a higher charge for these users. However, this would prove difficult in the terms of the administration of the halls. The Group agreed that the hourly rate for both halls should be increased by £1.00. Please see separate list for fees.

***The Group recommends that the hourly charge for the hire of the halls (Mandeville Hall and Gardiner Memorial Hall) should be increased by £1.00.***

It was also agreed that bookings should be monitored, and prices reviewed in six months' time.

### Cemetery

**The Group recommends to Full Council that all fees should be increased by £10.00 apart from the burial of an infant under twelve which should remain the same at £90.00.**

**The Group also recommends that a charge of £25.00 should be introduced for the transfer or changes to an Exclusive Right.**

### Allotments

Council has already agreed that the allotment rent from October 2023 should be 25p per square metre.

**The Group agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that allotment rent from October 2024 should be 30p per square metre.**

### Sports Facilities

Charges for the use of Sports Facilities to be considered by the Community, Sports, and Leisure Group at their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022.

### Lock Up

The Group agreed that the rent of £200.00 should remain the same for the Lock Up.

### F&GP/07022023/08 Mobile Phones for Key Holders

It was agreed that further investigation is required to find out what smart phone deals are available, either to purchase outright or as a contract for the key holders. The phones are needed so that the key holders can use the app for the intruder alarm at the Gardiner Memorial Hall. Ian Woodroffe and Lea Dodds to investigate.

Concern was shown about the Key Holders or Paul Webb being responsible for dealing with intruder alerts during the night at the hall. A final decision will be made about the phones at the next Finance and General Purposes meeting.

### F&GP/07022023/09 Cleaning Contract

Yvonne Rix reported that Burwell Cleaning had informed her that they would be ceasing trading as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The Clerk to proceed with going out to tender for a new contractor. The Keyholders carrying out the cleaning instead of a contractor was mentioned, but this was felt not to be the best way forward. However, it could be an option in the short term should a contractor not be available to start from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

### F&GP/07022023/10 5 Year Plan (Strategy Group)

It was suggested that a greater focus on Climate Change and the action plan the Council is working to in order to meet the target of carbon neutral by 2030 should be included in the 5 Year Plan. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the next Strategy Day later on in the summer when the new Council is in place.

**The Group agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that the proposed 5 Year Plan 2023-2028 should be adopted and that changes to content regarding Climate Change should be considered when the plan is reviewed at the next Strategy Day. Proposed by Paul Webb and seconded by Michael Swift.**

### F&GP/07022023/11 Any other matters and matters for discussion at the next Meeting (F&GP or Strategy)

Yvonne Rix informed the group that ECDC has appointed Emma Knights as Senior Strategic Planning Officer. For the foreseeable future, Emma's work will concentrate supporting parishes that are thinking about or working on Neighbourhood Plans. It was suggested that Emma could be invited to a meeting once the new council is in place.

Notification has been received from Unity Bank that the partnership with the Post Office allowing cash to be banked will cease on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Any cash that the Parish Council receives from that date will now need to be paid in at the Nat West bank in Newmarket. Having a 'sum up' device available may give an alternative to paying in cash. Payments by bacs or direct pay should be encouraged.

Those present discussed the date for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and it was agreed that the following recommendation should be made to Full Council.

***The Group recommends to Full Council that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council should be held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, 7.30 pm at the Gardiner Memorial Hall.***

The Group discussed if the Museum should be charged for the allotment plot previously let to Paul Hawes. For the year to October 2023 the cost will be £11.50. It was agreed that the Museum should be charged.

The Football Club had written in to the Council about a possible reduction in fees to balance out the loss of income from the sale of refreshments whilst the Pavilion is not available due to the water damage. It was agreed that this would either be discussed at the next meeting with the Football Club and/or at the next meeting of the Community, Leisure, and Sports Group.

F&GP/07022023/12 Date of the next meeting

The next Finance and General Purposes meeting will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The meeting ended at 9 pm.

Signed

Dated