

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
7PM ON 27 JULY 2022  
By Microsoft Teams video conference**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Woof, Chair. Cllr G. Jukes OBE, Vice Chair.  
Councillors S. Bromley; D. Cornish (part); G. Evans; G. Veitch (part) & S. Weeks.  
  
K. Dagnall, Clerk.  
C. Warke, Deputy Clerk.

**158/2022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs R. Cundy and S. McDonald.

**159/2022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

**160/2022 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2022 were agreed as a true record. These will be signed in due course.

**161/2022 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES / OTHER MATTERS**

**48/2022 Assets**

There has been good progress towards adding images to the software package and this should be completed soon.

**48/2022 Support for youth work activities**

Following discussion at a previous meeting Cllrs McDonald and Woof and the Clerk have met to discuss the next stages. It was agreed that a meeting will be arranged with FBC representatives to clarify certain points and enquiries will also be made regarding other provision in the area. A meeting will be arranged for September.

**52/2022 Projects / Strategic or Forward Plan**

A meeting will be arranged to discuss how best to integrate the Neighbourhood Development Plan into the work and future planning of the Council. This may also lead to changes in the Council's committee structure.

**53/2022 Council Management matters**

Updating of the Declaration of Interests Form to align it with the new Code of Conduct adopted in 2021 is in hand.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

No members of the public were present.

**162/2022 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL**

**Unity Trust Bank current account**

The balance on 10 July 2022 is £72,735.72.

**CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund**

£1,100,895,95 is currently held in the Fund. The yield on 30 June 2022 was 1.0384%.

**CCLA Property Fund**

£25,000 was invested in the Fund in August 2017. Information on current market values was circulated. The investment is stable and continues to be reviewed regularly.

### Income and Expenditure to date

A report was circulated. No issues were raised.

### Review of Ear Marked Reserves (EMR)

Ear Marked Reserves for 2022/23 were agreed by the Council as part of the annual budget setting process. However, during the preparation of the end of year accounts it was suggested that the EMR could be reviewed, particularly in view of the level of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds held by the Council.

It was agreed that the following would be recommended to the Council for approval.

Ear Marked Reserve 2022/23	£	Recommendation
Election costs	7500	Retain EMR.
Community transport	500	Remove EMR. Grant funding to be considered if assistance is requested.
Road safety improvements	1500	Retain EMR.
Footpath equipment	500	Remove EMR. Consider CIL funding for any equipment required.
Allotment maintenance	2000	Retain EMR.
The view/ land near the Memorial	1000	Retain EMR.

### 163/2022 GRANT AWARDS FOR 2022/23

Grant applications were considered, and recommendations made as set out below, subject to the approval of the Council at its meeting on 15 September.

Organisation	Project	Grant requested	Committee recommendation
Citizens Advice Wokingham	To help with the provision of free, independent and impartial advice for residents on welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment law and other issues, along with access to hardship support.	£3500	Grant of £3500
First Days Children's Charity	To reduce the long-term effect of poverty on children by providing everyday essentials such as school uniforms, toiletries, furniture and books.	£1000	Grant of £1000 *
Gorse Ride After School Support project <i>(Late application but considered due to time critical nature of the project)</i>	To provide after school support from September 2022 for young people living in the Gorse Ride community. Project will be based at the Community Hub on Gorse Ride South, with space for young people to complete homework. Grant requested to cover the cost of laptops and printer.	£400	£400 from Community Infrastructure Levy funds **

\* First Days application: The organisation will be contacted to establish exactly what the grant will be used for. If it is for capital equipment it may be appropriate to use Community Infrastructure Levy funds to support the project.

\*\* Gorse Ride community support: The Clerk and Deputy Clerk are arranging a meeting with the Community Engagement Officer to find out more about support being provided to the community, how this links to activities undertaken by the Baptist Church (FBC), and how the Parish Council could provide further support. A meeting will also be arranged with FBC to clarify the extent of its community activities.

### **164/2022 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDS**

A report was circulated showing the current funds, expenditure to date this year and current commitments.

The current balance is £1,074,354. Expenditure to date in 2022/23 is £20,371 and current approved commitments total £188,900.

At its meeting on 30 March 2022 the Committee considered applications from the Gorse Ride Schools and from the Finchampstead Sports Club and made provisional allocations subject to additional information coming forward.

- Gorse Ride Schools – application for £57,500 for play equipment for Junior and Infants playgrounds and two outdoor shelters. It was previously agreed that the project should be supported in principle and that the Council would contribute up to 50% of the project cost, phased over two years, subject to confirmation of sufficient funds being secured from other sources to allow the project to proceed.

Cllr Woof and the Clerk visited the School on 14 July to discuss progress with the project. Notes of the meeting were circulated. To date the School has been unable to secure significant match funding for the project.

Following the meeting the School is now securing up to date proposals and costs for the two priority items - a replacement trim trail for the Infants playground, and an outdoor shelter / learning space for the Junior playground. The Committee agreed that in view of this latest information a provisional allocation of up to £25,000 should be made towards these two priority items, with the School PTA contributing £5000.

Funding for the other two items will be considered at a later stage.

- Finchampstead Sports Club – application requesting up to £36,000 for improvements to changing facilities and groundman's facilities. It was previously agreed that the project should be supported in principle as the Memorial Park and Sports Club provide valuable facilities for the community. However, the decision was deferred pending receipt of further information regarding the level of local users of the facilities, a breakdown of costs for the project, and confirmation of funding from other sources including from the Sports Club itself.

Some additional supporting information has come forward, but it was agreed that further details were required before a firm commitment could be made.

At its meeting on 12 May the Committee considered an initial application from Finchampstead Primary School towards funds for a new ball court and trim trail. A decision was deferred pending additional information coming forward. The Clerk has been in contact with the School but no further information on the project has been received to date.

Other potential projects were noted, including those where additional information has been requested and others which may come forward for consideration in due course.

### **165/2022 AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

Current authorised signatories are Cllrs Bromley, Cundy, Veitch, Weeks and Woof.

It was agreed that Cllr Jukes should be added as an authorised signatory in order to ensure as far as possible that two signatories are always available, and to allow a rotation of signatories particularly on the online banking system.

### **166/2022 INTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT**

It was agreed that Claire Connell should be reappointed as the Internal Auditor for the Council for the year 2022/23. This is subject to approval by the Council at its meeting on 15 September.

### **167/2022 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) Independent Remuneration Panel has requested that a questionnaire be completed regarding current allowances paid to Councillors, and the Council's views on paying such allowances.

The Council does not currently pay any allowances and it was agreed that this approach should continue, subject to the approval of the Council at its meeting on 15 September.

### **168/2022 INVESTMENT STRATEGY/POLICY**

During the internal audit for 2021/22 it was informally recommended that the Council should have an investment strategy or policy, largely due to the level of CIL funds held by the Council.

A policy setting out the Council's approach to the level of funds kept in different accounts, to Ear Marked Reserves (including for Community Infrastructure Levy funds) and to actual investments – including compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance – is being drafted. This will also note how the Council's banking arrangements are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

### **169/2022 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT MATTERS AND WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES**

#### **Business Continuity**

- Cllrs Jukes, McDonald and Woof and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk met on 15 June to consider the next stages with ensuring business continuity. Work on the identified areas is progressing and Cllr Woof and the Deputy Clerk have held a further meeting to review progress and the Working Group will be meeting again in early October.
- Cllr Veitch suggested that an annual IT security audit should be carried out. Cllr Evans noted that Cyber Essentials Plus certification could be a helpful tool. This will be followed up with the Council's IT and website support providers.
- Cllr Jukes queried whether the Council has a policy or guidance on the retention of documents and emails. This is in place and will be circulated.

#### **HR Sub Committee**

- Mid-term appraisal reviews for staff are being arranged.

#### **Finchampstead Emergency Response**

- The Working Group had provisionally agreed to meet in the Autumn to review the role of FER and the Emergency Plan. A meeting will be arranged in due course.
- As noted at Main Council on 20 July the new WBC Emergency Planning Officer has been in touch and is keen to support the Group.

### **170/2022 FORUM**

No matters were raised.

### **171/2022 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 28 September 2022.

*These minutes are subject to final approval at the next meeting of the Committee.*

## FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 27 JULY 2022

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
161/2022	Add images to asset management software	Deputy Clerk
161/2022	Youth Work – arrange meeting with FBC / other follow ups	Clerk
161/2022	Strategic / Forward plan – arrange meeting for RW, GV, DC, RC, GJ and others tbc	Clerk
161/2022	Update Declaration of Interests form	Deputy Clerk
162/2022	EMR recommendations to Council 15/9/22 for approval	Clerk
163/2022	Funding recommendations to Main Council 15/9/22 for approval Citizens Advice (grant) and First Days (CIL/Grant) and Gorse Ride After School project (CIL) Contact First Days regarding specific plans / potential CIL funding	Clerk  Deputy Clerk
163/2022	Gorse Ride Community support – meeting with Community engagement officer. Meeting with FBC rep re community work.	Clerk/Deputy Clerk
164/2022	CIL bids Gorse Ride Schools – maintain contact. Contact WUC. Sports Club – continue to seek additional information. Follow up additional information on bids and other potential bids	Clerk
164/2022	Gorse Ride Schools – follow up potential WAHS funding	SW
165/2022	Arrangements for GJ to be an authorised signatory	Clerk/Deputy Clerk
166/2022	Internal Auditor appointment to Council for approval 15/9/22 Inform Internal auditor.	Clerk
167/2022	IRP questionnaire response to Council for approval 15/9/22 and submission to WBC by 23/9/22	Clerk
168/2022	Draft investment strategy/policy	
169/2022	Business Continuity Plan – continue to progress agreed actions Arrange Working Group meeting Contact IT support company and web support company regarding annual security checks Circulate policy on document management/email retention	Deputy Clerk
169/2022	Arrange FER meeting	Clerk