

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
7.00PM ON 30 NOVEMBER 2022
By Microsoft Teams video conference**

PRESENT: Councillor R. Woof, Chair. Councillor G. Jukes OBE, Vice Chair.
Councillors S. Bromley; D. Cornish; R. Cundy; G. Evans; S. McDonald;
G. Veitch & S. Weeks.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

277/2022 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

278/2022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

279/2022 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022 were agreed as a true record. These will be signed in due course.

280/2022 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

224/2022 Assets

There has been some progress towards adding images to the software package. The main assets have been inspected; the Clerk will circulate information on other items requiring inspection.

224/2022 Support for youth work activities

Cllrs McDonald and Woof and the Clerk have now held two meetings with FBC representatives to discuss the current youth activities and how the support provided by the Parish Council is utilised.

Following the discussions, the FBC has drafted a new format for reports to be sent to the Parish Council three times a year to coincide with the school terms. The reports will include factual information on the activities provided as well as statistical data. Cllrs McDonald and Woof and the Clerk will review the draft report and will discuss it with FBC representatives.

Regular meetings with the FBC representatives will continue, and an annual presentation to the Council is proposed.

224/2022 Declaration of Interests form

Updating of the Declaration of Interests form to align it with the new Code of Conduct adopted in 2021 will be progressed when resources allow.

224/2022 Authorised signatories

Cllrs Jukes and Weeks are now signatories for the Unity Trust Bank. Cllr Jukes has been added as a signatory on the CCLA accounts.

224/2022 Investment strategy / policy

A draft will be circulated for discussion at the January meeting of the Committee.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

281/2022 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Unity Trust Bank current account

The balance on 24 November 2022 was £109,408.30.

CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund

The balance on 24 November 2022 was £1,355,791. The yield on 23 November 2022 was 2.8205%.

CCLA Property Fund

£25,000 was invested in the Fund in August 2017. Information on current market and bid 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. The current projection for the end of the current year 2022/23 indicates that the budget may be approximately £13,000 underspent.

282/2022 PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2023/24

A draft budget for 2023/24 was circulated showing a net budget of £183,985. This was provisionally agreed, subject to confirmation from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) of the tax base for 2023/24.

The draft net budget for 2023/24 is slightly lower than the Precept Demand for the current year 2022/23, and the principle of a 'no increase budget' for 2023/24 was agreed.

It was noted that the Council has an appropriate level of reserves and will continue to rely on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for expenditure on capital projects and infrastructure projects.

The draft budget will be finalised at the January meeting of the Committee and will then be presented to the Main Council meeting on 25 January. The Precept Demand has to be submitted to WBC in the first week of February.

283/2022 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 21 December.

Organisation	Project	Grant requested	Committee recommendation
Wokingham Poppy Appeal	To cover the cost of the wreath provided for Remembrance and a donation towards the Appeal.	N/A	Donation of £ 400
South East Berks Gang Show	Contribution to the 2023 Gang Show at South Hill Park involving Scouts and Guides from across Wokingham and Bracknell.	£500	Grant of £0 *
Keep Mobile	Running costs of the services including Dial a Ride, Shopping Bus, Group Transport and Day Trips	£4500	Grant of £4000
Bohunt School	Community bus service to transport young people from Gorse Ride to the School	£2000	Provisional grant of up to £2000 **

* The South East Berks Gang Show will be advised that the Parish Council is very supportive of the local Scout and Guide Groups but prefers to support the Groups in alternative ways rather than with the Gang Show.

** Cllr Cornish will discuss the project with the Head of Bohunt School and clarification of the costs and timescales will be sought from the applicant.

Larger grant applications

If approved, any grants are likely to be CIL funded. All of the following projects are supported in principle by the Committee, but further information is needed before full consideration can be given to any funding award.

- **Gorse Ride Schools**
Play equipment and outdoor shelters.
- **Finchampstead Village School**
Multi-use games areas and a trim trail / active play space.
- **Finchampstead Sports Club**
Improvements to the officials' changing rooms and the grounds man's facilities.

284/2022 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 £1,351,264. Expenditure to date in 2022/23 is £103,291.

Current approved commitments include:

- Bridlepath 24 drainage improvements (works to commence December 2022)
- War Memorial relocation project (underway)
- War Memorial junction concept designs (complete)
- War Memorial junction improvements (provisional allocation)
- California Crossroads improvements
- Parish gateway signs (complete)
- Rooks Nest access improvements (underway)

Potential projects were noted and / or discussed as follows.

- **Gorse Ride Schools** – outdoor facilities. Refer to agenda item 283/2022 above.
- **Finchampstead Primary School** – outdoor facilities. Refer to agenda item 283/2022 above.
- **Finchampstead Sports Club** – changing and groundman's facilities. Refer to agenda item 283/2022 above.
- **Gift for the young people in the community** – originally linked to the Platinum Jubilee. It was agreed that it was unnecessary to continue to earmark funds for this and when a potential project comes forward it will be considered at that time.

CIL bids received from WBC

California Country Park lakeside improvements: WBC has drawn up proposals which have been presented and circulated to the Parish Council and other Town and Parish Councils within the Borough. WBC has now formally requested a contribution of £250,000 towards the project.

A provisional allocation of a maximum of £250,000 or 50% of the total project cost, whichever the lower, was agreed, subject to match funding being secured for the project from WBC and other Town and Parish Councils.

The allocation is also subject to WBC agreeing that the Parish Council has a leading role with the project going forward, as part of the managing group to be formed, and to the boardwalk being removed from the scheme.

This allocation is subject to approval by the Council at its December meeting.

Cycle route to Wokingham

WBC has formally requested the sum of £40,000 to create a section of a permissive cycle route to form part of a route between Finchampstead and Wokingham. The Committee agreed that insufficient information had been provided about the overall scheme and therefore while supportive in principle of the creation of a cycle route to Wokingham, the bid would not be supported.

Cllr Cornish agreed to follow this up with WBC.

Additional potential projects

Screens / portable television at the FBC Centre: The screens in meeting rooms at the Centre were installed in 2010 and as such are dated, and the portable television has suffered some damage although still useable. If replaced / upgraded there may be an opportunity to introduce equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings at the same time.

The Clerk will ask the FBC if they have any plans to replace all or some of the equipment.

285/2022 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT MATTERS AND WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

HR Sub Committee

- A meeting took place prior to the Committee meeting to consider the hours worked by the Planning Committee Clerk. A further meeting will take place in January 2023 to discuss how the ongoing issue can be resolved.
- The Deputy Clerk vacancy is being advertised. One application has been received to date.

Council Strategy / Forward Plan

- An initial meeting was held on 20 October. Points raised at the meeting will be collated and research will be undertaken into community demographics before the group meets again in late January or early February.

Business Continuity

- Good progress has been made with documenting procedures although the loss of the Deputy Clerk has an impact as cover for the Clerk is a key part of business continuity.
- The accountant who has previously worked with the Clerk / Deputy Clerk for approximately half a day per year to finalise the year-end accounts has retired. It was agreed that RBS Software, the provider of the Councils accounting software, should be appointed to undertake the work at year end at a cost of approximately £500.
- IT security and the potential need for an annual security audit was raised at the July meeting of the Committee. Advice has been sought from the Council's IT and website support providers who regularly review security and who have confirmed that no additional measures need to be put in place.

Finchampstead Emergency Response

- As reported to Main Council, the Working Group has met the new WBC Emergency Planning Manager. It has been agreed that FER still has a useful role and the next stage is for the Working Group to review the Emergency Plan, with input from WBC, and to contact former volunteers and refuges to see if they are still willing to be involved.

Communications

Finchampstead Magazine: Former Councillor Chris Driver submitted a monthly item to the Magazine, based on Main Council meetings. This ceased in May 2022 when Mrs Driver left the Council and it was agreed that the articles would not be continued. The editor of the Magazine receives the Parish Council's e newsletter and has permission to use information from it in the Magazine.

It was agreed that the development of a communications strategy will form a key part of the Council's Strategy / Forward Plan, in order that resources are directed to priorities and where maximum impact can

be achieved. The Finchampstead Magazine will be considered as part of this, but in the interim it was agreed that Cllrs Cornish and Weeks and the Clerk would aim to submit a regular article to the Magazine.

Social media

At present the Council has a Facebook page but does not use other social media. Widening the use of social media may be appropriate and will be discussed as part of the communications strategy noted above.

Councillor vacancies

There are currently two vacancies on the Council which may be filled by co-option. It was agreed that a leaflet drop would be organised for parts of the Parish – the Clerk will circulate a leaflet which may be suitable.

286/2022 FORUM

No matters were raised.

287/2022 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 4 January 2023 at 7.30pm.

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

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 30 NOVEMBER 2022

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
280/2022	Add images to asset management software	Clerk
280/2022	Circulate information on asset inspections needed	Clerk
280/2022	Youth Work – review draft report format provided by FBC. Continue to liaise with FBC and ensure regular reports on activities and future plans are received	Clerk/RW/SM
280/2022	Draft investment strategy/policy	Clerk
280/2022	Update Declaration of Interests form	Clerk
282/2022	Finalise draft budget for 2023/24 for January meeting / January Council approval	Clerk/RW
283/2022	Grant recommendations to Council Wokingham Poppy Appeal Keep Mobile Bohunt School – subject to further information Inform SE Berks Gang Show	Clerk DC/Clerk Clerk
284/2022	CIL projects WBC bid for California CPK – seek approval from Council. Advise WBC. WBC bid for cycle route – advise WBC of decision and follow up. Screens / TV at FBC Centre – speak to FBC	Clerk Clerk / DC Clerk
285/2022	HR sub committee meeting – 4 January. Briefing note.	Clerk
285/2022	Strategy / forward plan – research. Arrange further meeting. Include communications strategy as priority.	Clerk

285/2022	Business Continuity Plan – continue to progress agreed actions Book RBS software for support with year end accounts	Clerk Clerk
285/2022	FER - Contact volunteers and refuges - Review Emergency Plan	Clerk Working Group
285/2022	Finchampstead Magazine – produce regular article	DC/SW/Clerk
285/2022	Councillor vacancy promotion Circulate possible flier. Organise volunteer distribution.	