

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
7.30PM ON 5 JULY 2023
At the FBC Centre, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead**

PRESENT: Councillor R. Woof, Chair. Councillor G. Jukes OBE, Vice Chair.
Councillors E. Allen; S. Bromley; R. Cundy; P. Grainger; S. McDonald;
G. Veitch & S. Weeks.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

117/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cornish and Evans.

118/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

119/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2023 were agreed as a true record and were signed by Cllr Woof.

120/2023 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

26/2023 Asset inspections and asset management software updates

The asset inspections are almost complete and a list of required works will be collated. Progress is being made with the asset management software updates, the main outstanding item is the uploading of photographs of various items.

32/2023 Council Management Matters

Policy reviews: Outstanding items are a review of Standing Orders and some work on the HR policies.

Business continuity: A meeting of the Working Group will be arranged in due course to review the current position.

Finchampstead Emergency Response: The Emergency Plan will be reviewed by the Working Group and the former volunteers and refuges will be contacted to establish if they are still willing/able to be involved.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

121/2023 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Unity Trust Bank current account

The balance on 10 June 2023 was £103,441.06. This does not include the payments of £15,000 approved by the Council on 29 June 2023.

CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund

The balance on 31 May 2023 was £1,780,757.78. The yield on 31 May 2023 was 4.4486%.

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, this will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Income and Expenditure to date

A report was circulated showing the current position, not reflecting the payments authorised by the Council on 29 June 2023. No issues were raised.

122/2023 GRANT AWARDS FOR 2023/24

A grant application was considered, and the following award agreed, subject to approval from the Council at its meeting on 26 July 2023.

Organisation	Project	Grant requested	Committee recommendation
Parenting Special Children	Specialist support to vulnerable families of children and young people with special needs, disabilities and early life trauma.	£500-1000	Grant of £500

FBC Youth Work activities

The Parish Council provides its largest single grant to the FBC towards the provision of youth activities. Cllrs Woof and McDonald and the Clerk have had several meetings with FBC representatives over the last year to discuss the youth activities and how the support provided by the Parish Council is utilised.

A report was circulated to the Councillors, covering activities provided from January to April 2023.

It was agreed that the report provided sufficient information. The Clerk will continue to liaise with the FBC representatives to ensure that the agreed quarterly reports are provided going forward.

123/2023 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDS

A report was circulated showing the current funds and current commitments. The current balance is £1,731,106.06.

Expenditure to date

- War Memorial relocation project (final payment) £7645.

Current approved commitments include:

- Waverley Way play area
- California Country park improvements (provisional allocation)
- California Crossroads improvements
- War Memorial junction improvements (provisional allocation)

Potential projects were noted as follows.

- **Gorse Ride Schools** – outdoor shelters and play equipment. A grant application was submitted in 2022 and a provisional allocation made but further information is needed before full consideration can be given to any funding award.
- **Finchampstead Sports Club** – changing and groundman's facilities A grant application was submitted in 2022 and a provisional allocation made but further information is needed before full consideration can be given to any funding award.
- **Screens / portable television at the FBC Centre** – the Clerk has suggested that the FBC submit a grant application for support for replacement presentation/ display equipment and associated infrastructure, but this has not been received to date.
- **Nine Mile Ride Primary School** – the school has made an initial approach regarding support with the provision of play equipment and has been encouraged to submit a grant application. This has not been received to date.

Bids from WBC for CIL funds towards projects to be delivered by WBC

In accordance with the agreement for joint working over CIL, WBC has submitted 3 bids to the Parish Council in April 2023. Two bids were considered at the previous meeting and the Clerk has requested further information on the third bid relating to the provision of bus services. No information has been provided to date.

Bids for consideration

Telephone Box: The Amenities Committee requested up to £5000 to add artwork reflecting local heritage and nature to the Parish Council owned telephone box, creating an attractive and interesting feature.

Allotment Gates: The Amenities Committee requested £2600 for replacement gates for the main entrance, to include a double-sided digital lock.

Allotment water troughs: The Amenities Committee requested £1250 retrospectively to cover the replacement of two of the original troughs installed in 2012.

The above three requests were unanimously approved by the Committee.

Improvements to the former War Memorial junction: Information on the proposals for potential future improvements to the junction, drawn up by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), was circulated to all Councillors. The War Memorial Working Group requested that WBC is commissioned to undertake detailed design and survey work in order that the cost for implementation can be confirmed. The sum of up to £40,000 was requested.

The request was provisionally approved subject to clarification on a point which the Clerk will follow up with WBC.

The above four requests are subject to final approval from the Council at its meeting on 26 July.

124/2023 APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2023/24

Claire Connell has audited the Parish Council for several years and is willing to continue in the role for 2023/24 at a cost of £365. This was unanimously agreed subject to approval by the Council.

125/2023 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT MATTERS AND WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

Council Strategy / Forward Plan

- Cllrs Allen, Jukes, Mortimer and Woof and the Clerk met on 14 June for an initial discussion on communications in the context of the wider strategy to be developed for the Council. A further meeting will be arranged to discuss the next stage.
- Parish demographics are being looked into, with a view to establishing the current situation, and future projections.

CIL Project List

- Cllrs Allen and Woof and the Clerk met on 29 June for an initial review of the list. Several projects have been completed, others are no longer viable or appropriate for inclusion on the list for other reasons, and there are new projects to be added. A further meeting will be arranged to undertake a full review of the Project List, for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee. The meeting will include Cllrs Allen, Cornish and Woof and the Clerk.

Training

- Information on NALC online courses has been circulated and several Councillors are now booked on various sessions. Two Councillors have been booked on to a course being arranged by Wokingham Town Council.
- The Deputy Clerk has completed and passed ILCA, the Introduction to Local Council Administration course offered by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). The Clerk will pass on the Committee's congratulations for the achievement.

126/2023 FORUM

- Cllr Veitch asked about an IT security review, and particularly the potential value of 'Cyber Essentials'. The Committee did consider this in October 2022 and agreed no further action was required at that stage – the Clerk will follow up to see if changes since 2022 warrant further action.

- Cllr Jukes asked about the use of MS Teams. This is the most appropriate product for the Parish Council, but the software is not fully utilised. The staff team will be reviewing the opportunities provided by the software to see if better use of it can be made.
- MS Teams meetings are likely to continue, although many Council and Committee meetings are now held in person. Hybrid meetings are still not legal for the sector, and are unlikely to be, but the requirements to run these 'properly' will still be looked into due to the flexibility these meetings offer.

127/2023 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 11 October 2023.

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

FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 5 JULY 2023

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
120/2023	Collate information on required asset refurbishment/repair works	Deputy Clerk
120/2023	Check and update asset management software, add images as required.	Deputy Clerk
120/2023	Policy reviews Standing Orders HR Policies	Clerk/Deputy Clerk
120/2023/	Business Continuity – arrange Working Group meeting	Clerk
120/2023	FER - Review Emergency Plan Contact volunteers and refugees.	Working Group/ Clerk
121/2023	Review the performance of the CCLA Property Fund investment 2017 – 2023. For discussion at the next meeting.	RW/Clerk
122/2023	Grant recommendation to July Council meeting for approval Parenting Special Children	Clerk
122/2023	Youth Work – continue to liaise with FBC and ensure regular reports on activities and future plans are received.	Clerk
123/2023	CIL bids to Main Council for approval Telephone Box Allotment Gates Allotment water troughs War Memorial junction design/survey work (contact WBC for clarification on one point)	Clerk
123/2023	Potential CIL projects – continue to follow up. Gorse Ride Schools (Sports Club) Screens / TV etc. for FBC Centre Nine Mile Ride School	
124/2023	Internal auditor appointment To Council for approval on 26 July Inform CC of outcome	
125/2023	Strategy / Forward Plan – arrange further meeting with focus on communications - Investigate parish demographics	Clerk EA/GJ/CM/RW
125/2023	CIL project list – arrange meeting to update for full discussion at October Committee meeting.	Clerk EA / DC/RW
126/2023	IT security / cyber essentials – look into additional requirements (previously looked at October 2022)	Clerk
126/2023	Review use of MS Teams	Clerk/Deputy/PCC
FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS		
28/2023	Promote awareness of return to grants being considered once a year in October from 2024/25 (unless exceptional circumstances and excluding larger bids)	Deputy Clerk / Clerk
31/2023	Parish Council debit card (as approved at May Main Council – arrange increased limit)	Clerk
32/2023	Review FPC position on Councillor allowances. October meeting	Clerk
33/2023	Look into requirements for hybrid meetings	Clerk