

**FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
7.30PM ON 22 NOVEMBER 2023  
At the FBC Centre, Gorse Ride North, Finchampstead**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor R. Woof, Chair. Councillor G. Jukes OBE, Vice Chair.  
Councillors E. Allen; S. Bromley; D. Cornish; G. Evans; A. Grimshaw; S. McDonald; G. Veitch & S. Weeks.

K. Lang, Deputy Clerk.

**251/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Cundy.

**252/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Non-pecuniary declarations of interest were received as follows:

Cllr Bromley: California Ratepayers Association; Finchampstead Park Management Committee.

Cllr Woof: Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership.

Cllr Weeks: Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership; Finchampstead Park Management Committee.

**253/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023 were agreed as a true record and were signed by Cllr Woof.

**254/2023 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**26/2023 Asset List**

The asset list has been circulated and some suggestions made for the repairs.

**32/2023 Standing Orders**

NALC have not published a new standing orders model for 23/24.

**126/2023 Cyber essentials security audit**

To be discussed in agenda item 9.

**126/2023 Calendar Invites**

Implemented and working well.

**211/2023 Budget**

A draft budget has been circulated to committee members, to be discussed under agenda item 6.

**212/2023 Grant Application changes for 24/25**

The website has been updated to communicate the changes.

**212/2023 Youth work**

Reports to be sent each quarter.

**212/2023 Amenities funding awards**

Completed.

**212/2023 Blackwater Valley**

Grant application received.

**215/2023 Insurance Renewal**

Completed.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

No members of the public were present.

## **255/2023 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Unity Trust Bank current account**

The balance on 11 November 2023 was £727,096.

A transfer of c. £500,000 to the CCLA deposit fund to be arranged.

### **CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund**

The balance on 30 September 2023 was £1,809,257.59.

### **CCLA Property Fund**

£25,000 was invested in the Fund in August 2017. The investment remains stable.

### **Income and Expenditure to date**

Report circulated showing the current position. There will be a reduction in staff costs due to the loss of the Clerk.

## **256/2023 Budget for 2024/25**

The draft budget for 2024/25 was circulated showing a total expenditure of £221,011.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) have not yet sent confirmation of the tax base for 2024/25.

The principle of a 3% increase for 2024/25 was agreed. A recast with the 3% increase will be circulated prior to the next meeting on the 9 January.

The chancellor increased the minimum wage today, this will need to be reflected in the budget which will add around £450.

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

## **257/2023 GRANT AWARDS FOR 2023/24**

Grant applications were considered, and the following awards agreed, subject to approval from the Council at its meeting on 30 November 2023.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant requested</b>	<b>Committee recommendation</b>
Me2Club	Me2 Club's objective is to address the isolation and exclusion of children and young people (aged 5 to 19 years) with wide ranging additional needs and disabilities by enabling them to benefit from a weekly mainstream leisure activity of their choosing.	£750	The committee recommended awarding the full amount. Deputy Clerk to speak to them regarding their comment about supporting more children in Finchampstead as there may be scope to increase the grant.
Blackwater Valley Country Park	To support the work of the BVCP in Finchampstead and the wider Blackwater Valley, developing new countryside sites for public access and wildlife, and supporting communities to look after their local areas	£4,000	The committee recommended an award of the full amount. Deputy Clerk will investigate if CIL funds

			can be used for this in the future.
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## **258/2023 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDS**

The current balance is £2,346,743

### **Expenditure to date**

- War Memorial relocation project (final payment) £7645.
- War memorial junction improvements - Surveys £35,000.

### **Current approved commitments include:**

- Waverley Way play area
- California Country park improvements (provisional allocation)
- California Crossroads improvements
- War Memorial junction improvements (provisional allocation)
- Gorse Ride Primary
- Nine Mile Ride Primary

### **The following applications were considered for CIL funding:**

#### **St James Church £12,000**

Refurbishment of kitchen and disabled toilet. The total project cost is £30,428.94.

There is a very old bylaw that may prevent funding being awarded to a Church, Deputy Clerk to investigate and confirm.

#### **California Association £17,337**

Solar panel installation at the Ratepayers Hall. The committee recommended approval of the full amount requested. Deputy Clerk to tell Climate Change Wokingham about the award of this grant.

#### **California Gardeners Club £798**

The purchase of a laptop and projector for the annual shows and club administration. The committee suggested the purchase of a projector to keep at the Ratepayers Hall as this is where their meetings take place. This would benefit more people in the community. The purchase of the laptop is recommended, the Deputy Clerk to ask them to resubmit the grant application without a projector.

#### **WBC Resurfacing of Range Road £84,000**

The committee would like WBC to send a further cost breakdown, confirm why they have chosen Range Road for this project and send a full list showing which roads in Finchampstead are being included as part of this programme. Concerns were raised about potential overuse of the road if the surface is improved and an increase in fly tipping.

A CIL report is being created by the Deputy Clerk for WBC; this will be shared with the committee.

## **259/2023 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT MATTERS AND WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES**

### **Cyber Essentials Security Audit**

There are two options for this audit, costs were shared. Cllr Veitch mentioned a Cyber essentials training course which could benefit councillors and staff. Deputy Clerk to ask other Clerks what they are doing regarding Cyber security.

### **Spam Emails**

Councillors have been receiving spam emails, whilst there is nothing that we can do to stop these, our website lists individual email addresses, this should be changed. Deputy Clerk to discuss with website developer and change the way emails are displayed on the website.

**Increase file access for Councillors**

We have SharePoint and it would not be hard to move our files. The Deputy Clerk has experience of using SharePoint and can manage read only access for Councillors using permissions. A separate group has been set up to discuss this and the Cyber Security issues in more detail. Cllr Jukes will produce Terms of Reference.

**Arborfield Green Sports and wellbeing pavilion**

Cllrs McDonald and Cundy met with Martin Prodger and Chris Shelton who are trying to set up a Trust and take control of delivering the community a centre which can be used by everyone in a similar way to the FBC. It will have sports facilities for football, cricket, and tennis but it is their aim to have the facility more widely enjoyed by the community and have other classes or events and provide a cafe open throughout the week. There would also be a bar for members and other events if the appropriate licence is granted. The committee agreed to invite them to present to Main Council before the meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November. Deputy Clerk to organise.

**260/2023 FORUM**

Cllr Veitch mentioned the recent allotment inspections and the requirement for some maintenance on the fencing and trees. WBC officers have suggested that WBC may have a budget for allotment repairs and maintenance, Cllr Veitch will follow up with them.

**261/2023 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 9 January 2024.

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

## FINANCE & GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 11 OCTOBER 2023

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

MINUTE REFERENC E	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
205/2023	Financial Position – A transfer from the Unity Trust account to the CCLA deposit fund of around £500,000 to be arranged.	RW/Deputy Clerk
257/2023	Grant Applications – Me2Club – Deputy Clerk to speak to them regarding their comment about supporting more children in Finchampstead as there may be scope to increase the grant.	Deputy Clerk
257/2023	Grant Applications – Blackwater Valley Country Park – Deputy Clerk to confirm if CIL funds can be used for this next year.	Deputy Clerk
258/2023	Deputy Clerk to confirm if FPC can fund a Church project.	Deputy Clerk
258/2023	Deputy Clerk to tell Climate Change Wokingham about the award of a grant for solar panels.	Deputy Clerk
258/2023	Deputy Clerk to ask the California Gardeners club to resubmit their grant application without a projector.	Deputy Clerk
258/2023	Range Road - Deputy Clerk to ask WBC to send a further cost breakdown, confirm why they have chosen Range Road for this project and send a full list showing which roads in Finchampstead are being included as part of this programme.	Deputy Clerk
258/2023	Deputy Clerk to share CIL report once completed.	Deputy Clerk
259/2023	Deputy Clerk to discuss Cyber essentials with other Clerks to see what other Parish Councils are doing.	Deputy Clerk
259/2023	Deputy Clerk to discuss changing email addresses with website developer.	Deputy Clerk
269/2023	A group has been set up to discuss file access and the Cyber Security issues in more detail. Terms of reference to be written.	Cllr Jukes
259/2023	Deputy Clerk to invite Martin Prodger and Chris Shelton to present their ideas to the Council.	Deputy Clerk
260/2023	Cllr Veitch to confirm if WBC will fund allotment repairs/maintenance.	Cllr Veitch