

COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of an Inquorate Meeting of the FINANCE COMMITTEE
Held in the Community Room on Tuesday, 21st March 2023, commencing at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr P. Roe (Chairman)
Cllrs L. Austin, B. Perry and J Perry.

No members of the press or public were present.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Clerk made the attendees aware that this meeting of the Finance Committee was not quorate, 5 Committee members are required. The meeting continued with discussions, but no decisions could be made.

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M. Brar, C. Doyle and M. Howard.
Cllr I. Herd was not present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None.

3. TO REVIEW THE PROVISIONAL YEAR END 2022/23 FIGURES IN LINE WITH BUDGETS:

Cllrs present reviewed the provisional figures. The income and expenditure are almost balanced but are both higher than budget, this is due to the Alfred Major play equipment project. However once the funds held in Strategic reserves are moved back to the General funds there appears to be a surplus of £31k, which is higher than expected. Moves to Strategic Reserves will be considered to keep the General Fund balance at a reasonable level in line with 4-6 months running costs.

It was noted that there were unexpected gains from Burial income of £21,000 and £9,000 from remuneration costs.

Cllr Austin arrived at 8.05pm

4. TO REVIEW THE STRATEGIC RESERVE AND PROPOSE AREAS FOR MOVES TO AND FROM THE FUNDS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL:

Following the review of the provisional Year End figures and the anticipated surplus, Cllrs discussed moves to the Strategic Reserves for recommendation by Full Council:

Moves from Strategic Reserves:

- Alfred Major Projects - £35,000 to the general fund against the completed project spend.

Moves into existing Strategic Reserves:

- Election Fees – £1,200 from budget plus £2,000 total £3,200
- Cemetery Lodge - £5,000 to build up funds for maintenance issues and Energy Performance rating project.
- Legal and Planning consultant fees - £10,000
- Alfred Major Maintenance – £3,000
- Chapel Maintenance - £5,000
- Flood Planning and Management – £500 (unspent budget).
- Salt bins – £350 (unspent budget).
- War Memorial Repair/Maintenance - £1,200 unspent budget.

With the addition of a new reserve:

- Locum Support fees/ Clerk cover - £5,000

These changes would take a net minus of £1,750 from the Strategic Reserve fund, taking it to £72,469. This would be recommendation to Full Council in April for approval.

5. TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF ALLOTMENT DEPOSITS FROM THE STRATEGIC RESERVE BACK TO THE GENERAL RESERVE:

The Cmte acknowledged the transfer of £500 (20 x £25) from Allotment Deposits back to the General Fund as it relates to deposits that will not be refunded due to plots being left in a poor state.

6. TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE RENEWAL OF THE LEASE WITH COOKHAM RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR THE PART USE OF LAND ON THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND, WHICH ENDED APRIL 2022:

A number of time consuming steps are still required to complete the work on the Lease and first registration of the land.

Following an update from the Clerk, the Committee acknowledged that this will not forward until extra resource is in place. The recommendation is to ask Full Council for additional staff resource.

7. TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE COMPLETION OF THE RENEWAL OF THE LEASE, INCLUDING THE SPECIAL TENANCY CONDITIONS AND TO CONSIDER THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CARPETS AT CEMETERY LODGE:

The renewal of the Tenancy Agreement for Cemetery Lodge was completed in January 2023. This included a special tenancy condition which noted the agreement for decorating work to be actioned by the tenant within 6 months of the tenancy start date. CPC have agreed, subject to the decorating works being carried out, that they would replace the carpets.

CPC have received two quotes via Prospect but Cllrs and The Clerk felt that they needed further information to be able to come to a decision. The Clerk to work with Prospect to find out more about the type of flooring that would be best suited to a rental property. Cllrs were keen to give the Clerk authority to spend up to £2,000 to complete the work.

8. TO DISCUSS A PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE RATING FOR CEMETERY LODGE TO BRING IT UP TO ENERGY RATING C IN LINE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS. *

A new Energy Performance Certificate is being prepared. It is anticipated that there will be a list of recommended projects that can increase the buildings energy performance.

There is a legal obligation for rental properties to have a minimum EPC rating of E, which Cemetery Lodge currently has. There is a proposal, still in consultation, that may require properties to be brought up to EPC rating C, however as this is not yet legislation. However, the council recognise that it is beneficial for both council and tenants if the building were as energy efficient as possible.

Cllrs agreed that planning for the project would start once the recommendations were forthcoming. They acknowledged that the project will be detailed and time consuming and will require Cllr involvement for it to be successful.

9. TO CONSIDER THE CEMETERY LODGE BATHROOM TILING PROJECT AND ANY FURTHER ACTION:

Cllrs present, agreed that The Clerk should continue to press for the work to be completed as specified, ie fully tiled. Work had been done in November 2022, but the room had only been part tiled at the time. An additional sum of £100 had been requested by the contractor to fix the issues caused by the plaster and complete the room on the quoted amount. The work had taken over a year to be actioned. The Clerk will liaise with Prospect.

10. RATIFY THE PURCHASE OF A NEW WASHING MACHINE FOR CEMETERY LODGE:

This was acknowledged but will need to go to Full Council for ratification.

11. REVIEW THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ACTION LIST:

- Grounds Maintenance Tender: Cllr Roe to bring initial findings together for future review.
- Assets Register: Work to be completed.

Cllr P Roe thanked the Finance Committee for their work over the last four years.

The Clerk thanked Cllr Roe for his hard work and input during his time as Finance Chairman.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.