



FC2211.01 MEETING GOVERNANCE

.01 **Attendance:** **Committee Members:** Cllrs. Merritt (Chair), Gill, Grimble, Head, & Shaw (4/5).
Cllrs: Head & East (taking part in discussion but non-voting members).

Apologies: Cllr. Gateshill

.02 **Declarations of Interest:** None

.03 **Order of Business:** No change to agenda however the clerk reported it was prudent to defer agenda items 2211.02.01-03 as these matters although they have been prepared were undergoing further review by the clerk to ensure they meet statutory regulations and best practice. The clerk is to attend an online Internal Controls course on Wednesday 23.11.22, following this the policies may be finalised and presented at the next finance committee meeting.

.04 **Terms of Reference:** The draft which had been circulated prior to the meeting was considered. It was suggested by Cllr. Grimble that financial papers, with such importance, should be provided to councillors well in advance of the meeting to allow the thorough review and consideration and the opportunity for questions. This was agreed unanimously, clerk to add a relevant line under Meeting Arrangements, stating at least 4 days. Members discussed at length the level of spending authority stated under Resources & Budgets; it was agreed by a majority to keep this as £500.

It was proposed and seconded for the draft terms of reference to be adopted subject to the addition above.
FOR: 3, AGAINST: 0, ABSTAIN: 1, therefore RESOLVED.

For membership all current members were happy to continue serving. In addition, Cllr. East requested to join the finance committee for future meetings. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed for a recommendation to be made to the full council at its meeting to be held 05.12.22 for this membership to be approved.

FC2211.02 2022-23 BUDGET & PRECEPT REVIEW:

Members reviewed papers circulated by the clerk which showed the payments & receipts from 01.04.22 to 30.11.22 against budget set and the spend taken from the current £64,959 precept and the remaining balance.

The following suggestions and comments were NOTED:

- Cllr. East commented that it would be useful for members to be given a guide of the predicted/forecast total spend at the end of the financial year, to know if spend was on track or if there was any area for concern due to potential over spend. He suggested this as an additional column in the paper provided. This was unanimously agreed, clerk to provide this on future papers.
- Cllr. Gill questioned the responsibility to fund defibrillators, whether new or replacement parts when required, as he understood this was a cost to be met by Bishopsteignton Healthy Living Group (HLG), not BPC. The clerk explained the ongoing working relationship between HLG and BPC. New units are funded using donations or fund-raising, they are purchased by BPC as they are added to the council's asset register and insurance policy, this also enables us to reclaim vat. The Parish Council have a responsibility to maintain these assets including the purchase of additional parts as and when required; these costs are shared where possible with funds from both BPC and HLG, if their fund-raising efforts allow it. It was suggested by Cllr. Shaw and agreed that a better understanding of the expected life of each unit and its parts would be useful to enable the right budget to be set.
- Cllr. Gill questioned the lack of applications for BPC Grant funding, suggesting the opportunity was not promoted well enough and that many community groups are unaware this is available. The clerk explained previous attempts at promotion and agreed new methods were needed and should help, for example Cllr. Shaw suggested promoting at upcoming events such as the village Pantomime, Play and Christmas Market.

FC2211.03 PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF BPC BUDGET & PRECEPT FOR 2023-24

Papers which had been circulated prior to the meeting were reviewed and the following comments were noted and adjustments suggested:

- **TABLE 1. CLERICAL COSTS:**

- The clerk stated there had been new contribution percentages announced this day by the Local Government Pension Scheme following their actuaries report for 2022. These will come into effect from 01.04.23 and raised the employer's contribution from 21.1% to 21.9%. The employee's contribution was raised by 1% but this does not affect the budget as it is deducted from the clerk's salary.
- No further comments on this table and proposed budget.

- **TABLE 2. ADMINISTRATION COSTS:**

- **IT:** Minor adjustments noted, mainly due to inflation. No further comments or suggested changes.
- **Clerical Expense: Rent:** It was noted that an increase to the service charge for the tenancy in Bishopsteignton Community Centre was expected, due to energy cost rises, awaiting confirmation of amount.
- **Clerical Expenses: Phone & Broadband:** As it is only ever used for internet connection during monthly meetings it was unanimously agreed to terminate this contract, to cut off the telephone line and broadband connection. Cllr. Merritt added that the Community Centre were looking to provide broadband throughout the centre in the future.
- **Clerical Expenses: Zoom licence:** It was unanimously agreed for this contract to be cancelled rather than renew when the current contract ends (March 2023). The licence has not been used for meetings during the current financial year and the statutory regulations on meeting are unlikely to change to accommodate us to hold remote meetings. Line to be removed from future budget papers.
- **Clerical Expense: Legal Services Retainer:** The clerk explained the recent uses of legal services and the associated costs as well as the likely need for this in the future. It could potentially save more in the future when seeking advice and preparing contracts/leases for future assets, new or transferred. It was agreed in principle.
- **Clerical Expense: Elections:** The reduction proposal and reasoning for it was accepted and fully agreed.
- **Training:** It was suggested and agreed to raise the clerks CPD/Training budget to allow the clerk to attend the SLCC annual conference in November 2023.
- **Chairmans Allowance:** The point of this line was explained by the clerk, and it was unanimously agreed it was not required; that every possible expense should be attributed to an existing cost code. It has previously used for Annual Parish Meeting of Electors, but this should come under clerical expenses and has been added as such. Omit this line from future budget papers.

- **TABLE 3. ASSET MANAGEMENT COSTS:**

- **MUGA:** As suggested by Cllr. Shaw an additional line to earmark a reserve for future resurfacing of the courts. Quotes to be sought to indicate possible costs and timeframe for work.

- **TABLE 4. OTHER PROJECT COSTS:** All below can be adjusted as considered appropriate.

- **Queens Platinum Jubilee:** It was considered appropriate to assign £800 here for a new bench and tree to be planted, as originally intended and resolved.
- **Kings Coronation:** £300 to cover administration of printed material for the community (as for Jubilee) and a tree planting.
- **Climate Action projects:** It was agreed there were no projects in the pipeline which would require any more money that that held earmarked from the National Lottery grants previously secured by Cllr. Watson.

CHAIR:

DATE:

- **Chairmans Chain:** It was agreed this should be dealt with during the current financial year, therefore a budget for 23-24 should not be required.
- **War Memorial:** Difficult to set a budget for this item as Bishopsteignton Heritage are still considering a donation and it is unclear if an application for a grant will be successful or not. Both are awaiting 3 comparable quotations. Set at £1,000, which can be adjusted. It is unlikely that CIL could be used to cover the maintenance of this asset.

- **BURIAL CHARGE FOR 2023-24:** The amount to be allocated to this charge was discussed, most members felt it would be correct to use a charge based on an average of 3 hours per week, £5,160 (option A), however it is possible to adjust this figure; based on 2.5 hours the charge will be £4,300 (option B).

Cllr. East rightfully stressed the importance of rebuilding a contingency for the council, especially as it is currently running very low. The significance of handing over a sensible and healthy financial position to a potential new Parish Council following the May 2023 local council election was noted.

MEETING CLOSED BY THE CHAIR AT 20.42

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