

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** duly convened and held in The Committee Room, Malvern Wells Village Hall, and Wells Road **on Thursday 22nd January, 2015** commencing at 7.00pm.

Attendance: Councillors N Johnson (Chairman) Mrs H Burrage, K Wagstaff and M Victory

In Attendance: Mr D M Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer)

1 Apologies for absence A Hull, B Knibb, K Hurst, S Freeman

2 Declarations of Interest

a) Register of Interests: No changes were necessary to the schedule of Members interests which had been previously lodged with the District Council.

b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the Agenda and their nature: There were none.

c) To Consider Written Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) No such requests had been received.

3 Approval of minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th October, 2014

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th October, 2014, having been previously circulated, were unanimously approved and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of that meeting.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item 9 – 16th October- Electronic Banking

The Clerk advised that the account opening processes with Unity Trust Bank was now being completed. The resultant bank mandate would need to be signed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, together with Cllrs Johnson, Knibb, Victory, Wagstaff and Bradshaw. Any two of the Councillors listed would be authorised to certify bank transactions.

5 a) The Bank Reconciliation statement to 31st December, 2014: The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated bank reconciliation which showed that the Council's total cash funds at 31st December, 2014 comprised:

National Westminster PLC

	£
Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	31,639.35
1 month fixed deposit at 0.04%	40,000.00
(less) unrepresented cheques	(370.00)

HSBC PLC

Current Account	97.57
3 month fixed deposit Maturity 2 nd March	25,000.00
3 month fixed deposit Maturity 27 th February	25,040.14
3 month fixed deposit Maturity 30 th January	30,225.52

Total cash at 31st December 2014	£151,732.58
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The level of funds within each of the Council's banks was continuing to be monitored to ensure that total cash held, with each bank, was maintained below a level of £85K so as to spread risk. It was noted that the Business Reserve account was being maintained at a level to support known outgoings during each month. Surplus funds were invested at the most favourable rates offered by the Council's bankers.

The Clerk advised that the Council's Business manager at HSBC Bank had been instructed to re-invest two of the Council's fixed term bonds, which reached maturity at the end of December, for a further three months at a fixed rate of 0.40%.

Members were given sight of all of the Council's bank statements as at 31st December, 2014 for verification purposes and the account balances were agreed to the bank reconciliation statement which had been prepared.

b) The Quarterly budget monitoring Report: The Clerk presented the previously circulated quarterly report showing actual income and expenditure for the period ending 31st December, 2014.

Members noted that the financial projections for the remainder of the financial year showed that a projected underspend of approximately £14.4K against the 2014/15 originally approved budget was likely to arise by year end. This was mainly due to slippage of the receipt of anticipated Section 106 funding (£23.2K), Administration costs savings (£2.7K), Community Events Savings (£1.7K), Cemetery Maintenance savings (£2.1K) and the slippage of some £30k worth of expenditure on proposed new play equipment into the 2015/16 financial year.

The estimated level of the Council's general reserve at 30th March, 2015 was forecast to outturn at some £48.7K. The external auditor's advice was that the level of the general reserve should ideally be maintained at around 50% of the amount of the annual Parish precept. This would equate to a figure of approximately £38k in the Parish Council's case at 31st March, 2015.

The earmarked reserve for potential legal costs in respect of the maintenance responsibility for St Peters Churchyard had been returned to general reserves following the decision to ask the District Council to undertake future maintenance works.

A new earmarked reserve in the sum of £5k for the new Gas Lamp replacement project had been established.

6 Grass Cutting Contract 2015 -2018

The following tenders for the 2015/18 grass cutting contract had been received:-

Smart Cut Ltd in the sum of £2,440 (variable annual cost)

New Farm Grounds maintenance in the sum of £2,920 (fixed annual cost)

Steve Maund in the sum of £3,000 (fixed annual cost)

Following a careful cost benefits analysis of each of the quotations received the committee unanimously **agreed to recommend to Council** that the 2015/18 Grass cutting Contract should be awarded to Steve Maund at a fixed annual contract sum of £3,000

Following a request from Cllr Victory the Clerk advised that he would provide an analysis of all Council payments made to Steve Maund during the financial year.

7 Cemetery Fees and Charges 2015/16

The Clerk circulated details of the suggested Cemetery Fees and Charges for 2015/16. It was **agreed to recommend to Council** that the charges for 2015/16 should be increased by 5%, rounded up to the nearest £5.

It was also agreed that the policy appertaining to the pre- purchase of Cemetery plots for non-parishioners should be the subject of review by the Cemetery working group at its next meeting.

8 Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16

The Clerk presented details of the Parish Council's updated Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2015/16. The Policy document had been established in accordance with best practice as set out in *DCLG Guidance on Local Government CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Public Services, and the Local Government Act 2003*.

The strategy document is intended to underline the Council's commitment to ensuring that:

- It maintains the security of its cash balances whilst retaining sufficient liquidity to meet its revenue spending plans
- Any Capital expenditure plans are affordable
- Any external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels
- Its Treasury Management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice

The strategy is the subject of an annual review in January each year.

During 2015/16 any cash investments made will be limited to less than one year in duration, and deposited with named UK High Street Banks and Building Societies as set out in section 2.3 of the strategy document. The Council would continue to maintain cash deposits with the National Westminster Bank PLC, HSBC PLC and Unity Trust bank.

The Parish Council does not currently have any external borrowing and does not anticipate requiring additional loan sanction or external borrowing for any capital projects in the immediate future.

In addition to the Electronic Banking Account with Unity Trust Bank the Clerk advised that the bank authorisation mandates for each of the Parish Council's existing bank accounts with HSBC PLC and NatWest PLC are also due for updating. These require the signatures of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council, together with Cllrs Johnson, Knibb, Victory, Wagstaff and Bradshaw. In accordance with the current financial regulations any two of the Councillors listed would be authorised to certify bank transactions.

Following discussion it was **unanimously resolved** that Treasury Management Policy & Strategy for 2015/16 should be **recommended to Council for approval**.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm

Chairman-----
Dated 16th April, 2015

N Johnson