

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, Wells Road** on **Wednesday 25th April, 2012 commencing at 7.30pm.**

Attendance: Councillor N Johnson (Chairman)

Cllrs B Knibb and A Hull

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

1 Apologies noted: Cllrs K Wagstaff, Mrs H Burrage, Mrs A Bradshaw and M Victory

Declarations of Interest for a) the Meeting and b) Any Changes to be notified to the Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality: No changes were to the register of interests were declared.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th January, 2012, having been previously circulated, were accepted and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of that meeting.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Clerk advised that a meeting of the play and open spaces working group would be convened during May to give further consideration to the development of play facilities within the Parish. An officer from the District Council would be invited to attend that meeting to discuss the potential for grant funding of the play scheme.

4 To Consider & Accept

a) The Bank Reconciliation statement to 31st March, 2012: The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated bank reconciliation which showed that the Council's total cash funds at 31st March were represented by:

	£
Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	25,193.09
Treasury Deposit Account	70,000.00
(less) unrepresented cheques	(10,363.83)
Bank lodgements	2,795.96
Total Cash held at 31st March 2012	<u>87,725.22</u>

The Clerk advised that, after consulting with the Chairman of the Committee and the Chairman of the Council, a new bank account with HSBC would be opened. It had been agreed that a sum of £50k would be transferred to a 1 year fixed rate deposit account with that bank. This would secure a more favourable interest return for the Council's medium term cash investments and would mean that cash balances, which would then be held with both the National Westminster Bank and HSBC, would each be maintained below a level of £85k and would therefore be fully protected by the Bank of England's deposit guarantee scheme.

b) Draft final accounts report 2011/12

The Clerk presented the previously circulated draft final accounts report showing the Council's income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 2012.

Total expenditure for the year had outturned at £94.4k set against income received totalling some £115.1K. Cash reserves had increased by £20.7K during the year. The major contributory factors to the increase in reserves were:-

<u>Reduced Expenditure</u>	£k
Salary and payroll savings	(2.4)
Other Council administration and running costs	(4.8)
Elections budget	(1.4)
Gas Lamps maintenance and running costs	(5.3)
Cemetery labour costs and supplies	(2.2)
Grass cutting and open spaces savings	(2.3)
<u>Increased income</u>	
Additional income from Cemetery fees	(2.3)
 Total increase in reserves 2011/12	 20.7

The draft final accounts report **was approved for recommendation to the Council.**

c) The Annual Audit return and Governance statement

The Clerk presented the 2011/12 draft annual audit return and governance statement for Members consideration. The Annual Audit return would be prepared for the approval of the Council at its meeting on 24th May.

Members reviewed each section of the annual governance statement and agreed that the Council was in full compliance with each of its sections. The Committee agreed **to recommend to Council** that the annual governance statement for 2011/12 should be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Council at its meeting on 24th May.

d) Council reserves policies

It was agreed that the following additions would also be made to the Council's Earmarked reserves, at year end, to provide for future years commitments in respect of:-

	£
Future Cemetery Land purchase	3.0
Assarts Road Playing Field	2.5
Gas lamps – gas consumption contract	7.0
Gas lamps – future maintenance costs	5.0
St Peters Closed Churchyard	0.5

Contributions from Earmarked Reserves had already been released during the year to fund:-

Cemetery Railings Painting	£1k
Section 106 – St Wulstans Grass Cutting	£1k

The Council's total level of earmarked reserves at 31st March, 2012 was now £58.4k and the general reserve had increased to £29.3K. The Council's total reserves at the end of the 2011/12 had risen to £87.7K from the opening balance of £67.4k at the beginning of the year.

It was agreed to recommend to Council that the use of the earmarked reserve for

Assarts Road playing field should be reviewed following the next meeting of the play and open spaces group who would be reviewing the specifications for improvements to that site.

5. Grass Cutting contract 2012/13 – 2014/15

Having considered the tender bids and associated documentation presented by the Clerk, the Committee agreed to **recommend to Council** that the grass cutting contract for the Assarts lane playing field and St Wulstans Village Green should be awarded to the current contractor Steven Maund

6. Internal Audit arrangements 2012/13

The Clerk advised the Committee that the Council's current internal auditor - Phillip Wain - had resigned as he now found a full time position which would preclude him from continuing with his audit duties on behalf of the Council

Contact had been made with Mrs Yvonne Scriven - a highly experienced Parish Council clerk and Accounting Technician with a view to her taking over the role as the Council's internal auditor and Mrs Scriven had indicated that she would be willing to do so.

It was agreed to **recommend to Council** that Mrs Yvonne Scriven MAAT be appointed as the Council's internal auditor at a fee rate of £150 for the final audit of the 2011/12 accounts, scheduled for 30th June, and £150 for the 2012/13 interim audit scheduled for 31st October. A letter of appointment would be sent to Mrs Scriven once Council approval had been received.

7. Annual performance reviews of the Council's outdoor contractors

The Chairman reported that he and the Clerk had met with both Steven Maund and Martin Thomas, the Council's two outdoor contractors, to undertake a review of their roles and work performance during the preceding year

The contractors job descriptions, contracts of employment, calendar of work and their performance had been the subject of detailed review at the appraisal meetings

At the completion of the reviews the contractors performance in their respective roles was considered to have been highly satisfactory and it was agreed to **recommend to Council** that the hourly pay rates for both of the posts should be increased by the 3.5% (April, 2012 CPI inflation rate) backdated to 1st April, 2012.

Further performance reviews would be undertaken during April 2013

8 Malvern Volunteer Board

Cllr Johnson drew attention to the work undertaken by the Malvern Volunteer Centre who do much help and support local residents. The Centre had been instrumental in helping to secure the services of the current editor of the Wells News and following discussion it was agreed to **recommend to Council** that a donation of £50 be made to the Centre to help to help support their activities

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman
Dated 19th July, 2012
