

## MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** duly convened and held in The Committee Room of Malvern Wells Village Hall **on Thursday 17th April, 2014** commencing at 7.30pm.

**Attendance:** Councillor N Johnson (Chairman)  
B Knibb, A Hull, Mrs H Burrage, K Wagstaff

**Also in Attendance:** Mr D M Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer)

**1 Apologies for absence** Cllrs Mrs A Bradshaw, A Hull, K Hurst, M Victory.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

**a) Register of Interests:** No changes were necessary to Members interests which had already been 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) .** None were required

### **3 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd January, 2014**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd January, 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.** There were none

**5 The Bank Reconciliation statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014:** The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated bank reconciliation which showed that the Council's total cash funds at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 comprised:

#### National Westminster PLC

	£
Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	40,049.44
1 month fixed deposit at 0.3 % (Maturity – 28 <sup>th</sup> April, 2014)	40,000.00
(less) unrepresented cheques	(6,672.87)

#### HSBC PLC

Current Account	97.57
3 month fixed deposit at 0.4% (Maturity – 28 <sup>th</sup> July, 2014)	25,000.00
6 month fixed deposit at 0.4% (Maturity – 30 <sup>th</sup> July, 2014)	30,000.00

**Total Cash held at 31March, 2014**

**£128,574.14**

## 6 The Draft Final accounts report for 2013/14

The Clerk presented the previously circulated report showing the final income and expenditure outturn figures for the financial year 2013/14

Actual expenditure for the year had out turned at £82.8K against the revised budget of £106.42K.

The main variations contributing to the under spend of £23.6K were caused by:

	£K
Net savings on the gas lamps maintenance and gas consumption budget	(7.5)
Savings on office expenses and administration	(1.6)
Cemetery supplies and maintenance	(2.0)
Fruitlands Xmas illuminations scheme slippage	(2.0)
Assarts Road Drainage scheme slippage	(8.8)
Other variations	(1.7)
Total net expenditure under spend	<b>23.6</b>

Income for the year had totalled £98k which was broadly in line with the overall revised income budget.

The Council's total cash reserves had increased to £128.6k as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 of which some £100.3k had been earmarked for specific purposes as set out in the table show below.

The Clerk advised that the draft final accounts for 2013/14 would now be lodged with the Council's internal auditor for inspection, prior to the approval of the accounts and the authorisation of the Annual Audit return and Governance statement by the Parish Council at its meeting on 15th May, 2014

In accordance with previously agreed Council policy the transfers from the Council's General reserves to Earmarked reserves had now been undertaken at to provide for future years commitments in respect of:-

	£k <b>Balance at 31st Mach 2014</b>
St Wulstans Green - maintenance	15.0
Future Cemetery land purchase	21.0
Future Cemetery Equipment purchase	1.0
Assarts road drainage scheme	10.0
Assarts road play equipment	10.0
All Saints Ward play equipment	15.0
Community Development Reserve	15.0
Future Election costs	1.0
St peters closed churchyard	6.5
Neighbour Hood plan consultancy	5.0
Staff Pension Gratuity (1996 LGA regulations)	0.8
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves at 31st March, 2014</b>	<b>100.3</b>

The General reserve level at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014 would be £28.3k. The Parish Council's cash holdings had risen to approximately £128.6K at the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

It was **unanimously agreed to recommend** to Council that the 2013/14 final accounts and Annual Audit Return should be approved for submission, to the appointed external auditors Grant Thornton LLP, once the final internal audit of the Council's accounts had been satisfactorily concluded.

## **7 Section 106 funding application**

An application had been sent to the District Council to secure the release of Section 106 funding to support works to the improvement of the drainage system at Assarts Road and the purchase of new play equipment for the recently extended play area there.

The District Council had requested that firm quotations for these works should be sent to them to support the Council's funding application and those quotations would be considered at the next meeting of Play & Open Spaces working group.

The Clerk also circulated a reminder of the Council's agreed strategic priorities for the potential use of any further section 106 contributions that might emanate from any future developments within the Parish. If and when any such additional income was made available to Parish Council **it was agreed** that the priorities for its use should be reviewed by the full Council.

## **8 Potential for electronic Banking**

The legislative reform order from the DCLG repealing section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 now means that Parish Councils no longer have to make payments by cheque or standing order, and can lawfully now use electronic payment methods such as direct debit and debit cards. Councils are still at liberty to continue to use cheque payments if they wish to do so.

It was agreed that the Clerk should make contact with the Council's bankers to explore the potential for electronic banking and to consider control mechanisms that would need to be put in place to ensure the ongoing integrity of payment procedures if the Council decided to move towards payment by such means.

The Council would be required to adopt new model financial regulations and review the DCLG Governance and Accountability arrangements should it decide to take advantage of the change to new payment facilities. A further report on these issues would be presented to the July meeting of the Committee for further consideration.

## **9 Quotations received**

### **(a) Fruitlands green Xmas illuminations**

The Clerk advised that quotations in had been received for the re-connection of the electricity supply to Fruitlands Green, and for the purchase of a new living tree for planting there, with the intention of the re-introduction of the illumination of a tree at Christmas time.

An electrical contractor from the County Council's street lighting team had completed an inspection of the illuminations connection point on the Green. The existing connection would need be updated and rationalised to comply with current safety standards.

Quotations had been received for the costs of the scheme as follows: -

£K

Purchase of one "Abies nordmanniana" tree	2.3
Delivery and planting	0.8
Electricity re connection	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.0</b>

The Clerk informed members that there would be a need to increase the current budget for the Christmas illuminations scheme by approximately £1k to support the existing total scheme budget of £4k. It was agreed **to recommend to Council** that the budget for the scheme should be increased accordingly.

The proposed Jubilee Fountain illuminations scheme would be revisited later in the year to review the type and size of tree to be planted and the budgetary implications for that particular scheme would then be reviewed as appropriate.

### **(b) Cemetery unused grave plots**

It had been discovered that, according to the cemetery records, there were several apparently unused grave plots in the older part of the cemetery. In order to allay any uncertainty about these plots it would be possible to have a ground survey undertaken to confirm whether the area in question had in fact previously been used or whether there were any below surface obstructions actually preventing their use.

A specialist local ground survey company had been approached to undertake an initial scan of the area at a quoted cost of £500. It was agreed to **recommend to Council** that the quotation for this initial ground scan should be accepted

There being no further business the Chairman closed he meeting at 8 45pm

**Chairman-----**  
**Dated 10th July, 2014**

**N Johnson**