

## MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** duly convened and held in the **Village Hall Wells Road on Thursday 13th October, 2016** commencing **at 7.30 pm.**

**Attendance:** Councillors M Victory (Chairman) N Chatten, B Knibb, K Wagstaff, S Freeman

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

**1 Apologies for absence** Mrs H Burrage, Mrs J Smethurst, N Johnson

**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 14th July, 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July, 2016, 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 a) The Bank Reconciliation statement to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016:** The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated bank reconciliation which showed that the Council's total cash funds at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 comprised:

*National Westminster PLC*

	£
Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	32,679.24
1 month fixed deposit at 0.025%	50,000.00
(less) unrepresented cheques	(43,333.73)

*HSBC PLC*

Current Account	25,122.23
3-month fixed deposit a/c 20721891	25,180.29
3-month fixed deposit a/c 90717738	30,415.83

*Lloyds PLC*

Current Account	25,046.90
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**Total cash at 30th September 2016      £145,210.76**

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 £75K, as far as possible, to spread counterparty risk during each month. Surplus funds were invested at the most favourable rates offered by the Council's bankers. A sum of £25K had now been moved from the National Westminster Bank to Lloyds PLC as an opening balance for the Council's electronic banking facility.

The Chairman was given sight of the Council's bank statements as at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016 for verification purposes and the account balances were agreed to the bank reconciliation statement which had been prepared.

**b) Budget monitoring report as at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016.** The Clerk presented the previously circulated report showing actual income and expenditure for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2016. All the Council's budgets were broadly on track with the originally profiled estimates and there were no significant variances worthy of comment.

## **6 2017/18 draft budget projections and recommended precept level for 2017/18.**

The Clerk presented updated details of the Council's draft budget projections and estimated level of reserves for the financial year 2017/18.

It was agreed that an expenditure budget of £10K should be established to accommodate work associated with the development of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan. This would be offset by a grant of approximately £9k from MHDC once the work had been completed.

A budget of £10K was also agreed in respect of work in connection with the replacement gas lamps project

After allowing for the additions to these budgets, and other minor revisions arising because of likely inflation levels in 2017/18, **it was agreed to recommend to Council** to that the increase in the level of the 2017/18 should be set at no more than 1.95%.

If these changes were agreed by the Council, it was noted that the level of the Council's general reserve was estimated to outturn at some £28.9k at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 with total earmarked reserves estimated to be £87.5K at the same date.

## **7 New Gas lamps project**

Cllr Freeman advised that further work had been undertaken on the new gas lamps project, with Malvern Hills AONB helping in putting together a bid for funding from the heritage lottery scheme. The indicative capital costs of the scheme were currently estimated to be in the range of £60k to £80k

The Council will be expected to contribute at least 5% of this sum in either providing cash or volunteer time to support the project. The results of the recent public consultation exercise on the project would be helpful in supporting the grant funding bid.

## **8 External Audit report 2015/16**

The clerk reported that the Council's Annual Audit return for 2015/16 had now been signed off by the external auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP.

The Auditors had drawn attention to the fact that the total sum recorded as fixed assets in box 4 of the return should be increased by a sum of £33,338 to reflect the purchase of the new Assarts Road Play equipment.

Additionally the auditors had pointed out that the commencement period for the exercise of public rights of the inspection of the accounts should in future include the first ten working days in July each year.

**9 Council Meetings dates 2017** the committee approved the list of Council and Committee meeting dates which had been circulated by the clerk for review after amending the location for the Annual Parish meeting to All Saints Church

**10 Jubilee gardeners working group.**

During the recent judging of the Garden by the RHS the judge discussed the plans for the garden with those present. This was regarding the area along the western fence (adjacent to the flowering cherry tree) that was then covered by a rather large, non-flowering bush (a symphocarpus). The judge liked the idea of replacing the bush with some 'edible' planting. The bush has now been removed and the ground prepared for planting.

It had been proposed that a single eating apple tree be planted together with three currant bushes. The apple tree will be planted on the opposite side of the bed to the flowering cherry and some six feet from where the xmas tree base is. The proposed apple tree is on a root stock that will allow it to grow to only around seven feet and it will cost £30.

It is now the correct time of year to plant the apple tree, and the three currant bushes. Permission was therefore being sought to purchase and plant the said tree. The "Red Falstaff" eating variety which also appropriately reflects Shakespeare's tercentenary this year.

In the Spring 2017 there will be other planting in the garden. The Jubilee Gardeners Working Group had requested urgent authorisation for the purchase and planting of an apple tree (a red eating apple). This is needed because the Group's Terms of Reference requires additional permission for the planting of any trees or large bushes within the Garden. The Group has authority within the Terms of Reference (within the annual budget of £500 in total) to undertake other small plantings, including vegetables. The Group was currently working on an updated planting plan for the garden

The Committee **approved** the proposed planting plan which had been submitted, subject to further discussion with group members on the type and size of the apple tree to be planted.

**11 Christmas Carol concert – December 16th**

The Committee **approved** the detail of the proposed budget which had been submitted for the Christmas carol concert in the total sum of £210

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm

**Chairman-----**  
**Dated 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2016**