

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** duly convened and held in Malvern Wells Village Hall **on Thursday 16th January, 2020** commencing **at 7.30pm**.

Attendance: Councillors N Chatten (Chairman), Mrs J Smethurst, B Knibb, Mrs H Burrage

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

1 Apologies for absence: Cllr M Dyde

2 Declarations of Interest

a) Register of Interests: It was noted that Cllr Tonya 'O Donnell had still to complete her register of interest form for transmission to the District Council. The Clerk advised that he would again remind Cllr O'Donnell of the legal requirement to complete the form.

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

c) Written requests from Councillors for a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) No such requests had been received.

3 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th October 2019 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17th October, 2019, 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 Bank reconciliation statement and budget monitoring review at 31st December 2019. The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated bank reconciliation which showed that the Council's total cash funds at 31 December, 2019 comprised: -

	£
Opening Cash at Bank at 1st April, 2019	197,769.26
Add Receipts to 31 st December, 2019	91,023.22
(less) Payments to 31 st December, 2019	(81,548.35)
Total Cash held at 31st December, 2019	207,244.13

Represented by: -

Bank Balances at 31 December, 2019: -

National Westminster Bank PLC:

Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	78,485.63

HSBC PLC:

Current Account	25,122.23
3 months fixed rate deposits	56,348.29

Lloyds Bank PLC

Current account	4,137.07
Business Reserve Account	43,050.91

Total held in Bank Accounts at 31 December, 2019 **207,244.13**

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 spread adequately so as to mitigate any deposit risk. With effect from 1st February 2017 the Bank of England's Deposit Guarantee scheme been extended to cover Parish Council deposits of up to £85k with individual banks covered by the scheme. Surplus funds were continuing to be invested at the most favourable rates offered by the Council's bankers. Members reviewed the individual bank statements presented for verification purposes.

6 Council Budget for 2020/21 Projects, Cash reserve levels and the setting of the 2020/21 Parish precept

The clerk presented the latest budgetary monitoring report and highlighted variations against the original 2019/20 approved budget. There had been some discussion regarding the costs of production of the half-yearly Wells News magazine. Following consultation with residents it was agreed to continue with printing of the magazine in hard copy. The delivery of the magazine would revert to being delivered by volunteers. The Magazine would continue be published electronically on the Council's website and social media platforms.

It was noted that a balance of £3.5K was due to be claimed from the Government's locality fund to support work on the preparation of the Council's Neighbourhood Plan and an update report on the costs of the production of the plan would be presented to the next Parish Council meeting.

The Clerk advised that he had added the following sums to the projected to the 2020/21 draft base budget: -

- £7.9K as a contingency for the potential crossover in the employment of the new Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
- £7.5K for payment of the Housing Needs Survey and final consultancy fees for the production of the Council's Neighbourhood plan
- £2.5K for new play equipment for Assarts Road
- £1.6K additional income- increase in in parish precept of £1.5%

The Clerk advised that there had been no increase in the grass cutting tender submitted by Steve Maund in recent years. Steve will be asked if he wishes to submit a price increase for consideration by the Council prior to the new grass cutting season.

It was anticipated that the level of the Council's Cash reserves was due to fall from £207K to £184K by 31st March, 2021. There had been no increase in the Parish Council's precept in 2019/20. It was agreed to recommend to Council **(R1)** that a small increase of 1.5% should be included in the 2020/21 budget which would see the precept demanded from MHDC rise to £81,250 from the current level of £79,650

7 Annual review of the Outdoor contractors' performance and revision of their contractual hourly rates.

It was unanimously agreed that both Steve Maund and Martin Thomas had undertaken work on behalf of the Parish Council in an exemplary manner throughout the year.

8 Retirement of the Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

It was noted that the Parish Clerk and RFO had notified the Council that he would be retiring from his post on 31st August, 2020. It was agreed to recommend to Council **(R6)** that the recruitment process for a new Clerk should be delegated to the Staffing Committee for action.

The remainder of the meeting was closed to the public pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960. The reason being the consideration of the purchase of Amenity Land where details may be discussed which could be commercially sensitive.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Chairman-----

Dated 17th January 2020

Summary of Recommendations to Council on 30th October, 2019

R1 That the Council's Community Development reserve be increased to £50k to assist with the funding of future projects

R2 Wells News - that a notice should be published in the forthcoming winter edition to advise parishioners that hard copies of the magazine would in future only be distributed on request. The publication will be fully enabled to be viewed online

R3 Following requests from local organisations for funding assistance it was agreed to recommend to Council that the following donations should be made from the 2019/20 community support budget: -

South Worcestershire Citizens Advice Bureau	£1K
Worcestershire AONB	£1K

R4 That the suggested meeting cycle for 2020 (attached) should be approved

R5 That the budget for the 2019 Christmas Carol Concert expenditure should be set at £250

R6 That the recruitment process for the appointment of a new Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance officer should be delegated to the staffing committee for action