

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** duly convened and held via the Zoom conference facility **on Thursday 16th April, 2020** commencing **at 7pm.**

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

In Attendance: Mr D M Taverner (current Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer) (DMT)
Michelle Alexander (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer -Appointee)

1 Apologies for Absence- None recorded

2 Declarations of Interest -

a) Changes to the Council's Register of Interests: None recorded

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 16th January 2020. The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th January had been previously circulated.

The following amendment to minute reference 7 was agreed: -

"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. Following further discussion, it was agreed to recommend to Council that the contractual rates for both Steve and Martin should be increased by 2% with effect from 1st April, 2020"

The corrected minutes were then unanimously approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

4 Matters arising from the minutes There were none.

5 The draft 2019/20 Final accounts and draft Annual Governance statement for 2019/20. The Clerk presented the figures contained in the previously circulated financial year's outturn and bank reconciliation papers which showed that the Council's total cash holdings at 31 March 2020 comprised: -

	£
Opening Cash at Bank at 1st April, 2019	197,769.26
Add Receipts to 31 st March, 2020	92,981.35
(less) Payments to 31 st March, 2020	(110,805.55)
Total Cash held at 31st March, 2020	179,945.06
Represented by: -	
Bank Balances at 31 March, 2020	
National Westminster Bank PLC:	
Current Account	100.00
Business Reserve Account	78,143.55
HSBC PLC:	
Current Account	25,122.23
3 months fixed rate deposit a/c20721891	25,596.55
3 months fixed rate deposit a/c90717738	30,970.28
Lloyds Bank PLC	
Current account	6,955.55
Business Reserve Account	13,056.80
Total held in Bank Accounts at 31 March, 2020	179,945.06

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, Cash reserve levels and the Annual Governance and audit return for the 2019/2020 financial year

The clerk presented the final out turn report for the 2019/20 financial year and highlighted variations which had arisen against the approved budget for that year. It was noted that a budget of £1K had previously been approved by Council towards a donation to the Wyche school and the clerk advised that the necessary change would be made to the 20/21 budget figures.

Cllr Burrage queried the difference that had arisen on the actual expenditure shown on the final outturn, when compared to against the figure which had been presented to the last events working group meeting. the Clerk advised that this was due to some advertising costs for the 2020/21 event being incurred prior to st April 2020 and recategorization of other costs and some non- recoverable VAT.

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 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 parish precept

It was anticipated that the level of the Council's Cash reserves was due to fall from £184K to £178K by 31st March,2021. It had been intended to increase the 20/21 parish precept demand by 1.5%. However, due to the unexpected reduction in the Parish Council Tax Base, the precept had actually risen by 3.2% for the 20/21 financial year. It was anticipated that there would be no increase in the 21/22 precept which would mean that the parish element of the council Tax levy would equate to approximately 1.65% over the two- year period running from 1st April 2020 to 31st March,2022

7 Annual review of Standing orders and Financial Regulations

It was agreed that this review would be undertaken by the two Clerks and RFO (DMT & MA) during the handover of tasks. The finding of this review would be referred for consideration by the F&& GP committee at their meeting on 16th July.

8 Risk Register and Insurances review

It was agreed that this review would be undertaken by DMT and MA during the handover of tasks. The findings of the review would be presented for consideration by Finance & General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 16th July.

9 Neighbourhood Plan Expenditure and income update

A review of the additional costs incurred by the council's consultant and the respective grants claimable would be presented to the 7th May Council meeting.

9 Internal Audit 2019/20

Dianne Malley had agreed to complete the internal audit for the second half of the 2019/20 financial year, having already previously carried out the audit of the first half year's accounts, for the period ending 30th September, 2020, which had received an unqualified audit opinion

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman-----

Dated 16th July, 2020