

Minutes of the meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council Finance Committee held on 20th February 2012 in Fairfield School

Present: Councillors C Scurrell (Chair), J Bradley, K Green, C Hine, T Jones, S MacDonald, and P Shotton.

In attendance : Katie Limm (Clerk). Cllrs A Hood and A Ince; Richard Bartram and Jane Somervell (Belbroughton Rec. Committee) and Ron Wilkes (Fairfield Village Hall Committee) also attended.

059/12 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Kitson and Roberts.

060/12 Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

061/12 Minutes of the meeting on 23rd January 2012

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and were signed by Cllr Scurrell.

062/12 Bank reconciliations

The reconciliation of the Council's two HSBC accounts was noted by the Committee.

063/12 Accounts for payment

Payments for February set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were approved.

064/12 Grant applications

The Council had received two requests for grants:

- a request from Belbroughton Recreation Centre management committee for £10,000 to create a new small meeting room from former changing rooms
- a request from Fairfield Village Hall Committee for support for various improvements, including a new central heating boiler, insulation and lighting (estimated cost for urgent work £23,500)

The Finance Committee noted that the support sought for these projects was on a larger scale than that normally offered through the Council's annual grants allocation. The money available for capital grants in 2012/13 was £5,000 in total. However, the Committee considered that these projects could be considered under the Council's financial strategy as projects that could be funded using the capital reserves since both should improve the parish infrastructure and income (sustainability) of the organisation. Cllr Green suggested that giving grants to these bodies would also be a good way of marking the Diamond Jubilee.

The fact that other parish organisation might have projects to put forward was noted by the Committee. It was felt that any other applications should be considered on their merits.

Richard Bartram outlined the Rec.'s project which was intended to provide a room in Belbroughton to attract groups or individuals wanting a smaller venue for meetings, training, or other uses. He was asked whether the Rec. had explored other sources of funding. Mr Bartram said that they had but that the project did not readily fit the criteria for the grants available which tended to be for educational or sporting facilities. The Rec. Committee was asked to provide

- a copy of the specification and cost estimate they had obtained for creating the room plus copies of two quotes for the work

- further details/evidence to support the assumptions the Rec. Committee had made about the potential bookings of the room – this was to help demonstrate the value for money of the project and the potential for the room to generate additional income.

Ron Wilkes outlined the work that Fairfield Village Hall Committee wanted to do. The boiler was elderly and urgently needed to be replaced. The Committee had made contact with Community First for advice about heating options and possible sources of funding. The Committee also wanted to improve the hall's insulation and install a false ceiling and new lighting- this would make the hall more attractive and enable the Committee to let it more successfully at weekends for parties and other functions. The Village Hall committee was asked to provide further information to the Council after it had held discussions with Community First. The Committee was asked to provide:

- Two quotes for the work that they wanted to have done
- Information about other funding sought
- Further information/evidence about the potential for increased lettings

The Finance Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that it should:

- i. consider supporting the applications by Belbroughton Recreation Centre and Fairfield Village Hall from its capital reserves without seeking to replace the funds used since both projects would improve the village infrastructure and should improve the viability of both organisations
- ii. earmark a grant of £10,000 for each body subject to receipt of satisfactory information on the points requested.

The Committee discussed whether support for the Belbroughton Rec. project should be on the basis of a loan or part loan and/or an arrangement whereby the Council could use the room at the Rec. on a rent free basis. The Committee thought that a further loan would impose a considerable burden on the Rec. Committee and it was agreed not to recommend this approach to the Council.

065/12 Gardening work in 2012/13

The Committee agreed that the gardening contracts with Bernard Edwards for Fairfield (4 hours per month) and James Callaghan for Belbroughton (6 hours per month) should be renewed on the same basis as in 2011/12. The hours worked could be reviewed as necessary during the year if new work was required, for example after planting on Hartle Lane.

066/12 Maintenance items

A quote of just under £1,000 had been obtained to repair the damaged bus shelter on Top Road, Wildmoor. If covered by the Council's insurance the Council would have to pay the first £250. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that the shelter should be repaired. In the meantime the Clerk was asked to send the quote to the Council's insurers to see if they would be content to settle a claim on this basis.

067/12 Village tidying

The Clerk reported that a consultation meeting had been held with the village tidier about the Council's decision not to make provision for village tidying in its 2012/13 budget. A further meeting with him had been arranged. During this consultation period the Council should consider whether there was any way of avoiding making the tidier redundant. The Committee reviewed the decision about village tidying, but concluded that it would not be prudent to make any changes to the agreed budget for 2012/13. The Committee therefore confirmed that the redundancy process should proceed.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Signed.....Chairman