

Minutes of The Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 27 September 2022 at 6.30 P.M
at The Council Office, The Clanfield Centre.

Present: Cllr P. Hurst – Chair; Cllr Stephen Williams; Cllr Laurent Coffre and Cllr Brian Foster (Vice Chair).

In attendance: Katie Knowles, Parish Clerk

FGP40/22 **To receive Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Cllr M. White.

FGP41/2 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no interests declared.

FGP42/22 **Minutes of the previous meeting**
The minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

FGP43/22 **Review of Income & Expenditure**
Members of the Committee reviewed the income against expenditure for Q2. The Committee had reviewed the areas of spend that exceeded 25% at the last meeting.

Clarification on the level of spend for the Clerk's Salary (31%), Pension (97%) and Tax & NIC contributions (214%) was requested. The Chair advised that previously the Clerks Salary and Pension had been a single budget heading, and the budget for Tax & NIC contributions had been underestimated.

The Clerk advised that the payroll data would provide a breakdown of the contributions for the employer and employee which will assist with setting the budget next year.

Cllr Coffre requested a breakdown of the expenditure for 4076 (£522) Community Working Group. The Clerk confirmed that £500 had been paid towards the costs of the Jubilee Community Festival and a hand augur had been purchased (£22) at the request of the Environment Working Group. This was an outstanding purchase from a grant for the Whiteland Copse project from 2021/2022.

FGP44/22 **External Audit Report**

Members had received correspondence from PKF Littlejohn confirming the completion of their review of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2022. Their report and certificate (Section 3) was also circulated. It was noted that there were no observations or comments had been made.

The Clerk confirmed the Notice of Completion of Audit had been completed and was on the Council's website and in the Parish Noticeboards.

FGP45/22 **Draft Budget & Precept 2023/2024**

Cllr Hurst had prepared a draft budget & precept for the Committee to review.

Cllr Hurst explained the follow areas included in the draft budget.

- Salaries £3% increase
- New Project & Media Post - The hours and salary needed to be confirmed.
- Training and equipment included for the Ranger post.
- A budget for the website design and ongoing costs had been included
- Professional fees had been increased

- The support grant and office Licence (Communities First) would continue
- Agreed to increase Utilities at Peel Park Pavilion to £2,000

The Chair asked the Clerk to circulate the Earmarked Reserves to all Councillors.

Members discussed in detail the calculation used to offset the budget £214,456, to keep the precept at a 3.8% increase or £189,442. The Clerk explained that income used to keep the precept below the budget needed to achieve an income e.g., allotment rent, or the budget could start in deficit. A transfer from General Reserves was an option. Other areas of income could be Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Section 106 payments, grant funding and income from buildings or assets owned by the council.

FGP46/22 Correspondence with Castle Water

Members considered a report prepared by the Clerk regarding a formal complaint lodged with Castle Water regarding fixed charges for the allotments at Bee Orchard Close.

In April 2022 the Council received an invoice from Castle Water for the allotments for £3,577.83 for the period 2 February – 31 July 2022. A visual reading of 93 was recorded. The water usage charge was £75.64. The fixed charges were £3,502.19. Two of the largest fixed charges (and the subject of the dispute) are 15.857 and 17.369 per day. A formal complaint was lodged with the Water Company in August.

Members having considered the report agreed the outstanding invoice should not be paid and Officers were asked to continue to pursue the complaint with Castle Water and request all charges are reimbursed.

FGP47/22 Date of the next meeting

The date of next meeting will be held on 22 November 2022 at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

Signed..... Dated.....