

Charmouth Parish Council

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MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT THE ELMS AT 7.00PM ON TUESDAY 16 January 2024

In attendance: Cllrs Katie Moore, Peter Noel, Martin Sayers, Judith Sheppard and the Clerk, Lisa Tuck.

FGP24/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Jane Bremner (away).

FGP24/02 DISPENSATIONS

It was noted that all Councillors (except Jane Bremner) have an ongoing dispensation to enable discussion of the precept for the Parish.

FGP24/03 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

FGP24/04 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on the 14 November 2023, circulated to members, were an accurate record and these were signed by the Chair.

FGP24/05 SUPPLIER PAYMENTS DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY 2024

The supplier payments for December (attached B) were approved retrospectively as having been approved by delegated authority and it was

RESOLVED that the supplier payments for January 2024 be approved.

FGP24/06 BANK RECONCILIATION (UP TO END SEPTEMBER 2023)

The Committee proposed approval of the bank reconciliation up to the end of September 2023 (attached D).

FGP24/07 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGETS INC RESERVES (UP TO END NOVEMBER 2023) AND FORESHORE INCOME TRACKER

Proposed that the income and expenditure accounts for April 2023-November 2023 (attached E1) be approved by the Council. The Foreshore Income Tracker (attached E2) was noted and that car park takings continued to be up.

FGP24/08 RESERVES

(a) SCHEDULE UP TO END DECEMBER 2023 – Reserves schedule for April-December 2023 (attached F) was noted.

(b) BANK TRANSFERS – There were no bank transfers to report.

FGP24/09 CLERK'S REPORT

It is proposed that the Clerk's Report (attached G) be approved by the Council.

FGP24/10 BUDGETS – Peter made the point that use of any surplus at the year end should be considered in conjunction with the budgets as it should be borne in mind that the car park income can never be guaranteed and there are several variables with the staffing situation which will need monitoring.

- (a) **PROPOSED BUDGETS (attached H)** – The budgets as previously discussed at Committees were proposed to Full Council for approval.
- (b) **PROPOSED CHARGES (attached I)** – The charges for 2024/25 as previously discussed at Committees were proposed to Full Council for approval.
- (c) **PROPOSED PRECEPT REQUIREMENT** – It is proposed that the precept requirement for 2024/25 be agreed as £101497 (5% increase on 2023/24) to enable the budgets to balance.
- (d) **CONFIRMATION OF PURCHASE OF 4 X BEACH HUTS** – in line with approval of the budgets it is proposed that the purchase of 4 new beach huts at a cost of £10773 plus VAT be confirmed.

FGP24/11 AUDIT 2022/23

- (a) **INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (attached J)** – The three recommendations were taken on board and will be implemented and brought back to the Committee if necessary. It is proposed that the interim internal audit report be approved by Council.

FGP24/12 HAZARD AND INCIDENT REPORT - None

FGP24/13 FORESHORE COMMITTEE

- (a) **FS68.23 (e) MAINTENANCE RENEWAL NOTIFICATION FROM FLOWBIRD** – Following recommendation by the Foreshore Committee it was **RESOLVED that the annual car park machine maintenance contract be renewed with Flowbird at a cost of £851.70 plus VAT. This is included in the current car park mtce budget.**
- (b) **FS68.23 (i) BEACH ACCESS STEPS – QUOTE FOR REPAIR RESERVE FSH5** – Following recommendation by the Foreshore Committee it is proposed that the quote of £250 to repair the beach access steps be accepted (to be taken from the Beach Access Steps Reserve FSH5).
- (c) **REPLACEMENT BODY CAM** – Following the loss of a body cam last year, it is proposed that a replacement be purchased from Amazon at an approximate cost of £220 plus VAT. This would be taken from General Reserve FSH1.
- (d) **WEBCAM DONATION – THANK YOU FROM CHCC** – The thanks was noted as well as the fact that the camera would now be situated on the sea end of the building in line with advice.
- (e) **RE-FILLING OF SINK HOLE BY GROIN** – It was noted that the hole by the groin has opened up significantly and following a quote of £175 from Martin Edwards, this has been approved under delegated authority. This would be taken from the current Foreshore General Maintenance Budget.

FGP24/14 PLAYING FIELD, CEMETERY & STREET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- (a) **PC62.23 (e) PLAQUES – INCLUDING ADDITIONAL ONES FOR COMMUNITY ORCHARD (CORONATION) AND OAK TREE FROM ROTARY (QEII) – QUOTE** – Following approval of the wording by the Committee, it was **RESOLVED that all 4 plaques be ordered at a cost of £354.17 plus VAT. To be taken from current PF General Maintenance Budget.**
- (b) **PLAYGROUND BARK TOP UP** – Following a quote from the usual supplier, it was **RESOLVED that play bark be ordered at a cost of £977.41 plus VAT, this is within the current year's budget of £1000.**
- (c) **CEMETERY BIN CANCELLATION** – The bin at the cemetery has been cancelled and replaced with a CPC bin which will be emptied as necessary by Council staff. This saves the Council approx. £130 a year.

FGP24/15 FACILITIES MANAGER MONTHLY REPORTS (NOV AND DEC 2023) (attached K) – Noted.

FGP24/16 ELMS

(a) DAMP ISSUES – SECOND OPINION – Peter and Dave are still pursuing this and will report again to the next meeting.

FGP24/17 GENERAL

(a) BUILDINGS VALUATIONS – QUOTE ACCEPTED – As agreed at Full Council, the Valuer has been instructed and visited all buildings last week.

(b) RENEWAL OF ENERGY CONTRACTS – INCREASE IN QUOTED COST - Following approval by Full Council, on speaking to EDF to confirm, the price had risen to 60p per day standing charge for elec accounts and a slightly lower usage rate. This is still much lower than all other quotes received, and was therefore renewed for 3 years as agreed by the Council. Budget figures had already been significantly increased to cover a potential increase.

(c) IT STORAGE/SUPPORT – QUOTE - Following installation of the new mesh wifi network just before Christmas, other issues were discovered with the data storage systems which meant that Lawsons Computers spent a full day at The Elms on 18 Dec and consequently the invoice amounted to more than the quoted price! They eventually recovered the data which had “disappeared” but it is apparent that a professional is needed to look after the systems.

It is proposed that the quotes received be accepted with the initial amount being taken from the anticipated surplus at the year end and moving forward the annual/monthly amounts included in the annual subscriptions and budgeted accordingly.

(d) VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEME – Following receipt of details of this initiative from Chris Loder MP, it was agreed that Andrew Lightfoot be asked to look into applying for a grant for the delivery of an independent energy assessment. Andrew would be asked to copy Lisa into all correspondence and report back to the F&GP Committee at every stage.

(e) CHARITY FUND – THANK YOU LETTERS - It was reported that all organisations were very grateful for the recent donations. It was agreed to invite Peter Wild etc to come and update the Council on the latest position regarding the Youth Club.

(f) CORPORATION TAX – DEMAND FOR OVERDUE FINES - This has been an issue for a while which Peter has been aware of. The Internal Auditors have confirmed categorically that as a Local Council we shouldn't even be registered for Corporation Tax. A letter has been sent to HMRC disputing the demand and asking when and how CPC was registered for Corporation Tax.

(g) COMPLAINT ABOUT POST OFFICE – CONTACT MP – Following a telephone complaint about the new post office service, it was agreed that the Council shouldn't write to the MP but Peter would speak to Chris Loder and deal with any future complaints.

FGP24/18 POLICIES

(a) GRANT AWARDING POLICY (current policy attached L) – It is proposed that the Policy be accepted with no changes.

(b) MEMORIAL BENCHES (current policy attached M) – The Committee feel that the Council should be moving towards all recycled material benches now and therefore it is proposed that the amended Policy be accepted with the addition of “recycled material” inserted in the first line before “memorial benches”.

FGP24/19 VEHICLES/MACHINERY

(a) ANNUAL SERVICING OF MACHINERY QUOTES (FM report attached N) – It was

RESOLVED that the basic quote of £2875.80 to service the machinery be accepted and be taken from the combined budget of £4021.67 (made up from GEN6 £878.14; 23/24 MC service bud £1423.68; 23/24 JD Mtce bud £1367.72; 23/24 Kubota Mtce bud £352.13).

It was also

RESOLVED to purchase a new short handled hedge trimmer at a cost of £220.83 plus VAT from current Mach/Vehicle Replacement budget standing at £1000.

(b) TRACTOR TRAINING – This training had been booked (by delegated authority due to timescales) for Jose to attend at the end of January (to be undertaken in Charmouth on the Council Tractor “one to one”) at a cost of 2/3 days @ £995 + VAT/£1270 + VAT depending on existing knowledge. To be taken from current training budget topped up with current contingency budget.

FGP24/20 ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP – ITEMS TO NOTE

- hedge planting on West Green on 20th January;
- proposal to hold an open meeting in 4-6 weeks about Charmouth in Bloom;
- suggestion here and at the Environment Exchange that there should be a local meeting to consider potential priorities for the coastal resilience fund (for Fsh agenda);
- River Char meeting on Friday and nurdle clean during 24-28th Jan with a beach clean on 27th;
- in the light of the warmest year on record for the globe, CPC should reconsider its position on the climate emergency – The F&GP Committee felt that this should not be progressed at the current time;
- Lyme TC has offered to assist with clearing the wood on the foreshore. (For Fsh agenda – in the meantime the Clerk would speak to Belinda.)

FGP24/21 STAFF REPORT (attached O) – The Committee noted the report and approved payment of Clerk’s additional 20 hours.

FGP24/22 IN COMMITTEE

(a) WAGES BUDGET 2024/25 (Wages budget and detailed salaries sheet attached P) – It is proposed that the Wages budget be approved as set out with specific rates from 1 April 2024 to be determined by the HR Committee.

(b) ELMS 2nd FLOOR ROOM 2 – UPDATE - This space is currently empty with some enquiries but no offers as yet.

(c) LAND OWNED BY PC, HIGHER SEA LANE (Valuation Report attached Q1; NALC advice attached Q2). Proposal from Committee included in updated report Q2.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Proposals:

- FGP24/06 Bank Reconciliation
- FGP24/07 Income and Expenditure against Budget
- FGP24/09 Clerk’s Report
- FGP24/10(a) Budgets
- FGP24/10(b) Charges
- FGP24/10(c) Precept Requirement
- FGP24/10(d) Confirmation of purchase of beach huts
- FGP24/11 Interim Internal Audit Report
- FGP24/13(b) Beach Access Steps
- FGP24/13(c) Replacement Body Cam
- FGP24/17(c) IT storage/support (IN COMMITTEE)
- FGP24/18(a) Grant Awarding Policy
- FGP24/18(b) Memorial Benches Policy
- FGP24/22(a) Wages Budget (IN COMMITTEE)
- FGP24/22(c) Land (IN COMMITTEE)