

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BELBROUGHTON AND FAIRFIELD PARISH COUNCIL  
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2023, 7.30PM AT  
BELBROUGHTON RECREATION CENTRE**

**Present**

**Parish Councillors**

Cllr. Pawley  
Cllr. Gibbs  
Cllr. Hardeman  
Cllr. Mabbett (Chairman)  
Cllr. Wilkes  
Cllr. Sadler (Observing)

**Public**

There were no members of the public in attendance

**432/23 APOLOGIES**

Ruth Mullett (Clerk).

**433/23 VICE CHAIRMAN**

Cllr. Hardeman was elected as Vice Chairman.

**434/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Gibbs – disclosable pecuniary interest on agenda item 12 due to proximity to Fairfield Recreation Ground.

Cllr. Wilkes – disclosable pecuniary interest on agenda item 12 due to proximity to Fairfield Recreation Ground and a Housing Needs Survey conducted on land adjacent to the Recreation Ground.

**435/23 DISPENSATIONS REQUESTED**

Cllr. Gibbs was granted a dispensation on agenda item 12.  
Cllr. Wilkes were granted a dispensation to debate but not vote on agenda item 12.

**436/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was unanimously agreed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

**437/23 BANK RECONCILIATIONS**

Cllr's Hardeman and Pawley had received training from the Clerk and confirmed the accounts has been scrutinised and were in good order. The Committee agreed that Cllr. Mabbett as Chair would conduct the next bank reconciliation for November.

**438/23 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

- It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to agree the accounts for payment circulated to all councillors. Cllr. Gibbs and Cllr. Wilkes to authorise the online payments.
- To **RESOLVE** to apply for a Unity Trust Multipay Card for Clerk's expenses – this item was postponed to be carried forward to the next Finance Committee meeting.

- To agree to the purchase of a GOV.UK domain name at £150.00 plus VAT – it was agreed to make a **RECOMMENDATION** to Full Council as the Clerk is not present this evening.

## **439/23 INVESTMENTS**

The difficulties of outdated bank mandates and a required final signatory to enable these to be updated will be sought in the next few days. The signatures of all current councillors are required to change the mandates. The Chair explained the limitations for charities to deposit money now. Cllr. Hardeman agreed to talk to a Treasury contact for potential new investment avenues. Cllr. Hardeman also asked whether the barriers to investment were down to new processes or tighter money laundering regulations as it could be either of these which is proving a barrier to a swift investment solution, suggesting that these were questions the Clerk could ask in any future enquiries about potential investments.

Cllr. Pawley asked if it is normal practice to expect the Clerk to investigate investment options and whether we were in fact being supportive enough to the Clerk in sourcing these?

## **440/23 CAPITAL/MINOR GRANTS**

The Chair gave an overview of the criteria for Minor and Capital Grant applications.

### **MINOR GRANTS**

**Bromsgrove Citizens Advice Bureau** – did we want to give more than £300.00 which was previously allocated? It was decided that the minor grant application for £500.00 was probably submitted in view of the last allocation of £300.00 being overdue. All agreed this was a cause which benefitted the whole of the parish and should continue to be supported. However, it was agreed that this should be allocated from the precept as in the past and not from a minor grant application. £300 was the agreed amount.

**Blooming Buddies** – agreed to grant request for £350.00 for repair and rejuvenation of vegetable patch.

**Friends for Lunch** - £85 for provision/erection of shelving to store club's equipment.

**Fairfield Village Association** – just under £400 agreed – Clerk to grant balance left from £1,000.00n to FVCA.

**Belbroughton United Charities** - £200 for fencing replacement to border of allotments.

**Belbroughton Church Hall** – refurbishment of bar area – declined criteria not fulfilled.

**Bromsgrove Citizens Advice Bureau** – declined as funds for continuation of service to be provided from the precept and not from Minor Grants.

### **CAPITAL GRANTS**

The Chair outlined the law regarding funding church infrastructure.

**Belbroughton Club** – did not fulfil the requirements of the criteria.

**St Mark's Church Fairfield** – clock scaffolding £1,750.00 – this was agreed by Council.

**Belbroughton Church Hall** – removal and disposal of asbestos in loft cavity – declined as ineligible.

**Belbroughton Church Hall** – addition of insulating materials and make good plastering – declined as ineligible.

**Belbroughton Church Hall** – rewire of building – declined as ineligible.

**Belbroughton Church Hall** – decorating and cleaning – declined as ineligible.

#### **441/23 MAINTENANCE WORK**

Chair reported that a bent 20mph sign had been bent over on Brook Road.

Noticeboard still outstanding.

#### **442/23 TENANTS**

To review agricultural tenants – the Chair explained that Cllr. Nock was going to conduct a walk of the agricultural holdings and report back. Chair also explained that we will need to give twelve months' notice of a rent change for tenants.

Cllr. Gibbs raised the issue of security of tenure for agricultural tenants in view of a potential rent increase and put forward a motion – *“that Parish Council reaffirm their commitment not to sell parish land to preserve the integrity of the rural location and to offer some security to agricultural tenants of parish land”*. This motion was accepted by Councillors and recommended to be taken to Full Council for the next meeting for discussion.

Deli – no issues reported.

Fairfield Villa – no issues reported – tally of matches played to be recorded.

#### **443/23 DE-FIB**

A de-fib for Quantry Lane was unanimously agreed.

#### **444/23 NALC SALARY SCALES**

Cllr. Pawley explained that as an employer the Parish Council is obligated to fund the backdate of pay to April 2023 and that 25% of the Clerk's salary is paid from the secondary income stream. Council confirmed that backpay is to be paid to the Clerk.

#### **445/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A new date to be circulated for the December meeting as Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December seems unsuitable for most.

**446/23      ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

The recruitment of a new Lengthsman was raised to be discussed at the next Finance Meeting.

To be agreed as a true record by the Finance Committee

Signed .....

DRAFT