

PANGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

At a meeting of the Finance and Compliance Committee held at Pangbourne Village Hall on Wednesday 28 June 2023 commencing at 1.30pm

Present: I Walker, B Kerr Muir, J Higgs, N Goodwin,
R Elkin (Clerk)

Absent: None

# FC/118 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

 Following nominations and a vote, it was RESOLVED that I Walker was duly elected as Chairman.

#  ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

 Following nominations and a vote, it was RESOLVED that J Higgs was duly elected as Vice-Chairman.

# FC/119 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

 None.

# FC/120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELEVANT TO THE AGENDA

 None.

# FC/121 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

 Minutes of the last meeting on 4 November 2022 were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record with no amendments.

# FC/122 MATTERS ARISING ON THE LAST MINUTES

 None.

# FC/123 REGULAR REVIEW OF FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

* The Bank Statements were checked against the latest budget control by Councillors and found to be accurate.
* CIL reports showing expenditure to date and outstanding sums were reviewed.
* Hall, Grounds, Cemetery income and expenditures were reviewed.
* Staff costs were reviewed.

 Banking Signatories amendments

* Banking mandates were completed and signed to remove ex-cllrs CH and PM as signatories, to add Cllr IW as a signatory and also to upgrade existing signatory Cllr GC to online banking access.

# FC/124 TO DISCUSS STAFFING MATTERS

* **Appraisals Update**

 Completed

* **Appraisals outcome review**

 It was RESOLVED to increase ASC1 to 12 hours per week and ASC2 up one scale point.

* **Cover for OSW for 2023-update**

 Zero hours cover has been arranged over the summer to cover the OSW’s holiday.

# FC/125 TO DISCUSS 5 YEAR PLANNING AND STRATEGY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BUDGET

* The Clerk presented a report detailing the Precept Levels and Ave Band D equivalents for the 6 “Rural Service Centre“ villages in West Berkshire District as defined by the West Berkshire Settlement Hierarchy. These are Hungerford, Lambourn, Burghfield, Theale, Stratfield Mortimer and Pangbourne.
* Of all 6 villages, Pangbourne has set both the LOWEST cash precept demand and the LOWEST Band D equivalent figure.
* Conversely, when the services which Pangbourne delivers are considered, it is operating at the top end of the list by providing almost all of the possible services including a Cemetery, well used open spaces at the river meadows, recreation ground and Chiltern walk, a very busy village hall, operating one set of public toilets and partially funding a second, support for the local library and bus service, provision of Christmas lighting, allotments, two car parks and assistance with various sports facilities at the recreation ground and one playground, street lighting, dog waste bins and public bins.
* This is problematic due to the relatively small size of the population funding the services which are used as a destination hub by a much larger population surrounding Pangbourne.
* The Clerk noted that over the last 5 years or so the parish had taken on more and more devolved services and yet the precept had only risen roughly in line with the national average precept rise over that time (27.6% Nationally, Pangbourne 27.7% since 2019) and only a little higher than inflation (22.4% since 2019 to 23/24). In addition, it was delivering services better than a few years ago.
* The impact of inflation, staffing and taking on these additional services were now affecting the ability to cover budgets. This has been eased somewhat over the last few years by expenditure from reserves, however a discussion took place regarding how to cover these costs going forward as reserves are now reducing.
* Discussion focussed on revenue generating areas including potential charges/income from the parish council car parks (it was noted that the public/chargeable car parks at both main parish sites – the meadows and the village hall – were operated by West Berkshire Council who took the revenue). The two parish operated car parks at the rear of the hall and at the recreation ground do not currently charge.
* It was also suggested that the Recreation Ground should be focussed on to generate income from sports and fitness activities and hire of facilities to offset some of the operational costs.
* Commercial activities are also a possibility at the recreation ground and licence opportunities for a coffee hut or similar should be investigated, though this would need to be strictly controlled as regards waste control.
* Charging for the public toilets was also considered as these are very expensive to operate.

 These areas should all be reviewed as part of the strategy of the Council and considered alongside a likely significant increase in the precept.

 IW also stated that he wanted to keep the Council focussed on core strategy items and would continue to raise this at future council meetings.

 It was agreed that thought should be put into developing a survey for residents to obtain a better view of what services/service levels they deem as important and what they wish the parish council to focus on next.

# FC/126 TO RECEIVE ANY ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY OR FOR THE AGENDA OF THE NEXT MEETING

 None.

# FC/127 CLOSURE

 There being no further business the meeting was closed at 2.50pm.

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