**Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Committee meeting held virtually on**

**Monday 2nd November 2020 at 7:00pm via Zoom**

**Present**: Cllr Alan Biddle Cllr David Chenery Cllr Ivor French Cllr Emma Lawrence

Cllr Robin Cooke

**Officer in Attendance:** Jo Peters, Clerk to the Council

Cllr John Horsnell was in attendance

There were no members of the public present

1. **To receive Apologies for Absence**

There were none.

1. **To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

1. **Open Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

1. **To approve the minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 7th September 2020**

A copy of the draft minutes had been circulated to all Committee members prior to the meeting**.**

**RESOLVED**

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2020 were signed as a true record by the Chairman, when convenient.

1. **To consider amendments and recommend approval to Full Council to adopt a Policy and Procedure for Handling Freedom of Information Requests**

The Parish Clerk had circulated a copy of the draft policy to all Committee members along with suggested amendments/clarifications received.

**RESOLVED**

Subject to minor amendments this policy should be recommended to Full Council for Approval.

1. **To consider amendments and recommend approval to Full Council to adopt a Dignity at Work Policy**

The Parish Clerk had circulated a copy of the draft policy to all Committee members along with suggested amendments/clarifications received.

**RESOLVED**

This policy should be recommended to Full Council for Approval without amendment.

1. **Proposed Men’s Shed project – To consider charging an annual rent if this shed is sited at the Glebe Allotment site**

This item was deferred.

1. **To receive an update from the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer on the 2020/2021 accounts & 2nd quarter budget (to be given at meeting)**

The Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer reported, as follows:-

**Bank Balances as at 30th September 2020**

Savings Account - £15,781.80

Current Account - £93,402.93

**Income**

Cemetery - To date £4208.00 has been received, £4,000.00 was budgeted for as income for 2020/21. The Parish Clerk confirmed the final year-end income figure would be higher than predicted.

**Savings to date:-**

Insurance – Budget £1000.00, Renewal Premium - £798.72 – Savings of £201.28 at year end.

Hanging Baskets/Lights/Xmas Trees – Budget £1483.00 – Savings have been made of around £1153.00 within this budget due to no hanging baskets being purchased due to COVID-19 this year, predicated costs for Xmas Trees £330.20 (same as last year). **Thanks were offered to the Parish Councillors who had offered to put the main Christmas tree and the small trees up on the Hill (whilst adhering to social distancing at all times).**

Room Hire – £900.00 was budgeted for. The Parish Clerk suggested this budget could be carried across to another heading if the Committee agrees as there would not be any charges for Room Hire for 2020/21 due to COVID-19.

Grants – £3100.00 was budgeted for Capital & Revenue grants, to date just £600.00 has been allocated leaving a current saving of £2500.00

**Overspends to date:-**

Legal Fees – Budget £2500.00. Blocks interim invoice £3016.00 – The Parish Clerk reported there had been an overspend of £516.00 but as the Contingences budget was £8500.00 she predicts a further £3000.00 may possibly need to come out of this.

Village Sign – Budget £2000.00. The Parish Clerk confirmed there would certainly be an overspend in relation to the Village Sign, to date £1488.00 has been spent but the invoice from Brooks & Wood for the new base is £2722.34 and further costs will be incurred following these for the new oak post and works to the sign. Overspend to date - £2710.34. The Chairman requested that going forward the Parish Clerk should put this item under a separate budget heading.

**Matters for consideration:-**

£3500.00 grant to Village Hall – The Parish Clerk reported she had been made aware this grant is paid in arrears to the VH CIO and therefore recommended this should be paid.

Play Area Inspection report – The Parish Clerk advised that some work is required to carry out minor repairs and also some concerns regarding the Skate Park had been raised. These matters will be looked into in more detail by the E & L Committee.

**Income reductions to date:-**

**Hanging Baskets** – Budget £600.00 – Nil received

**WM Youth FC Licence Fee** – Budget £550.00 – Half Year charged £275.00 due to COVID-19.

**Markets** - Summer and Xmas 2020 markets were cancelled due to COVID-19. Budget £2000.00. Weekly markets year end figure could be lower than £1000.00 predicted depending on future COVID-19 outbreaks. Although now the Saturday market is a fee paying market it is hoped this figure could rise.

**RESOLVED**

**The 2020/21 Quarterly Accounts and Budget update be Approved.**

**RESOLVED**

The grant to Wickham Market Village Hall CIO for £3,500.00 would be paid. ***Cllrs Biddle and French declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of this item.***

1. **To receive an update from the Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer on the 2021/22 budget including Village Handyman hours & Tax Base & Parish Precept (to be given at meeting)**

**2020/2021 – Precept £73,000**

***A grant has been received in 2020/21 from ESC for £10,000 as due to COVID-19 it is anticipated there will be a reduction in the tax base for 2021/22. The Parish Council have earmarked this funding in order so that a rise in the Parish Precept for 2021/22 would hopefully not be necessary.***

The Parish Clerk stated the Parish Council needed to consider future projects and also needed to take into consideration that within the terms of the new lease for the VH CIO they would be taking back some responsibilities including grass cutting and responsibility for the car park area.

Room Hire is still questionable due to COVID-19.

Legal fees – The Parish Clerk recommended it would be sensible to keep this budget the same as this year i.e. £2500.00.

Markets – Licence fees including the Saturday market will be £600.00.

Hanging Baskets – It is not certain that SC Norse will provide a watering service so the E & L Committee will need to consider if fewer hanging baskets should be provided or if planters could be purchased – this budget may therefore vary.

Computer - Parish Clerk – The Parish Clerk reported as part of her Working from Home Risk Assessment Josie Hopps had recommended that a desktop set up would be much more preferable. The Parish Clerk suggested a maximum budget of £1000.00 for this item. The Chairman asked for this matter to be an agenda item at the January Committee meeting as this could possibly come out of this year’s budget.

The Chairman thanked the Parish Clerk/RFO for these reports.

1. **Matters of report and items for the next meeting**

Cllr French reported on the drainage issues at Simons Cross and the necessary works required. It was agreed these works subject to the costs could be agreed by Cllrs French, Chenery and the Parish Clerk.

3rd Quarter Budget, 2021/22 Budget, Purchase of desktop Computer for Parish Clerk/RFO and outcome of Simons Cross drainage issues/impact on budget.

There being no further discussion the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.03pm

Signed………………………………………., Chairman Dated…………………..................