

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

Held on 7th November 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Bush Room

Present: - Cllrs. Terry Hunt (TH)(Chairman), John Cutland(JC), Brian Lee(BL), Bernard Willcox(BW), Hannah Richmond(HR), Alison Peters(AP).
Bob Phillips (Clerk),

1. Apologies accepted for Absence

None

2. Evacuation Procedure

Evacuation procedures were noted.

3. Public Participation

None

4. Declaration of Interests

Item 10

Cllr Terry Hunt – Trustee of Age UK South Glos.

Cllr Brian Lee – Treasurer of JHMC, member of Community Forum and AAA

Cllr Bernard Willcox – Committee member Helmet

5. Minutes of meeting held on 5th Sept 2011 and Matters Arising

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th Sept 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5.1. Matters Arising

None

5.2. Outstanding Actions

5.2.1. ***F110606-1 to review and make recommendations on the efficiency and serviceability of the Parish Council IT services and equipment. Action to Cllr James Sumner & Clerk***

1/8/11 the review of Parish IT services has been started with an inventory of current assets, services and technology. Minor changes made to the Council laptop to increase efficiency.
7/11/11 ongoing

5.2.2. ***F110801-4 to clarify the Community Leadership Award process and determine if there was still a need. Action to Clerk***

Matter raised with the liaison officer, response still awaited. Ongoing 5/9/11
Time expired, action closed. 7/11/11

5.2.3. ***F110905-1 to purchase some 16Gb flash drives and deliver a data backup copy of the Parish records to the Council chairman for safe keeping. This process to be performed every month. Action to Clerk***

Completed – Action closed 7/11/11

5.2.4. ***F110905-2 to investigate the viability of investment bonds as a means of increasing interest revenue.*** ***Action to Cllr John Cutland***

No financial advantage, action closed. 7/11/11

6. Matters Arising from Committee reports

- 6.1. Planning Committee – none
- 6.2. Footpaths & Allotments Committee – none
- 6.3. Playing Fields & Open Spaces Committee - none

7. Financial Reports

- 7.1. Budget Reports dated 31/10/11
- 7.2. Account Balance for 31/10/11
- 7.3. Receipts & Payments for Oct 2011
- 7.4. Bank Reconciliation for Oct 2011

Resolved: The Financial Reports as presented were accepted as a true reflection of the current state of the Parish Council Finances.

F111107-1 to investigate the production of less complex finance reports.

Action to Clerk

8. Financial Matters

- 8.1. 2012/13 Budget Review .

After examining the preliminary budget, the committee discussed the general principle of increase to the Precept or not.

BL suggested that a small increase in precept would enable the Council to maintain most of its current plans.

HR was in favour of no increase and reducing costs.

AP was in favour of a small increase on the grounds that a very high proportion of Council expenditure is “restricted” costs and many of those costs will be increased by previously agreed contracts (e.g. salaries) or outside the Council’s control (e.g. Council Tax). AP felt that it was sending the wrong message to the residents that the Parish Council could squeeze even more out of an already challenging budget. We may not have another opportunity to take advantage of the visible evidence of the improvements made to local amenities. Many residents have been applauding the actions taken and may accept a small increase in Precept especially if we point out this is the first increase for three years.

JC was in favour of maintaining the precept for another year but did express some concern about the Reserves.

BW thought that in the current climate we would be wrong to increase the precept and should look to finding ways to work within that budget.

TH in summarising the views, suggested that whilst we should be mindful of the points made by AP, he felt that we should maintain the Precept for another year and be especially vigilant with all unrestricted costs.

Resolved: To recommend that the 2012/13 Precept be the same as that for 2011/12 and the previous two years, £47,346. The budget to be created with that figure fixed.

Second Budget Review - Further work now needs to be done to create a proposed budget. It was suggested that one area we should look very carefully at is the subscriptions. Are they value for money? The Clerk was asked to try and create a simplified budget that was easier to assess. There was also a need to establish a clear picture of the Financial Reserves as it was agreed we should plan to replace, in time, the sums spent in the last two years and bring the reserves back to 2010 levels.

9. Authorisation of Payments & Income Received

9.1. Payments

The following payments were approved and authorised by Cllrs. John Cutland and Terry Hunt.

Payee	Details	Chq. no	£
CRK Garden Manicures	Grounds Mtce - Oct	1964	£978.00
R Phillips	Post Office - Stamps	1965	£22.08
South Glos Council	Empty Dog Bins June - Oct	1966	£215.42
Came & Co	Additional Insurance Premium	1967	£25.00
R Phillips	Real Trade Ltd. Logitech mouse	1968	£24.94
CFS	Photocopy Service	1969	£25.26
Virgin Media Business	Broadband to 30 Nov 11	1970	£26.40
	Total expenditure		£1317.10

9.2. Recent Receipts are listed below

None

10. Grant Aid 2011/12

Applications were received from:

2nd Alveston Scouts	2 x tents
Age UK	Assistance to equip room
Alveston Allotments Association	Gate & Wildlife equipment
Alveston Community Forum 1	Assist running costs
Alveston Community Forum 2	Assistance with Blue Plaque
Alzheimer's Society	Support to running costs
Helmet	Council advertising & articles
Jubilee Hall Management Committee	Insurance
Marlwood School	Prize
Royal British Legion	Wreath + donation
SG Citizens Advice Bureau (Thornbury)	Support to running costs
St Helens Pre-School	Resources for outdoor activities
St Peter's Hospice	Support for Community Nursing
Youth Centre Management Committee	Insurance

Some discussion took place about the applications:

JC – we should focus on those applications from groups in the Parish. He suggested to initially determine the recommended awards to the JHMC and YCMC.

BW – we should limit awards only to local groups.

Some amounts were discussed but it was felt the committee should be provided with the complete set of papers before recommendations could be agreed.

Resolved: to hold a special F&GP committee meeting to discuss and recommend Grant Aid Awards 2011/12.

The awards to the JHMC and YCMC have in the past been specifically to support the payment of the two committee's insurances. Whilst in recent years the awards have been roughly 50% of the premiums, it was suggested that it may be more economical if the buildings were included in the Parish Council Insurance.

F111107-2 to investigate the feasibility of insuring the Jubilee Hall and Youth Centre in the Parish Council Insurance. ***Action to Clerk***

11. Policy Documents

None

12. Playbuilder

It was agreed to remove this item from the agenda.

13. Correspondence

13.1. ALCA/NALC - Advanced notice of 2011/12 subscription - noted

14. Any other business

None

The meeting was closed at 8.15pm.