



## ALDINGBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the ordinary meeting of the Finance Committee of Aldingbourne Parish Council held on Tuesday 21 February 2023 at Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre, Oliver's Meadow, Westergate, West Sussex PO20 3YA**

**Present:** Cllr Warden – Chair of Parish Council, Cllr Trabucco, Cllr Flitter & Cllr Heidi Luther (observing).

Marie Singleton – Parish Clerk

**Members of the public present:** No members of the public were present.

**151 Agenda item 1 - Apologies for absence**

Cllr Michelle Harbord (personal).

**152 Agenda item 2 – Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Warden & Luther declared an interest as Trustees of the Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre.

**153 Agenda item 3 - Public Participation**

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**154 Agenda item 4 - Minutes of previous meeting held on 18 October 2022**

It was proposed by Cllr Warden and seconded by Cllr Trabucco that the minutes of 18 October 2022, be RESOLVED and accepted as true and accurate. This was unanimously agreed and signed by the Chair Cllr M Warden.

**155 Agenda item 5 – Matters arising from previous minutes not covered on the agenda**

The Clerk confirmed that all matters on the action Items listing for 18 October 2022 had been resolved.

**156 Agenda item 6 – To note Management Accounts for April 2022 – January 2023 and review of bank statements**

The Clerk advised that all monthly Management Accounts for April 2022 – January 2023 had been signed by the Chair of the Parish Council Cllr Michael Warden. Bank Statement reviews on opening and closing balances for April – September 2022 were undertaken by Cllr Flitter and countersigned. Bank statement reviews and opening and closing balances for October 2022 – January 2023 were undertaken by Cllr Trabucco and countersigned. Both councillors confirmed they were happy that all balances were correct.

Details are available to Councillors in TEAMS and had been previously circulated.

**157**     **Agenda item 7 – To review and discuss the Budget Financial Monitoring Report to 31.01.23 (Period 10)**

The Clerk had provided a budget financial monitoring report to 31.01.23 (period 10) in the format agreed by councillors along with a set of notes for budget headings. Information included variances to budget and a forecast of outturn to 31.03.23. The Clerk advised that next year's budget monitoring report would include a column on the previous years expenditure as it was now possible to show a like by like analysis.

Several questions were posed by councillors and answered by the Clerk.

- The HMRC Employee/Employer costings were showing separate from salaries so that parish council liabilities were identified.
- Room Hire was significantly under spent – Clerk advised that the arrangements with the ACSC for the letting of the Parish Council Office at a cost of £2,650 pa had not been invoiced. Cllr Warden advised that this would be forthcoming shortly as all user group lettings were being reviewed. The cost was deemed steep, and it was agreed any future hire agreement would need to be reviewed by the Full Council for 2023/2024.
- The Clerk advised that no budget had been set for Professional Fees for administration and this would be rectified next year as all professional fees had originally been put under the same heading.
- Professional Fees on the ANP/Planning cost center was discussed, and an analysis of the last 2 financial years expenditure provided by the Clerk. Recommendations were made that costs incurred by a Barrister should be as a last resort and any referrals that were deemed necessary should first be raised with the parish councils' solicitors. It was agreed to use Steve Tilbury the planning consultant on retainer with WSALC the next time a planning application required a planning consultant, and to benchmark his report against the information we receive from Adams Hendry to determine a preferred supplier. It was also agreed that an item should be added to the April 2023 Finance agenda to specifically discuss the approval of budgets for ANP/Planning and Surveys once the end of the financial year expenditure was known.
- The Clerk advised that the Business Plan and Budget setting were 2 different topics and that a final budget should be set in April/May of each year following the end of the previous financial year. This provides more accurate budget setting within cost centers.

The Clerk advised that the receipts over payments at 31.01.23 were showing general reserves of £59,967. The outturn for 2022/2023 financial year was showing possible general reserves of £40,259 after predicated expenditure for Feb/March 2023 was taken into consideration.

**158**     **Agenda item 8 – To review Bank Account Balances and agree any transfers required**

The bank balances to 31.01.23 were noted, Community Account £156,187.89, Business Premium £200,167.79 and it was agreed by all councillors in attendance to recommend to the Full Council that £100k was transferred from the Community Account to the Business Premium Account. This would still leave an acceptable operating budget for the rest of the financial year with knowledge that the first tranche of the precept is due April 2023. Proposed Cllr Warden, seconded Cllr Trabucco.

**159 Agenda item 9 - To review Earmarked Accounts and Reserves for 2022/2023**

The current Earmarked accounts and Reserves were noted including that the Clerk had transferred the CIL funding that had been received in April 2022 from Income to CIL.

The following were recommended to be approved by the Full Council: -

- a) £20k from this financial year to be allocated to the ACSC rebuild earmarked account.
- b) A new account to be created specifically for work on the Aldingbourne Neighbourhood Plan and £20k transferred into this account for future work that would be required on updating the plan to make it more robust.
- c) To create a new earmarked account to identify the funding received for the maintenance of the Artwork Project.

The above recommendations were agreed by all councillors in attendance. Proposed Cllr Trabucco, seconded Cllr Flitter.

**160 Agenda item 10 – To agree 2022/2023 Finance Journals**

It was agreed at the last finance meeting 18.10.22, that the finance database should be amended to reflect correct expenditure within cost centers. The Clerk had identified five journals that had been required and these had been actioned as agreed. Journals approved by all councillors in attendance, proposed Cllr Trabucco, seconded Cllr Warden. Cllr Warden signed the journals.

**161 Agenda item 11 – To note oncome for 2022/2023 including VAT Receipts, outstanding funding**

The income statement for 2022/2023 was noted. Confirmation had also been received from ADC that the funding for the refurbishment and maintenance of the play area at ACSC under planning application AL/8/16/OUT for £15,445.54 has been approved, and a Deed of Agreement has been received by the parish council for signing at the Full Council Meeting 07.03.23.

**162 Agenda item 12 – To note that confirmation of the Precept had been sent to Arun District Council 20.12.22.**

It was noted that confirmation of the precept had been sent to ADC 20.12.22 and no queries had been raised.

**163 Agenda item 13 – Auditors.**

The interim Internal Audit 2022-2023 report recommendations had all been actioned. There were only 3, details of how to access the finance system had been provided to the Chair, an investment strategy proposal was included on this agenda and the final audit report from Moore for 2021/2022 had been received and the conclusion of audit published on the website. The councils' finances are now all up to date. The final audit date for 2022/2023 has been booked for 2 May 2023.

**164 Agenda item 14 – Finance Investment Strategy**

It was noted that it is a recommendation from the Auditor that the parish council considers adopting a Finance Investment Strategy as it is a statutory requirement for all councils that have over £100k in surplus funds. The parish council is in this position, due to an agreement that funds are being earmarked for the redevelopment of the Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre. It is acknowledged that there is limited opportunities for parish councils to invest public money and assurances must be undertaken that any investments are made responsibly and ethically. Any investments must benefit the parish based on possible enhanced returns. The draft Investment Strategy provided by the Clerk was recommended to be approved by the Full Council and paragraph 5.3 will stipulate that “The council has decided that investments are limited for parish councils and are happy with the current arrangements of the funds staying in the Business Premium Account.” Proposed Cllr Warden, seconded Cllr Trabucco. Cllrs Trabucco and Flitter will research investment options including Treasury Bonds in more detail and report back at the next finance committee meeting.

The parish council still has a Public Works Loan (PWL) in place. The Clerk was asked to look into whether this could be paid off early in full to discharge the debt, and if so to recommend to the Full Council that this is actioned.

**165 Agenda item 15 – Grant requests**

- a) 4 Sights Vision Support – grant request towards supporting their work £250 – request received 01.12.22 – grant recommended. Proposed Cllr Trabucco, seconded Cllr Flitter and approved by all councillors in attendance.
- b) West Sussex Mind – donation request towards supporting their work £500 – request received 01.02.23 - grant recommended. Proposed Cllr Flitter, seconded Cllr Warden and approved by all councillors in attendance.

Clerk to put on Full Council Agenda 07.03.23.

**166 Agenda item 16 – SDNPA CIL Funding**

An email was circulated 06.02.23 regarding projects on the SDNPA Infrastructure Business Plan. The list of projects was discussed, and it was noted that most of them are outside the boundaries of the National Park. The Clerk was asked to contact SDNPA and ask them to clarify if the whole of Aldingbourne Parish in regards to projects was being included in this listing. If it is limited to the small part of Aldingbourne that lies within its boundaries, then the list of projects for CIL funding would have to be re-visited. It was noted that the current round of funding deadline is 03.03.23 but the parish were not in a position to apply.

**167 Agenda item 17 – Section S137 funding 2023/2024**

It was noted that Section S137 funding of the Local Government Act 1972 for 2023/2024 has been set as £9.93 per resident (2022/2023 figure £8.82). The Clerk advised that once the council adopted the General Power of Competence following the upcoming May elections then the parish council would have more Powers to use this funding for other opportunities outside its current remit.

**168 Agenda item 18 – To review the Risk Management Assessment Register for 2022/2023**

It was noted that there were no longer any outstanding action items and the Risk Management Register had been amended to reflect this. The risk management assessment register for 2022/2023 was reviewed and approved. Proposed Cllr Warden, seconded Cllr Trabucco and signed by Cllr Warden.

**169 Agenda item 19 – To review the Asset Register for 2022/2023**

The Clerk advised that Cllr Harbord had undertaken a location audit of all the items on the asset register and there were outstanding queries on ownership of several items. It was agreed that all items within the Playground at the ACSC had been adopted by the parish council when it took over responsibility and should be listed on the asset register. Items identified within the ACSC grounds had not been purchased by the parish council and were therefore the responsibility of the ACSC and should be removed on register. The Asset Register for 2022/2023 was therefore finalized and the insurance company would be advised upon renewal in June 2023 of any amendments that were required.

**170 Agenda item 20 – To review Service Level Agreements for 2023/2024**

As previously agreed, the Service Level Agreements are being reviewed individually as and when they come up for renewal to ensure best value for money. The Clerk confirmed that specifically the costings of the IT Support had been negotiated and reduced by 50% in October 2022. Following discussions with the Clerks Forum on several SLA topics it was noted that the current IT providers were used by many parishes, were cost effective, helpful and professional. The website hosting also had the same number of parishes which allowed for the future change in the required website platform to be charged to all parishes rather than incurring substantial individual costs.

It was recommended that no changes should be made to the current listing and that the following should be actioned:-

- Meeting to be held with Fandango to discuss and explore current and other social media options.
- Meeting to be held with Processmatters2 on website development.
- Meeting to be held with JNR Computers regarding future technology requirements.
- The current DPO arrangements should be kept protecting the parish for any future FOI requests and any inadvertent cyber security or data breaches.
- The cost of the grass cutting/litter picking contract for the children's playground at the ACSC should be reimbursed from the Westergate Recreation Ground Fund from April 2023 as per the Charity Commission guidelines.

**171 Agenda item 21 – NS&I Accounts**

The Clerk updated the finance committee on the accounts listed below:-

Sportsfield Capitalisation Account – Balance at 01.01.23 - £7,378.79. The Clerk advised that the money for this had been taken from the Westergate Recreation Ground Fund without the knowledge of the Charity Commission and invested in a NS&I Account.

Cannon Jolly Fund – Balance at 01.01.23 - £244.45. This was invested for the purposes of the upkeep and maintenance of the Tote Copse Ancient Monument in Aldingbourne which was bequeathed to the parish by Cannon Jolly.

The accounts have been in place since 2001 and were not set up with the possibility of either online access or for the accounts to be discussed by phone, despite an authority mandate having been recently provided with a list of members able to discuss the accounts. Therefore, any instructions are only actioned by post. The interest rate is negligible, and the Clerk recommended that these accounts be closed and funds transferred to the parish council. The Sportsfield Capitalisation amount can be transferred back to the Westergate Recreation Ground Fund Accounts, and an earmarked account set up specifically for the Cannon Jolly Fund.

This recommendation to the Full Council of closing the accounts was agreed by all councillors in attendance. Proposed Cllr Warden, seconded Cllr Flitter.

- 172** **Agenda Item 22 - To note the date of the next Finance Meeting.**  
Tuesday 18 April 2023, 7.00 pm at the Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre

There being no further business for discussion the meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Signed .....(Chair)

Date .....

**PLEASE NOTE THESE MINUTES ARE IN DRAFT AND SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT UNTIL APPROVED  
AT THE NEXT FINANCE MEETING TO BE HELD 18 APRIL 2023**