



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held at Mortimer Methodist Church Hall on Tuesday the 2nd of January 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Cllr. D. Morsley (Chairman), Cllr. G. Bridgman, Cllr. S. Hill, Cllr. A. Noonan, Cllr. A. Marsden, Cllr. A. Richardson.

Officers:

Mrs. L. Hannawin.

Public/Press:

There were no members of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

Part I

23/074 Public Questions (for agenda items only)

None.

23/075 To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. D. Butler.
Cllr. H. Geary did not attend, and no apologies were received.

23/076 To receive any declarations of interest

To receive from Members at this point or at any point during the meeting, in respect of any items included on the agenda, disclosure of any interests in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and gifts and hospitality in line with Government legislation.

None.

23/077 Minutes of Last Meeting

To:

a. Approve and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of the 7th of December 2023.

The minutes were amended to change Cllr. Bridgman to Cllr. Hill at agenda item 23/063. **Resolved** unanimously that these minutes be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

b. Note the additional meeting scheduled for Thursday the 21st of December 2023 was cancelled.

Noted.

23/078 Clerk's Report

To receive a report from the Parish Clerk outlining actions taken following the meeting held on the 7th of December and other updates.

1. West Berkshire Council's (WBC) "Balancing the Council's Budget – Consultation 2024/25".

Responses agreed at the meeting on the 07/12/2023 have been submitted.

2. Pillbox Lease.

The wording of the lease has been finalised and will be signed once a copy has been received.

It was noted that the gate for the pillbox is currently locked. However, under "Permitted Use" the lease states "to provide access and an external viewing area to allow local residents to view the pillbox from the outside". The Clerk will check with Englefield Estate that it is not an issue for the tenant farmer if the gate remains permanently unlocked to allow viewing from the outside.

The report was received.

23/079 Items to be taken into private session

To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded.

Cllr. Morsley proposed that agenda items 23/081 1. Budget 2024/25 be taken in Part II. Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

23/080 Working Party Reports

1. Personnel

Cllr. Morsley confirmed that further to the first unsuccessful round of interviews for the position of Assistant to the Clerk, three further candidates are being interviewed on Wednesday the 3rd of January. If appropriate, the appointment of a suitable candidate will be approved at the Council meeting on the 11th of January.

2. Communications

Cllr. Bridgman confirmed the deadline for copy for the next newsletter is the 21st of January and a reminder will be sent to those providing articles.

3. Mortimer to Burghfield Cycleway and Footpath

Cllr Morsley reported that further to planning permission having been granted, the Working Party are meeting on the 4th of January to establish the next actions. Recommendations will be made to full Council at the meeting on the 11th.

4. The Street Footway

Nothing to report.

23/081 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Budget 2024/25

To receive the draft budget and approve it for presentation to Full Council on the 11th of January 2024.

Minuted at Part II.

23/082 Finance

1. Accounts to the 30th of November 2023

To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Report to the 30th of November and the Balance Sheet as at that date.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

The reports were received and **approved** unanimously.

2. The Public Sector Deposit Fund (TPSDF)

To note the return on investment as at 30th November 2023.

The return of investment was noted as being 5.3% as at 30th of November 2023. As at the 30th of September 2023 it was 5.2%.

23/083 Items for information only

Minor Matters

- Flooding: Cllr. Noonan raised concerns regarding flooding and the lack of maintenance of gullies and ditches. Further to a discussion, it was agreed that flooding due to extreme conditions would be considered by the Emergency Plan Working Party and the ongoing maintenance required to prevent other flooding, would be considered by the Roads, Footpaths and Commons Committee.

23/084 Communications

To identify items for communicating

Changes regarding the position of Assistant to the Clerk.

23/085 Future Agenda Items

To identify future agenda items

1. Emergency Plan: flooding due to extreme flooding.
2. Roads, Footpaths and Commons: ongoing maintenance and flooding prevention.
3. Finance and General Purposes: Reserves policy

23/086 Exclusion of Press and Public

To pass a resolution under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting at Part II, items identified at 23/079 on the agenda due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed by Cllr. Morsley.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Resolved unanimously.

Part II

23/081 Items for Consideration and Resolution

1. Budget 2024/25

To receive the draft budget and approve it for presentation to Full Council on the 11th of January 2024.

The draft budget and updated report were received. As part of the budget discussion, it was agreed that further consideration would be given to the Council's reserve policy at the Finance and General Purposes meeting in June.

Cllr. Morsley proposed the draft budget be approved for presentation to full Council on the 11th of January.

Seconded by Cllr. Bridgman.

Approved unanimously.

The meeting closed at 20:36.

Date of next meeting: 7th of March 2024.