

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

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Alfriston War Memorial Hall

Old School House

The Tye, Alfriston, BN26 5TL

Monday 10th June 2024

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Alfriston Parish Council (APC), held in the Alfriston War Memorial Hall on Monday 10th June 2024 at 7.15pm

Present: Cllr D Monteath-Wilson (Chair), Cllr J Watkins (Vice Chair), Cllr S Daw, Cllr A Harris, Cllr N Parkinson, Cllr J Spring, Cllr S Rabagliati.

In attendance: Mrs Suzanna Dry – Parish Clerk & RFO. No members of the public were present.

37. Chairman's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that, as agreed at the Annual meeting in May, there is no longer a Finance Committee and all finance meetings will now be held as a full council meeting. Finance meetings will be held quarterly, with all members of the council present. The Chair asked Cllrs to bear in mind the reduced hours that the Clerk\ Responsible Finance Officer is contracted for, when raising queries.

38. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

39. Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence.

40. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Daw declared an interest as she is a Churchwarden, a member of the Patient Participation Group and a trustee for Children with Cancer. Cllr Watkins declared an interest in Heartstart and Alfriston Emergency Group. Cllr Harris declared he is a trustee of the Manifold Trust. Cllr Parkison declared an interest in the Dene Car Park & Alfriston Allotments.

41. Finance

41.1 Review overspend lines from end of last financial year.

The Clerk reported that the three main areas of overspend last financial year were:

Allotments (water leak) – measures are now in place to pick up any leaks early, with regular meter readings being taken. Local election (due to more than 10 members of the electorate calling for an election, following the resignation of a councillor) – there is now an amount in earmarked reserves for this, which will be built up over the next few years. Training\subscriptions due to employing a new clerk - now that subscriptions are up to date and training has been undertaken, this cost will decrease going forwards. Other - historically there has never been an amount allocated to this budget line, although there are costs attributed to it each year. This was discussed at the last Finance Committee meeting in January and Cllrs voted to leave this for the current financial year in an effort not to raise the precept any more. Cllrs **AGREED** that, wherever possible, any expenditure should be put against a specific budget line rather than under 'Other'.

Village Clock - on going EDF standing charges. Disconnection of the meter is now imminent, the Clerk will shortly have

a written quote for the disconnection cost to be presented at the next APC meeting. Once disconnected there will be no further costs.

General Reserves

As per the Clerk's report (Appendix A on the Agenda) APC need to find a minimum of £4,000.00 from earmarked reserves and put this into the general reserves, in order to remain compliant with JPAG rules (Joint Panel of Accountability & Governance). Councillors unanimously **AGREED** to move the following amounts from earmarked reserves, into the general reserve: £3,000.00 from the High Street Traffic Plan, £1,263.07 from Playground and £500 from NDP. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary financial transfers. **Action 1.**

41.2 Expenditure against budget Qtr 1 and forecast Qtr 2

Cllrs discussed expected increase in expenditure as per the Clerk's forecast figures ([Appendix A](#)). With the projected increase in costs this financial year resulting in an overspend, it was **AGREED** that any additional spending would be considered very carefully going forwards.

Allotment costs were discussed with the Biffa bins costing £1,700 p.a. in addition to water and grass strimming.

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Rabagliati seconded a motion to cancel any further strimming of the allotments, in order to save costs this financial year. This was **RESOLVED** unanimously. The Clerk was asked to inform the contractor **Action 2.** Also to write to allotment holders to advise they will responsible for clearing the pathway around their plot. **Action 3.**

Cllr Daw proposed and Cllr Harris seconded a motion to terminate the Biffa bin contract when it is due for renewal in March 2025. This was **RESOLVED** unanimously. The Clerk was asked to write to Biffa and give notice. **Action 4.**

Cllr Spring offered to look into bank accounts provided by other banks, which may offer lower bank charges and report back to the Clerk. This was **AGREED.** **Action 5.**

Cllr Parkinson asked if a list of contracts could be prepared, showing all outside suppliers. Cllrs **AGREED** this would be very helpful and the Clerk was asked to start pulling this information together. **Action 6.** The Chair was keen that this additional work does not impact on the Clerks hours. The Clerk confirmed this would be carried out as time allowed, and would mean that other tasks take longer to complete.

41.3 Review of Clerk's Hours

The Clerk gave an update on workload, advising that the increase in hours to 22.5 hrs per week has helped. The Clerk is having to prioritise carrying out statutory duties such as preparing for meetings, research information for meetings, attending and producing minutes, financial requirements of the council i.e. paying invoices, reconciling bank statements, income and expenditure ledger, monthly finance reports, quarterly audits, preparing for annual audit and end of year. These are all statutory duties and any time left after this is used to work through a 'to do list' of what the council would like to do, i.e action points from meetings, replying to correspondence and general enquiries. The result is there is a delay in getting things done, for example some action points from meetings two months ago are still outstanding. Cllrs **AGREED** that the Clerk should signpost residents to District or County Council on matters that APC have no jurisdiction with i.e. potholes, parking, footpaths. Automated e-mail replies and deferring all correspondence to APC meetings were discussed as options as well as cllrs responding directly on portfolio enquiries. It was **AGREED** to monitor the situation and review.

41.4 Review of Risk Register

Cllrs reviewed the updated Risk Register (updated May 2024). The Clerk was asked to look into the requirement for weekly playground checks (under the sub-heading equipment) and see if weekly checks are mandatory. **Action 7.**

42. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th June 2024 in the AWMH at 7.15pm.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 8.44pm.

APPENDIX A

Agreed Budget for 2024/25			FORECAST		
INCOME	2024-25			Est. EOY	
Precept	56,736				
ESCC Grass Cutting	0				
Allotment Rents	800				
Donations	0				
Interest	150				
Pavilion	150				
Benches	0				
Playground Project donations	0				
Queens Green Canopy	0				
Other	0				
Total receipts excl VAT	57,836				
VAT on receipts					
VAT refunds from HMRC					
Total receipts	57,836				
EXPENDITURE					
APC Staff costs	27,500		same	27,500	
Administration	1200		same	1,200	printer,phone,payroll,web
Grass Cutting (excl Willows)	5500		increased costs	5,600	ESCC increase in cost
Allotments	1000		same	1,000	
Pavilion	150		same	150	
Rec & Playground	500		same	500	
Bins	4346		same	4,346	
Tye	500		same	500	
Village Amenity Maint.	1200		same	1,200	
Insurance	1100		increased	1,137	slight increase this yr
Jubilee Clock	550	*	increased	1,170	added in disconnection
S137 Grants	800		same	800	
Courses & Subs	500		increased	850	clerk's & civility pledge
Rent	400		increased	600	increase cost and frequency
Bank Charges	240		same	240	
Audit	750		same	750	
Benches	0		same	0	
Playground project	0		same	0	
Election Expenses	500		same	500	
Chairman's allowance	100		same	100	
Speedwatch	0		same	0	
CIL money	0		same	0	
Other Misc	0	*	increased	1,500	mileage,misc, as per last yr
Earmarked reserves	11,000		same	11,000	
Total payments excl VAT	57,836			60,643	Up £2,807
VAT on payments	0			0	
VAT paid to HMRC	0			0	
Total payments	57,836			60,643	