

DRAFT MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF FIVEHEAD PARISH COUNCIL
Held on Monday 21 December 2020 at 1930 - Virtual meeting online using Zoom

Present:

Mrs K Beacham - Chair (KB); Mrs L Howard (LH); Mr K Male (KM); Mrs P Brett (PB); Mrs N Cameron (NC); Dr B Ferguson (BF); Mrs J Parsons - Clerk/RFO (JP)

Attendees confirmed that they understood remote meeting procedures and etiquette. KB advised that the meeting was being recorded using the Zoom facility and the recording would be deleted after the Minutes were agreed.

4025 Public participation

No members of the public attended.

4026 Apologies for absence

Mr Rob Wynn

4027 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The following Declarations of Interest were made, with no dispensations given:

- i) Relating to matters at Min 4028a – PB, as a member of the Playing Field Committee, would be asked to withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.
- ii) Relating to matters at Min 4028b – LH, as trustee to the Village Hall, would be asked to withdraw from decisions on grant funding as necessary.
- iii) Relating to matters at Min 4028f (i) – PB, as a member of the Save our Crown Community group, would be asked to withdraw from decisions as necessary.

4028 Budget discussions – items for budget/precept/reserves for FY21/22

- a) Playing Field request for grant for FY21/22 - the grant application from the Playing Field Management Committee was discussed. Members were grateful for the financial details provided to assist with decision making and approved the inclusion of the grant award in the FY21/22 budget. **Resolution: to include the award of a grant of £2834.50 in the FY21/22 budget, under S19 LGA 1976, towards maintenance and support for the Playing Field, including a contribution to the play area fence repair.** Proposed NC and seconded KB. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to notify Playing Field Treasurer of grant award approval and request that governance policies are up-to-date, including protocol for tendering, to obtain a minimum of three formal quotes for all maintenance work over c£150. Members would also like to be copied in on future Minutes and grant progress updates.
- b) Village Hall request for grant for FY21/22 – the grant application from the Village Hall Committee was discussed and it was noted that, under normal circumstances, the Council would provide a grant for a specific project. As none was planned due to the ongoing situation, assistance had been requested for the monthly cost of £160 for insurance, which was needed to keep the facility running. **Resolution: to award a grant of £960 from the Parish Council's Covid business support grant, to cover insurance costs for 6 months from April 2021 – September 2021, to help support business recovery, with a view to reviewing the position in September 2021, when further clarity on the charity's financial position would be sought.** Proposed by KM and seconded by NC. Carried unan. **Action:** Clerk to notify Village Hall Treasurer of grant award approval for 6 months from Council's Covid grant and request a further financial update shortly before the Council's September 2021 meeting. A request that governance policies should be up-to-date and regular financial updates be provided to the Council to ensure transparency would also be made. Any further grant funding would be taken from Reserves, so as not to impact the precept for 21/22, as it was noted that SSDC may need to increase the community tax.
- c) Asset Register – Members reviewed the latest version of the Register and the following points were noted:
 - (i) KM would obtain a value for insurance purposes for the Cemetery railings for the next meeting. **Action:** KM to contact Matravers to provide a value for insurance for replacement railings.

- (ii) It was agreed that the insurance cover for the Christmas lights would be down-graded to £300 from £1500, as this was for the value of the lights and electrical work. The electrical work had been completed so the value could be reduced. **Action:** Clerk to update Christmas lights replacement value on Register to £300.
 - (iii) The Commonwealth War Grave should be added to the Register, with the cost of a simple replacement Headstone in Portland Stone. This would need to be ordered from the War Graves Commission should it ever be damaged. Members estimated this to be around £1k, but the Clerk would need to follow this up to verify. **Action:** Clerk to follow up to check the value is accurate for next Register update.
 - (iv) The Council laptop was relatively new and in good working order, so it was agreed that it would be reviewed again next year.
- d) Cemetery spoil and maintenance – Members reviewed the quotes received and plans for the removal of the spoil off-site. It was agreed that, as sufficient funds for this work were held in Reserves, this could be undertaken in the Spring and would not affect next year’s budget. Approval of the quote would be moved forward to the February meeting. **Action:** Clerk to add approval of quote for spoil removal to Feb 2021 agenda. Other points noted:
- (i) Maintenance of Holm Oak – this was only necessary for mature trees if they were likely to cause a danger or touch the War Grave headstone. Otherwise, they should be left alone, as it may have been planted as part of the memorial. Further discussion and quotes would be held later in 2021.
 - (ii) Following the reply from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, a working party, organised by the Chair of the Royal British Legion, would look at gentle cleaning (with water only) and weeding around the War Grave in the Spring.
 - (iii) During the removal of the spoil, it may be necessary to cover and protect the War Grave and for a Member to supervise operations.
- e) Housing Needs Assessment survey – it was agreed that sufficient funds were held in Reserves to cover this project, even without a grant. **Action:** Clerk to add approval of quote and gift voucher of choice for completed surveys to January 2021 agenda.
- f) Other possible projects requiring spend in 21/22 were discussed as follows:
- (i) Provision of a seed fund, should it be needed, had been requested by the Save our Crown Community group to start-up and support them in their bid for The Crown Inn. Around £2.5k was likely to required, towards registering the business with the Financial Conduct Authority and putting together a Business Buyer’s Report to assess the business’ potential. The Save our Crown Community group is working with the Plunkett Foundation to set up as a Community Benefit Society; to be able to do this, a bank account would be needed. Given that setting up of new accounts is especially difficult at present, due to COVID-19 and increased fraud risk, the Group had requested assistance from the Parish Council for a temporary bank account facility, through the Council’s account. PB was asked to leave the room at this point for discussions. It was agreed that Save our Crown should be asked to make a written submission to the Council before the next meeting. KB would contact the Council’s auditor for his comments. Further information would also be needed on what would be required of the Clerk to administer the account. It was noted that protocol would need to be in place, including an update at monthly Council meetings. Members asked that the Group submit their application for their own bank account, as soon as possible, so this would be in the pipeline. **Action:** PB to report back to Save our Crown and provide a written submission, with a briefing on the Councillor’s Guide to Community Businesses, including details of banking facility and protocol needed, for consideration at January 2021 meeting. KB to contact the Council’s auditor for his views, once the written report had been circulated by PB, copying in the auditor.

- (ii) Church wall repairs – it was agreed that some areas now needed urgent attention, such as a bulging area behind the bench and a loose coping stone which could collapse, and repointing along the bottom 2ft of the wall along the roadside. As it is a Grade I listed wall, repairs would need to be done in lime mortar and the Heritage Officer should be involved. **Action:** Clerk to obtain quotes for entire renovation work on both sides, as well as sections of work for the future, so that the Council could start some urgent work and also save for further repairs as it would be costly. It may also be possible to obtain grants from Somerset Community Foundation on an annual basis, but there would be a limit as to how many could be obtained. It was agreed that a further £2k sinking fund should be added to this year's budget, in addition to reserves of £5k. Clerk to contact Heritage Officer to discuss plans before booking appointments with stonemasons in January. Clerk to look into whether CIL monies could be used for Church wall repairs in future.
- (iii) It was agreed that a parish linesman would be considered at a later stage.
- (iv) Budget provision for web hosting, training and support was agreed at £550.
- (v) Newsletter advertising had decreased during 2020 due to economic conditions. PB offered to look at a policy for boosting revenue via website advertising, in conjunction with the newsletter.
- (vi) Legal costs – it was agreed that the Clerk would follow up with the Langford Corner solicitors to find out if any costs would be incurred for the final transfer.
- (vii) A provision of £250 for bat boxes would be added to the budget under fixed assets.

4029 Payments authorised

- i) A Barrett – Heart Internet Ltd – domain name renewal for 2 years - £21.58 (inc VAT) – **Resolution: to approve payment and overspend on website line.** Proposed by KB and seconded by PB.
- ii) Willoway Landscaping Services Ltd – moving bin and erecting noticeboard - £110 (inc VAT). Proposed by LH and seconded by PB.

4030 Matters of Report, Questions and Items for the Next Meeting

- a) Chairman – Members had received a letter from a parishioner who was concerned about the opening up of access near Crossham Lane. It was agreed that the Clerk would respond with an email to explain that there were no plans to apply for anything at this stage. The Council had been looking at safety for its parishioners, as part of its preparation to publicise its parish walks in 2021, and it was noted that traffic had increased significantly on some sections of the walks. It was researching the legal status of local tracks and footpaths within the Parish, around Fivehead, with a view to improving accessibility and safety in future.
- b) Clerk – it was noted that a planning application had come in from Greenshutters which would require a prompt response after the next meeting as the deadline had been extended to 8 January 2021. Members were asked to email comments in advance, for approval at the meeting.

4031 Date of Next Meeting - Monday 4 January 2021 at 1930 via Zoom

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Chairman..... Dated.....