

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2022 IN THE PARISH ROOM, FELIXSTOWE ROAD

PRESENT: Mr L Burrows (Chairman), Mrs J Hall (Committee), Mr M I O'Brien Baker (Committee), Mr M Williamson (ex officio).

Members of the public: Mr D Green, Martlesham Climate Action, and Mr I Read, Martlesham Community Hall Management Committee.

In attendance: Mrs S Robertson (Finance Officer).

1. Apologies: Mr D Boswell (Committee), Mr M Irwin (Committee).

2. Interests

2.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI): Mr O'Brien Baker declared a pecuniary interest in the Martlesham in Bloom grant, item 7.2.

2.2 Local non-pecuniary interests (LNPI): Mr Burrows declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Martlesham in Bloom grant, item 7.2.

3. Actions from last Meeting: Ongoing or completed.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda

There were no issues raised.

4.2 Any issues raised by the public

There were no issues raised.

5. Green Energy Audit

5.1 Report on solar panels by Dave Green CPs circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

Thanks were expressed to Mr Green for his comprehensive report. He was invited to address the meeting. The south facing roof of the Richards/Parish Room is ideal for a photovoltaic (PV) system. Mr Green did stress that it is worth getting the loft insulated first as it will be the cheapest and most cost-effective way of reducing carbon emissions and energy bills along with cavity wall insulation if not already installed.

Mr Green had obtained 3 quotes for solar panels. Two companies had quoted for a large 20kW system but, having done some analysis, Mr Green considered that a smaller half sized system was more likely to pay back quicker in 3-4 years based on the current electricity rate of 58.5p/kWh and had obtained quotes for a 10kW approx. sized system. From a financial point of view, he considers it to be a "no brainer investment".

There was much discussion about the merits of adding a battery to the system. Mr Green advised that there is not such a strong business case to include one. The payback would be much longer as a 15kw battery would cost approx. £10k, so nearly as much as the PV system. It could also take 10 years to become carbon negative because of the way the materials are mined etc. He strongly recommended loft insulation first, then solar panels and adding a battery later if necessary. He acknowledged that there is carbon in the solar panels & it would be 7-8 years to become carbon negative, but the panels are meant to last 25 years or more.

5.2 Loft & cavity wall insulation

Mr Read, Chairman of Martlesham Community Hall Committee, confirmed that there is already 100mm of loft insulation in the Richards/Parish Room roof, but this could be increased to 300mm. The building is 220 sq.m. and he estimated a cost for insulation alone of £1,100. He acknowledged the savings on energy from insulation & solar panels but advised that there is no direct gain to the Hall Committee as the Council pays for the electricity on the building. The Committee might be willing to contribute to insulation, but they would expect the Council to fund the solar panels.

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It was noted that the Council does have CIL funds available and savings on electricity, possibly £4k a year, could lower the budget & therefore precept, to the benefit of parishioners.

Mr Read reported that Mr Embery, who has been involved with running the halls for over 30 years, has confirmed that there is cavity wall insulation. Mr O'Brien Baker also confirmed this. This was noted but Mr Read was asked to confirm whether there was any possibility of adding to the existing insulation.

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10a: That the Parish Council increases the loft insulation in the Richards/Parish Room from 100mm to 300mm, with a budget of £2.5k to be taken from the earmarked Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. **Agreed.**

Clerk/Finance Officer to liaise with Mr Read regarding contractors for quotes.

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10b: That the Parish Council proceeds with the installation of a PV system once the 3 quotes already obtained have been updated and explores the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. **Agreed.**

It was noted that formal permission is needed from the Hall Committee to install a PV system. There was a discussion re the installation of a smart meter & whether it is possible with a 3-phase connection, if that is what the building has. **Finance Officer** to check.

Mr Green agreed to prepare a case for a battery after a new system is installed. **Clerk/Finance Officer** to make the contractor aware that the Council might wish to install a battery at a later date so that this can be taken into account.

Noted that an air source heat pump can be considered once the projects above have progressed.

Messrs Green & Read were thanked for their input and hard work.

It was agreed to bring forward item 6.6 re the Repair Hub so that Mr Green could provide comments.
6.6 Martlesham Repair Hub: insurance, request for an allowance & relocation to the Parish Room?
FOR3 & CPs

1. Approve insurance – 2 quotes were considered.

DECISION F2022/10a: To accept the insurance quote for the Repair Hub for the period 12 November 2022 – 11 November 2023 from Ansvar at a cost of £172.29 + £20 fee. **Agreed.**

The Committee agreed that cover for PR crisis, libel & slander, needs to be retained. Noted that the Martlesham Climate Action budget includes the Repair Hub insurance renewal so the cost will not come from the Repair Hub funds this financial year.

2. Consider request for an allowance for September.

DECISION F2022/10b: That the Parish Council does not award an allowance for the September Repair Hub following MPC's decision to cancel it on the death of the Queen. **Agreed.**

Noted that the Repair Hub had not effectively lost any funds.

3. Any recommendation on relocation of Repair & Advice Hubs to the Parish Room?

There was much discussion on the advantages & disadvantages of relocation of the hubs to the Parish Room from St Michael's. Main advantages are the saving on hire fees and the ease of parking. Main disadvantages are the possible loss of passing trade and the loss of support from the Runway Café providing free coffees. Mr Green reported that some opinions had been gauged at the October Repair Hub but the result was inconclusive.

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10c: That the Parish Room is used by the Repair & Advice Hubs for a trial period of up to 6 months, with ongoing review. **Agreed.**

Mr Green left the meeting.

It was agreed to bring forward item 9.3 re the access to Richards/Parish Room so that Mr Read could provide an update.

9.3 Access to Parish Room & Office for electric wheelchair users

Mr Read reported that the Martlesham Community Hall Management Committee are committed to taking action to make the building more accessible to people with all forms of mobility issues and are investigating options.

No further action for the Parish Council.

Mr Read left the meeting.

6. Financial Matters

6.1 Cheques signed between meetings CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

Mr Williamson left the meeting.

DECISION F2022/10c: To ratify the list of payments made & signed between meetings (report filed in the office together with minutes). **Agreed.**

Mr Williamson returned to the meeting.

6.2 Any pending expenditure transactions

DECISION F2022/10d: To pay all pending expenditure transactions (report filed in the office together with minutes). **Agreed.**

The Chairman and the Finance Officer signed the pending expenditure transaction report.

6.3 May Admin Income & Expenditure Report CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

The report was noted. A report on F&GPC earmarked reserves was also noted.

6.4 Internet banking proposals & draft policy FOR1 & CPs – sample policies emailed in advance of the meeting

The Finance Officer apologised that she had not had time to produce a bespoke draft internet policy & procedure. The two sample policies from other councils were helpful. The Finance Officer explained how she felt a system with Barclays could work. There was a discussion about security, and it was considered that Lloyds Bank offered a more secure system because officers do not have to be signatories. It was noted that Lloyds imposes bank charges whereas Barclays does not.

DECISION F2022/10e: The Finance Officer to investigate setting up an additional current account with Lloyds Bank before the F&GPC makes any recommendations to the full Council. **Agreed.**

6.5 Bank reconciliation verification June & Sept 2022 FOR2

The bank reconciliations were verified by Mrs Hall on 16 October 2022. Mrs Hall was thanked for carrying out this work.

6.6 Martlesham Repair Hub: insurance, request for an allowance & relocation to the Parish Room? Considered after item 5.2 above.

6.7 Suffolk Pension Fund: Annual Employers' Meeting FOR4 Noted.


6.8 Pension Fund triennial valuation – Employer Contribution Rates FOR5 & CPs
New proposed lower contribution rates from 2023 noted.

6.9 Sale of Rialtas to Harris Computer Corporation and Handover of Leadership Email circulated on 12/10/22

No change to how Rialtas operates – noted.

6.10 Pensions Regulator automatic re-enrolment

Noted that the Finance Officer had received a letter from the Pensions Regulator with a re-declaration deadline of 26 June 2023.

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7. Grant Applications

7.1 Review of grant expenditure: report on grant expenditure covering the last 5 years CP circulated via email prior to the meeting. Noted.

7.2 Grant Applications for 2023/24 FOR6 & CPs (summary of grant applications (full copies available on request) & Grant Policy for reference)

Mr O'Brien Baker took no part in this item due to his disclosable pecuniary interest.

The Admin Assistant has been unable to establish whether the recent rumours re the closure of the Saplings nursery are true. Discussion on the applications took place.

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10d: That the Parish Council approves the following grant applications received for 2023/24: Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk) £500.00; Greenways Countryside Project £1,100.00; Martlesham Bowls Club £1,000.00; Martlesham Conservation Group £147.52; Martlesham in Bloom £190.00; Martlesham Heath Aviation Society £400.00. **Total: £3,337.52.** That the grant application from The Saplings Nursery is put on hold until further information is forthcoming. **Agreed.**

DECISION F2022/10f: To suspend Standing Order 3w to complete all business on the agenda. **Agreed.**

8. Administration Budget & Earmarked Reserves

8.1 Setting the Administration Budget: Projected Expenditure to financial year end CPs: table & notes

Noted that the Finance Officer estimates expenditure of £119,735 of the F&GPC's £123,790 budget for this financial year, i.e. approx. 96.7%, so the committee is on target to be within its aim of 5% over/under-spend. No particular concerns raised at this stage.

8.2 Setting the Administration Budget 2023/2024 CPs: table & notes

The Finance Officer reported that she had forgotten to include £120 in anticipation of the next funeral of a 'Senior Royal', as agreed at the October full Council meeting. The Committee was satisfied with the figures as they stood so, with an amendment to include an additional £120, the draft F&GPC budget 2023/24 was noted as **£129,766**. This will be subject to review at the December meeting before recommendation to full Council in January 2023. It was also noted that draft salary figures may alter following the Personnel Working Group meeting.

8.3 Setting F&GPC earmarked reserves 2023/2024 CPs: table & notes

The Finance Officer's reports were noted. It was agreed to carry forward the surplus from the Village Fete to the next financial year rather than setting a new earmarked reserve. The current EMR CIL Reserve of £77,136 was noted; funds must be spent within 5 years of receipt. Draft F&GPC earmarked reserves for 2023/24 are currently shown as £148,073 but will be subject to review in December.

8.4 DETC provisional Earmarked Reserve of £1k for 2023/24

To be discussed by the DETC at its meeting on 14/12/22 – noted.

9. Finance Officer's Report

9.1 Fitness training on Kronji's Piece – renewal of agreement FOR7 & CP

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10e: That the Parish Council renews the agreement with Mr Tester for fitness training on Kronji's Piece including the request for a contribution of £80 towards the maintenance of Kronji's Piece. **Agreed.**

9.2 Civility & Respect Project FOR8 & CPs

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10f: To pass a resolution to sign up to the civility and respect pledge. **Agreed.**

9.3 Access to Parish Room & Office for electric wheelchair users

See after item 6.6 above.

10. Annual Review (circulated by email for reference and attached to the minutes)

10.1 Annual Review Programme CP

Review of policies deferred to the December F&GPC meeting.

10.2 Review of Financial Management

Meeting between PC and F&GPC Chairmen and Finance Officer to be arranged in January 2023.
The Clerk to be invited to join the meeting.

11. Any items for the next agenda

Budgets & precept for 2023/24, policy reviews.

12. Martlesham Newsletters/Website/Facebook

12.1 Contributions/what has this meeting achieved?

Recommendations re reducing the Council's carbon footprint & electricity bills and better insulation for the Richards/Parish Rooms; a draft administration budget for 2023/24; recommendation on grants.

DECISION F2022/10g: The Finance & General Purposes Committee resolves that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw. **Agreed.**

13. Staff Matters

13.1 Staff pay scales for 2022/23

Details expected after 01 November 2022 so no issues to discuss.

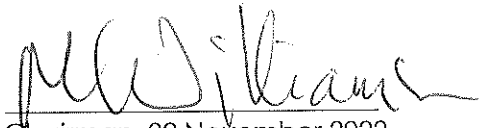
13.2 Pay in lieu of holiday for the Admin Assistant Confidential CP

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10g: To pay the Admin Assistant in lieu of holiday when she leaves her job on 31 December 2022. **Agreed.**

Discussion took place on how to mark the Admin Assistant's retirement.

RECOMMENDATION F2022/10h – please refer to Confidential Report F2022/10.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.07pm.


Chairman, 02 November 2022

