

# BOTTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held in the Poppy Room, Bottisham Community Sports & Social Club  
8pm, Tuesday 23 November 2021

### Present:

Cllr Wilson– Chair. Cllrs Ogborn and Winkcup, the Clerk.

#### 1. Apologies

None

#### 2. Minutes of last meeting (20 April):

Acceptance proposed by Cllr Winkcup and seconded by Cllr Ogborn; approved unanimously

#### 3. Matters arising:

a) **Membership of Finance Committee:** There was discussion about whether further members should be sought but it was agreed this should be reviewed once further members had come onto the Council

b) **Bank Account Signatories:** It was agreed that Cllr Wilson should be added as a signatory on the Council's accounts with Lloyds and Cambridge Building Society and the names of people who are no longer on the Council removed.

**ACTION:** The Clerk

c) **Asset Register:** A copy of the Asset Register will be sent to Cllr Wilson. Cllr Wilson queried whether there was any documentation relating to the Parish Council's ownership of part of the Bowling Green and the Bowling Club's lease from the Council.

**ACTION:** The Clerk will refer the question to Cllr Buchanan

4. **Review of Income & Expenditure for the year to date:** The Clerk presented the income and expenditure summary for the year to date. The largest variations arose from the unplanned requirement to replace some of the streetlights owned by the PC which was more than balanced by the underspend on environmental maintenance arising from staffing and equipment problems experienced by the East Cambs Trading Company earlier in the year. In the context of this item, Cllr Winkcup highlighted the availability of an Accounting system specifically designed for Parish Councils with associated modules for managing allotments and cemeteries. It was concluded that the level of transactions means that this is not a priority for financial records and allotments. However, it will be important to establish a robust system for the new Cemetery.

**ACTION:** Cllr Winkcup will establish from the supplier whether the Cemetery module is available as a freestanding package and what facilities it offers

5. **Forecast to the end of March 2022:** For the remainder of the year the greatest uncertainty arises from environmental maintenance. Now that the leaves have fallen, the Clerk will arrange for an inspection of the trees in the Cemetery by a qualified tree surgeon to check that they are safe. Otherwise, the other main unbudgeted expenditure for the period is the replacement of the streetlight by the garages in Jenyns Close. With all the necessary

caveats, the Clerk suggested that by 31 March 2023, the Council's reserves are likely to stand at around £156,000 as compared with an opening level of £138,000 at 1 April 2021. The high level of reserves is linked to the development of the new Cemetery – any reserves built up now will reduce the amount that has to be borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board.

**ACTION:** The Clerk will arrange for a Tree Surgeon to assess the Cemetery trees

**6. Draft Budget and Precept for 2022-23:** The Clerk presented a draft budget which provides for the current responsibilities of the Parish Council. The draft budget would cover budgeted running costs and generate an element to contribute to planned capital projects (the new cemetery and play area). Investment may also be required in the development of the allotments which will be located in the new development off Bell Road.

Regarding the precept, the Clerk explained that the "Tax Base" (the notional number of Band D properties paying Council Tax) has been restored close to its pre-pandemic level, having been reduced by ECDC last year with the prospect of people becoming unemployed and unable to pay the tax. The impact of this means that maintaining the amount £57.25 which has been levied on Band D properties during 2021-22, would raise a precept of £49,753. Lifting the levy by 27p to £57.52 would raise a precept of £50,000. The Committee concluded that the draft budget and precept should be recommended to the full Council at its December meeting.

**7. Transfer of funds from Bottisham Players:** The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Players for the proposed transfer. It was noted that the funds were intended to be allocated for "drama related activities and entertainment within the local community". Given the limited facilities for dramatic performances within the village, the Committee felt that the wider eligibility for community entertainment was helpful. It was confirmed, that the best route for the transfer of the funds was through BACS.

**ACTION:** Cllr Wilson will discuss the scope of eligible entertainment with the donors

**8. Table Tennis Club Grant:** The Committee confirmed that as the grant was not cashed during the financial year in which it was awarded, it does not roll over into subsequent periods. The Committee suggested that the Club re-submit their application specifying how the money would be spent. Ideally the Club would have its own Bank Account but if this is not achievable, the option of it being paid to the Bottisham Community Sports & Social Club and earmarked for the Table Tennis Club would be acceptable. The alternative would be for the Club members to purchase the items and produce itemised receipts which could be reimbursed up to the amount of the grant.

**9. Request for funding by the B1102 Group:** The Clerk reported that this group does not yet have a constitution and bank account. However, the membership does include a number of Parish Councillors from the villages covered by the Group and its coordination of responses to significant initiatives affecting this area by the Greater Cambridge Partnership is helpful and valued. Until the group is formally constituted, the Committee will recommend to the Council that it agree to reimburse the Group up to an agreed level on production of itemised receipts.

**10. New Cemetery:** Cllr Ogborn reported that the acquisition of the land by the Parish Council had been approved by the Eastern Regional Board of the National Trust and will be considered by the national board in the Spring. The key outcome of the Eastern Regional Board meeting was the suggestion that a long lease to the Council is considered as an alternative to pursuing the compulsory purchase route. This would be simpler as the District

Council would not have to be involved in the process. The Trust's Surveyor is going to obtain valuations for both purchase and leasehold, for which the Parish Council would pay.

Cllr Wilson asked for information about the overall costs of the project. Cllr Ogborn said that this depends largely on whether the supply and delivery of soil to construct the raised platform would be free of charge or whether there would be a cost attached. The platform will require an estimated 1,000 truckloads of soil. He said that this element had no cost in the case of the new cemetery at Littleport because it was sourced through a contractor who had to dispose of soil arising from a road construction project. He will supply estimates produced early on by our consultant which he indicated total around £250,000.

**ACTION:** Cllr Ogborn to circulate cost estimates to the Finance Committee

**11. Date of next meeting:** Monday 24 April at 7pm

Meeting closed at 9.23 pm

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