



Laverstock & Ford Parish Council

Incorporating Milford, Bishopdown Farm, Old Sarum & Longhedge

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Meeting held on Monday 4th September 2023

at River Bourne Community Farm.

MINUTES

Councillors present: Baker (Chair), Maskell, Schneider, Waller

In attendance: Deane (Clerk), Prince (Responsible Financial Officer RFO)

The meeting commenced at 7.01pm.

FGP.23.037 Apologies

There were no apologies.

FGP.23.038 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

FGP.23.039 Approval of Minutes

Resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023

FGP.23.040 Financial Regulations

The RFO reported on a breach of Financial Regulation 6.4 (Authorisation of BACS payments) in August 2023, where by midday on Monday 21st August only one councillor had approved the monthly payments due on Tuesday 22nd. The RFO had been unable to contact other authorising councillors, and in conjunction with the Clerk agreed that the Clerk would make the additional authorisation needed.

The RFO presented a proposed amendment to Financial Regulation 6.4 to read:

6.4. Online payments by BACS or CHAPS shall be created and authorised by the Clerk or RFO and further authorised by two members who are bank signatories. ***Exceptionally if no member is available, the BACS payment can be authorised by the Clerk, the RFO and one councillor, and the departure from this regulation shall be minuted at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the council.*** Councillors confirmed they were happy to recommend this change at the upcoming full council meeting.

A rota for BACS authorisations was discussed, but Cllr Maskell confirmed that he was prepared to commit to authorising payments on the Sunday before the PC meeting, using Scribe to check the supporting documents. The final authorisation will be made by the councillor checking full finances each month.

FGP.23.041 SCRIBE Update

The RFO reported that all accounts were now on Scribe and encouraged councillors to log on. The signing of paper copies by the authorising councillor will continue until a new process is agreed with the Internal Auditor. The RFO continues to back up some reports in Excel to provide more detail, such as reserves, and to investigate additional features of Scribe such as Asset recording.

FGP.23.042 Budget 2024/2025

Performance against budget for 2023/2024 was discussed. The RFO confirmed that the expenditure on salaries budget was likely to be exceeded as expected, following approval of the council joining LGPS and a larger national pay award than expected. Total income is forecast to be over budget due to improved returns on investment.

The RFO will produce a draft budget for 2024/25 for consideration, and highlighted that significant tree work was required following surveys undertaken, resulting in a likely increase in the tree budget for next year.

FGP.23.043 Wiltshire Council Draft Local Plan Consultation

The upcoming public consultation on the Draft Local Plan was discussed. Three proposed 'development sites' in the parish have been included. Cllr Baker asked councillors to consider proposals regarding engaging professional legal advice to help the Parish Council formulate their response to the consultation. After lengthy discussion, not all councillors supported this approach, and the committee agreed this should be presented for consideration at Full Council, without any recommendation from FGP.

FGP.23.044 Officers Report and Correspondence

The RFO reported that invoices for maintenance sums at Longhedge had just been raised for over £400,000.

FGP.23.045 Draft Agenda Full Council Meeting 18th September 2023

The Chair requested that an update on Church Road traffic be added to the Highways section.

FGP.23.046 Exempt Business –Matters in Confidence

Resolved: that in view of the commercial in-confidence nature of the business about to be transacted, the public and press be temporarily excluded from this meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100. The Clerk reported that updated documents had been received by the solicitors and some queries had been raised.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.

NEXT MEETING. The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held on Monday 2nd October 2023 at the River Bourne Community Farm.

SIGNED:

DATE: