

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**Held on 6th Dec 2010 at 8.10 pm in the Bush Room**

Present: - Cllrs. Terry Hunt (Chairman), John Cutland, Brian Lee, Bernard Willcox, Alison Peters, Brian Davis
Bob Phillips (Clerk),

1. Apologies accepted for Absence

None

2. Evacuation Procedure

Evacuation procedures were noted.

3. Public Participation

None

4. Declaration of Interests

None

5. Minutes of meeting held on 1st Nov 2010 and Matters Arising

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st Nov 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5.1. Matters Arising

None

5.2. Outstanding Actions

5.2.1. ***(5/10/09) Clerk to investigate the cost and feasibility of providing a litter bin in the cemetery and report to the Playing Fields Committee. Action to Clerk***

It was agreed to create a small project where the Clerk would prepare some maps of the Parish and an identification list as a pack which volunteer Council members would use to each survey a part of the Parish. This would create a complete survey of the Parish's litter and dog bins, their location, type and condition.

F100510-1 The Clerk to prepare Litter/Dog Bin Survey Packs. Action to Clerk
Ongoing (6/12/10)

5.2.2. ***PC100215-7 The Council to consider erecting a display of all previous John Dyer Award winners in the Jubilee Hall. Action to Council***

To be discussed under item 6. Action Closed

F101101-1 to obtain estimates for an "Honours Board" for past and future John Dyer Award recipients. Action to the Clerk

The Clerk reported that he had been in contact with one supplier but wanted confirmation of the requirement before approaching other suppliers with an estimate request. Was the framed display installed in the Jubilee Hall still considered temporary?

Cllr Brian Lee, who had made and installed the current display, confirmed that it was only temporary. The meeting agreed that the action should continue. (6/12/10)

5.2.3. ***F100906-1 The Clerk to investigate the Scribe 2000 and Alpha Financial Director systems and report back to the F&GP Committee.*** ***Action to Clerk***

The Clerk had tested both applications with the following conclusions:

Feel and Functionality - Of the other two packages, both have a similar feel, use very similar formats but with only two levels of reporting, the Scribe 2000 software has less of a match to our current Accounts structure.

Company - In communicating with both companies by email, phone calls and in the case of RBS, a two hour on-line demo, the professionalism of the people and the processes operated by RBS were far better than Scribe2000.

Set Up - Scribe2000 offer no direct assistance with set up. The help information is good but it would take some time reading and self-training to fully understand the optional set up.

RBS will set up the database against an existing structure and is willing to carry this out at their offices with on-line involvement from the Clerk for £50.00.

Training - Scribe2000 offer no training. Their help information is good but it would take some time reading and self-training.

RBS offer on-line training at £50 for the first hour and £35 per hour after that. It is suggested that the average training takes about 4 hours although probably not all in one session.

Costs -

Scribe 2000 (software and support)	£195.00 per year.
10 year cost	£1950.00
RBS Alpha Financial Director	£295.00 software cost
	£50.00 set up cost
	<u>£155.00</u> training
Total initial cost	£510.00
Upgrades & support	£89.00 per year.
10 year cost	£1400.00

With advantages in long term costs, training and setup as well as the more precise fit with our current accounts structure, the Clerk recommended that the Parish Council purchases the Alpha Financial Director from RBS Software Solutions with set up and training.

Resolved: To purchase the Alpha Financial Director from RBS Software Solutions with set up and training.

Action Closed

5.2.4. ***F100906-2 The Clerk to circulate the current Risk Assessment Schedule for understanding by all members and the item to be discussed at the next PC meeting.*** ***Action to Clerk***
Ongoing (6/12/10)

5.2.5. ***F100906-3 The Clerk to add a debt recovery process in the Financial Regulations and circulate for consideration.*** ***Action to Clerk***
Ongoing (6/12/10)

6. Matters Arising from Committee reports

- 6.1. Planning Committee – none
- 6.2. Footpaths & Allotments Committee – none
- 6.3. Playing Fields & Open Spaces Committee - none

7. Financial Reports

- 7.1. Budget Report & Interim Account

Resolved: The Budget Report and Interim Accounts for Nov 2010 were accepted.

- 7.2. Receipts & Payments

Resolved: The Receipts & Payments statement for Nov 2010 was accepted and signed by the Chairman.

- 7.3. Bank Reconciliation

Resolved: The Bank Reconciliation statement for Nov 2010 was accepted and signed by the Chairman.

- 7.4. Reserve Account

Resolved: The Reserve Account statement for Nov 2010 was accepted.

8. Financial Matters

- 8.1. Budget 2011/12

The Clerk presented a summary Budget Report with explanations as follows:

Current year budget - The budget at the beginning of the year showed that we would expect a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,290. This would be added to our balance that we started the year with (£13,264) to leave a balance in our General Account at 31-Mar-11 of £14,554.

Currently the General Account shows that we could have a surplus at 31-Mar-11 of £3,110. However this is anticipated to end closer to the budgeted figure (£1,290)

Year-end balance (general account) for the past few years has been increasing steadily:

2006/7 - **£9,406**

2007/8 - **£10,232** (+9%)

2008/9 - **£11,492** (+12%)

2009/10 - **£13,264** (+15%)

2010/11 - possibly £14,554 (+10%) or as much as £16,374 (+23%)

Proposed Budget 2011/12 – As in the Government recommendations, the Clerk proposed that the budget for 2011/12 remains the same as 2010/11, the third consecutive year with no increase. However, the Council will need to consider any potential increased costs in the detail of the budget that will need to be incorporated into the static total including:

1. Increased grounds maintenance contract costs due to new playbuilder installation.
2. Increased daily inspection costs, possibly 30 minutes a day extra.
3. Additional improvements to existing play areas. (work currently on hold for playbuilder)
4. Replacement/new litter and dog bins
5. Possible computer/software change. (current laptop 4years old operating MS Office 2003)

The General Account budget decision is based on all expenditure against our annual income and takes no account of any expenditure made from the Reserve Account. However the general account budget does include the annual transfers we make into the Reserve Account.

Resolved: to recommend to Full Council that the Council budget for 2011/12 be the same as 2010/11 and the precept fixed at £47,346.

F101206-1 The Clerk to include in his next Helmet article that the Council has had a static budget for 3 years. **Action to Clerk**

8.2. The Council has been advised of 9% increase in CFS contract for photocopying services..

Noted.

9. Authorisation of Payments & Income Received

9.1. Payments

The following payments were approved and authorised by Cllrs. Brian Lee and Brian Davis.

Payee	Details	Chq. no	£
BT	Telephone Bill to Feb 2011	1804	64.62
South Glos Council	2 x Dog Bins emptying 28/6 - 31/10	1805	164.97
The Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual Subscription	1806	135.00
Signet Signs Ltd	Supply & Deliver 2 x signs, poles and fittings	1807	350.55
CRK Garden Manicures	Grounds maintenance & Cricket Strip	1808	2,675.29
The Information Commissioner	Registration Fee	1809	35.00
	Total expenditure		3,425.43

9.2. Income Received is listed below

Payee	Details	Chq. no	£
Bank of Ireland	Interest to November 5th 2010	dc	-0.04
The Co-operative Bank	Interest to Nov 5th 2010	dc	-6.38
L&J Gulwell	Interment Fee - Bryant Grave Plot 18	inc 1769	-68.00
	Total expenditure		-74.42

10. Policy Documents

None.

11. Playbuilder

Cllr Alison Peters reported that the consultation on Sunday 28th November had been very successful and attended by many members of the public, neighbours, Parish Councillors, District Councillors and a good mix of age groups. Both SG project managers were in attendance as was the designer from Jane's Ponds.

The comments by the visitors at the consultation were circulated to members as was the design. Cllr Alison Peters suggested that there was overwhelming support for the design although some of the comments about the detail would be given some more thought. In view of the comments and previous consultation responses the committee were asked to give their agreement to the design and enable the project to move forward.

Cllr Brian Davis expressed his concern about the use of timber play equipment as he remembered an action over 8 years ago where the Council had to remove timber play equipment at a cost of £25k following fears expressed about vandal damage creating very real danger for children using the equipment.

In response, Cllr Alison Peters suggested that the design and type of timber used had developed in recent years and that many “natural” play areas all over the country were now constructed of timber. All installations would be thoroughly tested before hand-over and all will comply with current Health and Safety requirements.

Cllr Bernard Willcox commented that whilst generally supporting the design and proposals, he had some concerns over the durability of the equipment, what were the life-expectancies, would the Parish Council be looking at replacement expenditure in the not too distant future. Can we have some idea of the expected life of each piece of equipment? Cllr Willcox also expressed some concern about the “grass” path. He thought that without some support structure a path would quickly become a muddy track.

The meeting voted on its agreement to the presented design.

Resolved: The Parish Council agrees the proposal for the Jubilee Field Playspace with the following provisos:

- That the Council is given assurance that all materials used will have a reasonable life expectancy.
- That the design is extended to include options for the Council to additionally spend some of its own funds.
- That the design is extended to include additional elements that may be added in the future.

12. Correspondence

None

13. Any other business

13.1. Renewal of SLCC membership

The Clerk reported that the SLCC membership renewal subscription for 2011 was the same as for the previous year, £135.00. The Clerk had used SLCC several times in the past year to advise on a variety of matters and because of the recent difficulties with support from ALCA, recommended that the subscription be renewed.

Resolved: The F&GP Committee agree for the membership of SLCC to be renewed at a cost of £135.00.

13.2. The Parish Council and St Helen’s School – in the light of recent emails, what relationship should the Parish Council have with the school?

The Clerk asked that the Council discuss the relationship they wanted with St Helen’s School as he was unsure how to deal with the invitation sent by the headmaster for councillors to attend the school Christmas productions. The chairman of the school governors had also requested that the Council builds a stronger relationship with the school. The Clerk had assumed this would not be a contentious issue and had extended the invitation and comments to members via email. It was clear from comments made in reply to the email that not all councillors agreed with the need for a closer relationship being built.

Cllr Alison Peters suggested that accepting or not accepting the invitation was a personal matter and should be the prerogative of individual councillors. This view was generally agreed by the committee.

Cllr John Cutland asked that the matter of the Parish Council's relationship with St Helen's School should be discussed at the next Full Council meeting. This view was accepted.

Resolved: That the relationship between the Council and St Helen's School be discussed at the meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Dec 20th.

13.3. Additional grant request from Litter Pickers (Shirley Whyte) for £120.00 (email.)

Following Litter Buster's help to the Council with the loan of equipment for the A38 Lay-by clean-up and being made aware of the possible support the Council could give, the Council had been asked to consider giving financial support for the purchase of equipment for junior "litter-pickers."

Shirley Whyte had requested approximately £120 to purchase "child-size" equipment.

Cllr Terry Hunt agreed that the Council should be anxious to help this initiative as it was a perfect example of a small number of people in the community volunteering effort for the benefit of the whole community. The decision should be deferred until the next meeting to allow the Clerk to clarify the requirement.

F101206-2 The Clerk to discuss with Shirley Whyte the exact need for "junior" litter buster equipment and report to the next meeting. ***Action to Clerk***

13.4. Alveston Trust

Cllr John Cutland explained that he had been a little troubled by the description of the Alveston Trust (formerly Alveston Charities) given at a recent Community Forum meeting. He asked if the Council had a copy of the Trusts terms of reference.

Cllr Bernard Willcox, the Council's representative on the Trust felt that although the report was not perhaps how some would have described the work of the trust, the explanation given at the CF meeting was not misleading. Primarily the Trust, formed from a number of legacies, is in place to help the poor of the Parish. The members of the Trust were now working to make the trust more transparent and fair. Cllr Willcox was concerned that only income from interest earned and not capital should be used for donations.

The Clerk confirmed that, apart from a representative Council member on the Trust, the Parish Council had no connection with the operation of the Trust.

The meeting was closed at 9.30 pm.