

FRAMFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE Minutes of the FGP Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 14 November 2018, at 6.30 pm at the Village Hall, Blackboys.

Present: Councillors Keith Brandon (Chairman), Peter Friend, Danny Gallagher, Noel Mansley, Maria Naylor and Sam Sharples.
In attendance: Ann Newton (Parish Clerk). Marie Owen (RFO).
Public: None.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting members of the public, if present, are invited to address the Parish Council at the Chairman's discretion for five minutes.

All recommendations detailed in the minutes are for ratification at the next full Council meeting on 27 November 2018.

Marie Owen was welcomed to the Parish Council as Responsible Finance/Section 151 Officer.

1. Apologies

There were none.

2. Declarations of Interest, personal, prejudicial or pecuniary.

Councillors to give notice of declarations of personal, prejudicial and pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda. There were none.

3. To accept the Minutes of the last meeting (26 February 2018)

It was resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2018, having been circulated, as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chairman as proposed by Maria Naylor and seconded by Peter Friend.

4. Matters arising

Matters arising from the last minutes which are not detailed elsewhere on the agenda. The Clerk ran through the items, which had not been formally listed on the agenda.

- General Data Protection Regulation – the Chairman confirmed that parish councils were no longer required to have a Data Protection Officer. The Parish Council is also now fully compliant with a negligible annual cost.
- Grounds maintenance contract – the Clerk confirmed that the contract has been extended by two years to a total of five years. The Clerk raised a concern that it appeared that the hedges were being cut at night!
- Subscriptions – charges for the use of facilities at Trust premises had all been agreed including a donation towards the fee for the use of the Memorial Hall by The Stagers in 2019.
- Review of the hire agreement for the use of the Memorial Hall by the School. The Clerk asked for Council agreement to Dawson Hart Solicitors acting for the Council on the matter of the licence to occupy devised by ESCC. They have offered a fixed price of £500-£600 + VAT. The meeting confirmed that the Clerk should agree to this adding that they believed it to be a shame and waste of charity funds but nonetheless necessary to ensure that the legal document was right for the Trust.
- Asset Register – to be taken forward next year.
- Emergency Plan – to be taken forward next year – comment was made that Selina Allen had taken this on, but perhaps someone else could pick this up next year.

5. Items for Discussion.

General Administration

- GDPR – Policies – to be discussed at the next FGP meeting.
- Social Media forum – the Chairman asked Councillors if they would be happy for him to set up a Facebook page in the Parish Council's name. This was agreed for a six-

month trial period in the light of the fact that most parish councils seemed to have one.

- Donations/Grants Policy – the Chairman agreed to draft a policy and circulate prior to the next meeting. This could help formalise the existing rather 'loose' set up.
- Future Projects – the meeting agreed that the Council should have something such as a short, medium and long term strategy for projects/programmes of work and budget for them accordingly. The new basketball facilities on Framfield recreation ground are likely to need at least £1,500 out of a budget.
- Town and Parish Council Allowances (paper circulated) – all agreed that they should not accept the allowances as proposed by Keith Brandon, and seconded by Sam Sharples.

Finance

- Discussion on the new way of working/revised budgetary spreadsheets. Comments from informal meeting with Internal Auditor – his report had been circulated with the agenda. Noel Mansley commented that he would prefer the expenditure used from reserves detailed on the main spreadsheet although following discussion the meeting agreed that the sheets should be kept separate. Other than that, they were happy with the revised layout.
- Invoice/payment and electronic authorisation payment trail – for review/discussion and recommendation to full Council. The Clerk and RFO explained how the payment trail would work and it was particularly helpful that they now had access to online banking again. Each electronic transaction would be approved by a councillor with online access (namely Keith Brandon or Maria Naylor). As usual, all invoices and BACS sheets would continue to be signed off before being put in the invoice file. The monthly expenditure sheet would also be signed off and kept by the RFO. Councillors were happy with the procedure detailed.
- Use of the bank debit card for purchases – for discussion and resolution to full Council. The meeting agreed that the debit card should be used for future purchases as proposed by Keith Brandon and seconded by Maria Naylor.
- Generic invoice for discussion – terms of payment (30 days) – a copy was circulated at the meeting and agreed. RFO to add her title.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Clerk explained the details of the payment and that it had come from the development at Blackboys Service Station. It would be included in Reserves and can be used on any infrastructure within the Parish.
- Draft Budget for discussion – all Councillors were in receipt of a report with recommendations and accompanying schedule on spend versus budget etc. (A copy of the recent SSALC report on Parish/Town precepts had also been circulated showing that Framfield has one of the lowest base rates for Council Tax purposes and since 2013/14 are one of only four parishes in East Sussex with the smallest 'increases' over that period with Framfield at -3.7%).

Following discussion the Council agreed to set the budget at £61,670. This would mean increasing the precept by 20% in order to balance the budget – an increase of £11.06 per annum to a Band D taxpayer. (The Council Tax Support Grant will be £222.00 for the 2019/20 year). The extra funds are required to cover the cost of increasing the cuts within the grounds maintenance contract, funding the 262 Saturday bus service, funding four extra urban grass cuts by ESCC, covering the extra costs of new office equipment in order to comply with the GDPR updates, projects such as the centenary trees, replacement swing seats and goal posts, replacement and adoption of nine finger posts – all of which had to be funded by reserves. A potential election also had to be budgeted for in 2019. The figure was proposed for recommendation to full Council by Keith Brandon, seconded by Sam Sharples and agreed by all present. The Clerk would put together an article for the Parish Magazine.

- Review of Reserves – all Councillors were in receipt of a report detailing recommended revisions to the Reserves list. This they subsequently recommended for agreement by full Council – and as detailed below.

General Reserves	22,360.0
<u>Earmarked Reserves</u>	
Recreation Ground/Play equipment	5,828.75
Framfield Play Area Fencing	2,000.00
Repair replace guideposts	2,000.00
Professional fee contingency	5,000.00

Centenary Trees	1,000.00
CIL	9,894.00
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	£48,083
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- Cross-checking of payments. The meeting carried out four separate cross-checks and found them all to be verified. (This was actually carried out at the end of agenda and Danny Gallagher and Noel Mansley had left the meeting at that time).

Proposed future works

- Review of the Financial Regulations – to be carried out by the RFO/Clerk.
- Review of the Standing Orders – to be carried out by the RFO/Clerk.

Consideration of exempt information and exclusion of the public. To give consideration under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100 (A) (4) to the public being excluded from the meeting for the following item ('Staffing') of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. This was agreed (KB/SS).

Staffing

- General staffing matters.
 - Implications from recent reports on staffing – programme for legionella testing etc. Keith Brandon detailed the amount of specialist work required to comply with the relevant legislation with regard to legionella testing etc. Rob Newton was happy to set up the programme of works and carry this out on voluntary basis for the present time. However, long term, with the ever-increasing amount of works required to the various Parish assets, Keith believed that a part time grounds manager will be required to oversee the works. The meeting agreed that a re-structure would be necessary and that they would look at it next year.
- Salary review – Clerk. (*The Clerk left the room for the duration of the discussion*). A recommendation paper had been drafted by the Chairman and the recommendations within it agreed by the Committee and recommended to go forward to full Council as such.
- Contract of employment – RFO. All were in agreement with the document which would be passed to Marie Owen in due course.

6. Items for referral by Councillors to the next appropriate Committee or Full Council agenda.

There was none other than detailed in the minutes.

7. Next Committee Meeting

To be arranged.

The meeting was closed at 9 pm.

Chairman..... Date