Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Parish Councillors
I D Wardrop (Chairman)
M Mickelsen (Vice Chair)
H M Bass
P J Bates
P D Layley
S Morgan
C Nappo
J Williams

Winner Best Kept Village 2009, 2015
3rd Place Essex Village of the Year 2015
www.wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org

Parish Clerk
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Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held on Friday 27th October 2023 at 12.30pm in the Village Hall Boardroom

Item	Subject
23F/001	**Those Present and Apologies for Absence** In the Chair: Cllr Mickelsen. Present: Cllrs Wardrop, Williams and the Clerk. There were no members of the public present.
23F/002	**Declaration of Interests and Compliance with the Ethical Framework** There were none.
23F/003	**Public Forum** There were no members of the public in attendance.
23F/004	**Process and Controls Review** To review the internal controls and 2022-23 audit report Cllr Nappo had recently completed a scrutiny of the accounts and would continue to do so periodically. The 2022-23 report from the internal auditor was noted as satisfactory and there were no recommendations. To consider a change in internal auditor and agree a recommendation for approval by Full Council **Resolved:** The same internal auditor had been used for the past 4 years and for reasons of transparency members recommended that Heelis & Lodge be used for the 2024 audit at a cost of £220 (for expenditure over £25k. £170 for up to £25k).
23F/005	**Asset Register and Risk Management Policy Review** To review the Asset Register to financial year ending 31 March 2024 Zurich Insurance advised that items on the Asset Register should be index linked and recommended a 10% increase on last year. They also confirmed that the Platinum Footpath need not be included on the Asset Register as our Public Liability would automatically cover this. However, WBPC should be regularly risk assessing the path, carrying out regular written inspections and carrying out maintenance when inspections identified a need for it. **Resolved:** The revised Asset Register document to be presented for approval at the November Parish Council Meeting. To review the Risk Assessment & Management Policy for approval by Full Council An amendment to include ownership of the bus shelter would be made. **Resolved:** A recommendation for approval would be sought at the November PC Meeting.
23F/006	**Current Year Budget Performance and Project Review** To review planned and actual spending in 2023-24 and projected end of year balance Actuals and Estimated Year End figures to 31st March 2024 prepared by the Clerk were noted. Estimated total expenditure was likely to be £25,676 meaning a year-end carry forward figure of £16,906. It was acknowledged that exceeding £25k expenditure would mean an external audit (at a cost of £340).

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Members acknowledged that it would be preferable if expenditure could be kept below £25k, thus removing the need for (and the cost of) an external audit. However, this may not be possible. **Resolved:** The Clerk and members to monitor expenditure from now until year end and review the need to adjust certain payment timings accordingly to achieve the most prudent result.

Essex Pension Fund had not yet invoiced £1806 for the actuary report, nor been in touch re the £5k liability.

Members noted that formal agreement had yet to be reached on the National Salary Award and new pay scales for 23/24 which when agreed would be backdated to 1st April 2023.

Budget item 15: Printing & Postage **Action:** In order to streamline the process and save paper and time, the Clerk was asked to enquire as to whether the Parish Magazine could include the Annual Report as part of the magazine in future, and the cost of doing so.

Budget item 17: Venue Hire Members considered the possibility of using the Church Hall for Planning and Finance Committee Meetings in future, thereby spreading the support to two organisations. **Action:** The Clerk to ask the Church Hall about current rates.

Budget item 28: Bench maintenance Following an inspection, the Clerk had been unable to find someone to carry out the minor maintenance required. **Action:** Contact to be made with two known village handymen.

23F/007 **Budget and Precept 2024-2025**

To consider setting aside sums for future projects including: additional dog waste bin Rainbow Field, notice board at bus shelter and possible biodiversity projects **Recommendations:**

- No further action to be taken regarding the dog waste bin - BHSA were considering it.
- A notice board at the bus shelter was not felt necessary at this time.
- An amount would be set aside in the budget for Biodiversity/Climate Change projects.

To develop the budget and precept proposals for approval by the Full Council Members were keen to keep any increase in the Precept to a minimum. The following amounts would be set aside using the Parish Council's reserves.

General Reserves		£10,000
Earmarked Reserves	Election Expenses	£2,000
	Planning Appeal Representation	£1,000
	Illustrated Village Map	£2,000
	TOTAL	**£15,000**

Action: The updated Precept and Budget Proposal document to be presented to the Full Parish Council on Tuesday 7th November.

23F/008 **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 7th November 2023 Full Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm, Village Hall Boardroom
Tuesday 5th December 2023 Full Parish Council Meeting, 7.30pm, Village Hall Boardroom

23F/009 **Close of Meeting** There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.55pm.