



## DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

Ditchling Village Hall 18 Lewes Road Ditchling East Sussex BN6 8TT  
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 Parish Clerk: Sarah Mamoany Deputy Clerk: Derek Blackhall

### Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held in the Parish Office, Ditchling Village Hall, Lewes Road, on Monday 14 October 2019 at 6.00pm

Present: Cllr Orme (Chairman), Cllr Smith, Cllr Madden, Cllr Farrands, the Clerk Mrs Sarah Mamoany and the Deputy Clerk, Mr Derek Blackhall

Public Participation:

No members of the public were present

1.	Apologies were received from Cllr McBeth	
2.	Declarations of Interest – no declarations of interest were made.	
3.	Minutes of the Finance meeting held on the 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019 were <b>agreed</b> by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.	
4.	<p>Interim Internal Audit Report and Recommendations</p> <p>The Clerk had circulated the interim internal audit report, which was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and it was reported that five points were noted for consideration by the Council as follows:</p> <p>Financial Regulations, Governance and Payments –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting documents should be posted with agendas on the website.</li> <li>2. Recommendation that draft minutes clearly marked as such should be published within a month of the meeting, in particular for those Committees that meet less regularly.</li> <li>3. Recommendation that all bank accounts should be reconciled at least quarterly</li> <li>4. Recommendation that salary amounts are double checked by Deputy Clerk to ensure they are correct before being processed.</li> </ol> <p>Risk Management and Insurance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Recommendation that level of employee dishonesty cover is reviewed by the Council as it may not be sufficient to cover the amounts held at some points during the year.</li> </ol> <p>The above recommendations were discussed in detail and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk will action as required.</p>	Clerk/Deputy Clerk
5.	<p>Consideration of funding major projects in 2020/21</p> <p>The Clerk advised that if the Council wish to take out a Public Works Loan in 2020/21 then they need to show in the budget the repayments of the loan, a three year business plan will also need to be provided and confirmation that residents have been consulted on the loan as well prior to the application being submitted.</p> <p>It was noted the Council had several large projects and these are listed below, with an estimated budget costing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Car Park Project £100K</li> <li>2. Playground Project £80K</li> <li>3. Burial Ground Extension Project £15K</li> <li>4. Traffic Consultancy Project £5K</li> </ol> <p>In total the capital expenditure for the 4 projects would be in the region of £200K. It was noted that the Council had Earmarked Reserves for capital projects as follows:</p> <p>Car Park £27,760          Burial Ground Extension £6,087</p>	

	<p>CIL from SDNP &amp; LDC £16,269 Playground Project £9,470 This amounted to £59,586 however, the cost to discharge the planning conditions for the car park will probably be in the region of £10-£15K. The Clerk advised that it is possible for further CIL money to become available during this financial year.</p> <p>Following the CIL bid to LDC for the Car Park Project being declined, the Council needs to consider its next steps on the financing of this project. For example, as LDC advised they felt the SDNP should be assisting, do the Council apply to the SDNP and then again to LDC to fund the project. The other option is to take out a loan to complete the project.</p> <p>The Clerk was not certain if a PWL could be taken out for several projects or if it had to be one individual project and would clarify this for the next meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk had prepared a report showing the costs for a PWL to the Council for £100K and £125K over periods of 10 and 20 years. In addition the guidelines for taking out a Public Works Loan.</p>	Clerk
6.	<p>Consideration of precept and budget for 2020/21 The Clerk circulated the first draft budget, together with a set of notes explaining any increases/decreases to the figures.</p> <p>It was noted due to the deficit in last years budget, the Council could have a deficit figure of £6,521 in the current financial year as explained at the last Finance meeting and this will have to come from general reserves. The issue from this financial years budget, has made it problematical to provide a budget for this financial year that does not show a large percentage increase.</p> <p>The Committee went through the budget headings line by line and the following were noted:</p> <p>Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIL – the Clerk advised the auditor recommended that CIL income was not put in the budget due to it being unpredictable income, which is used for infrastructure projects, not day to day running costs. The Committee agreed they wished to put a figure of £3K as last years budget</li> <li>• Rents – 5% added although fees not yet agreed by Council for 2020/21</li> <li>• Burials – no increase as cannot be certain of income in this area, although noted additional income of £2,308 received in this financial year which will cover the costs of mapping the burial ground. Fees will be increased from 2020.</li> </ul> <p>Expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff salaries – increased by 2% The Clerk noted this should be increased further if overtime was required or staff salary increases expected. The Committee retained the 2% increase</li> <li>• Pension – this was split out from the salary heading as advised by auditor</li> <li>• Subscriptions &amp; Memberships – increased by £700 as currently over budget by £282 and the Deputy Clerk requested if the Council would also pay his SLCC membership fees, which the Council currently pay for the Clerk</li> <li>• Telephone/Broadband – broken down to heading line as not previously shown as separate item</li> <li>• Website – decreased from £800 - £550 The Clerk noted the Council should consider a new website in the future</li> <li>• Grants – reduced by £2K</li> <li>• Rent – increased by 5% however a rent review is due in January 2020 so could be possible higher percentage increase</li> <li>• Meetings – decreased by £100 as less meetings being held</li> <li>• Operation costs – decreased by £250 in relation to telephone/broadband being split out</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loan repayment – following discussions this was added in at £8,500 which would cover a PWL over 25 years for £150,000</li> <li>• NP Projects – no budget for this financial year</li> <li>• Dog Bins – reduced by £700 Note that we are using more dog poo bags in the Recreation Ground, article has been put in next Parish Magazine</li> <li>• Grounds Maintenance – increased by 2%</li> <li>• Burial Ground Supplies – cost of the bin at the burial ground has been added to this budget line as should be shown as a cost to this area</li> <li>• Lighting Repairs – increased by £1K as repairs very expensive</li> </ul> <p>If these figures were adopted, the 2020/21 precept would be £98,105, which the Committee felt would not be an acceptable increase on the previous year's figure of £85,978. The Committee therefore requested that the Clerk/Deputy Clerk reviewed the figures again for a further meeting to try and reduce the increase. The Committee would like to present a first draft budget at the November Parish Council meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk was requested to look into the cost of upgrading the speed of the laptop and upgrading email service as it was generally agreed the Fasthost system was not very reliable.</p> <p>The Clerk was requested to check this year's lighting contract invoice and the period it covered.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Asset Register</b></p> <p>The Clerk had been working on updating the asset register with advice from the auditor. Fixed assets noted at the 31.03.19 were £424,604.14. However, due to the asset register showing the Scout Hut building at the insurance value cost and not the cost to the Council, which is understood was gifted, the asset register now shows a figure of £65,106 which will have to be explained to the external auditors due to such a large decrease. The asset register will need to be signed off by the full Council before the end of the current financial year, the Clerk is currently working on completing it in full.</p>	Clerk
8.	Next meeting – 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 6pm	

The meeting closed at 7.45pm