

Minutes of the Fremington Parish Council Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Thursday 29th September 2022 at 9.30am in the Beechfield Centre, Beechfield Road, Fremington

Present: Cllrs, F Biederman (Chairman), S Haywood, S Kingdom and A Rennles
Mrs V Woodhouse, Executive Officer

2209/13 **Apologies**
L Goodger.

2209/14 **Declarations of Interest**
None

2209/15 **Public Participation**
None

2209/16 **Minutes**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary and one abstention, that the minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on the 28th July 2022 be approved.

2209/17 **Staff Salaries**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the staff salaries, expenses, PAYE/NI and pension payments for the months of August & September 2022.

2209/18 **Accounts Due for Payment and Receipts for the period from the 25th July 2022 until 26th September 2022**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the payments for the period 26th June 2022 to the 25th July 2022 totalling £38,532.31 and receipts for the period 25th July 2022 to 26th September 2022 totalling £11,736.71 copies of which are attached as Appendix One.

2209/19 **Risk Assessments**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to note that the Risk Assessments 2022-2023 had been reviewed.

2209/20 **Parish Council's Insurance**
Members were informed that due to the climate a three-year policy was not available upon renewal in 2021. The quotations and recommendation from Gallagher were considered and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to renew the Parish Council's insurance policy with Hiscox on a 3-year long term agreement.

2209/21 **Internal Audit**
Members had requested that an item be brought to the Finance & Personnel Committee to review the Internal Audit report. Members were informed that updating of the website is an Admin function and

has been addressed; the issue with VAT not being claimed correctly is being investigated; a procedural note for the charge cards has been prepared and given to all cardholders, a copy of this is attached to the Agenda for the Committee to note and the fireproof cabinet is on order but there has been a stock issue, it is due for delivery the middle of October.

The report had raised an issue with some deeds not being received, members were informed that the paperwork for the Cemetery extension was with the solicitors because the Council transferred a small area of land, and the solicitors are still awaiting registration of the title with land registry for Riverside. Members noted that HM Land Registry do not provide timescales and the solicitor did put in a request to expedite the registration. It was resolved, with no votes to the contrary, to write to the MP about the delays with land registry which is having a severe negative impact on the Parish Council carrying out its functions and concerns that this could be affecting many other local authorities and businesses.

A query had been raised within the report about whether the Beechfield Centre should be registered with Land Registry, it was noted that the Parish Council's solicitor had advised that the registration is correct and no further action is required, the solicitor has been asked to investigate and register as necessary any of the PC's land which is not already registered, members were informed that the solicitor had agreed to undertake, however, this would be subject to workload and when priorities allow members agreed to wait for NDC's legal team to action when time permits.

Members were informed that a formal agreement with the Burial Superintendent is being progressed sensitively.

The Internal Auditor raised the following item "There is a discretionary agreement whereby some deceased non-parishioners are treated as parishioners if they have historically dwelt in the parish. This should be clarified, be transparent, consistently applied and included in the Terms and Conditions." It was noted that this is defined within the adopted Regulations for Fremington Cemetery under paragraph 2.2 which state: "Residents who live within Fremington Parish qualify for the reduced parishioner rate shown on the schedule of fees compared to non-residents of the parish. A resident is defined as somebody who, immediately prior to their death, was a resident of Fremington Parish, or who lived in the Parish for over ten years and moved out of the area less than one year before their death".

Members felt that the regulation was very clear, however, they felt the length of time someone has moved out of the parish after being a resident for so long should be increased and it was agreed to refer to Full Council to consider.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to note the report and associated information.

2209/22

Budgets

- a) To receive an update on the budgets to-date and begin to consider priorities for 2023-2024 budgets.

Cllr Biederman asked where the Parish Council is with energy budgets, members were informed that Cllr Dixon has submitted some information to the Environment and Community Committee with reference to the Parish Council's energy consumption which his investigation shows is on the increase. Members noted that energy consumption would be on the increase, the Beechfield Centre was open for less than six months when everything closed for Covid, since fully reopening the Centre has regular hirers and is well used with usage increasing each month. The Parish Council's other facilities are also used more than they were. In budgetary terms the Parish Council is currently in contract for its utilities, however, the electricity and gas for the Centre is likely to be over budget but there are savings elsewhere within the budgets and an increase in income from the Centre. Members were given a brief overview of current anticipated income and expenditure and noted that the budgets were looking comfortable overall.

Members started to consider priorities for 2023-2024, Cllr Biederman would like to see some maintenance to the War Memorial and investigate the possibility and cost of higher flag poles.

It was agreed to keep this item on the Agenda until budgets are set.

- b) To consider and agree Ear Marked Reserves for 2022/2023.
Members were informed that there is Approximately £52,983.03 from underspends in 2021/2022 and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to allocate as follows:

EMR	As at 31st March 2022	Add	Comments	Total in EMR from 1st April 2022
Muddlebridge Allotments	£0	£289.31	Underspend to be transferred as agreed	£289.31
Babbages Allotments	£380	£488.48	Underspend to be transferred as agreed	£868.48
Defibrillator	£0	£1,000	Building up reserve towards renewal of lease in 3 years at approximately £3,000	£1,000
Purchase of tablets	£0	£1,500	As agreed by Committee	£1,500
Fireproof Cabinet	£0	£3,000	Purchase	£3,000
Bollard Tews Lane	£0	£5,000	To secure the site	£5,000
Play Area Maintenance (Tews Lane and Beechfield)	£0	£30,000	The Administration and Projects Manager is investigating options to replace the Mult-play unit at Tews Lane and replace some of the older/broken equipment in the Beechfield Play Area and repair the wet pour.	£30,000
Elections	£5,009	£1,000	Elections in May 2023 cost £3,400 at previous election – allows for election, training, and a by-election.	£6,009
Bus Shelters	£7,000	£1,000		£8,000
Beechfield Centre	£5,000	£2,000		£7,000
War Memorial	£3,500	£0.00		£3,500
Griggs Field Maintenance	£4,610	£2,000	Ditches, trees, pathways	£6,610
Fremington Quay Repairs & Renewal	£2,503	£2,000		£4,503
Maple Grove Maintenance	£577.69	£1,000	Hedge Maintenance	£1,577.69
Beechfield Pitch Maintenance	£1,900	£0.00		£1,900
Fremington Quay Hire of Compound	£1,086	£0.00		£1,086
Sinking Fund	£14,164.26	£800	Annual Transfer	£14,964.26
Cemetery Maintenance	£0.00	£2,000	Soil removal	£2,000
Dog Bin Maintenance	£0.00	£500		£500
Total	£41,119.95	£52,577.79		£93,697.74
Minimum Reserve	£50,000	£0.00		£50,000
General Reserves	£7,000	£405.24	Remaining from underspend	£7,405.24
Total	£98,119.95	£52,983.03		£151,102.98

2209/23 It was **resolved** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information.

PART B

2209/24 **Staffing Matters**
It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to ratify the appointment of the Administration Assistant.

Members were informed that the National pay agreement was still being considered but was likely to be accepted and a two-year pay deal. Members felt that due to the cost-of-living crisis members an extraordinary meeting should be called to consider and review salaries.

The meeting closed at 10.30am

Signed..... Dated.....

