



***Minutes of the Limpsfield Parish Council Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday 4th April 2024 at 6PM, St Peter's Parish Office***

*Attending councillors: Mark Wilson (Chair), Thomas Briggs, Bernie de Haldevang, Antony Taylor and John Thompson*

*Clerk / RFO: Sophie Martin*

1. Apologies for absence

Berne de Haldevang hopes to make it but will be late.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes from Last meeting (October 2023 – draft minutes already online)

Approved with addition that we discussed the addition of Antony Taylor as a signatory and the possibility of putting some reserves into an interest-bearing account.

AT outlines interest available with NatWest: no notice - 1.45-2%, 35 day 3.25% 95 day 4.25%.

MW suggests we could look at putting £26K (10K playground decommissioning fund and £16K general reserves) into a 95-day account. MW proposes to recommend for approval. AT seconds. All agreed.

MW to open new savings account at NatWest linked to other accounts.

Antony Taylor to be added as signatory (SM/MW)

4. Note of Internal Audit date and any items for discussion ahead of audit

- The internal audit will be 1<sup>st</sup> May
- With the transition to “.gov.uk” domain, we will not set up emails for Limpsfield.org email addresses and instead convert to “.gov.uk” email addresses.
- High reserves, explanation will be given and allocated. With the earmarked budget allocations – mainly from CIL - we don't have particularly high reserves. Reserves will be explained and discussed at internal audit.
- Clarification of general rules for expenditure approval – to ensure everything is consistent with Financial Regulations / Standing Orders and actual process:
- We updated our Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to be consistent in November 2023.

- Some general rules for expenditure to be reiterated at Full Council meeting on Monday:
  - All expenditure must sit within an approved budget line item or otherwise approved at Full Council as a standalone project.
  - All projects over £500 require a detailed scope/proposal as per our Financial Regulations.
  - Clerk and Chair/Finance Chair can approve items (within an approved budget line item) outside of a council meeting up to £250 if required
  - Only in cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council subject to a limit of £500. This must be reported to the Council ASAP.
  - Footpaths and bridleways general maintenance and upgrade works for the coming year (e.g. repair or like for like replacement of fencing, gates, finger posts, signposts, ditch bridges, stiles etc.) can be agreed in advance as part of an overall footpaths project proposal. NB. Location and type of new kissing gates, mobility gates and substantial aggregate works must be approved at Council and also by the landowner.
  - Works must not take place ahead of quote being agreed at Full Council.
- 5. Review of NALC Practitioner's Guide and changes for 2024 – has been circulated for review
- 6. Q4 / end of year accounts reconciliation for sign off
 

All account statements and cashbook reconciliations agree. Signed by MW and the Clerk.
- 7. Completion of AGAR 3
 

AGAR 3 drafted. Figures all agree. This will be reviewed at the internal audit for the form to be approved at the May LPC Monthly meeting.
- 8. VAT reclaim for Q4
 

The clerk has prepared the reclaim form and we expect to claim £888.36 for Q4 23/24. The majority of which is allocated to CIL.
- 9. Overview of expenditure for FY2023-24

We are in a very good position at the end of the financial year with a healthy level of reserves and cash in the bank.

We have spent 99% of our general expenditure and running costs.

#### Reserves

- The Parish Council maintains a prudent reserve equal to 50% of the annual precept – currently £16,658.
- In addition, the Council has reserved £10,000 in the Limpsfield Chart Account for Chart Playground repairs and decommissioning if required by the National Trust after expiry of the lease.

#### Total Reserves: £26,658

- In addition to our Prudent Reserves, the Council periodically sets aside “earmarked reserves” in anticipation of significant expenditure. For FY2023-24, we set aside:
  - £10,000 for any potential off-street parking opportunities in Limpsfield Village
  - £4,800 (£2,400 per year, accruing) was earmarked for the annual maintenance of the Limpsfield Way and Cycle Route. The majority of this was spent.
  - £4,343 for the Limpsfield Way project contribution (as required by our contract with Your Fund Surrey), but this was not spent.

**Total: £19,143**

#### Income

- Core Parish Council income in FY2023-24 was £78,461.91, comprising Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds (£39,819.65), VAT refunds (£5,126.20), and the annual Precept of £33,315.

#### Expenditure

- Overall approved (budgeted) expenditure for our Core activities (including projects still in play) was £71,418.70.
- Total actual expenditure to 31 March 2024 was £61,268.
- We have £7,048 outstanding to pay for FY2023-24 budgeted projects (mainly CAAMP Ironstone).
- LPC claims VAT on a quarterly basis to assist cashflow. In FY24 the Council reclaimed £5,126.20 in VAT.

#### 10. Overview / any updates of 2025 budget

Streetlamps on Pebble Hill – TCB would like to obtain quotes on installing a new heritage streetlamp.

#### 11. CIL income update / draft report

Awaiting 2023-24 CIL form from TDC. Expected imminently. For return by end of May.

#### 12. Update of Registered Assets FY25

- Clerk to clarify with Oxted PC if the CCTV camera on the corner of Gresham Road is an LPC fixed asset and therefore maintained by LPC, or is it designated under TDC/SCC obligations?
- Clerk to ask National Trust about ownership/maintenance of bench at Pebble Hill.
- Clerk to add the Kissing Gate at Glebe Meadow to the list of assets.
- Other kissing gates are on footpaths and bridleways and therefore under SCC ownership and maintenance obligations. Clarification on ownership of

gates and other installations needs to be made with respect to maintenance and insurance.

- Clerk to send a list of gates/stiles that LPC has installed to SCC Countryside Access team.

#### 13. Biodiversity Budget Overview Criteria and awards criteria for Small Biodiversity Grants:

- At the LPC meeting in March, it was agreed that TCB would draft some criteria for the LPC Biodiversity Plan, including small grants for grass roots level, community groups and activities.
- An “earmarked budget” was agreed at the March 2024 LPC monthly meeting, but everything other than the grant pot (£2,000) still needs to be approved at a Full Council Meeting with a detailed proposal and scope and against the agreed Biodiversity criteria. *NB. Separate funding for B269 annual wildflower cultivation, given urgency of March planting season, was agreed following provision of acceptable quote provided by AO.*
- TCB says that LPC has an obligation to have a Biodiversity Plan in line with District and County strategy and our criteria should reflect this.
- He has drafted criteria and motion for Monday’s LPC meeting, as well as revised the grant application form for Small Biodiversity Grants drafted by AO.
- Small Biodiversity Grants for community groups and individuals (with a community focus) may be awarded up to £250 limit and must be approved against criteria set by the council. All applications should be reviewed by the Biodiversity Working Group, including a Member of the Finance Committee before approval by the full Council.
- The Finance Committee has therefore drafted and agreed priorities and criteria to support the council’s biodiversity strategy which should be agreed at LPC monthly meeting.

#### 14. AOB

- a. .Gov.uk site/domain move – SC has started the process of applying for a gov.uk site.

#### 15. Clerk salary review FY24/25

- This was discussed without the clerk present.
- Details to be circulated for monthly LPC meeting on Monday 8 April.

Clerk leaves at 20.17

*Antony Taylor*

Chair Finance Committee. 16.7.24