

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLETON AND HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023
at 9:30 am at the Parish Office, Littleton Recreation Ground.**

Present: Cllr J Biddlecombe, Cllr T Jackson, Cllr P Cunningham, Cllr D Tozer, Cllr J Musselwhite.

In attendance: Mrs L Fielding.

Members of the public: None.

F23-014: Apologies for Absence.

None

F23-015: Declarations of Interest.

None.

F23-016: Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2023.

The minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2023 were presented, and it was **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2023 be approved.**

F23-017: Matters Arising.

The actions from the last meeting were reviewed. The current status of actions is shown at the end of these minutes.

F23-018: Public Participation.

None.

F23-019: Employee Matters.

Cllr J Biddlecombe reported that the appraisal process had been completed. Some concerns had been discussed about the amount of extra time the Clerk has been spending supporting Councillors to pursue Council matters which leaves less time for her to perform her role as described in the job description. This was not considered to be a criticism of the Clerk but was in part caused by the extra workload to support a reduced number of Parish Councillors whilst the council waited to fill five vacancies.

F23-020: Legal Matters / Health and Safety.

- a. To review the progress of the digitisation process of the Council's deeds and property documents.

The Clerk presented two spreadsheets which summarised all the documents that she had digitised and stored on the Office computer. This includes any Parish Council lease, deed or other legal document going as far back as the Littleton Inclosure Act in 1843. The documents included those that had been securely stored by the Council's solicitors and relevant paper copies of documents held in the Parish Office.

- b. To review the progress of the investigation into the history of the Old Recreation Ground Charity.

The Clerk presented a report which covered the history of the Old Recreation Ground Charity and the Flowerdown Barrows/Tumulus Field. Following some discussion it was resolved for the Clerk to contact the council's solicitors to obtain a quote for work to resolve the ownership of the Flowerdown Barrows and the assets of the Old Recreation Ground Charity.

Action: The Clerk to contact Blake Morgan to obtain a quote to pursue the Flowerdown Barrows ownership and the Old Recreation Ground Charity assets.

Action: The Clerk to modify the Old Recreation Ground Charity report to highlight the English Heritage management of the barrows.

Cllr D Tozer suggested that the council might consider not closing the Old Recreation Ground Charity when the open issues are resolved in case it can be used for another purpose.

F23-021: Bank Reconciliation.

The Clerk presented the recent bank reconciliation documents and highlighted the signatures of the councillor who had cross-checked the reconciliation figures against the monthly cashbook and bank statements.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

F23-022: Current Financial State including Reserves.

- a. To review payments and receipts in comparison to the Council's annual budget

The Parish Clerk explained the current expenditure and receipts received. This was generally found to be satisfactory with expenditure under budget, however, some large payments were due to be made in November which would offset the existing underspend.

- b. To review the reserves position.

The reserves position was reviewed and it was agreed that based on the expected spending for the current year, a revised 2023/23 budget and reserves proposal should be presented for approval at the next Parish Council meeting.

F23-023: 2024/2025 Financial Planning

- a. 2024/2025 Budget (Expenditure and Income)

The proposed budget for 2023/24 was discussed and individual budget line items were reviewed with some modifications made to include reducing the budget for Grounds maintenance and PACE, delaying the provision to build up a reserve for election costs until 2025/6, and some other minor modifications.

It was agreed that the budget proposal should be put forward to the December Parish Council meeting.

- b. 2024/25 Precept charge

Given the anticipated income, the meeting proposed to add £10,000 from reserves to enable the proposed Band D charge to be £86.40 which would be a 9.8% increase compared to last year.

It was agreed that the Precept proposal should be put forward to the December Parish Council meeting.

F23-024: Items for noting, AOB, or for inclusion on next month's agenda:

None.

F23-025: Date of Next Meetings:

- a. Parish Council Meeting: 7:00 pm, 11th December 2023 at Littleton Memorial Hall.
b. Finance & Resources Meeting: 9:30 am, 6th March 2024 at the Sports Pavilion, Littleton Recreation Ground.

F23-026: Summary of Actions

Table 1: Open Action Points

ID	Owner	Action Points (Open)	Status
F23.02	Clerk	The Clerk to contact Lloyds Bank to ensure full access signatories are not able to make online transactions. 22 Nov 23: Not done yet – this is not a concern at present as councillors are currently not able to log on online.	Open
F22.08	Clerk	The Clerk to contact the Charities Commission to investigate the closure of the Littleton Old Recreation Ground Charity. 7 Sep 23: In progress. The Charities Commission have provided documentation on the process to close the charity, and has stated that they do not hold copies of accounts as they are not required from organisations with less than £25,000 annual turnover. 22 Nov 23: In progress. Solicitor advice is needed before this can be pursued.	Open

ID	Owner	Action Points (Open)	Status
F21.05	Clerk	<p>The Clerk to ask the Sports clubs to provide club-specific Health and Safety Policies.</p> <p>4 Mar 22: Received documents from Croquet and Cricket. The Croquet policy as it does not cover accidents for volunteers working on the green etc. An email reminder was sent for the last Sports club committee meeting.</p> <p>16 Nov 22: Draft policies for croquet and bowls club now available. Football club policy is left to do.</p> <p>28 Mar 23: The football policy is still outstanding – a reminder has been sent.</p> <p>28 Apr 23: To be discussed with the football club at a meeting covering pitch maintenance.</p> <p>7 Sep 23: The football policy is still outstanding. This will be raised with the Sports Club Chairman at the next Parish Council meeting.</p> <p>22 Nov 23: This was discussed by the Football committee and they believe they have a policy which could be used. It was agreed that the Clerk should specify a deadline for the Football Club to provide the document.</p>	Open

Table 2: Closed Action Points

ID	Owner	Action Points (Closed)	Status
F23.01	Clerk	<p>The Clerk to pursue quotes for moving the Speed Indicator Device.</p> <p>22 Nov 23: Done, and the contract has been awarded.</p>	Closed
F22.06	Clerk	<p>The Clerk to arrange a date for her appraisal meeting.</p> <p>22 Nov 23: Done, and the meeting has been held.</p>	Closed