

**Minutes of the Benson Parish Council Finance Committee held on
On Monday 24th July 2017 at 8:00PM in the Lounge**

Present: Cllr J. Fowler (JF)
Cllr P. Baylis (PB)
Cllr McTeague (TM)

Proper Officer: Anna Field (RFO)

1. **Apologies** – Cllr Peers
2. **Declarations of Interest** – None declared
3. **Public Session** – None present
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** – The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 16th May were signed by Full Council on 25th May 2017
5. **Management of green spaces owned by developers:**
It was agreed that at the proper time, the Council should consider taking ownership of green areas on the new developments.
The Registration of Green Close is in progress.
6. **Millbrook Mead:**
RFO to meet with the tenant to discuss a new agreement on a non commercial basis. It was proposed to offer an annual agreement for £250 per year subject to settlement of the outstanding amounts.
Action: RFO to meet tenant to discuss and draft an appropriate agreement
7. **Funding for 2018 WW1 event:**
It was agreed that a working group will be needed to plan this event. It was agreed Council would allocate £2000 to support the event as well as look at the potential for grant funding. JF
Action: Cllr Fowler to raise at Full Council. RFO
Action: RFO to investigate how much grant funding was contributed last time and where the grant was obtained from
8. **Cheque signatories:**
Action: RFO to circulate signatory pages to all Councillors to fill in and return in order to update current bank signatories RFO
9. **Financial contribution towards resurfacing of Castle Square:**
It was agreed that this area needs resurfacing and the Council should make a contribution in order to expedite this, subject to confirmation that the type of resurfacing will be the same as that recently carried out on Church Road.

- Action:** Clerk to find out the technical name for this type of resurfacing and enter into the recommendation below Clk
- Recommendation to Full Council:**
- That Benson Parish Council allocates a sum of £17k towards the cost of x resurfacing Castle Square**
- Funds to be taken from reserves
10. **Oxfordshire Together:**
- Action:** Clerk to send the OCC map to Cholsey PC to ask what their contractor would charge for the work. CLK
- JF confirmed that the likely contribution from OCC would be circa £1300
11. **Millstream Car Park:**
- As none of the existing issues appear to have been addressed (commercial parking, repairs to granite sets), and there has been a personnel change at cabinet level at SODC, JF to re-enquire about taking on this land. JF
- Action:** JF to chase in due course
12. **Internal Audit Report:**
- This has been circulated to all Councillors and the single recommendation to remove backup disks from site has been noted.
- JF commented that all other internal audit checks had been passed which was an excellent result.
- RFO reported on other advisory items that were raised during the internal audit, most of which had now been addressed:
- i) consider holding £20 hall hire deposits as customer credits rather than banking as income RFO
 - ii) Ensure Debt Policy is readopted at Full Council during the financial year
 - iii) Consider increasing the current level of fidelity cover
 - iv) Ensure the Clerk is appointed formally as Proper Officer
 - v) Ensure both the Internal and External Audit Reports are received and approved at Full Council.
- Action:** Clerk to move full backup disk off site monthly CLK
13. **External Audit Feedback:**
- RFO reported 3 issues flagged by the external auditors
- i) The Treasurers Trust building society account has not been updated with the current balance
- Action:** RFO to get account book updated in branch and resubmit RFO
- ii) Lack of detail in explanation of increased receipts
- Action:** RFO to submit more detailed explanation RFO
- iii) The asset value has changed due to the exercise carried out by RFO to review all current assets. This has led to a sudden jump in

asset value that is not acceptable to BDO. They have requested that the 2015/16 asset value is altered so that there is no large increase between it and the 2016/17 figure.

The Committee acknowledged this request but expressed concern about it. At the very least Full Council would have to be consulted but RFO to take advice from the SLCC initially

- Action:** RFO to request extension until at least after next Full Council, and consult SLCC for advice RFO
14. **Bertie West – landowner agreement for forest school:**
Cllr Baylis had previously circulated the proposed agreement and received no amendments
Action: RFO to copy onto headed paper with covering letter pointing out the gate has been replaced and the tree survey is in hand. Pass to PB to sign and send. RFO
PB
15. **Funding of play equipment:**
The £6050 SODC grant acceptance form for the St Helens play equipment will be signed by JF and Clerk. JF/ CLK
Cllr Mc Teague asked for a strategic plan for the play areas. JF responded that a strategic plan will be appropriate once the financial contribution from developments allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan are forthcoming. In the meantime TM could gather the YFWG papers and create a vision / mission statement of what is required. TM
With regard to funding the existing play area works;
i) Due to health and safety concerns it was agreed that Wickstead should be asked to remove the multi-play item at Sunnyside. R&L to discuss a replacement piece of equipment along with a grant application to cover the cost PB
RFO
ii) Installation of the anthill climber at Green Close can proceed but the Pendulum swing is to be put on hold pending registration of the land and a potential grant application
- Recommendation to Full Council:**
To purchase 2 items of play equipment from HAGS for St Helens play area, being a zip wire and a rope swing at a cost not to exceed £16500 plus VAT. The exact positioning of the equipment to be agreed following consultation with local residents.
16. **CIL projects:**
No update
17. **Defibrillators:**
RFO reported she had written to BCA to ask if they would be interested in applying for a Coop grant for a defibrillator to be sited in the village centre
18. **VAT on hall extension:**
RFO and PB to meet with Andrew Marsden to discuss VAT planning RFO
RFO/TM

RFO to make enquiries about loans and grants for the halls extension for TM

19. **Online Banking:**

RFO to check next step on the plan and report back to the Committee RFO

20. **Allotment Rates:**

PB to put on next R&L agenda to discuss 2018/19 rates PB

21. **Insurance:**

The contract with Came and Company will soon be up for renewal. The Committee confirmed they are happy to continue with the company as a broker. RFO

22. **Membership of Finance Committee**

Members asked whether they are able to send deputies to attend Finance Committee meetings if they are not able to attend, to ensure the Committee remains quorate. RFO

Action: RFO to check with OALC

23. **Date of Next Meeting: 19th September 2017**

Anna Field Responsible Finance Officer 28/07/2017