

Office Tel: 01643 863350  
clerk@porlockparishcouncil.gov.uk  
www.porlockparishcouncil.org  
Office Hours:  
Tuesday 9:30 – 15:00  
Wednesday 9:30 – 15:00  
Thursday 9:30 – 15:00  
Friday CLOSED

# PORLOCK



Parish Room  
Old School Centre  
West End  
PORLOCK  
Somerset, TA24 8QD

## Parish Council

### Minutes of the Finance Meeting held at Parish Room at the Old School Centre on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 10.00am

#### Members Present:

Cllr. Fraser, Chair  
Cllrs. McCoy, Ware and Wood

Also present: LOCUM RFO Annie Dallaway by Zoom (from Item 4 to 9 inclusive)  
Cllrs. S McCanlis, D McCanlis and L Thornton (minute taker)  
Deborah Stanyon (Visitor Centre Manager)  
Gillian Kenyon

#### 1. Apologies

None.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest and Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Dispensations

None.

#### 3. To receive a presentation from the PVTA

Deborah Stanyon (Visitor Centre Manager) asked in what capacity Sue, Lesley and Duncan were attending and whether they would be involved in any discussion or decision making. It was confirmed they were elected Councillors but would not be able to vote as not Finance Committee members.

Deborah Stanyon asked if Cllr Duncan McCanlis was impartial and whether he needed to declare an interest as a former employee of the Visitor Centre and former PVTA member. It was agreed that, in any case, this was not necessary as he is not a Finance Committee member.

Ms. Stanyon confirmed that ENPA were potentially looking to close two or all of their Visitor Centres which she described as 'purely tourism driven', adding that the Porlock Visitor Centre had evolved into a community hub. She read from some letters of support.

Ms. Stanyon reiterated that the PVTA is a registered Community Interest Company (CIC). She stated that they are a charity and not a commercial organisation, benefiting the residential and business community.

Ms. Stanyon stated that the PVTA are requesting PPC consider reinstating the annual grant in recognition of the work the PVTA do within the community, adding that, in her experience, parish councils are expected and encouraged to offer grants to local community organisations for the benefit of their community.

Two FinCom Councillors commented on a perceived disassociation between the traders and the PVTA. Deborah Stanyon invited anyone who wanted to attend the next PVTA meeting in December to discuss this perception which she did not feel was completely accurate. An agenda can be requested by email to the Visitor Centre or the PVTA Chair, Clare Gladstone.

Ms. Stanyon was asked if there were any other papers the PVTA wished PPC to look at and confirmed that the recent PVTA funding bid would be circulated to the newly elected Councillors. It was confirmed that the funding bid included a 2 page strategic business plan.

The Chair of FinCom thanked Ms. Stanyon for her presentation which will be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December. It was advised that the grant was a line in the budget to be discussed at item 6 on the Agenda and Ms. Stanyon was invited to stay to hear that discussion if she wished.

*Gill Kenyon left the meeting.*

*LOCUM RFO Annie Dallaway joined the meeting by Zoom.*

**4. To review and approve the FinCom response to the LOCUM RFO's Financial Review Report dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2022.**

**a. Accept the recommendations therein**

Cllr Wood noted that the Report included more than just the Recommendations but as only these are mentioned on the Agenda, only the Recommendations can be approved. There were no questions.

It was proposed to accept the recommendations therein.

**Proposer:** Cllr. Fraser  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Ware

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

**b. Accept the FinCom response thereto**

Cllr D McCanlis asked if there had been a meeting to draft the response and Cllr Wood confirmed there had been an informal FinCom meeting.

It was proposed to accept the FinCom response thereto.

**Proposer:** Cllr. Fraser  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Ware

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

**5. To review the preliminary Payments Schedule for December 2022**

Cllr Wood noted that the Payments Schedule for December 2022 was only available this morning and was preliminary. There was a query regarding the idverde invoice for £600. Cllr Wood advised he had written for confirmation of the services charged, being new and for the first time.

For information only – no more questions

**6. To further consider the Budget for the next Financial Year**

*Deborah Stanyon and Cllr S McCanlis left during this item*

Cllr Wood noted the observations provided by Cllr. L Thornton and suggested she joined the budget discussion. The LOCUM RFO suggested working through the Cost Centres and confirmed the Year to Date (YTD) figures were to end October 2022. Cllr Wood advised that the deadline for setting the precept and

advising SW&T was probably later in January 2023 so the budget could be approved at the January 2023 meeting, allowing more time.

**Clerks Salary** – The LOCUM RFO advised of an increase in pay for staff appointed on the NJC scales and the minimum wage nationally. It was advised that Clerks Salary may have been over-budgeted previously.

**Tel/Internet** – 3 numbers, 2 on fixed term until 2024. Generally felt excessive and should be checked.

**Website** – it was suggested that any decision on a quick or more extensive fix to include new Councillors

**Computer Supplies** – includes Rialtas software, AR computing, Zoom

**Bright HR** – A 5-year service started in June 2021, 80% paid if cancelled early, so keep in place. May be useful for new staff, etc.

**Grants** – From Allotment Fund but capped, so another grant fund had been set up for those that fall outside the allotment fund remit. The Environment & Amenities EMR currently has £3308.75 which could be used to fund the PVTA grant request, but would not leave much for other grants so may need adding to.

**Grass Cutting** – Costs much higher than previously. Increased contractor costs for fuel, etc.. A Dallaway to speak to A Binding about how he splits his work. 65% Cemetery, 20% VH carpark, 10% OSC, 5% Playground. Where is Village Verge maintenance budgeted? Cllr L Thornton to see if we recharge this to SW&T.

**Tree work in Cemetery** – it was advised that not enough work done previously, needs redoing. Leave budget at £3000. It was suggested that the Cemetery could be/have an EMR.

**Jubilee** – rename to Coronation. It was suggested that funding from E&A EMR as a donation to community group to run.

**Winter Maintenance** – for odd emergency jobs due to winter weather.

**OSC** – costs split between users. Formula based on previous figures. Electricity is de facto.

**Business Rates** – included in rents so no recharge. Cllr Wood advised only OSC and Cemetery liable for rates.

**Floral Displays** – could be paid as a grant, if from precept may need to reduce costs. Needs reviewing.

**VH Grass Cutting** – It was suggested that PPC research reducing costs as far exceeds income for Village Hall.

**PVTA** – Business rates not being recharged, net income from rent very low. It was noted that PPC needs to generate surplus revenues.

**Wood pellets** – It was advised that the budget needs to be based on 2 deliveries a year, circa £2000 for 22/23. Recharge as 48% Library, 37% VC, 15% Parish Room.

**Library Electricity** – it was noted that this figure might be too high, if refund is owing – could be £1000 less.

**100 Tree Project** – No further grants expected. Further funds could come from E&A EMR

**Doverhay toilets** – it was advised that a recharge for lights at car park calculated as 3.03 units a day

**Precept** – the LOCUM RFO advised she has included a suggested 10% increase. It was noted that there is a 5% cap on SW&T increases this year, but no cap yet on Parish Councils. May be capped in future, so this year could be the last opportunity to increase precept enough to avoid further deficit budgets. Consider increase once budget reworked and SW&T figure advised.

**VAT** – it was suggested VAT be taken out of budget if only itemised as in AGAR.

## **7. To receive an update on the External Auditor's report**

A letter had been circulated from External Auditor explaining they have a challenge file to investigate. No objections but more than 2 correspondents, to be taken under advisement. Report should be provided within financial year.

## **8. To receive and consider a letter from a member of the public on the 2021-22 AGAR Report**

The letter had been emailed to FinCom Councillors on 14<sup>th</sup> November. It was confirmed that no objection to the AGAR had been made due to the costs this could incur for PPC.

**9. To review the need to redact staff salary payments on the monthly Payments Schedule**

**a. To review Minute ref Full Council 28 September 2022, 9a (decision not to redact salary payments) Refer Standing Order 11.**

It was advised that at Full Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the Council came to the unanimous decision to not redact wages on the payment schedule. This decision should not have been taken as it was not a formal item on the Agenda. The LOCUM RFO also advised that a decision shall not normally be reversed within 6 months (Standing Order 11).

**b. To consider the need to redact staff salary payments on the monthly Payments Schedule.**

FinCom were now revisiting redacting staff salary payments as an item on the FinCom agenda 24.11.22. It was noted that SALC advise to redact names or figures/numbers. It was noted that names could be replaced with job titles as well.

It was proposed to redact salary figures and to use job titles only for the publicly available payment schedule, with the full information only available to Councillors for checking purposes.

**Proposer:** Cllr. Fraser  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Wood

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

*Annie Dallaway left the meeting.*

**10. To review the arrangements with Bright HR**

FinCom recommended to continue the Bright HR contract, as a five-year contract taken out in 2021 subject to an 80% cancellation fee. The service agreement will be circulated to all Councillors.

**11. To consider the need for repairs to the Churchyard pathway**

As St. Dubricius is a closed churchyard, PPC is responsible for the grounds. The back path needs repairing as a health and safety concern. It was advised this could be expensive so 3 quotes would be required.

**12. To allocate up to £50 for the installation of the new OSC sign**

PPC had already approved expenditure for the OSC sign, but additional funds to be taken from the EMR required to cover costs of £50 for installation. It was also noted that another sign had fallen down and been damaged and would need replacing.

**Proposer:** Cllr. Fraser  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Ware

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

**13. To review staff salaries**

PART B

Under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Local Government Act 1972, the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting for item 13, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

The Committee agreed to go into Part B for agenda item 13

**Proposer:** Cllr. Fraser  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Wood

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

Staff wages, salary increases and any necessary back pay were discussed. The committee noted the new NJC pay scales agreed in November 2022 for the 2022/23 financial year. The following recommendations were made:

- a) All PPC employees should receive NMW rates backdated to 1 April 22 as necessary
- b) All PPC employees will be paid in line with new NMW rates from 1 April 23
- c) All PPC employees appointed on NJC pay scales should be paid at the correct rates (including pension & NI contributions) backdated to 1 April 21 as appropriate

**Proposer:** Cllr. Wood  
**Seconder:** Cllr. Ware

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

The statement made by the Clerk in the 25 Aug 22 Fin Com meeting has been investigated with no further action necessary.

A confidential report for Councillors only is an appendix to these minutes.

**14. To confirm a date for the next Finance Committee Meeting**

5<sup>th</sup> January 2023

The meeting ended at 12.30pm

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**Date** **FinCom Chair**