

Priddy Parish Council

Finance Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on **21st November, 2018**
at **8:00pm** at the **Hunters Lodge Inn**

Present: Cllrs Butcher (chairman), Dyke, Leach, Maine, and Wilkinson

In attendance: William Newton Newey (Clerk)

PPF18/40 **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Oren

PPF18/41 **Resolutions relating to the Conduct of the Meeting**

That, in accordance with Standing Order 24, the press and public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of business to be discussed.

This was resolved unanimously.

PPF18/42 **Declarations of Interest:** None.

PPF18/43 **Acceptance of the Minutes of previous meetings:**

Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 18th July, 2018 were agreed.

PPF18/44 **To Receive a report from Internal Auditor**

The Clerk had circulated a letter from the Internal Auditor which stated that no material misstatements had been found in the 2017 – 2018 accounts. There were a number of procedural matters raised in the letter and the Clerk outlined actions which had been taken to address these matters.

The Internal Auditor had noted that 'payroll detail should be recorded in a separate confidential cash book. Financial regulation 7.4. As the council only has one employee this seems unnecessary so I suggest this regulation is amended.'

It was resolved to recommend removal of clause 7.4 from the Council's Financial regulations.

The Clerk was asked to check if NALC had issued a new set of model Financial Regulations which might be considered at the January meeting of the Finance Committee.

It was resolved to recommend a gratuity payment of £50 be made to the Internal Auditor.

PPF18/45 **To review the 2018 / 2019 Budget**

The Clerk spoke to the budget statement that had been circulated to Councillors in advance. It was noted that both income and expenditure were generally as expected. The External Audit had been more than budgeted but it was hoped that as a smaller authority with income / expenditure totals less than £25,000 per year the audit could be waived for 2018 / 2019.

Expenditure on projects was lower than expected as no monies had been spent on Priddy Pool and only the cost of the Section 171 licence had been incurred in respect of Townsend Pool. It was noted that the VAT would be reclaimed on the kerbing of the Village Green.

PPF18/46 **Project Funding**

a) **White Lining in Pelting Drove**

After discussion, it was decided that this project should be allowed to lapse.

b) **Townsend Pool**

Works had ceased until the spring when further clearing of bracken and other scrub would take place. The AONB were arranging for the tree roots to be dug out. Cllr Maine asked why trees had been left on the Plummers Road side of the pool. Cllr Wilkinson said it was to screen the open space from the road and avoid unwanted access by vehicles. He thought that large stones would eventually protect the area.

c) **Priddy Pool**

There had been no response from Priddy School in respect of Plans for Priddy which Cllr Dyke felt reflected that it was a time when the School had been very busy. It was noted that the pool was seasonal and often dried up in the summer; Cllr Wilkinson had been told that amphibians survived better in an environment where fish were not present.

It was resolved to recommend that £500 be returned to the general reserve and a budget of £319 left for the Pool.

d) **Finger Posts – Bristol Plain and Nine Barrows Triangle**

Verbal quotes had been received for the refurbishment of the Finger Posts. The Bristol Plain post would need new fingers, and a new section (having been knocked over) as

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well a shot blasting and repainting for which £1,000 had been quoted. The Nine Barrows Triangle would need to be re-sited as it was not only leaning but was loose in the ground. If it were shot blasted and re-painted before re-siting (at a 5 degree angle to reflect its longstanding position), the cost had been quoted at £400 to £500.

It was resolved to recommend that the refurbishment of the Nine Barrows Triangle Finger Post be undertaken in the 2018 / 2019 Financial Year.

It was further resolved to recommend that the refurbishment of the Bristol Plain Finger Post be included in the 2019 / 2020 budget.

e) **Parish Website**

It had been agreed at the November Parish Council meeting that current site would be revamped using the latest version of the software used to create the website. Discussions as to the creation of a new community website would be deferred until after May 2019.

Cllr Butcher asked if there was a counter or any analytics which could indicate visits to the website. The Clerk said that there were none currently. Cllr Butcher wondered about the problems that websites faced, especially where there were section editors who might not keep details up to date. He contrasted websites with the use of Facebook and other social media. Cllr Butcher also reminded the meeting that the Council had a website to discharge the requirements of the Transparency Code. Cllr Wilkinson felt that it was necessary to keep abreast of technological developments both in terms of accessibility (reference was made to NALC Legal Briefing L09-18 on public body websites) and security.

It was resolved not to recommend any change in the budget for this project.

PPF18/47 **Review Banking Arrangements**

The Clerk was awaiting details from one of the signatories but opening of a bank account with Lloyds Bank was in progress.

PPF18/48 **To consider amendment of Financial Regulations**

This matter had already been dealt with under consideration of the report from the Internal Auditor.

PPF18/49 **To set a Budget for 2019 / 2020 and outline budgets for 2020 / 2021, 2021 and 2022**

The Clerk spoke to the budget projections that had been circulated with the agenda. A 1% percent increase had been calculated on the anticipated 2018 / 2019 outturn. This had been added to the outturn and then a new budget figure had been produced to allow for known changes (election costs) and to rounding. The proposed revenue budget for 2019 / 2020 was £7,030 as opposed to £6,020 in 2018 / 2019. £700 pounds was due to the provision for election costs. It was proposed that the precept was increased by 1.02% to £9,900 and that sum allocated to project (capital) funding be reduced to £2,870.

Cllr Butcher said that he was concerned that service reductions by the County Council (e.g. gritting of roads) might result in extra costs for parish councils. Reserves might allow these extra commitments to be met in the short term but it would be for parishioners to decide if these were to be funded in the longer term with an increase in the precept. It was noted that it had been the desire of the Council not to use the proceeds of the additional easement for other than a lasting project such as affordable housing or facilities for the elderly. Cllr Butcher felt that it was not the appropriate time to consider major projects as there would be a new Council after the May 2019 elections.

It was resolved to recommend the adoption as prepared by the Clerk.

A similar process had been used to produce the projections for 2020 / 2021 and 2021 / 2022 financial years. **These projections were noted.**

PPF18/50 **Recommendations to Council**

a) That the Budget for 2019 / 2020 as prepared by the Clerk and considered by the Finance Committee be adopted.

b) The outline budget projections for 2019 / 2020 and 2020 / 2021 prepared at the same time as the 2019 / 2020 be noted.

c) That project funding for Priddy Pool be reduced to £319.

d) That Nine Barrows Triangle finger post be refurbished and re-sited at an estimated cost of £500

e) That the refurbishment and re-siting of the Bristol Plain finger post be included in the 2019 / 2020 budget at a an estimated cost of £1,000

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d) That Financial Regulation 7.4 (in relation to a confidential cash book to record payments to staff) be rescinded.

e) That a gratuity be paid to the Internal Auditor.

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Matters of Report

- a) **Slurry Tankers Passing through the Village (various occasions including 15th November)**

Cllr Maine felt that there was a right to use the public highway. Cllr Leach was concerned that the vehicles were travelling so fast that they were clipping corners and damaging verges. It was noted that slurry spreading was allowed in Priddy where it was not in the Cheddar area due to groundwater protection.

- b) **Damage to village green adjoining the Baytree Cottage building site.**

Damage was being caused by the parking of contractors' vehicles. Before the Clerk was asked to write or Bye Laws were invoked, Cllr Butcher undertook to speak to the owner of the site.

- c) **Mendip Farmer's Hunt**

The Clerk reported that he had received further emails in respect of the Hunt and it opening meet. He would include this under his report at the next Council meeting

- d) **Bus Shelter Priddy Green**

Remedial works were to be undertaken to the roof by the end of the week. The suggestion of using impervious material had been passed to the contractor. It was thought that marine ply should not have delaminated so quickly.

- e) **The Old New Inn Priddy**

The Clerk had been contacted by the owner in respect of recent refusal of the application to extend the parking to the rear of the property. The owner was seeking a site meeting with the Parish Council to discuss a further application and the future of the property. The meeting felt that a meeting after 18th December and before Christmas Eve would not be possible. It was also felt that neighbours and other interested parties should also be present. The Clerk was asked to seek a meeting date in January.

- f) **Dursdon Drove**

Cllr Leach undertook to check if the gates had been removed from this right of way.

PPF18/039

Date and Time of Next Meeting

23rd January, 2019

The meeting closed at 9:21pm

William Newton Newey, Parish Clerk

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27th November, 2018