

**GREAT CORNARD PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

held in The Stevenson Centre at 8:12pm on Monday 24th July 2023

**Present**  Councillors Cllr Tony Bavington **Chairman**

Cllr Marjorie Bark Cllr Tom Keane

Cllr Stewart Sheridan Cllr Jane Wakeman

Cllr Pamela White Cllr Judith Wilson

Cllr David Young

Council Manager Mrs N Tamlyn

Council Administrator Miss E Skuce

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Sharon Bowman.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

**NONE.**

1. **DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

**NONE.**

1. **ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – FOR NOTING**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the Items Brought Forward list.

The Chair explained that an emergency Agenda item would be added under Financial Matters in relation to the recent traveller incursion on the Recreation Ground. **AGREED.**

1. **CORRESPONDENCE**
2. **Babergh District Council: Post Election Review May 2023**

Members considered correspondence from Babergh District Council which states that during the District, Town and Parish elections this year, they experienced a number of issues. As a result, an external review was commissioned from the Chief Executive of the Association Of Electoral Administrators, in consultation with the Electoral Commission.

Members reviewed both documents and discussed and agreed on the following concerns:-

The Report does not mention software failures which led to misdeclarations in respect of party labels and that measures to rectify the problems prior to the Elections were ineffective.

It was also felt that the Internal Report was written from the Officer’s perspectives and did not include the full range of interests such as those nominated or from voters.

The Report under-represents the confusion at the count with Great Cornard being the last to be counted and approximately 1800 votes taking 4 hours to process.

Despite the Report stating that the introduction of voter ID was managed well, Members were aware that the changes had led to some confusion over what could or could not be used as identification, and resulted in some people losing patience and not voting at all.

Great Cornard residents, it is believed, were disenfranchised, not only because of the introduction of voter ID, but also due to Babergh’s ongoing decision not to use Pot Kiln School as a much needed second polling station in the North Ward.

It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to write to Electoral Services in response to the post election review reports and share the Parish Council’s concerns.

1. **TO CONSIDER INSTRUCTING ARCHITECT FEE PROPOSALS FOR**
2. **The Village Hall Project**

Members were provided with up to date plans for the first phase of the Village Hall extension project, which had been granted permission by Babergh District Council. Members **AGREED** for the Council Manager to instruct the Council’s architects to draw up a Fee Proposal on the next stage of the project.

1. **Preliminary plans to extend the Parish Council offices and Council Chamber**

Members were provided with a plan of the internal layout of The Stevenson Centre building.

The Chair advised that the Parish Council office no longer provided adequate space for the three members of staff and would benefit from being redesigned. It was suggested that by extending the office into the Chamber, and extending the Chamber out under the canopy, that would provide a larger space.

Members **AGREED** for the Council Manager to instruct the Council’s architects to provide a fee proposal for plans which were financially feasible and to consider whether the Parish Council could obtain any funding.

1. **TO CONSIDER APPLYING FOR ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE (ACV) STATUS FOR REMAINING PUBLIC HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE**

The Chair explained that following the recent closure of The Five Bells, the remaining three public houses may wish to be listed as Assets of Community Value. It was **AGREED** that whilst the remaining three pubs appeared to be in a healthy position, that the Council Manager would write to the owners and ask whether they would welcome being listed as an ACV.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS – FOR INFORMATION GATHERING DURING THE SUMMER, NOT FOR DECISION MAKING**
2. **Environmental Policy Statement**

The Council’s Environmental Champion, Cllr Bark, explained that she would be looking at the Environmental Policy Statement over the summer period with the Council Manager and would present a draft to the Policy and Resources Committee after the break. **NOTED.**

1. **Riparian Ownership Obligations**

The Council Manager confirmed that no recent updates had been received from the Environment Agency in relation to their bid for funding to complete a flood risk modelling assessment. **NOTED.**

1. **Neighbourhood Plan Working Party**

Cllr Bark confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan working party could reconvene after the summer break. It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to re-issue the latest Neighbourhood Plan information packs to Members prior to the meeting taking place.

1. **Local Wildfire Prevention**

Cllr Bark confirmed that the Environmental Policy Statement would need to make reference to environmental protection and that she would liaise with the Sudbury Common Lands Charity in order to obtain their views and advice. **NOTED.**

1. **River Stour Protection**

The Chair stated that whilst none of the Parish Council’s land borders the River Stour, it flows through Great Cornard and the Parish Council should be involved with its protection in conjunction with Sudbury Town Council and The River Stour Trust.

A Member advised that the Trust was in the process of applying for ‘designated bathing waters’ status between Sudbury and Cornard Lock. If successful, Anglian Water would have responsibility for managing the water quality in that area.

It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to investigate the matter and to request that Great Cornard be involved in the project.

1. **TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FOR THE CCTV SERVICE CONTRACT AT THE BLACKHOUSE LANE PAVILION**

Members reviewed a quotation from STC Solutions to renew the annual CCTV service contract at the Blackhouse Lane Pavilion at a cost of £380 plus VAT. The quotation includes for one yearly service of all cameras and the hard disc recorder including a cherry picker for the moveable dome and pole mounted cameras.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it accepts the quotation from STC Solutions for the annual CCTV service contract at Blackhouse Lane Pavilion at a cost of £380 plus VAT.

Funds to come from the Blackhouse Lane Budget.

1. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**
2. **To approve the latest list of payments**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** the latest list of payments **(see Appendix A).**

1. **To discuss the recent traveller incursion on the Recreation Ground**

The Chair updated Members on the events of the past week when a group of travellers had gained illegal access on to the Recreation Ground on Monday 17th July. The Parish Council had acted swiftly and the travellers were served with an Eviction Notice and had left the Recreation Ground by just after 6pm on Thursday 20th July.

The Council Manager explained that she had made enquiries with the Council’s insurers and whilst there is a procedure available to deal with matters such as these through the insurance policy in place, it was likely that the time it would take to evict the travellers from Council owned land would be far longer than if the Parish Council were to instruct bailiffs direct. It had been confirmed that there was no option to claim retrospectively against the policy and also no enhancements or add-ons were available which would give better protection for any future incidents. It was **AGREED** for the Council Manager to investigate other insurers who may offer policies that would give the Council better cover in relation to any future illegal encampments.

It was **NOTED** that the travellers could be seen on the Council’s CCTV investigating possible entry onto the recreation ground using the newly installed gate. However, the gate appeared to prove an effective deterrent and entry was then gained by cutting the wooden posts with a chainsaw.

It was agreed that the defences on the Recreation Ground would need to be improved, as well as those at the Allotment car park to deter entry in to the Country Park. Members discussed various options to improve the security and it was agreed that the matter needed more time and would need to be properly thought through.

It was therefore **AGREED** for the Council Manager to arrange a meeting of the Security Improvements Working Party as soon as possible in order for the various options to be discussed. The invitation to attend the Working Party meeting would be extended to all Members.

Members reviewed a draft letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore (**See Appendix B)** which had been prepared by the Council Manager on behalf of the Parish Council. The letter seeks to make Mr. Passmore aware of the poor support received from the Police in relation to what was illegal entry on to Parish Council owned land through criminal damage and caused high tensions between local residents and the travellers. It was **AGREED** to send the letter with the following additional paragraph:-

*“Suffolk Constabulary are not being tough on crime because they are not taking action even when they are provided with evidence. The Principal Authorities are not being tough on the causes of crime because they have refused over many decades to provide sufficient, properly resourced permanent and transit sites for the travelling community”.*

1. **To consider the FY2022/23 Virement Report**

Members reviewed and **NOTED** Report No.G03 on the proposed virement of Unallocated General Reserves and remaining earmarked funds from completed projects for FY2022/23 **(see Appendix C).**

The Chair drew Members attention to the sum of £4,532.74 on page 2 of the Report for the Unallocated General Reserves and the Village Hall Improvement Fund and proposed that this sum now be held in an unused budget line for general building funds and made available for security improvements, if required. **AGREED**.

Members agreed that subject to the above change to **RECOMMEND** that Full Council accepts

the findings of the Report and its recommendations to:-

**Virement of remaining Earmarked Funds from Completed Projects**

1. Vire remaining Village Gateway Fund of £50.00 to the Commemorative Bench Fund;
2. Vire remaining Allotment Knotweed Fund of £414.60 to the Country Park Sign Fund;
3. Vire remaining Recreation Ground Fund of £5,004.84 to the SC Car Park and Surface Water Drainage Improvement Fund;

**Virement of FY22/23 Unallocated General Reserves**

1. The sum of £2,350.00 for the Great Cornard Swimming Pool Grant;
2. The sum of £745.40 to enable both Country Park signs to be ordered at the same time; and
3. The sum of £4,532.74 to be allocated to a General Building Fund and made available for security improvements, if required.

**Neighbourhood CIL Funds**

1. To allocate remaining CIL funds of £18,924.15 to the Streetlight Improvement Fund giving a total of £29,941.15.

1. **Proposal to EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC from the meeting in accordance with section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act (1960) for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of confidential and exempt information**

At 9:13pm Members **AGREED** to exclude press and general public from the meeting.

1. **VILLAGE HALL LEASE**

The Chair explained that this matter had not yet been progressed as a meeting with the Council’s solicitors had been delayed and would need to be rearranged. **NOTED**.

1. **HMLR APPLICATION AND DEED OF EASEMENT FOR THE VILLAGE HALL**

Members **NOTED** that a response was still awaited from the Land Registry.

1. **CORNARD DYNAMOS LEASE**

The Chair explained that a response was still awaited from the Parish Council’s solicitors and if delayed any further, the Council may have to decide to move to another solicitor. **NOTED.**

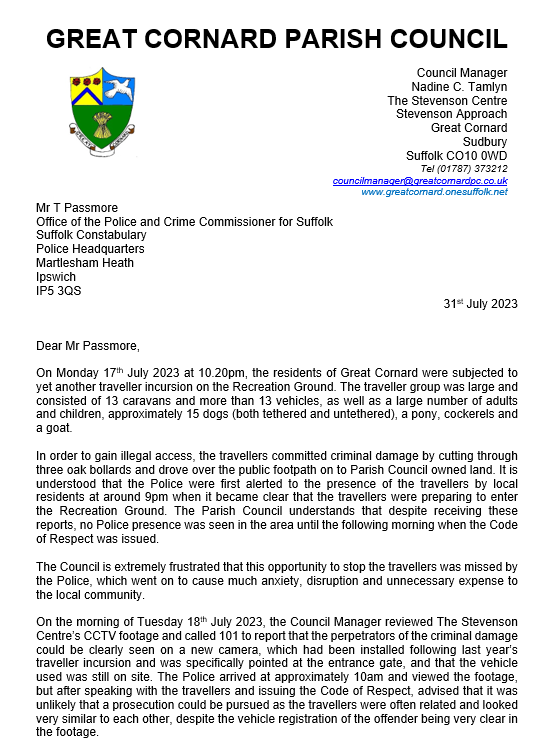
**Meeting closed at 9:15pm**

**APPENDIX A**

**Summary of Income and Payments for Great Cornard Parish Council**



**APPENDIX B**



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**APPENDIX C**

**Report No. G03 on the proposed Virement of FY22/23 Unallocated General Reserves and remaining Earmarked Funds from completed Projects**

To consider the virement of unallocated General Reserves for FY22/23 of **£7,628.14** and any remaining Earmarked Funds from projects which have been completed.

Please see refer to attached Earmarked Capital Funds for FY2023/24.

**Burial Authority £8,500:**

1. **High** - Turning Area £8,500 – It is expected that the funds set aside for this project will be sufficient and quotes are currently being sought.
2. **Medium** - Acquisition of land for a new Cemetery.
3. **Low** - Cemetery Building – Proposal to demolish and rebuild with improved facilities.

**Development and Planning Committee £28,640.38:**

1. **High** – Street Light Fund - £26,005 – There is an outstanding amount of £14,988 still to be invoiced for the first stage of phase 1 works. The remaining Balance of £11,017 to be allocated to the next stage of phase 1. To continue to build funds from the FY24/25 Budget and Neighbourhood CIL. (**See below CIL Report**)
2. **High** - Quiet Lanes Suffolk £50 – Project completed. Remaining funds to be vired to Commemorative Bench Fund.
3. **Medium** – Commemorative Bench Fund £2,585.38 - To install new benches throughout the village to commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Five bench locations have already been agreed at £686.39 per bench. To continue to build funds in FY24/25 Budget for additional locations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **To vire remaining Village Gateway Fund of £50.00 to the Commemorative Bench Fund**

**Arts, Sports & Leisure Committee £27,297.73**

1. **~~Medium~~** **High** - Recreation Ground Improvement Fund £22,383.13 – Project to improve play area facilities on the Recreation Ground. The PC secured S106 Recreation Funds of £57,621.71 and the project was therefore upgraded to **High**. The Council contribution will be £12,378.29 which leaves a remaining balance of £10,004.84. To complete the project, it is estimated that funds of approximately £5,000 will be required to install both internal and external play area furniture, carry out the independent Play Equipment Inspection and remove the old adult exercise equipment. It is proposed that the balance of £5,004.84 be vired to The Stevenson Centre Car Park and Surface Water Drainage Improvement Scheme, which should provide sufficient funds for the project to be instructed.
2. Allotment Knotweed Treatment £414.60 - **Project complete.** Remaining funds of £414.60 to be vired to the Country Park Signs.
3. Country Park Signs £2,000 – The cost of the replacement sign at the Country Park entrance has been agreed at £1,740 and the second sign will cost a further £1,420. It is proposed that £745.40 be vired from FY22/23 Unallocated General Reserves so both signs can be ordered at the same time.
4. Shawlands Wood Improvements £2,500 – Project to create a new vehicular and pedestrian access of Shawlands Avenue.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **To vire the remaining Allotment Knotweed Fund of £414.60 to the Country Park Sign Fund.**
2. **To vire £745.50 from Unallocated General Reserves for FY22/23 to enable both Country Park signs to be ordered at the same time.**
3. **To vire the remaining Recreation Ground Fund of £5,004.84 to the SC Car Park and Surface Water Drainage Improvement Fund**

**Policy and Resources Committee £114,744.16**

**Stevenson Centre Improvement Fund of £47,560.50:**

1. **High** – SC Car Park and Surface Water Drainage Improvement Scheme currently £47,560.50 –

Estimated cost around £57-£62k depending on size of soakaway. A further £3,288.00 is available from the SC Approach Road Fund giving a total of £50,848.50. If the Council agrees to vire the remaining £5,004.84 from the Recreation Ground Improvement Fund to TSC Car Park Improvement Fund, the total funds will be £55,853.34.

1. **High -** Village Hall Improvement Fund £65,641.26 **–** Planning Approval received. The Council to investigate project costs and assemble funds from grants, a PWLB Loan and the FY24/25 Budget.
2. **Medium** - Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Fund £0.00 – In FY22/23 due to the lack of progress with the JLP, it was agreed to vire £5,000 allocated to the NPF to the Village Hall Improvement Project, as a short term achievable project, subject to the NP fund being reinstated once the JLP has been adopted.
3. **General Improvement Funds** - £862.11 – Remaining Pavilion Improvement Funds allocated to improving the lighting/signage/guttering and CCTV access at Blackhouse Lane.
4. **Cornard United Roof Repairs -** £680.29 **–** Roof Repairs completed. Remaining funds to be used for further improvements to the Clubhouse.

**General Funds £3,611.73**

1. Defibrillator Fund £2,288 – Allocated to a new defibrillator in the Applegate Mews area and to cover the cost of consumables. Further funds to be considered in FY24/25 Budget.
2. St. Andrew’s Church Clock - £1,167.52 – Following the clock’s last service, it was suggested that it might benefit from the installation of a new Pendulum Regulator for automatic regulation of the clock. The cost is estimated to be £2,297. As the clock appears to be working fine at the moment, this has not yet been considered by the Council. To continue to build funds for future repairs/maintenance to the clock. Additional funds to be considered in FY24/25 Budget.
3. Election Fund £156.21 - To start to rebuild Election funds from FY24/25 Budget onwards.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Summary of remaining Earmarked Funds from completed projects to be vired**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Vired Funds** | **Total** |
| **Commemorative Bench Fund** | **£2,585.38** | **£50.00** | **£2,635.38** |
| **Country Park Signs** | **£2000.00** | **£414.60** | **£2,414.60** |
| **TSC Car Park and Drainage Improvement Fund** | **£47,560.50** | **£5,004.84** | **£52,565.34** |

**Summary of Recommendations for the Virement of FY22-23 Unallocated General Reserves of £7,628.14**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **FY22-23 Unalloc. General Reserves** | **TOTAL** |
| **Remainder of Great Cornard Swimming Pool Grant** | **£0.00** | **£2,350.00** | **£2,350.00** |
| **Great Cornard Country Park** | **£2,414.60** | **£745.40** | **£3,160.00** |
| **Village Hall Improvement Fund** | **£65,641.26** | **£4,532.74** | **£70,174.00** |
|  | **TOTAL** | **£7,628.14** |  |

**Proposed allocation of FY23/24 Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy:**



The Parish Council did not receive any Neighbourhood CIL Payments in April 2023 for the period covering 1st October 2022 to 31st March 2023. Whilst Babergh’s Neighbourhood CIL Payments does show some potential CIL payments in hand, it is difficult to assess when these will be paid over. The next Neighbourhood CIL Payment date is October 2023.

Following last year’s traveller incursion, the Parish Council agreed to improve security on Parish Council owned land and subsequently carried out improvement works to the Recreation Ground. The Council agreed to allocate CIL funds to carry out the security improvements and any remaining funds would be allocated to the Street Light Fund, so further works to Phase 1 of the Street Light Improvement Project could be instructed.

If the remaining CIL Funds of £18,924.15 are allocated to the Street Light Fund this would give a total of £29,941.15 to instruct the next phase of works.

