

23rd July 2024

Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the **FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham from 7.30pm to 9.27pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr M Gee

Councillors: Cllrs R Comber, S Gurney, K Malvern, H Richards.

IN ATTENDANCE

RFO: Lisa Davison

Town Clerk: Katy Hughes

Two representatives from Wokingham Horticultural Association (until 8.03pm)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr B Alvi, Cllr B Callender and Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr S Gurney declared an interest in agenda item 5 (WHA Funding Request) as a member of the organisation. Cllr M Gee advised that no votes were to be taken on the matter at the meeting and that her input to the discussion would be valuable.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OR THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

None other than the request by WHA (item 5).

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr S Gurney and it was

that the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on 18th June 2024, pages 17001 to 17012 be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous.

WOKINGHAM HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION (WHA) FUNDING REQUEST (Agenda Item 5)

The WHA Treasurer and a WHA committee member attended on behalf of WHA and verbally presented their funding request for £30,000 of a £70,000 project to repair and refurbish the trading store situated at Ormonde Road allotment site. The building is in need of urgent repairs to continue with existing activities and, by meeting legislative requirements, would be able to offer its use to other parties.

Initially a survey carried out by Allcotts determined the roof of the store, and possibly the concrete walls, contained asbestos and the project would cost an estimated £80,000. The WHA committee decided to proceed and appointed

**RESOLVED
30900**

CHAIR INITIALS _____



Iconic as their building manager for the project. An alternative solution has been agreed for the roof and it is to be coated with bitumen to seal in the asbestos and make it watertight – this would give the roof an estimated life of 30-35 years.

Iconic, together with surveyors have provided a current estimate of the following costs totalling £70,000.

- Roof replacement £20,000 (including coating of bitumen)
- Concrete panel repair £12,000
- Internal refurbishment £28,000
- External drainage £3,180
- Contingency £6,820

The WHA have development funds of £20,000 available and in addition to WTC, National Lottery are to be approached with a funding request for the remaining £20,000.

The committee asked the representatives questions and the following replies were received:-

- An up to date estimate of costs to be provided for the next F&P committee meeting on 24th September against which a decision will be made
- Confirmation that Iconic's fees are being funded separately
- Evaluation of impact of the project on all neighbours will be carried out
- Confirmation that the site is not impacted by the Network Rail bridge
- If the National Lottery funding request is not granted, the members of WHA could undertake some of the internal refurbishment works to ensure that the inside was warm, dry, and suitable for use by WTC's Allotment Officer / Bloom team.

The committee discussed and considered that the project could be funded by CIL rather than a grant. The clerk confirmed that the project would meet CIL funding criteria of being an upgrade to community infrastructure that benefitting the wider community and that the space could be further utilised by other groups. Members noted that the committee would consider how the project would be funded and how the resolution could be worded at a future meeting.

The next steps to progress the funding request were agreed:-

- WHA to determine the next iteration of the costs for the next F&P meeting
- Facilitate a meeting between councillors and Iconic on site - the Town Clerk to collate and advise potential dates for a visit in early September
- WHA to meet with the Town Clerk to determine what the Town Council's requirements would be for using the internal space
- WHA to come back with options regarding sub-leasing of space to WTC

Two representatives from WHA left the meeting at 8.03pm

CHAIR INITIALS _____



ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (Agenda Item 6)

The Town Clerk reported that the Council received a Freedom of Information request for all spend greater than £250 and justification for that spend, including any charitable donations for the last two financial years. The request also asked for any declarations of interest by officers over the last 12 months. The FOI request is complete with a list of payments between £250 and £500 and a referral to the council's website to payment lists showing all spend in excess of £500, as it is already available. The council do not record justification for spend nor does it require officers to declare interest and therefore, under FOI guidelines, it is not required to provide data it does not already have. Cllr M Gee enquired whether the council publishes its FOI requests and the Town Clerk was asked to follow this up and to provide a procedure for responding to FOI requests for consideration by the committee.

The following lists of payments from the F&GP and the Clerk's Drawing Accounts were received. Cllr R Comber asked for information on an item listed as "£12,000 correction" against the Clerks drawing account. The RFO was asked to clarify and respond to the committee.

It was proposed by Cllr R Comber and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

**RESOLVED
30901**

to approve:

- (a) The list of costs from 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024 totalling the sum of £169,241.05 paid from the F&GP Account, this includes £50,167.79 transferred to the Clerk's Account
- (b) The list of costs from 1st June 2024 to 30th June 2024 totalling the sum of £53,057.16 paid from the Clerk's Drawing Account

FINANCIAL REPORTS (Agenda Item 7)

The RFO gave a verbal report on the following financial reports which were received and noted:

- (a) Income and Expenditure to 30th June 2024.
- (b) Balance Sheet as at 30th June 2024.
- (c) Revenue monitoring report to 30th June 2024.

The RFO reported all council's insurance policies have been renewed and that the sum of these will exceed the annual budget due to the inclusion of civic regalia and artworks on the council's insurance policy. The Town Clerk advised that there could be a further overspend depending on the outcome of the Town Hall reinstatement valuation which is due to be undertaken early in August 2024. In the event that the valuation varies from our current insured value, we would look to revise our policy accordingly. The committee also noted that some of the insurance is re-charged to tenants of the building.

Cllr R Comber requested that the income and expenditure reports should include a column for the year end projection. The reports are those generated by the accounting software. The RFO was asked to investigate adding this information.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



Cllr M Gee observed that the general reserve is not needed as the emergency reserve covers the equivalent of 3 months' of costs. The Town Clerk confirmed that the council precept £8,500 per annum to cover the costs of the normal election cycle but could transfer additional funds from the general reserve for in-year unplanned election costs.

The Town Clerk also confirmed that predictions for Town Hall repairs and playground maintenance are being prepared. These will be checked to ensure current reserves are sufficient or whether these costs will need to be precepted.

Cllr S Gurney also observed that an agreed reserve of £8,000 for a new mayoral chain requires setting up.

INVESTMENT UPDATE (Agenda Item 8)

The RFO reported that the value of the CCLA Local Authority Property Fund (LAPF) mid-value at 30th June 2024 is £91,350.37 and remains the same as reported for 31st May 2024.

The RFO confirmed that the committee are to consider the remaining LAPF balance and other opportunities to invest at the meeting on 24th September 2024.

CIL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda item 9)

- (a) Members received a report detailing the latest information received from WBC regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- (b) The Clerk informed the committee that the invoice for the fire doors at Woosehill is now paid and that the next report will show this as spend against the remaining October 2022 balance of funds.

ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE IN-YEAR FUNDING REQUESTS (Agenda item 10)

- (a) Cllr M Gee reported on the request from the Arts and Culture Committee for additional Party in the Park (PITP) budget for 2025-6 to £73,640

(2024-5 £67,245; +£6,395 (+9.5%) to be precepted). Cllr M Gee reported that the Arts and Culture inflation index varies between 11-14%, a different value to general inflation.

Further to an inflationary cost increase, at a follow-up meeting after the 2024 event with the council's event contractor, Yes Events, a recommendation was made to budget for an increase in the number of security personnel due to increasing attendance numbers and reports of incidents relating to underage drinking being dealt with.

The increase in total budget is not to commit to an additional spend but to provide the Arts and Culture Officer with a budget to work within which enables her to negotiate with the company that provide the event on behalf of the council. The committee also noted that Yes Events review their prices annually on 1st September and that the price for the 2025 event would be held if booked before that date.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



- (b) Cllr M Gee reported on the request from the Arts and Culture Committee for additional in-year funding for the Lunar New Year event in 2025 to new budget of £11,950 (current 2024-5 £10,450; +£1,500 +14.4% to be funded by reserves). This is to cover a bigger stage and increased set up costs and enables the Arts and Culture Officer to confirm bookings for the event.
- (c) Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr H Richards and members

that the PITP budget for 2025-6 be increased by £6,395 and Lunar New Year 2025 2024-5 budget be increased by £1,500.

**RESOLVED
30902**

A vote was taken. Four members voted in favour, one member abstained from voting.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE IN-YEAR FUNDING REQUEST (Agenda item 11)

The Town Clerk reported on TC Report 18/2024 that the request is being made due to Health and Safety issues arising from loose and uneven flagstones at Howard Palmer Gardens (HPG) and their risk of causing injury. The works were identified during discussions for setting the 2024-5 Budget but withdrawn due to the extent of costs and other demands on expenditure.

Increasing sums are being spent on repairs and, if an in-year request is not approved, it is likely to become a budget request for 2025-6. Approving the £90,000 spend now means avoiding £16,000 repairs this year and that works can be undertaken during the autumn of 2024-5 rather than a year later or having to close the park for the summer.

It was confirmed that an engineer's report would be obtained to ensure an area of the new surface would be able to cope with the weight of vehicles

If the council agrees in principle to the spend, then an engineer's report, plan of works and quotes for the work would be sought to gain a more accurate price.

The Grounds and Bloom Officer has requested the opportunity to investigate installing additional water and electricity points to make better use of HPG as an entertainment and activity space.

Cllr M Gee requested that, as for building play equipment reserves, another reserve should be set up for refurbishment/ replacement works in all parks too.

Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

**RESOLVED
30903**

to fund from general reserves in the current financial year an amount of £90,000 to comprehensively resurface the flagstone surface at HPG. It was agreed that should the committee decide to reallocate funds from CIL to cover all or part of this fund it would be taken to full council.

COUNCIL GRANT SCHEMES (Agenda item 12)

CHAIR INITIALS _____



The Town Clerk presented the updates to the council's main grants policy (appendices 12(a) to 12(f)) following circulation to and receipt of feedback from committee members. The recommended changes were read out by the Town Clerk and agreed to/ adjusted by the members of the committee.

The members discussed the Culture and Community grants policy and agreed to amend Eligibility s3.5 to "salary costs unrelated to this application".

**RESOLVED
30904**

- (a) Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr R Comber and seconded by Cllr K Malvern and it was

to approve the updates to the council main grant policy document.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

- (b) A scoring mechanism to trial was received by members.

- (c) An updated application form was received by members.

- (d) Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr R Comber and it was

**RESOLVED
30905**

to recommend the grants budget for 2025-6 be set at a maximum of 10% of the current year's precept (£122,727) to include a sum for the council's in-year Culture and Community Grant Fund.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous.

- (e) Members noted the proposed period for receiving grant applications.

- (f) Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

**RESOLVED
30906**

to approve amendments to the Culture and Community Grant Fund Policy and note the proposed launch alongside the council's main grant scheme.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda item 13)

- (a) None.

- (b) To launch the Culture and Community Grant and opening of the main grants process.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 14)

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee, seconded by Cllr R Comber and it was

**RESOLVED
30907**

that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e. commercial, financial and personnel, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



A vote was taken and it was unanimous

The RFO left the meeting at 9:06pm

STAFFING UPDATE (Agenda Item 15)

- a) The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on staffing matters.
- b) Members received and discussed the Town Clerk's confidential report TC16B/2024. It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

**RESOLVED
30908**

To approve the recommendation from the Town Clerk on staff remuneration. Members expressed gratitude and appreciation to the member of staff for their hard work.

The Town Clerk noted a review of related policies and procedures will be undertaken.

The meeting ended at 9.27pm

CHAIR INITIALS _____



F & P and Current Accounts

List of Payments made between 01/06/2024 and 30/06/2024

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	3,085.00		Town Hall Chambers 2104329
05/06/2024	O2	DDR 050624	342.98		30614279/O2
06/06/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	Top Up LD	18,067.79		Main to Clerks
07/06/2024	Google Ireland Limited	DDR 070624	49.35		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
08/06/2024	Alliance CFM Limited	Std Ord	132.00		TH heating contract
08/06/2024	Alliance CFM Limited	Std Ord	60.00		WH Heating contract
08/06/2024	Hiscock	Std Ord	2,402.00		WTC insurance payment
08/06/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	Imprest	30,000.00		Main to Clerks
10/06/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 100624	44.00		010034750524/Barclaycard Comm
11/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5031	BACS Pymnt	70,711.78		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5031
12/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5036	BACS Pymnt	8,231.60		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5036
14/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5038	BACS Pymnt	5,630.80		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5038
16/06/2024	SAGE	Std Ord	66.00		Payroll
17/06/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 170624	1,942.14		E0400RWZSP/Barclaycard Com
17/06/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 170624	79.46		10002442874/Castle Water Limit
18/06/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	Clerks top	12,000.00		Correction 180624
18/06/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 180624	26.82		10002505779/Castle Water Limit
18/06/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	iportal tx	100.00		iportal tx test
19/06/2024	Grenke Leasing Limited	Std Ord	168.00		Copier - admin fee (to be ref)
19/06/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 190624	59.31		341938866/24/Total Gas & Power
19/06/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 1906	121.80		341938657/24/Total Gas & Power
19/06/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 190624	4.52		10002540383/Castle Water Limit
25/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5043	BACS Pymnt	2,529.46		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5043
26/06/2024	ARVAL	DD	599.24		HK72 FNE WO7317
27/06/2024	HMRC	BACS	9,488.62		HMRC
28/06/2024	Focus Group	DCR 2806	134.09		6827262/Focus Group
28/06/2024	Focus Group	DCR 280624	921.59		6827417/Focus Group
30/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5048	BACS Pymnt	2,242.70		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5048
		Total Payments	169,241.05		

CHAIR INITIALS _____



Clerk's Drawings Account

List of Payments made between 01/06/2024 and 30/06/2024

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
01/06/2024	Peninsula	Std Ord	167.44		HR support
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	337.00		Market tolls 1016075
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	352.00		Woosehill 101493X
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	329.00		Info Centre TH 1045161
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	259.00		Town Hall Chambers 2035191
01/06/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	250.00		Town Hall Chambers 2239762
03/06/2024	STAFF	BACS	17.85		STAFF
04/06/2024	CHQ	CHQ 302637	100.00		CHQ
11/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5032	BACS Pymnt	4,283.94		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5032
12/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5034	BACS Pymnt	4,426.74		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5034
13/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5037	BACS Pymnt	577.80		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5037
14/06/2024	June Salary	BACS	30,656.41		June Salary
15/06/2024	STAFF BLOOM	DD STAFFB	410.10		STAFF BLOOM DD
18/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5039	BACS Pymnt	5,187.64		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5039
19/06/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 190624	16.15		10002536071/Castle Water Limit
20/06/2024	DD STAFF SLREF	BACS	242.50		DD STAFF SLREF
25/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5042	BACS Pymnt	3,169.16		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5042
27/06/2024	Bloom Staff	BACS	88.20		Bloom Staff
30/06/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5049	BACS Pymnt	2,186.23		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 5049
		Total Payments	53,057.16		

CHAIR INITIALS _____

