

TIBBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF STRATEGY and FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2023, 7.30PM at

TIBBERTON PARISH HALL, PLOUGH ROAD, WR9 7NQ.

Committee Members present: Cllr Robbie Hazlehurst, Chair
Cllr Liz Morton
Cllr Helen Savage

Committee Members absent: Cllr Trevor Knight

In attendance: Rachel Hinton-Jones, Clerk & responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

1. Chair's welcome.

All were welcomed to the meeting.

2. To receive and note apologies for absence. Apologies received from Cllr Trevor Knight.

3. Declarations of interest.

Cllr H Savage declared a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) on the grounds that she is the Chair of the New Village Hall.

4. Written requests for dispensation.

No requests for dispensation had been received.

5. To hear from members of the public. No public members present.

6. To agree the minutes of the previous committee meeting held 02/08/2023.

The minutes of the meeting held 02/08/2023 were **AGREED** a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

7. To discuss and recommend where appropriate:

A. The SmartWater project and recommend uptake.

To update on the position of purchase of SmartWater following the presentation to the council meeting on 20/07/2023, for ratification of full council:

Approval to spend £1,481.85 on SmartWater and agree how it is to be rolled out to the

community. Details for the roll out of the kits to each household would be firmed up in due course and led by Rich Minor and the Neighbourhood watch scheme. Order currently in progress and will be fully funded by the CIL budget.

A. Solar Powered vehicle-speed warning indicators.

The Chair reported that the county councillor has offered to purchase a solar-powered vehicle-speed warning indicator for Tibberton. The original position proposed is unsuitable, and currently looking at alternative position.

A meeting is to be arranged between members of this council and the county councillor.

8. To review the Asset Register.

A template had been prepared which would be built upon to represent a complete picture of the community's public assets, not only those owned by the parish council. In progress and to be shared at the next Strategy & Finance meeting on 9th November 2023.

9. Appointment of Lengthsman.

Update on works that have been identified as priority and currently being undertaken by Jeremy Moore. To be updated and shared at the next parish Council Meeting on 19th October 2023. Noted that there have been positive comments and feedback on how tidy the village is now looking, and a thank you to Jeremy Moore for all his hard work to date.

(attached pp 7 -11).

10. To review the following policies:

- a) **Reserves Policy, AGREED.** To identify the total legal fees costs to date. (attached pp 12 - 13).
- b) **Training Policy,** to be reviewed at the next meeting on 9th November 2023.
- c) **Financial Regulations,** To increase the values for Payments under contracts for building or other construction works, stores and equipment within the policy: TIBBERTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS. Date adopted June 2023. To be agreed at the next council meeting on 19th October 2023.

11. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Action Plan.

The internal Auditor's recommendations, numbered 1 – 5, were reviewed:

Recommendation 1. The Council undertake a comprehensive review of its financial control systems, introducing arrangements that ensure there is:

- effective controls to manage the Councils financial risks.
- compliance with the Councils Financial Regulations.

The Council develops policies and associated process appropriate to the Councils size and its activities in support of its governance and administration arrangements.

It was AGREED to continue to monitor risk throughout the year and carry out six-monthly reviews, with the next one in December.

Recommendation 2. The Council formally establishes its position in respect of the 'old' Village Hall and respond appropriately.

It was AGREED to review all documents available and contact relevant bodies to sort out the confusion over ownership.

Recommendation 3. The Council has recently introduced risk management arrangements, during 2023-24 the control processes need to be fully established with the effectiveness of those controls, and compliance with them, being assured, evidenced, and reported. **It was AGREED** to attend to this in December and develop risk logs for all risks, Low Medium and High.

Recommendation 4. The Council introduce a Reserves policy that identifies earmarked reserves (for specific projects and specific projected costs) with the balance being held as general reserves. The general reserves being set in the policy (a percentage of the years expenditure, see JPAG guidance). The level of reserves should be a factor when setting the coming year's budget and precept.

It was AGREED to adopt the policy attached.

Recommendation 5. The Council reviews its Asset Register and the arrangements operating to ensure the effective management of its assets, including inspections and associated record keeping.

It was noted and in progress. To be shared at the next meeting on 9th November 2023.

Arising from the responses provided in the AGAR Annual Governance Statement, the council had undertaken to contract-out payroll. Three Counties Payroll are **now** appointed to undertake the monthly payroll duties for an initial period of one year. They will be asked to rectify the outstanding matters relating to the council's PAYE returns since July 2015.

On the matter of sector-specific bookkeeping software, **it was AGREED** to defer any decision on this whilst the new Clerk gets acquainted with the current bookkeeping system.

Cllr Liz Morton appointed to review bank reconciliations quarterly to apply and provide further compliance with the Unity trust Bank transactions.

It was noted the next council meeting 9th November 2023 will be required to appoint the Internal Auditor for the 2023/24 financial year.

12. To discuss the budget for three years 2024 – 2027.

a) To plan budget setting meeting, Date TBC. Copy of 2023 budget attached for reference, page 14. Date of 4th December 2023 @6pm **AGREED**, diary invite to be sent.

b) Review Building Society position which currently has a balance of £6,310.00. Signatory forms issued from the Cambridge building society to close account. Cllr Helen Savage to obtain from all 3 parties. Cllr Robbie Hazelhurst to obtain a date when these funds were gifted by the Tibberton

Singers, to support the recommendation to the Council for the purchase of a sound system for the New Village Hall.

c) Following the 1st Neighbourhood Planning meeting on 9th October 2023, to propose a set up budget for 2023/24 of £2k to support the working group to appoint a consultant to progress this work. **AGREED**

13. New Village Hall update.

- a) **Lease revision.** Members of both Tibberton Community Land Trust (TCLT) and the parish council had met to discuss progress to date. The council's solicitor has now drafted a clean document and has been issued to the TCLT's solicitor for signing.
- b) **Start-up budget.** The TCLT has applied for funding from the Wychavon Rural Fund to add to the £25,000 promised from the old village hall funds and its own funds of £5,000. The Parish Council has committed match funding of £8.1k. Now at stage 2 for the decision by Wychavon, expected outcome by the end of October 2023.
- c) **Works required pre-handover to TCLT.** It was noted there were some matters that required attention from the original builder before the building could be handed over. Works have been identified and now in progress. Installation of hand dryers by Black Pear Electrical was **AGREED**. All outstanding maintenance works to be identified and undertaken, list to be provided at the next meeting on 9th November 2023 for clarity of costs.

14. Identify possible applicants for the Wychavon Rural Fund. Next steps-awaiting decision on application from the rural fund, now at stage 2.

15. Items for discussion at next meeting. To be advised.

16. Date and time of next meeting.

Thursday 9th November 2023 @ 7:30pm

This meeting ended at 9.00pm.

Signed as a true record:

Date:

Agenda item 9

	Report on various issues to be found in Tibberton parish					
	*Priority is obviously an opinion and up for discussion					
	Abbreviations: WCH = Worcestershire County Council Highways, ROW = Worcestershire County Council Public Rights of Way, PC = Tibberton Parish Council, L/man = Lengthsman					
<u>Item no.</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>ROW number(s)</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Priority</u> *	<u>Responsibility</u>
1	Plough Road off	No kissing gate	522 (C)	There is a gate here and it is perfectly usable.	Low	ROW
	Pershire Lane					
2	Plough Road off	No kissing gate	553 (C)	The ROW is perfectly usable as is.	Low	ROW
	Pershire Lane					
3	Plough Road/	Signs		1. Get temporary A boards with "Weak	High	WCH

				Bridge, 3 ton limit" as soon as possible.		
	Crowle Road junc.			2. Install correct permanent signs of the above on BOTH sides of the road.		
4	Plough Road/	ROW signs	529 (C)	A single post for both footpaths to be installed at the reference given.	Low	ROW
	Ash Lane junction		551 (C)	Ash Lane 529 (C) has no stile or kissing gate but is perfectly usable.		
5	Plough Road	Narrow footway		Footway wants edging out and hedge cutting back. It's unlikely that the required	High	L/man
				1.2m footway width will be there.		
6	Plough Road	Hedge wants cutting back		Contractor required to flail along here as it is too difficult on a logistical or safety	High	WCH/PC
				front for the lengthsman to do. If WCH are slow/reluctant to do this then the PC		
				could consider hiring a contractor? Get the owner of Courtend Farm to do it as the		
				(presumed) adjacent land owner for free?		
7	Back Church Lane	ROW signs and waymarking	547 (C)	No signpost for these footpaths and 552 (C) has no waymarking	Low	ROW
			552 (C)			
8	Church Lane	ROW sign	544 (C)	No signpost for footpath through Gordans Farm	Low	ROW

9	Church Lane	ROW sign	549 (C)	No signpost for the footpath here and it looks like the ROW doesn't actually exist on the ground	Medium	ROW
10	Hawthorn Rise	Gritsalt box			Low	WCH/PC
11	Evelench Lane	ROW sign	519 (C)	Evelench Lane beyond the village hall appears to be unadopted and comprises		
				of 2 rights of way 519 (C) and 520 (C) presumably running over an easement (?)		
12	Evelench Lane	Missing ROW	516 (C)	No sign, kissing gate or waymarking but the footpath is perfectly usable through	Low	ROW
				a gate		
13	Plough Road	Kerb sweeper		Both sides of Plough Road from the entrance to Courtend Farm to Foredraught	High	WCH
				Lane		
14	Plough Road	HGV signs		Unsuitable for HGVs signs to be placed somewhere e.g. Foredraught Lane/Plough	High	WCH
				Road junction so a HGV can reverse into Foredraught Lane? Obviously this is not		
				an ideal scenario but the buses do this and with the (presumed) development of		
				Plough Meadow it affords more protection for the		

				bridge. Is there anything		
				stopping the installation of these signs at the Plough Road/Crowle Road junction?		
15	Plough Road	Gritsalt box for bridge		Some additional protection for the bridge. Generally waterways etc. are at the	High	WCH/PC
				lowest point around and can be "frost pockets".		
16	Foredraught Lane	Hedge wants cutting back		See item 6.	Medium	WCH/PC
17	Plough Lane	Missing ROWs	503 (C)	Missing signage and kissing gate for these footpaths. In fact, it would be very	Low	ROW/PC
			504 (C)	difficult to do so bearing in mind location. Suggest these rights of way be legally		
				diverted to come out on Plough Lane at option.way.streaking In any case it		
				appears to be informally so with 503 (C) already. 504 (C) which runs beside		
				the canal, doesn't appear to exist at all. This could be diverted down the track to		
				the property Marl Bank. A ROW signpost would be needed near the above		
				location		

16	Plough Lane	Signage		1. Restore the temporary A board to the M5 side that currently resides broken in the adjacent hedge. 2. Erect new weak bridge signs with the correct 3 ton limit.	High	WCH
19	Plough Lane	Deep grips		A number of deep grips on the M5 side of Plough Lane that may be of hazard to vehicles entering the verge. The "worst" of these could have bollards around them. They would be an inconvenience to undertakes the verge cut	Low	WCH

TIBBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Reserves Policy

Date agreed	12/10/2023	
Date of review	09/2024	

1. INTRODUCTION

Tibberton Parish Council is expected to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the expenditure identified during the budget-setting process and to cope with possible emergency expenditure as and when it arises. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the council will determine and review its reserves.

2. POLICY GUIDANCE

For relevant guidance, the council refers to the Governance & Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners Guide 2023 which states at paragraphs:

1.13 Reserves — The authority needs to have regard to the need to put in place a General Reserve Policy and have reviewed the level and purpose of all Earmarked Reserves (EMRs).

5.28 Most authority reserves are held in instant or notice bank accounts or other short-term investments. Occasionally, circumstances necessitate authorities to make other types of investment, for example when saving for a future capital project or while deciding how to apply the proceeds of an asset sale or a donation.

5.30 As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (general and earmarked) to finance both their day-to-day operations and future plans.

5.31. Smaller authorities have no specific right to accumulate funds via the precept. All reserves should be reviewed and justified regularly (i.e. at least annually). It is good practice to transparently publish both the level and rationale of all reserves.

5.38. There is, in practice, no upper or lower limit to EMRs or Capital Receipts Reserves save only that they must be held for genuine and identifiable purposes and projects, and their level should be subject to regular review and justification (at least annually and at budget setting) and should be separately identified and enumerated. Significant levels of EMRs in particular may give rise to enquiries from internal and/or external auditors.

5.199. As authorities have no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or for specifically earmarked purposes, whenever an authority's year-end general reserve is significantly higher than the annual precept or rates and special levies, an explanation should be provided to the auditor.

3. THE POLICY

Tibberton Parish Council agrees to follow the guidance in the Practitioners' Guide and in particular as set out in paragraph 2 above.

Reserves are categorised as follows:

A. Specific/Earmarked Reserves (EMRs)

Funding that is set aside for known or predicted liabilities and specific items of expenditure, which can be built up over a number of years to reduce the impact of any significant expenditure in one year. These reserves will be realistic and approved by the council.

Earmarked Funds to 31/03/2024, as below, totalling £83,409.12 + TBA:

- Landscaping at new village hall £20,000.00
- Completion of new village hall support (includes legal fees) £60,641.56
- CIL funding available 2019/20 £54.15
- CIL funding available 2021/22 £2,018.44
- CIL funding available 2023/24 £694.97

- Neighbourhood Plan budget for 2023/24 TBA
- In addition, the council will establish a fund to allow for an effective programme for the replacement of assets. TBA

Prior to identification of actual expenditure, these funds may be invested in keeping with the council's Investment Policy to ensure they provide a return whilst awaiting draw-down.

B. General Fund.

This is the 'working balance' required during the year for day-to-day expenditure. A slight surplus in this fund will help to cover uneven cash flows and avoid temporary borrowing in the event of, say, late arrival of precept.

The level of general reserves should not be significantly higher than the annual precept thus the amount held will be between three- and twelve-months' expenditure budget.

The General Fund amount will be risk assessed annually and approved by the council.

For the remainder of 2023/24 the General Fund will be £26,000.

C. Contingency Fund.

This is the amount held in reserve to help the council cope with any unexpected events or emergencies and includes for the possibility of:

- Unexpected challenge such as audit.
- A contested election or bye-election.
- Clerk illness.
- Cover for short term cash flow issues.
- Essential repairs/maintenance.
- Unexpected administration duties.
- Employment obligations.

For the remainder of 2023/24 the Contingency Fund will be £10,000.

