



Minutes of a meeting of Cold Ash Parish Council Finance & General Purposes Committee on Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7pm In the Acland Committee Room

Present: Cllr Adams (PA), Cllr Codling (HC) and Cllr Fenner (MF),
In attendance: Rosie Jardine (Clerk)

- 1** **Dispensations to allow Councillors to discuss matters pertaining to the Precept**
With the authority granted to her, the Clerk granted dispensations to Councillors to discuss matters pertaining to the Precept.
- 2** **Election of Chairman**
PA was unanimously elected as Chairman
- 3** **Apologies for Absence**
There were no apologies for absence
- 4** **Declarations of Interest**
There were no Declarations of Interest
- 5** **Minutes**
Minutes of the meeting held on 30.11.22 were signed and approved as a correct record.
- 6** **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
There were no matters arising from the minutes
- 7** **Charity Return**
Clerk to report an update on new processes for the new financial year
Members discussed the recommendation from the Internal Auditor that all Poor's Charity business should be conducted separately from Council business including but not limited to independent bookkeeping and committee meetings. It was agreed that advice should be sought to identify if there is an alternative approach whilst ensuring both Council and Charity are compliant.
RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL to discuss future administration of the Charity considering both the Auditors' reports and recommendations as well as the fact that the Council has fully administered the Charity thus far. The Committee proposes to use HALC for legal advice (one hour free but subsequently chargeable) to establish whether the full separation of the Charity business from the Council is in fact required or if there is an alternative, simpler way, including potentially winding up the Charity. Council is asked to consider and approve spending in principle on legal advice from HALC before further work is undertaken
ACTION Clerk to make contact with HALC to establish potential charges for legal advice and to include for Council discussion 14.11.23
- 8** **Cold Ash Parish Council Fees & Charges**
Members to discuss fees and charges and propose any changes
Charges to Hirers of Recreation Ground 2023

Description	Current	Proposed
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	Football Clubs (Cold Ash Boys & Girls)	£40.00/date	£45.00/date
ACTION	Clerk to enquire about overall usage including training		
	Football Clubs – Adults (no usage at present)	£30.00/game	£60.00/game
	Cold Ash & Ashmore Green Cricket Club	£30.00/game (weekend)	£45.00/game (weekend)
ACTION	Clerk to enquire if the Club has officially wound up and if items are stored in the Rifle Shed		
		£15.00/game (weekday)	£30.00/game (weekday)
	Cold Ash Tennis Club – court maintenance (Parish Council pays £750.00 into same fund)	£1500.00 p/a	£1500.00 p/a
	Pelham Fair	£300.00/visit	Remove
	Casual Hirers (e.g. Brass on the Grass)	£15.00 p/h	Redefine
	Casual Community Hire		£15 p/h
	Casual Private or Commercial Hire		Price on application
	Peppercorn Rental (Pre School, Hort. Society & Tennis Pavilion)	£1.00 p/a	£1.00 p/a
	Storage - the football clubs and cricket club share a space	£25.00 p/a	£25.00 p/a
	Allotments		
	Johnson's Lane	£20.00 p/a	£20.00 p/a
	The Ridge & Gladstone Lane	£20.00+£15.00 water p/a	£20.00+£15.00 water p/a
	Grazing field 1	£150.00 p/a	TBA
	Grazing field 3	£60 p/a	TBA

It was agreed that Allotment fees should be reviewed with consideration given to actual water usage at a later date.

It was agreed that Glebeland Cemetery fees would be reviewed at a later date.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL to adopt the amended Fees & Charges schedule for 2024-2025

ACTION Clerk to liaise with Cllr McArdle regarding grazing field fees.

9 Online Banking

Members to discuss online banking to replace cheques and telephone banking – Clerk's report to follow

The Clerk reported a proposed process to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL to apply for online banking with the Council's existing banking provider, The Co-Operative Bank, for a trial period to assess satisfactory function. It may be necessary to consider an alternative banking provider in the future.

10 Draft Budget

Members are invited to discuss the first draft of a budget for 2024/2025, prepared by the Clerk/RFO with commentary, and discuss proposed additions

Members discussed the following budget items

Budget line	Item	23/24 Budget	23/24 Pred. Spend	24/25 Budget
2	Clerk Training	500.00	0.00	500.00
ACTION 17	Mileage	50.00	TBA	50.00

ACTION Clerk to update figures to include CiLCA in addition to desired webinars, courses

ACTION Clerk to update 24/25 budget to include mileage reclaim for noticeboards
 22 Hire of Premises 800.00 800.00 800.00

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL To discuss cost saving for this budget line by returning to one meeting per month and relocating meeting back to the Committee Room as pre-Covid

ACTION Clerk to include for discussion on 14.11.23 agenda and prepare according budget figures to facilitate discussion

New Office 365 sub 0.00 51.50 123.60

ACTION Clerk to update 24/25 budget to include one member subscription

New Finance Software 0.00 0.00 756.00

The Clerk reported on 3 potential suppliers of Finance Software following recommendations by fellow Clerks and the Internal Auditor. Members were satisfied with the Clerk's recommendation to subscribe to Scribe from April 2024 in principle but wish to await advice and a Council decision regarding the administration of the Poor's Charity before setting the budget. The 24/25 budget figure includes £99.00 towards a ledger specifically for the Charity.

ACTION Discuss at next meeting of this Committee 6.12.23

33 Grants 1250.00 0.00 1250.00

MF suggested grants funds could be used to support a Warm Spaces initiative in the parish. The question was also raised, should Council publicise the availability of grants?

34 Remembrance Day Wreath 50.00 50.00 50.00

The Clerk advised the budget includes the cost of a wreath from the national RBL which is then marked up with a donation to total £50.00

ACTION Clerk to amend the budget to reflect the expected cost of a wreath and to order from a local RBL branch in future.

34b Libraries Cont. 2500.00 2500.00 2500.00

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL to discuss and resolve, if appropriate, a 2024-2025 contribution to the West Berkshire Libraries Service

57 Tennis Court Maint. Fund 750.00 750.00 750.00

Members discussed the possible reduction of contributions by Council as above and the Club of £1500.00 given that a refurb was recently undertaken.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL It was proposed that contributions should remain the same to generate reserves for use in case of repairs in the near future (eg if the coming winter causes any frost damage).

New Local Implementation of NDP 0.00 0.00

Members discussed the addition of a budget line to facilitate the local implementation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL To discuss a budget for this new budget line at Council.

ACTION Clerk to include for discussion on 14.11.23 agenda

68 Contribution to Reserves 1430.96 1430.96 1500.00

HC proposed that seed funding should be considered to fund future projects such as improvements to the play areas. Further discussion needed.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Chairman

Date