



MINUTES of the **FINANCE WORKING GROUP** of Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council held on **3rd January 2024**, via Zoom.

Please note: - These minutes are to be read in conjunction with Budget Forecast Comparison spreadsheet at end of Quarter Three published on the Parish Council's [website](#).

Present Cllr. Phil Colmer (Finance Committee Chair); Cllr. Paul Jordan (Chair of the Parish Council); Cllr. Rick Robinson; Cllr. Nicholas Taylor; Cllr. Andrew Woolf and Catherine Nutting (Clerk & RFO); Jane Bromley (incoming Clerk & RFO).

1. Apologies for absence & housekeeping

None.

2. Disclosure of interests

None.

3. Minutes

The Working Group (FWG) did not raise any issues with the Finance Committee minutes dated 11th October 2023.

4. Public participation

Not applicable.

5. VAT – Qtr. 3

The FWG **ACKNOWLEDGED** the end of Qtr. 3 **HMRC VAT RECLAIM** for the period 01.10.2023 – 31.12.2023 for £323.71.

6. Verification of bank reconciliations for Qtr. 3 (October – December 2023)

The FWG **ACKNOWLEDGED** the bank statements, corresponding reconciliation statements, cash book and balance sheet for quarter 3 and did not raise any issues or concerns to be brought to the attention of the Committee. These documents to be **COMMENDED** to the Committee to sign.

7. [2023/24 Budget Forecast Comparison spreadsheet](#)

The FWG **REVIEWED** the Budget Forecast Comparison spreadsheet at Quarter 3 and **NOTED** the movements since quarter 2, highlighted blue in Column N.

The FWG **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Committee: -

- The 'Crouchlands Development Planning Consultancy' reserve (Line 137, Column L) should increase to £15,450 to account for the £2,000 already held in the reserves.

Ifold Bike Rack

The FWG **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Committee/Full Council that this project go ahead in quarter 4 of the financial year (January – March 2024) due to the improved end of year budget forecast (Line 112, Column L).

8. **Banking**

The FWG **ACKNOWLEDGED**: -

- transfer of funds to Unity Bank Instant Access Savings account
- the establishment of dual authorisation for online payments (two signatories)
- Cllrs Woolf and Robinson are set up to authorise payments via Bankline.

9. **2024/2025 Draft Budget**

The FWG considered the draft budget and **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council: -

- Clerk's salary to be reduced by £12,000 to account for 30 hours per week (not full time).
- Not to include a larger Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) 'Precept budget' – expenditure should be funded from the Government grant, rather than the Precept. The FWG acknowledged: -
 - (a) the Precept will, at some point, need to make up a funding deficit, as the Government grant will not cover 100% of the cost to prepare a NDP;
 - (b) any delay opening the 24/25 grant funding window will frustrate the NDP's progression (grant funding cannot be applied retrospectively).

Nevertheless, it was felt that the progress of the Chichester Local Plan (LP) through Examination stage during 24/25 would delay the NDP in any event; (the NDP cannot 'overtake' the LP and cannot progress to Regulation 14 public consultation until *after* the LP has completed Examination). Consequently, any Government delay in opening the 24/25 funding window would be mitigated.

- Tennis Court budget should be reduced to £1,500 for the usual annual cleaning / routine maintenance. Until the

works have been properly assessed and costed, and the position of the Trustees established regarding the lease (which expires in March 2027) any increased budget (£4,000) would be arbitrary and unhelpful. The cost to remediate the Court is likely to be significant (initial quote of £20,000). Therefore, this project is likely to need substantial grant funding (where available) and to be considered in conjunction with the Council's emerging 3-year Business Plan.

- Budget to support the Winterton Hall and Youth Club to become one Incorporated Charitable Organisation (ICO) to be increased to £2,000 to cover Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) fees.
- To reduce the anticipated expenditure regarding the Foxbridge planning application to £2,000 in 2024/25 and increase the reserves to £3,000.
- The Council could consider taking a PWLB loan to fund the Ifold play area during 2024/25. However, it is not necessary to specifically budget for such an eventuality.
- A Precept of £120,000, being a minimal increase of £2,000 or 1.69% increase from the 2023/24 precept of £118,000.

10.

Meeting Dates

Schedule End of Qrt.4/Year End meetings in April 2024.

Actions:

Clerk

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 21:15