

MINUTES of the Finance Committee (Budget) Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 12th November 2012 at Crown Chambers, 7 Market Place, Melksham at 7.30 p.m.

Present: FULL COMMITTEE: Cllr. Mike Mills (Chairman); Cllrs. Richard Wood; Alan Baines; Rolf Brindle; John Glover; and Pat Nicol.

279/12 **Declarations of Interest:** The Chairman declared an interest in the Chair's Allowance and the Clerk and Finance Officer declared an interest in matters relating to staff salaries. Cllr Brindle declared an interest in the land at the rear of the Spa, as a resident, when this item was discussed.

280/12 **Finance:**

a) Receipts: Resolved: *The following receipts be noted:*

Allotment rents	£	12.50
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b) Accounts for payment:

Recommended: *The following accounts were checked and approved for payment:*

4245 Townsend Design & Print: Letterhead and compliment Slips (£215.00 + VAT)	£	258.00
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4246 *Void Cheque – error made in writing*

4247 Playsafety Limited: Annual Play Area Inspections (Shaw & Beanacre) (£147.00 +VAT)	£	176.40
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4248 Wiltshire Publications Ltd: Melksham News Quarterly Newsletter (£140.00 + VAT)	£	168.00
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4249 Condor Office Solutions Ltd: Photocopying charges 25/7/12 – 15/10/12 (£100.73 + VAT)	£	120.88
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4250 Wiltshire College: CIEH Level 2 Health & Safety Training for M Jarvis 17/10/12	£	90.00
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4251 RM Software: PC support (£45.00 + VAT)	£	54.00
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4252 TOTAL Equipment Limited: Electricity charges for Crown Chambers 31/08/12 – 30/09/12 (£26.88 + VAT)	£	28.22
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4253 Melksham Town Council: Remembrance wreath (<i>from Chair's Allowance</i>)	£	17.00
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Salaries:

4254 Mrs Mary Jarvis: November salary + additional hours

4255 Mrs Teresa Strange: November salary + additional hours + expenses (cleaning materials £3.63, stationery £7.85, VAT) + adjustments due to error on previous wageslip

4256	Mrs Margaret Mylchreest: November salary + additional hours		
4257	Mr Terry Cole: w/e 06/10/12 – 27/10/12 + travel allowance + expenses (new lock for Briansfield allotments gate £12.49 + VAT) + mileage (£66.80) + adjustment due to error on previous wageslip		
4258	Mrs Elaine Cranton: October office cleaning		
	Total Salaries:	£	3,469.15
4259	Inland Revenue: PAYE Tax & NI for Employer/ee	£	737.71
4260	Wiltshire Council – Wiltshire Pension Fund: Employer/ee Superannuation for M. Jarvis/T. Strange	£	631.68

281/12

Review of estimate for the current year’s spending 2012/13:

a) Additional dog fouling signs for Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field:

Cllr Glover had requested additional dog fouling signs at Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field to ensure that *all* entrances to the Sports Field have a warning sign that “Dogs must be kept on a lead” and “No fouling – please clean up after your dog”. A quote had been sought for 3 signs with the same specification as the signs installed in July for the following entrances:

1. At bridge at Knorr Bremse (on wooden fence) @ £34 excl VAT
2. At entrance via Cereal Partners (on metal fence) @ £34 excl VAT
3. At end of footpath, railway line (stand alone post mounted) @ £136 excl VAT

It was suggested that the sign for the end of the footpath at the railway line could be installed on the wooden gate, subject to checking the gate’s suitability, negating the need for the post mounting. The signs would be collected and installed by the Parish Caretaker.

Recommended: *The Council proceed with ordering 3 dog fouling signs from Sign Marketing at a maximum total cost of £204.*

b) Income - General Account:

In the General Account the projected balance last November to carry forward on 1st April 2012 was £8,657.63 but the actual balance as at the end of Year Accounts 31st March 2012 was some £7,538.07 lower at £1,119.56. This was due to the expenditure for 2011/12 being higher than expected as the new Basketball Court at Shaw and new Allotments at Briansfield were completed in 2011/12 rather than 2010/11 as budgeted.

The actual Income for the year ending 31st March 2012 was up on the budget by £7,507 which was the grants received for the above projects.

Income for the current year 2012/13 (incl Balance C/F from 2012/13) is estimated to be £128,984.57; £5,343.94 higher than originally estimated at £123,640.63.

This is despite the carry forward figure being £7,538.07 lower than anticipated.

The Council were in receipt of £11,000 from Wiltshire Council as a contribution to the first year’s maintenance of Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field (which has been

put into the Sports Field Reserve) as well as sponsorship of the Western Way Roundabout (£1,237.25) and sponsorship of new litter bins (£369.80).

c) Income - Allotments

Rents for Briansfield Allotments for the year commencing 1st October 2011 to 30th September 2012 were requested when the allotments were let at the Allotment opening on 6th September 2011. This means that the rent was paid and banked in the year ending 31st March 2012 in advance for 2012/13 (when they would usually be requested in April mid way through the allotment year). Therefore no rents will be received for the Briansfield Allotments in the financial year 2012/13 (apart from re-lets) as it has already been received. The rents for Berryfield allotments for the same period were not requested until April 2012 and therefore will appear in the accounts for 2012/13.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Allotment Account when they met in May 2012, and agreed to move £500 from the New Allotment Reserve to the Allotment Account (Min 48/12 c). The account was still showing at a loss and the revised estimate for the current year now shows a total of £1,500 moved across from the New Allotment Reserve to the Allotment Account. Therefore the estimated income for the Allotment Account was £1,490.94.

Recommended: *The Council transfer a further £1,000 from the New Allotment Reserve to the Allotment Account.*

d) Expenditure - General Account

The overall original estimate for expenditure for 2012/13 was £114,941.00 but was now estimated to be £109,973.73; £4,967.27 lower.

It was noted that the 2nd phase of Whitley footways work at Top Lane was currently under way. The £1,000 contribution for Phase 1 had been committed in 2011/12 but Wiltshire Council had not invoiced, and so the Parish Council not paid for this work, until the current financial year. A further £1,500 had been committed this year as a contribution to Phase 2 of the Top Lane works. £2,370 had been put aside in the budget this year as a contribution to the works planned at Middle Lane.

The Finance Officer provided an analysis on the income and spend on the Bowerhill Sportsfield for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 to date.

Recommended: *The revised estimate for spending 2012/13 be formally approved.*

e) Expenditure - Allotment Account

The Allotment Warden duties are now carried out by the Parish Caretaker. The cost of this is shown in the Allotment Account as 1 hour per week of the Parish Caretaker's time plus fuel reimbursement costs of 1 trip per week.

The original estimate for expenditure for 2012/13 was £1,451.64, but was now estimated to be £1,300.88; £150.76 lower.

Recommended: *The revised estimate for spending 2012/13 be formally approved.*

f) Reserves for 2012/13:

The reserves balance as shown on the actual end of March 2011 figures was £66,020.

Anticipated spend from Reserves was £1,500 from the General Highway/Footpath & Lighting for Whitley Footways and £5,000 for Bowerhill Sports Field maintenance. The following Reserves have / are anticipated to be spent this financial year:

Highway & Footway/Lighting	£ 2,500	Whitley Footway £1,000 committed 2011/12 but invoiced 2012/13 £1,500 committed 2012/13
Legal Fees	£ 4,000	Bowerhill Sports Field transfer
New Allotment	£ 1,500	To Allotment Account
Elections	<u>£ 2,000</u>	Transfer to General Account
Total	£10,000	

The following Reserves are proposed to be transferred this financial year:

- i) Transfer £475 from Crown Chambers (residue for new furniture etc) Reserve to Contingency Reserve.
- ii) Transfer £375 from Crown Chambers (future accommodation) Reserve to Contingency Reserve.
- iii) Combine the two Crown Chambers Reserves to make one of £5,000.

Recommended: *The above spend and adjustments for Reserves in 2012/13 be formally approved.*

DRAFT BUDGET 2013/14

282/12 A figure of £4,600 is shown as income from bookings for the Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field by the football teams (Melksham United (*youth*) and AFC Melksham (*Sunday league*)) based on the figure that they currently pay English Landscapes (£5,500 per year) but proportioned for 10 months (as English Landscapes are maintaining the field until the end of May 2013.) Clarification needs to be sought from Steve Ibbetson at Wiltshire Council about how the income for the next football season and financial year will be collected and proportioned with the English Landscapes contract ending in May 2013. Councillors raised concerns about the Council being able to collect the correct amounts from the football teams if they were also invoiced by English Landscapes at the beginning of the financial year. It was noted that a new Wiltshire Council will be elected in May 2013 and there was concern that the contract could be extended again, while the new Council was settling English Landscapes were yet to deep clean and paint the Pavilion as instructed by Wiltshire Council following the site meeting with Tim Woolford.

Recommended: *The Council clarify the income settlement arrangements for Bowerhill Sports Field for the new financial year and football season 2013/14 with Steve Ibbetson, Wiltshire Council.*

The Committee also felt it would be useful for these booking and payment arrangements for 2013/14 to be discussed with the football teams. **Recommended:** *The Council add as*

an agenda item at the next meeting of the newly formed Bowerhill Sports Field and Pavilion Management Committee on 19th November.

283/12 **Income – Allotment Account:** At the Finance Committee (28/05/12) it was noted that the current rental income for both the Briansfield and Berryfield allotment sites would not be sufficient to cover the projected expenditure for 2012/13. The tenants of both sites were now able to park in a designated car park, rather than on the roadside, and the recent improvements made were considered relevant to increasing the rent charged for the allotment plots. The Finance Committee (Min. 48/12) recommended an increase in the Allotment rents, which was subsequently approved. The Council will increase the rent for the allotments, with effect from 1st October 2012; from £12.50 to £17.50 for a half plot and from £25 to £35 for a full plot. A rent of £8.75 would be due for the 4 x ¼ plots at Briansfield.

This gives an annual income of £637.50 for Berryfield and £595 for Briansfield if all let, excluding any additional re-lets.

284/12 **Expenditure – General Account:** Expenditure in the General Account is budgeted at £131,131.00.

Generally, costs for consumables have been uplifted by 2.2%. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate of inflation in September 2012 was 2.2%. This September inflation figure is what the Government use to set State Pension, Income Tax allowances, NI thresholds, Tax Credits etc. for the following financial year commencing in April.

285/12 **Administration Costs:** Grant Thornton have been appointed as the External Auditors for the next five years 2012/13 to 2016/17. The scale of fees shows a fee of £400 for the Parish Council. This is a reduction of £150 from the fee in previous years; the budget amount therefore has been reduced to £650 (£400 external £150 internal).

£500 has been included for Elections for a casual vacancy, in case of any vacancies arising from newly elected Councillors following the May election.

The amount budgeted for Admin/Stationery has been reduced from previous years to £525 as the Council took surplus stationery from County Hall when the building was being emptied for refurbishment.

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

Audit	£ 650
Elections – casual vacancy	£ 500
Postages	£ 800
Administration & Stationery	£ 525
Copier costs/maintenance	£ 615
Binding of Minute books	£ 72
Advertising – general	£ 200
Advertising – Quarterly newsletters	£ 600
Website Hosting/IT Support	£ 630
Room hire	£ 35
Telephone/Broadband	£ 800
Total	£5,427

286/12

Council Office Costs: The rent for Crown Chambers is shown with an increase from £7,000 to £7,150 in anticipation of any rent increase with a hoped for new tenancy agreement, and based on the ground floor entrance improvements planned by the Parish Council's landlord TOTAL Equipment Ltd.

There has been no communication over additional small business relief for rates for 2013/14 and so £1,000 has been included in the budget in case this relief is not available. The 100% relief in 2012/13, 2011/12 and 2010/11 was a Government incentive to aid small business.

The electricity has only been uplifted by 2.2% despite media reports of energy increases of 11%, however, the meters in the building have now been correctly identified with the Council paying 100% of the bill for the night storage heaters in the Council offices, but only 25% of the day time usage on the First and Second floors (this used to be a third). This means that the office staff will be able to monitor and control the use of the night storage heaters themselves, rather than be tied in with the others users in the building.

The Crown Chambers maintenance figure includes all the annual services and tests for portable appliances (PAT), fire extinguishers and the stairlift.

The office cleaning figure shows an increase due to a rise in the national minimum wage levels in October 2013.

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

Crown Chambers rent	£ 7,150
Crown Chambers rates	£ 1,000
Crown Chambers maintenance	£ 260
Crown Chambers building insurance	£ 750
Crown Chambers electric	£ 1,400
Crown Chambers refurbishment	£ 100
Office cleaning and materials	<u>£ 930</u>
Total	<u>£11,590</u>

287/12 **Staffing Costs:** An increase of 2% has been shown on the salaries for staff. On the 2nd November the Local Government Employers responded to the Trade Union Sides's claim for "a substantial flat rate increase on all scale points" by advising "that the consensus view of most councils is that there should be an appropriate pay offer but that pay should be just one element of a broader package". In October the Employers stated that they stood by their Statement of 23rd February that "they wish to avoid a situation of not being able to make a pay offer for a fourth year in 2013/14". National Insurance and Superannuation contributions have been raised accordingly.

Cllr Sankey had previously requested that a breakdown of the staff hours worked was reviewed and this was provided to the Finance Committee.

The Clerk reported that the pressure of work meant that a job description and advertisement had not yet been placed for a casual assistant/minute taker. Councillors emphasised this should be a priority in view of the increase in work.

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

Clerk's Salary)	
Assistant Parish Officer)	£44,775

Finance Officer)	
Casual Assistance)	
National Insurance (Employer)		£ 2,700
Superannuation (Employer)		£ 6,350
Office Staff Training		<u>£ 650</u>
Total		£54,475

288/12 **Chair's Allowance:** Cllr Wood chaired this item as the Chairman had declared an interest. **Recommended:** *The Chairman's Allowance remain at £550 for 2013/14 with the proviso that the Chairman can make an application for more funds if additional expenditure is incurred during the year.*

289/12 **Members' Expenses and Training:** A figure of £500 has been included for Members Expenses/Training in anticipation of training needs following the Parish Council Election in May 2013. **Recommended:** *£500 be allocated.*

290/12 **Caretaker and Parish Enhancement:** A figure of £1,000 has been included for Street Furniture. A bin has been requested by a Councillor for the Spa, and one for the layby/turning circle at Forest & Sandridge School by the Parish Caretaker. As new houses are completed in the Parish at the East of Melksham there may be an additional requirement for a new Parish noticeboard; alternatively the existing noticeboard outside Forest & Sandridge School may be suitable to move to the new school site eventually.

£2,700 has been included for a hard standing at the West Hill bus stop following the survey earlier this year, based on the quotation provided by Wiltshire Council. The Clerk was currently seeking alternative quotations from private contractors for the work.

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

Parish Insurance	£ 2,350
Caretaker costs incl training	£10,465
New equipment / Equipment hire	£ 100
Maintenance materials	£ 340
Weedspraying	£ 800
New street furniture	£ 1,000
Trees/roundabout planting	£ 500
Whitley Bus Hardstanding	£ 2,700
Best allotment competition	<u>£ 100</u>
Total	£16,955

291/12 **Grants and subscriptions:**

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

General Grants	£ 7,000
Grant – M'sham Tourist Info Centre	£ 500
Grant – Shaw Hall & Playing Field	£ 3,250
Grant – Bowerhill Hall	£ 2,650
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	£ 500
Subscriptions	<u>£ 1,400</u>
Total	£15,300

292/12

Village halls, Sports Field and Youth Work:

The costs outlined in the Budget for the Bowerhill Sportsfield and Pavilion are in line with the Bowerhill Sportsfield & Pavilion Budget agreed by the Finance Committee (Min. 50/12 b). This assumes that 100% rate relief will be secured as a community “not for profit” run building. The £12,500 put aside for maintenance is generous amount as previous calculations by other sources have put the figure at nearer £15,000 for the year, this has then been proportioned for 10 months as English Landscapes are maintaining the field until the end of May 2013. It could be closer to £12,000 for the whole year. In this case the Reserve for the Sports Field may be able to be increased at the end of the year. The Finance Office reported that there were some grant funding options that could be applied for in the new year:

- i) “Inspired Facilities” from Sport England/Big Lottery for Community Club facilities – to refurbish or upgrade sports facilities (open for applications 4th March to 29th April).
- ii) “Protecting Playing Fields” from Sport England/Big Lottery for protecting and improving playing fields and developing community sport (open for applications 10th December to 18th February).

Recommended: *The following amounts are allocated:*

Beanacre Play Park rent and grasscutting	£ 640
Play Inspections – Shaw & Beanacre	£ 160
Play Area repairs	£ 335
Parish Youth	£ 500
Contribution to MUGA Hornchurch Road	£ 3,775
Bowerhill Sportsfield Maintenance	£12,500
Pavilion Electricity	£ 1,375
Pavilion Water charges	£ 806
Pavilion Cleaning	<u>£ 2,243</u>
Total	£22,334

293/12

Neighbourhood plan: **Recommended:** £1,000 be allocated.

294/12

VAT: VAT expenditure may be higher than the £3,000 budgeted for; this is dependant on whether the contractors used for the Bus hardstanding at Whitley and the Sports Field are VAT registered or not. VAT is claimed back the following year, however, this can only be done on things that the Council does not gain a profitable income from. This will not be the case for the Sports Field as an income will be received from the bookings.

Recommended: £3,000 be allocated.

295/12

Reserves for Major/Capital Projects: The Council discussed the land at the Spa that had been offered to the Parish Council by Wiltshire Council. At this stage no money was to be reserved for this project as the Parish Council was hoping to gain agreement with English Heritage and Wiltshire Council re future use for this land rather than take it over.

Recommended: *The following amounts be reserved:*

New Hall Berryfield	£1,000
Shaw Play Area Safety Surfacing	£ 500
General Highway/Footpath & Lighting	£ 500
Bowerhill Sports Field maintenance	£3,000
Legal fees	<u>£1,000</u>
Total	£6,000

296/12 **Anticipated spending from Reserves:**

A figure of £32,500 has been agreed to be written into the Section 106 agreement for the housing development at the Local Centre Land at Hornchurch Road. The funding is to be used to build a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) to replicate the one built at Shaw Playing Field in July 2011. The MUGA at Hornchurch Road play area will however have the room for a full size court 30 x 15m, unlike the Shaw court that was restricted for space by the existing play equipment and football pitches. Some additional funding may be required to meet the budget needs of the proposed MUGA. The Finance Officer provided a variety of budget options for MUGA's from different manufacturers, different sizes and with/without fencing options. It was noted that planning permission may need to be obtained from Wiltshire Council.

Recommended: *The following projects be financed from Reserves:*

Community Projects/Match funding £3,775 for MUGA at Hornchurch Road

297/12 **Council Precept 2013/14:**

For this current year (2012/13) the number of Band D properties was 2,821 which meant that the current Precept of £107,000 costs the average Band D household £37.93.

The draft budget for 2013/14 shows a Precept of £114,000 an increase of £7,000 on last year's Precept. This is to take account of the £7,500 addition to the Precept for the Bowerhill Sportsfield but with cost savings taken into account, along with 2.2% inflation rate on consumable items next year.

A £7,000 rise in Precept, based on the number of Band D properties at 3,017.44, would give a **decrease** of 15p per household next year due to increased number of households. A precept of £114,000 would give a £37.78 charge per average Band D household for the year which equates to 73p per week.

Recommendation: *The Precept for 2013/14 be £114,000.*

298/12 **Precepts Update – changes in legislation:**

The Finance Officer reported that Stuart Donnelly, Principal Account (Revenue), Wiltshire Council had stated that he hopefully would be in a position to confirm the 2013/13 taxbase for Melksham Without (i.e. Number of Band D average households) the following week; subject to the Wiltshire Council consideration of the Council Tax Support Scheme. The current indicative number was 3017.44

The Council noted a Policy Briefing Update on Precepts issued by NALC (26th October) that advised that **no** precept should be confirmed until **after** the publication of the Draft Local Government Finance Report to Parliament on 6th December, and the subsequent final issue of the Tax Base figures.

299/12 **Contribution to Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership:** The Finance

Officer reported that despite the Council not granting funds to the Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership earlier in the year, an invoice had been received from Wiltshire Council for £500 plus VAT. The initial grant requested was for a contribution towards its Canal Officer and the Council had refused as although they were happy to contribute to the actual project they did not feel able to use the Precept to pay for Wiltshire Council staff costs. A request had now been received asking the Council to

reconsider making a grant for the current financial year, which outlined projects for the Wilts & Berks Canal, but not directly in the Melksham Without parish.

It was noted that £500 had been allocated in the budget for the current year for the Wiltshire & Berks Canal Trust.

Recommended: *The Council ask for details of how the grant would be spend on projects in the Parish, for consideration at the next Full Council Meeting on 10th December.*

300/12 **Quotations for replacement noticeboards for Beanacre and Sandridge Hill:** The Committee reviewed the quotations received for replacement noticeboards.

Recommendation: *The Council order 2 new replacement noticeboards for Beanacre and Sandridge Hill from Arien Signs at the total cost of £1,203 plus VAT.*

301/12 **Changes to Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations and Auto-Enrolment:** This item was deferred to the next Staffing Committee on Monday 7th January.

Meeting closed 9.45 p.m.

Chairman, 10th December 2012