

MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 9th May at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs. John Glover (Committee Chair) Alan Baines (Committee Vice Chair) Richard Wood, Rolf Brindle, Pat Nicol and Mike Mills
Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) & Sharon Newton (Finance Assistant)

Apologies: None

Housekeeping: Cllr Glover welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

608/15 **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

609/15 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

610/15 **Items to be Held in Committee: Resolved:** *Agenda items 8c & 10 to be held in Committee in line with Standing Order 61: "That in the view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw". For 8c: "Reason c) Preparation of cases in legal proceedings". For 10: "Reason b) Terms of tenders and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts".*

611/15 **Assets:**

a) **Asset Register:** The Committee reviewed the Asset Register for the year ending 31st March 2016. Any additions during the year had been detailed, with an audit trail using the cheque number as a reference. The Register had been updated with details of any improvements and maintenance items, again with the cheque number as a reference point. The Committee Chair reported that he had reviewed the Register with the Clerk earlier in the day and that the current situation with the purchase price of assets being the value on the Register, in line with current regulations, was due to change in the future. The Clerk explained that at the recent briefing by Grant Thornton (the appointed External Auditors) that the Finance Assistant and herself had attended, they informed that in the future Councils could choose to record the current value of their assets, rather than the purchase price. However, that part of the Regulations; for reporting at the end of the current financial year 2016/17, had not yet been written and published. If the Council changed to the current value of items, then there would be a dramatic change in the Asset Value for 2016/17 as for example the asset value of the Pavilion at Bowerhill Sports Field was recorded at its purchase price, a nominal £1; however was insured at its build cost of £843,000. The Asset Register had additional columns which reflected the insurance value of every item as well as its asset value. Cllr Wood congratulated the Officers for the work on the Asset Register, which was now a really comprehensive document. The Clerk reported that the Parish Caretaker was now undertaking an inspection of all assets and recording their current condition. **Recommended:** *The Committee approve the Asset Register for the year ending 31st March 2016 and the total of Assets at £257,223.*

- b) Asset Disposals:** The Chair explained that on the advice of the Internal Auditor, all asset disposals must be explicitly minuted. The Clerk explained that two new noticeboards purchased during the financial year were minuted at the time as replacements but the disposals needed to be formally recorded. **Recommended:** *The Council note the disposal of the following assets during 2015/16:*
- i) Noticeboard outside the old Forest & Sandridge school site as in a poor, dilapidated state. This was removed and disposed of by the Parish Caretaker when the old school was demolished. A new noticeboard has been installed as a replacement outside the Water Meadow pub, next to the new Forest & Sandridge School on Cranesbill Road.*
 - ii) Noticeboard on Corsham Road, opposite Shaw Primary School has been replaced with a new one, and the old, dilapidated one disposed of by the Parish Caretaker.*
- c) Shaw Village Hall & Sports Field:**
- i. Activities 2015/16 & Plans for 2016/17:** The Committee noted the report from the Shaw Village Hall & Sports Field Committee Secretary of the activities during 2015/16 and details of the new Committee in place for 2016/17; as the Hall and Field were both assets of the Parish Council which are managed by the Committee on their behalf. The Clerk reported that she had attended a recent joint meeting of CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw) and the Village Hall Committee over the plans for their Summer Fayre and Event to mark the 90th Birthday Celebrations for the Queen (to be held on Sunday 12th June). At that meeting it was agreed that all proceeds from the event would be spent on improving the recreational facilities on the Playing Field.
 - ii. Insurance Policy:**

The lease between the Parish Council and the Village Hall committee states that Parish Council should be named on the Village Hall's insurance policy. However, the Village Hall's insurers (Zurich, administered by Community First) were not happy with this arrangement. The Clerk had explained to the Community First agent, Jennie Lane, that the only reason that the Parish Council were stipulating that the lease had to be adhered to in this way was to ensure that the Insurance company were not given a reason to not pay out in the event of a claim. Community First had put in writing that this was not the case, and that the Parish Council did not have to be named on the insurance policy, as the lease stipulated. **Recommended:** *The Council write to the Shaw Village Hall committee to state that they are happy with the arrangement as agreed with Community First and Zurich, that the Parish Council does not have to be named on the insurance policy for the 2016/17 period. The Council remind the Committee that this needs to be reviewed and agreed each time the insurance is renewed, paying particular care if a new insurer is in place.*
- d) Bowerhill Pavilion and Sports Field:**
- i. Activities 2015/16 & Plans for 2016/17:** The Clerk was delighted to report that the home team AFC Melksham had won the Chippenham & District League the previous week. There had been a big turnout at the

Sports Field to watch the last match of the season and great celebrations; a good advert for the Sports Field. Taff Evans, the Manager of AFC for the last 20 years was stepping down now, but will continue to manage and support the Ability Counts teams (disabled youth teams). AFC are planning on remaining at the Sports Field for the next season, and new enquiries had been received for next season from Trowbridge Ladies and from Trowbridge 3rd Reserves. The sad news was that the youth teams from Melksham Town, which had contributed £2,700 in bookings the last financial year, had just confirmed when they were moving to the new Melksham Town club facilities under construction, and only intended to book at the Sports Field for September 2016 only. The members discussed the impact of this and how they could not reasonably turn away teams looking to book for the whole season, to give a booking to the youth teams for September only; despite the good use of the field by the youth teams in the past. The Chippenham & District League matches are all played on Sunday mornings, but the Clerk explained that the facilities could support four adult home teams, with 2no. 11 vs 11 pitches and 2no. suites of changing rooms which could be carefully planned to have home and away matches scheduled on alternate weeks; this would have an impact on the pitch condition though. It was agreed that it would be useful to have some marketing of the sports field and facilities, through social media, which would target adult teams.

- ii. **Review of Management of facilities:** The Chair reported that the Council had previously discussed whether the Bowerhill Sports Field & Pavilion should be run by a separate Management Committee and that this was due for review. However, as there was currently only one user at present, he recommended that the Council continue with the current situation with the Council running the facilities until there was a change in circumstances or users. **Recommended:** *The Council continue managing the Bowerhill Sports Field and Pavilion facilities until there is an increase in user groups, when this will be reviewed again.*

- iii. **Pavilion usage:** Consideration was given as how to increase the usage of the Pavilion and its lounge and kitchen facilities, perhaps for conference facilities for local businesses or as a meeting place for the Seniors group. The Clerk explained that she had suggested the Pavilion to Brian Warwick for the Seniors group, but that they had felt it was not readily accessible by public transport. The Clerk had an action to purchase the furniture (stacking chairs and folding tables) offered for sale by Bowerhill Scouts Group, but existing furniture at the Pavilion needed to be cleared first and a site visit to calculate what numbers of furniture could fit appropriately. **Recommended:**
 - 1. *The Council contact Bowerhill Village Hall to let them know that if they have enquiries for the Hall that they are unable to let as fully booked, that the Pavilion is an alternative meeting space.*
 - 2. *The Council advertise the Pavilion as a meeting/training facility via social media, the Bowerhill Villager publication and the Bowerhill Industrial Estate & Hampton Place business group.*

3. *The Council offer the Pavilion meeting and kitchen facilities to the Bowerhill business group free of charge for their next meeting, to advertise the facilities available.*
- iv. **Winvic Defects Meeting at the Pavilion:** A meeting was due to be held on 24th May with the construction company, one year after completion of the building. It was agreed that the Chair of the Bowerhill Sports Field Working Party, Cllr Brindle and Cllr Baines would meet the Clerk, Finance Assistant and Parish Caretaker at the Pavilion at 9am on Thursday 19th May to complete an inspection of the facilities and compile a list of defects to present to Winvic when the Clerk met them on 24th May.
- v. **Water Monitoring & Treatment:** The contract for the quotation previously agreed (Min 441/14) for Aqualogy for water treatment services (at £1,835) had not been started, it was not clear if this was due to change of staff at the Parish Council, Aqualogy or both. (Min 74/15 states that the contract had been taken up). A new quotation had been submitted, and under Aqualogy's new name, Suez. **Recommended:** *The Council proceed with the quotation from Suez for the yearly provision of water treatment services at the Bowerhill Pavilion at £1,890.05 + VAT.*
- vi. **Spiking of Bowerhill Sportsfield: Recommended:** *The Council instruct J H Jones to spike the Sportsfield, in line with their quoted price of £160 + VAT.*
- vii. **Pavilion deep clean:** The Council had a quotation from the onset of the cleaning contract for the new Pavilion at £300 for a deep clean by the current Pavilion cleaner, this was not for the use of professional equipment. It was agreed that a specification could be drawn up for the deep clean when the Councillors and staff meet there on 19th May. It was recalled that Sparkles Window Cleaning services had been appointed recently to clean bus shelters, but also to include the skylights etc at the Pavilion. Councillors agreed that when they meet on site, they could also inspect the pond, the pond planting and the general landscaping around the Pavilion. Perhaps Herman Miller could be contacted to see if they would be prepared to continue the landscaping maintenance at the Pavilion as a community benefit if using a contractor themselves at their site next door. It may be that there are only a small amount of weeds that could easily be managed by the Parish Caretaker.

612/15a

Additional temporary security measures due to proximity of

Travellers: It was noted that Travellers had been camping on the green area next to Herman Miller at the weekend and had then moved to the open space behind the Canberra Youth Centre, they had been evicted earlier in the day and were now on King George V park. Cllr Brindle offered the use of a very strong chain to enhance the security of the gates to the Bowerhill Sportsfield as a temporary measure. The impact on users and key holders was discussed and what mitigating circumstances could be put in place. It was noted that the last booking for the Sportsfield for the current season

was 28th May. **Recommended:** 1. The Caretaker be asked if he would take responsibility for locking and unlocking the additional chain for weekend bookings at Bowerhill Sportsfield and be paid accordingly. 2. Shaw Village Hall Committee be warned about the proximity of the Travellers so that they can consider putting in mitigating measures at Shaw Village Hall.

612/15b **Statement of Accounts & Accompanying Report 2015/16:**

- a) **Local Government Transparency Code 2015:** The Chair reported that the Council needed to comply to this new code as the Council were eligible as their turnover was over £200,000 for 2015/16. The Chair had discussed this with the Clerk and gone through the requirements earlier in the day. Some of the requirements; such as reporting all payments over £500 every quarter; were already fulfilled as published in the monthly Minutes of the Full Council meeting, however not in the precise format prescribed. Moving forward, the Finance Assistant will include more details in the monthly Payments schedule detailed in the published Minutes, to ensure that reporting under the Code requirements was undertaken monthly. **Recommended:** *The Clerk & Finance Assistant produce a report of the Council's compliance to the Transparency Code for the year ending 2015/16 which would form an Appendix to the Statement of Accounts.*
- b) **Statement of Accounts & Accompanying Report 2015/16:** Members made a couple of typo/layout amendments to the Statement of Accounts. The Clerk drew attention to the VAT de-minimus calculation at the end of the Report that means that the Council is still able to claim all the VAT expenditure it spent in the year ending 2015/16. **Recommended:** *The Council approve the revised Statement of Accounts & Accompanying Report 2015/16.*
- c) **Type/style of Accounting 2016/17:**
- i) **Subjective or Objective accounting:** The Chair explained that there was a choice of presentation of accounts, which the Clerk had sought guidance on how the Council wished to proceed. A good example was the Staffing costs, which could easily and simply be presented as all staff costs however, the Council currently present the staff costs by attributing this to the costs of the Allotments, Crown Chambers such as office cleaning, Parish Enhancement, Office staff etc. For the "Staffing costs" box on the External Audit form this necessitated a spreadsheet to show where the figures have come from; but it was felt that this was the best way to present to the public and Council as actually meant more in real terms and was more transparent. This breakdown of figures should be easier to manage when the new accounting software is brought in. **Recommended:** *The Council continue to present their Accounts in a subjective reporting style.*
- ii) **Receipts & Payments vs Income & Expenditure:** The Regulations state that Accounts reporting has to move from Receipts & Payments to Income & Expenditure (to include accruals etc) when a Council's Income or Expenditure exceeds £200,000. This has to be done when reporting on the 3rd consecutive year of reaching the threshold but can be done in earlier years. 2015/16 was the first year that the Council had reached the threshold, and it had been originally planned to move over to Income & Expenditure for 2016/17 as new software would be used to make such reporting easier. However, the Clerk advised that at the recent Audit

briefing, they had been advised that when reporting in the new way the figures for the previous year have to be restated in the new format. This would mean that all the figures for 2015/16 would have to be recalculated in the new format. The best way forward would be to account for 2016/17 as Receipts & Payments but internally prepare the figures in the Income & Expenditure format too so able to restate the following year.

Recommended: *The Council prepare their 2016/17 Year End accounts in the Receipts & Payments format and move to the Income & Expenditure format for 2017/18.*

613/15 **Audit:**

- a) **Guidance Notes:** The members noted the following advice notes:
- i) SLCC Advice Note “The new audit requirements and transparency regimes in England”
 - ii) DCLG “Changes to the smaller authorities’ local audit and accountability framework: a guide”

The initial intention of the new regulations (The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015) was for parish and town councils to appoint their own External Auditors in the future but there had been resistance to this from the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) and NALC (National Association of Local Councils). In response the SAAA Ltd (Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointments) will perform this procurement function formerly conducted by the Audit Commission (now abolished) and will provide an external auditor for any town or parish council that does not opt out and will also set the audit fees for such an auditor. The deadline for notification of “opting out” was 31st March 2016. The Parish Council had previously considered this and decided not to opt out.

The Clerk explained that for the purposes of the External Audit regime, the parish council came under the SAAA Ltd as the definition of Smaller Authority was those with a turnover of under £6.5 million. But for the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities the Parish Council do not come under the definition of Smaller Authority as the threshold is turnover of under £25,000.

There were other changes in the Regulations, including that the approval of the External Audit documentation having to be a two stage approval by Full Council with Section 1 (Governance Statement) being approved before Section 2 (Accounts Statement). The Clerk reported that at the Grant Thornton briefing the external auditors stated that they would be looking for proof of such things, and often use the Parish Council’s website to check for compliance to such things as the Transparency Code and the Notice Period for Inspection of Accounts by members of the public; this was especially so for those bigger Councils whose income or expenditure was over £200,000.

- b) **Grant Thornton External Audit briefing:** The Clerk attended this session with the Finance Assistant who both felt it was very worthwhile and 2 x £10 well spent. The Clerk had raised with Grant Thornton that it was only advertised through WALC (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils) and therefore may parish councils would miss out on the advice if not members of WALC. The Parish Council had only found out as it was mentioned at a recent SLCC Branch meeting.

New guidance had been issued in March 2016 “Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England. A Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements”. However, the Clerk advised that she had not yet read in detail as it was for reporting 2016/17 and could confuse the reporting for 2015/16.

As before, residents had the right to inspect the accounts of the Council and this now had to be for a period of 30 consecutive working days set by the Council; the Council would make the accounts available for this period but on an appointment only basis. This was to meet with the Lone Working policy, and in line with the advice from Grant Thornton that electors are not left alone with documentation when inspecting books and documents.

A useful document published by the National Audit Office “Council accounts: a guide to your rights” had been mentioned, and the Clerk had obtained copies to give to residents wishing to inspect the Council’s accounts as it explained what – and what not – could be inspected. With the new Inspection Period guidelines in place, the Officers would work out the Inspection Period dates for the Council, in line with when the accounts are approved etc, and advise at the Full Council meeting.

- c) **Internal Auditor’s Report:** The members noted this report. It has been reviewed at a previous Finance Committee meetings, but had been included here to aid the members in answering the Governance section of the Annual Return for the External Audit; in line with the new Regulations.
- d) **Review of effectiveness of Internal Control & Appointment of Internal Auditor:** The members noted the SLCC Advice Note “Effectiveness of Internal Financial Control” and then considered the effectiveness of their Internal Control measures and were happy that they were effective and sufficient. They noted that when appointing the Internal Auditor that in line with the new regulations the appointment letter has to be explicit and detail the scope of the audit work. The Clerk was tasked with doing this. **Recommended:**
1. *The Council have reviewed their Internal Control measures and consider them effective.*
 2. *The Council appoint IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd (Kevin Rose) to be their Internal Auditor for 2016/17.*
- e) **External Audit Annual Return – Section One (Annual Governance Statement):** The Chair had reviewed this section and proposed that the answers to Questions 1 – 8 were YES, and “Not applicable” to Question 9. It was noted that the Full Council had to approve this document which would be an agenda item at the next meeting, 23rd May. **Recommended:** *The Council approve the External Audit Annual Return Section One as detailed above.*
- f) **Reserves Breakdown:** The members reviewed the breakdown of the Reserves as at 31st March 2016. The General Reserve is the carry forward figure of £56,362.64. This roughly equates to 4 month’s spend based on last year’s expenditure. The other Reserves totalled £88,875 which were split into two separate headings, members discussed what these headings should be named;

short term / medium term, planned / unplanned, current / future, committed / uncommitted or earmarked / contingency as named last year. The issue with calling them earmarked and contingency is that technically they are all earmarked. This had been discussed with the Internal Auditor. **Recommended:** *The Council use the following names, and breakdown of Reserves for reporting at year end 31st March 2016*

Short term Reserves (up to 3 years)	£ 29,625
Medium term Reserves (over 3 years)	<u>£ 59,350</u>
	<u>£ 88,975</u>
General Reserves	<u>£ 56,363</u>
TOTAL RESERVES	£145,338

g) **Reserves Policy:** The members reviewed an example Reserves Policy from Holt Parish Council which was clear and explained the purpose of Reserves.

Recommended: *The Clerk draw up a Reserves Policy for approval of the Parish Council, along the lines of the example provided but with specifics to Melksham Without.*

h) **External Audit Annual Return – Section Two (Accounts Statement):** It was noted that the Internal Auditor had made a mistake on completing the Internal Audit section of the Return, stating that the Council “does” maintain a petty cash, instead of “does not”. Grant Thornton were happy for the Council to alter this, as long as it was accompanied by an email from the Internal Auditor confirming the alteration to be made on his behalf.

The members noted where the figures had been drawn from in relation to other documents that had been reviewed that evening, for example the Asset figure from the Asset Register (Min 611/15 a). The Clerk explained that the only Variance on last year to be explained was the increase in Precept, as all other variances were under the 15% threshold for explanation. The increase in Precept had all been detailed in the Minutes when the Precept was approved back in January 2015 and so relatively easy to complete and the members noted the detail. **Recommended:** *The Council approve the External Audit Annual Return Section Two (Accounts Statement) as detailed.*

614/15 Insurance:

a) **Insurance Cover for the year commencing 1st June 2016:** The members reviewed the insurance renewal documents. The insurance is with Aviva under their National Parish Council Insurance scheme, operated by Came & Company as brokers, with cheques payable to Came & Co; this is a change from the past where cheques had to be paid to Broker Network Ltd. The 3 year Long Term Agreement is in place until 31st May 2017 and the Council is given a 5% reduction as part of this agreement. The Insurance premium includes 9.5% insurance premium tax, this went up on 1st November 2015 from 6% for all Insurance Policies in the UK. The policy excess remains at £250 for each and every claim. The sums insured had been index linked by 1%). The premium quoted was £4,463.93. Additional cover had been included for Fidelity Guarantee to increase the Limit of Indemnity to £300,000 to reflect the Council’s bank account holdings at certain times of the year.

The Clerk and Finance Assistant had made the following queries, which had now been addressed:

- i) The policy cover was for a population of under 10,000. This had been taken from the 2011 Census figure of 7,230. There had been some 800 houses built and occupied since then, and 3,663 houses was the figure quoted at the Community Governance Review at the end of 2015. Wiltshire Council use a population factor of 2.4 people per house, but the NHS use a factor of 3, which would take the Council's population to over 10,000. **Recommended:** *The Insurance Cover be for a population of under 15,000 people.*
- ii) **Keyman Cover** is included in the renewal policy, and this is for key personnel, which are classed as the Clerk or Assistant Clerk and the Groundsman/Assistant Groundsman and pays out £400 per week for up to 26 weeks for illness cover after the first 2 weeks. The Clerk explained that this was a useful addition as in the past the Council had incurred costs when staff were off on long term sickness, as there is a difference between SSP (Statutory Sick Pay) claimed back from HMRC and the amount paid to staff as the majority staff receive 6 month's Full Pay if sick due to their longevity of service. This would also contribute to additional hours worked by other staff members or a Locum Clerk for example.
- iii) **All Risks cover.** Came & Co had confirmed that the policy was for All Risks, and that this covers deliberate damage such as vandalism and graffiti as well as accidental damage.
- iv) **Natural Surfaces cover.** Additional cover was available which would indemnify the parish council in respect of damage to greens and playing surfaces stated in the schedule for re-seeding or re-turfing and the replacement of any trees or plants which would be with saplings of the same or similar type. The brokers requested some idea of what cover would be needed, and the Clerk sought guidance from the Committee to see if this was something of interest that it was worth requesting J H Jones, the sports field maintenance contractor to quote for. The Clerk had thought it might be useful in case of occupation on the field by Travellers again. An additional premium of £47 would give £10,000 cover, which the members considered would go a long way with the contractor at Bowerhill Sports Field to repair damage to the playing field if motor vehicles drove across the football pitches, and if the Travellers returned and occupied the space and damaged the playing fields. **Recommended:** *1. The Council add £10,000 of cover to their policy for Natural Surfaces at renewal 1st June. 2. The Council request J H Jones to provide a quotation for such type of repair works at Bowerhill Sports Field to assess if adequate cover was being provided.*
- v) **Property Insured.** The value of the property insured for 2015/16 was £1,158,347 with the value for cover commencing on 1st June 2016 at £1,169,930 which agreed with the figure from the Asset Register which detailed all the Council's assets in details. The following amendments were to be made though:
 - £14,140 cover had been added during the year for the 7 Defibrillators and cabinets, however there was now automatic cover of £5,000 in the policy and so the additional cover had been reduced to £9,140, making a reduction of £23 on the premium.

The 5 water troughs at the two Allotment sites were to be added at a purchase price of £545 each (Total £2,725) with a premium increase of £12.83

Amendments were made to Street Furniture to match the changes during the year ie: additional noticeboards but two noticeboards disposed of giving a final figure of £92,301.90 and a premium reduction of £3.80.

Recommended: *The Council proceed with the Insurance Policy renewal with Aviva via Came & Co, with the above recommendations incorporated. The new premium was calculated to be £4,449.42 + £47 for natural services cover = £4,496.42 but would be confirmed with Came & Co, with the cheque to be raised for approval at the next Full Council meeting on 23rd May.*

b) Insurance query from CAWS (Community Action: Whitley & Shaw)

Emergency Response team: The CAWS team had requested to be covered by Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council's insurance. Wiltshire Council had confirmed that they were **not** covered by their insurance. Came & Co confirmed that the volunteers were covered by the Parish Council's insurance after noting the procedures that were in place eg: the Clerk keeps details of who the volunteers are, what work they are undertaking and what training they have done as well as conducting DBS checks for those who are door knocking or aware of the who the vulnerable people are in their community. Came & Co recommended that a Risk Assessment be undertaken by the volunteers. The cover provided would be under the Employers' and Public Liability sections where a £10 million limit of indemnity applies under both sections and for those volunteers aged over 16 and under 86 then they are also covered by the Personal Accident section.

The members noted an Insurance Information document produced by Renate Malton who worked in the Community Resilience Team at Wiltshire Council in the Drainage team, which related to insurance issues and Flood Wardens.

c) Update on claim against Insurance policy: The members noted the update from the Insurance company's solicitors.

d) End of Long Term Agreement: It was noted that current Long Term Agreement ends on 31st May 2017. The Clerk sought guidance from the members as to whether they wished officers to seek 3 alternative quotes from differing companies next year, or whether they were happy for Came & Co as specialist insurance brokers for parish council insurance to seek 3 quotations on the parish council's behalf. **Recommended:** *The Council request Came & Co to seek 3 alternative quotations for Parish Council insurance for the renewal at 31st June 2017.*

615/15 **Wiltshire Council owned play areas in the Parish:** The members noted the current situation with the project to take over the Wiltshire Council owned play areas in the parish, and the plan to use s106 funding and Roundponds solar farm community benefit funding to refurbish them and bring them up to the Parish Council standards.

- a) Funding available:** The s106 funding was at different levels of availability.
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|------------------------------------|---|
| Retail units East of Melksham | £11,125 available to draw down from Wilts Council |
| Old Forest & Sandridge School site | £19,540 invoiced to Persimmon from Wilts Council |
| 303 Sandridge Road | <u>£ 5,893</u> work on site due to start, bungalow demolished |
| | £36,558 |

It was noted that the funding from Persimmon could take up to 6 months to be paid, and there was a small risk that the money would not be paid. The £28,000 from the Roundponds Solar Farm community benefit was in the Council's bank account. The Technical Officer at Wiltshire Council, Sarah Holloway, had confirmed that Wiltshire Council were in principle happy for the s106 funding from these projects to be used to refurbish the two play areas in Bowerhill.

- b) Indicative costings of refurbishment:** The Clerk had obtained quotations from 2 separate companies to date, with another quote to follow, these are summarised as:

Berryfield Play Area:

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|---|------------|
| i) To replace all safety surfacing and replace swing seats | £12,703.98 |
| ii) To replace some safety surfacing, to repair some safety surfacing, to clean and paint teenage shelter, clean and paint MUGA and surface, clean all equipment, repairs to cone climber, slide painted, swings painted, seat and bin treated, all play equipment cleaned and scrubbed | £12,748.74 |

This refurbishment cost to be set against the Roundponds funding of £28,000 which would give £15,000 for Bowerhill play areas after allocating £13,000 for Berryfield Play Area.

Kestrel Court Play Area, Bowerhill: The costings include for collecting the spare basketball hoop stored at the Industrial Estate and its installation opposite the MUGA goal end further to the request of the children at Bowerhill Primary School during the Parliament Week visit in November 2015.

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| i) To replace all safety surfacing, 2 springers, install spare basketball hoop, replace swing seats | £21,129.00 |
| ii) To repair fence, replace some safety surfacing and repair and clean some surfacing, 2 springers, extend goal end and install spare basketball hoop, mend access gate, clean and scrub all play equipment | £21,869.80 |

Hornchurch Road Play Area, Bowerhill:

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|---|------------|
| i) To replace all safety surfacing | £29,888.02 |
| ii) To replace all safety surfacing, clean/scrub all play equip | £25,309.10 |

This refurbishment cost for the Bowerhill play areas would be £51,017.02 if contractor (i) was chosen or £47,178.90 for work outlined by contractor (ii). The £36,558 available from s106 funding in addition to £15,000 from Roundponds solar farm funding would give a total of funds available of £51,558 which would cover the work planned. It was noted that contractor (i) had quoted to replace all the safety surfacing whereas (ii) had quoted to repair some and replace some of the safety surfacing but had also quoted to mend items, repair items such as gates etc and to clean and scrub, treat or paint the play equipment.

Recommended: *The Council proceed with obtaining a 3rd quote for work to be completed, based on the specification for (ii) and apply for all the £36,558 s106 funds available from Wiltshire Council which requires 3 independent quotes for requests at this spend level (£5,000 - £50,000) for the refurbishment of Kestrel Court and Hornchurch Road play areas.*

- c) **Transfer of assets:** It was noted that it had been recently discovered that Wiltshire Council did not own Hornchurch Road play area, it was still in the ownership of Bloor and Westbury Homes. It is believed that the transfer of ownership had “fallen through the cracks” when West Wiltshire District Council was dissolved and the unitary Wiltshire Council commenced in 2009. Sarah Holloway was making contact with the developers to see if the play area could be transferred directly from the developers to the Parish Council or whether it had to go first to Wiltshire Council, it was dependant on the legal agreements in place.

Recommended: *The Council proceed with the asset transfer of Hornchurch Road Play area, despite the ownership currently sitting with Bloor and Westbury Homes and not Wiltshire Council.*

Both contractors that had attended site to quote for refurbishment works were surprised at the poor quality of the safety surfacing at Hornchurch Road play area, in terms of the thickness of the safety surfacing, and in its design which only covered the fall areas with concrete filling in the gaps. This backed up the Parish Council’s comments on the recent s106 Planning Obligations DPD out for consultation where the Parish Council challenged the policy statement that Wiltshire Council insist on high quality play area provision. The Clerk had also questioned Wiltshire Council as to when it had originally been installed to see if it was still covered by any warranties.

- d) **Grasscutting & Shrub/Tree maintenance:** Cllr Mills reminded members that within the fence line of the Kestrel Court play area there was not only grass but also trees and shrubs that will need future maintenance. The Clerk explained that an amount had been put into the budget for grass cutting at the 3 Wiltshire Council owned play areas which had been based on the budget for grasscutting at Beanacre play area. It was noted that there was only a small grass margin at the Hornchurch Road play area and it may make more economic sense to wet pour the whole play area within the fence and not have a small grass area framing the play area which would negate the need for any grasscutting by the Parish Council at that site.

616/15 **Renewal of Farm Business Tenancies:** The Council’s solicitors had been in contact to say that the other party had stated that the Parish Council would be paying their legal fees of £11,000. This had not been agreed or even discussed when the parties met. It was noted that the Parish Council had made a £250 contribution to the other party’s fees when the tenancies were drawn up 5 years ago. This was a different situation, with just the tenancies being drawn up this time and therefore should be much less legal work. **Recommended:** *The Council reply to say that they are paying for their own legal fees, and feel that the other party should pay for their legal fees, as the tenancies are just being renewed.*

617/15 **Review of Finance Regulations:** The members noted the SLCC Advice Note: “How we deal with money. Advice on the content of Financial Regulations for Local

Councils in England". The Clerk drew attention to 6.2.4 "Each bank mandate, list of authorised signatures, limits of authority and amendments to any of these, must be approved by the council. Authorised signatories should be rotated on a regular basis", this was an agenda item later this evening for the setting up of the new account for the Unity online bank account.

The Clerk reported that the main changes to the Financial Regulations were to bring them into line with the online banking that the Council is about to start, the changes in the Audit and Transparency Code regulations and recommendations of the Internal Auditor, for example a List of Direct Debits to be approved annually so that all Councillors are aware of them and none get forgotten that are no longer required. The members reviewed the revised Finance Regulations ***Recommended: The Council adopt the revised Finance Regulations with the following additional amendment. The Council change the limit from £500 to £1,000 for the amount that the Clerk can authorise for urgent expenditure under Regulation 3.5, in line with the SLCC recommendation 4.2.4.***

618/15 **Review of Risk Register:** The members reviewed the changes and additions to the Risk Register in the revised version, and made the following additions and amendments in addition.

It was noted that the Caretaker had a separate Risk Assessment and that it would be prudent to review this again.

Page 9 onwards detailed the historic changes made over the last years and this can be removed from the document moving forwards.

It was queried as to whether a fire safe was required in the office but the Clerk advised that all legal documents were filed in the metal cabinets, and that these were only copies with the originals being filed with Solicitors. The cheque books etc were in a separate small metal box. Copies of all other documents were to be shortly moved over the Cloud, which the Finance Committee had recently considered to be adequate protection. In addition the staff often scan or photograph other documents that have not been generated from their own computers, to ensure a copy is saved to the Cloud in the future.

It was noted that procedures were in place for Bowerhill Sports Field and Pavilion and minuted, but needed to be drawn together into one Risk Assessment. There should also be a Risk Assessment for the play areas and open spaces, which should include the risk of Travellers occupying the land.

The door key code for Crown Chambers should be changed annually at the time of the Annual Council meeting, and only the key holders should have the door code. Councillors and staff should not share the door code with others.

The members discussed at length how to manage the risk of buildings and community facilities in the Parish owned by others, for example if a committee was about to fall with no one to take over; how would the Council be warned that they may be required/decide to step in. The current Risk mitigation states that the Council representative is to attend meetings regularly and the AGM. A risk had been identified if representatives do not attend the Committee meetings regularly and therefore would not be aware of any issues arising. An addition to be made to the

Register that the Council must have visibility of Minutes of those Committee meetings; this would alert the Council to any issues within the Committee such as continuity problems, and whether the representative was regularly attending the meetings. It was noted that the Council provides grant funding to the village halls in the parish and therefore could reasonably expect to receive copies of the Minutes from the organisations supported. The Council already hosts some organisations' minutes on their website; this allows them to have a website presence and to be found by members of the public via internet searches. At the Annual Council meeting on 23rd May it will be pointed out to the Council representatives that the expectation of the Council representative is:

- To attend the majority of all Committee meetings regularly.
- In addition, if the representative is for a Village Hall/Community Facility in the Parish then there is an additional expectation to ensure that the Clerk (as legal officer of the Council) receives copies of all Minutes of meetings, which will be published on the Parish Council website. This is to act as an early warning system in case of the fall of the Management Committee to enable the Parish Council to take action and step in if necessary.

Recommended: *The Council adopt the revised Risk Register with the additions listed above.*

619/15 **Review of Schedule of Charges:** Under the Council's Finance Regulations (9.3) it states an annual review of fees and charges to the public is undertaken. No changes were recommended by the Clerk as the charge of 12p per copy (1-19 copies) and 10p per copy (20+ copies) and £2.00 + post and packaging for copies of the Annual Accounts was adequately covered by the cost of photocopying at 1.209p per copy. This was the charge to members of the public. The Clerk had recently charged BASRAG (Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group) at the cost price of 1p per copy and the cost of a ream of paper (Total £12) for the 700 copies of "Berryfield Buzz" that were printed. There was very limited time involved by staff, just one print instruction on the computer and the Council provides grant funding to other village publications in the parish and not for Berryfield Buzz.

Recommended: *The Schedule of Fees & Charges for 2016/17 remain as per the charges for 2015/16.*

620/15 **Approval of Bank Mandate details for new Unity online bank account:** The Clerk had not copied the mandate details for the members as it contains all sorts of security details for all the members of the Finance Committee. The Clerk suggested that when the cheque is raised to open the balance, that a member is given delegated powers to check the final documentation, names authorised and their authorisation limits and the cheque is enclosed and the envelope sealed and sent. That way the Council has used an effective internal control that no amendments have been made following their approval. The members of the Finance Committee will have the ability to view and approve payments but not set them up. The Clerk and the Finance Assistant will have the ability to view and set up payments but not approve them.

Recommended: *The Chair of the Finance Committee has delegated powers to check the bank mandate for the new Unity online bank account, following the Annual Council meeting on 23rd May when a cheque will be raised for £500 to open the account, to ensure that the authorised members and their authorisation limits are correct as detailed above and will then seal the envelope for sending to the bank.*

621/15 **Requests for funding:**

- a) **Wilts & Berks Canal Trust for “Destination Lacock” land purchase:** It was noted that there was no great urgency for this project. It was questioned if the Trust knew about the Parish Council’s grant funding round earlier in the year. The Clerk advised that this was publicised via social media, two separate adverts in the Melksham Independent News and in the Quarterly Newsletter, via the Council website and the Trust had a Council representative that attends their meetings. **Recommended:** *The Council reply asking for the Trust to apply for a grant by the end of January 2017 deadline for the next round of grant funding offered by the Parish Council.*
- b) **CAWS Emergency Response Team for installing landline and wifi at Whitley Reading Rooms (Control Room for Emergencies):** It was noted that this project was considered differently by members as this was setting up a Control Room for the Community Emergency Volunteers in Shaw & Whitley whose kit was stored close by. The landline would be for use when the Reading Rooms was used as the Control Room/Muster Point and the wifi was to gain access to the Environment Agency website for flood warnings, Met Office website for weather conditions, Wiltshire Council website for gritting maps etc. An indicative cost of £150 for landline installation (‘phone would be locked in cupboard and only used for Emergency use) and £500 per annum for line rental including broadband. Bowerhill Village Hall have just had this installed themselves via Virgin who installed the landline for free and charge approx. £30 per month for line rental. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council support the installation of a landline and wifi at Whitley Reading Rooms for use of CAWS Emergency Response team in principle, but wish to see more precise costings before approving the funding of this project.*
- c) **Melksham & District Seniors Forum for transport to events in the Parish:** The Council had received correspondence from the Forum stating their disappointment at the amount of grant funding received in comparison to their grant award from Melksham Town Council and compared to the grant award given to Young Melksham. **Recommended:** *The Council reply to the Forum to explain that the grant awarded by the Parish Council is not related at all to grant funding provided by the Area Board, and comparisons cannot be made with Melksham Town Council funding levels as not comparing “apples for apples”. The application from Young Melksham was very detailed about what their funding would be used for, with much less details on planned expenditure from the Seniors Forum. In addition, the Parish Council provides grant funding to the Village Halls in the parish, as well as local Friendship groups, so there should be less need for parish residents to be collected and transported into Seniors Forum events in the town as there is already provision in the Parish. Mr Warwick is most welcome to address the Parish Council at its June Full Council meeting on other matters of concern to the Seniors Forum group.*

Meeting closed at 9.55pm

Chairman, 23rd May 2016