

MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 5th March 2018 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. John Glover (Committee Chair), Alan Baines, Paul Taylor, Nick Holder

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) & Justina Barber (Finance Assistant)

Observer: Cllr David Pafford

Apologies: Cllr Richard Wood had undergone an eye operation earlier in the day and Cllr Paul Carter was on holiday. These reasons for absence were accepted.

Housekeeping: The Committee Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

468/17 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Baines declared an interest as a volunteer for Melksham Christmas Lights. Cllr Glover declared an interest as a member of MRDG (Melksham Railway Development Group) as the parish council rep for the Melksham Area Community Safety Group, for Melksham & District Girl Guides due to his association with Guiding for Wiltshire South which covers the Melksham District, as an ex committee member of Melksham ATC and as an ex work colleague of the applicant for the West Wiltshire District Scout Council. Cllr Holder declared an interest as parish council rep for BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group). The members took no part in the voting on the grants to be awarded for those organisations that they had declared an interest in.

The Clerk declared an interest in Broughton Gifford & Holt Scouts as her son was an Explorer, Melksham & District Girl Guides as a volunteer, 5th Melksham Guides as her daughter was a Guide, as a Trustee of Young Melksham, and as a cheque signatory for Melksham Gardeners' Society. The Clerk also declared an interest in the applications for both Shaw and Berryfield Village Halls as her husband had previously quoted and been contracted for the type of work at the halls that they were now applying for funding for.

469/17 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

470/17 **Grant Aid Policy:**

- a) The Committee noted the current Grant Aid Policy.
- b) The Committee welcomed the news in a SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) press release that the "Taylor Commission" had recommended that the Government clarifies the legal powers of parish and town councils to fund church buildings, as this is something that both NALC and the SLCC had been raising with Government officials for some time. The Taylor Commission had reviewed the sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals. The Clerk explained that this was a legal grey area and that the Council's professional bodies had recommended that no funding was made to church buildings until clarified by Government. This meant that the Parish

Council could not support church halls for community use which was frustrating when they were the only community facility in a rural community, such as Beanacre for example. The Parish Council had previously written to their MP, Michelle Donelan, about this and would address again as they were due to meet with her later that week.

471/17 **Grant Aid 2018/19 Budget provision:** The members noted the Budget provision for Grant Aid. It was noted that there was still a Reserve of £1,500 for Bowerhill Youth Club of which the Budget shows of spending of £1,000 in 2018/19 for funding youth projects in the Parish, nominally set against Young Melksham's grant.

Section 137 Grants	£ 8,000
Section 137 Grants <i>from Bowerhill Youth Club reserve</i>	£ 1,000
Section 133 Village Hall grants	£ 8,000
Section 144 Tourism grants	£ 600
TOTAL	<u>£17,600</u>

472/17 **Section 137 Spend Limit:** Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables parish councils to spend a small amount per elector for the benefit of people in the parish. The Parish Council may use this power to give grants for any local activities or projects which are not covered under any other specific Council legal power. The Clerk reported that she had not been able to source the announcement of the amount per elector for 2018/19 yet and so had based the spend limit calculation on the figure for 2017/18 acknowledging that it always goes up by a few pence each year. The Department of Community and Local Government (DCLG) had confirmed that the appropriate sum for the purpose of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for parish and town councils in England for 2017/18 was £7.57. Based on £7.57 x 5,421 electors in 2017/18, this would give a maximum limit of £41,036.97 that could be spend under S137 powers.

473/17 **Grant Aid awarded 2018/19:** The Committee Chairman, Cllr Glover reported that the Council had received 45 applications for Grant Aid with requests totalling £35,346.70 and gave an overview of how the Council had prioritised the grant funding in the past. Priority for grant aid had been for groups and organisations that directly support residents in the parish such as the Village Halls and Action Groups. Providing funding for the village halls means that the Parish Council can also support a wide range of local groups and organisations using the facilities by contributing to their running costs and so enabling them to keep their hiring charges to the groups relatively low. The Action Groups have been set up often at the instigation of the Parish Council and often take on tasks that would otherwise fall to the Council. Young Melksham runs a youth centre in town; it is recognised that this provision meant that the Parish Council had no need to resurrect the Bowerhill Youth Club in the new Pavilion facilities as the young people of Bowerhill were already well provided for at the Canberra youth centre run by Young Melksham. Therefore, the funds reserved for Bowerhill Youth Club have in the past been used to fund Young Melksham in recognition of the young people from all over the parish who attend its youth clubs. **Recommendation:** *The Council award grants to the following organisations:*

Application number	ORGANISATION	Awarding in 2018/19
SECTION 133 GRANTS (HALLS)		
1	<i>Bowerhill Village Hall Trust</i>	1,850
2	<i>Shaw Hill Playing Field and Village Hall</i>	3,000
3	<i>Berryfield Village Hall</i>	500
4	<i>Whitley Reading Rooms</i>	2,400
5	<i>The Rachel Fowler Centre</i>	250
SECTION 133 GRANTS (HALLS) TOTAL		8,000
SECTION 137 GRANTS		
ACTION GROUPS		
6	<i>Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)</i>	400
7	<i>Berryfield & Semington Rd Action Group (BASRAG)</i>	500
8	<i>Community Action Whitley Shaw (CAWS)</i>	500
9	<i>Melksham Community Area Partnership for Melksham Community Area Safety Group CCTV</i>	250
10	<i>Melksham Community Area Partnership for Melksham Community Area Neighbourhood Watch Group</i>	100
11	<i>Melksham Community Area Partnership for the Melksham Community Area Community Safety Group</i>	300
ACTION GROUPS TOTAL		2,050
YOUTH		
12	<i>Melksham & District Girl Guides</i>	0
13	<i>Bowerhill Scouts</i>	250
14	<i>1st Broughton Gifford & Holt Scout Group</i>	200
15	<i>Young Melksham (from Bowerhill Youth Club Reserve)</i>	1,000
16	<i>5th Melksham Guides With caveat that money granted is used as a welfare/hardship fund only; to support girls to attend activities who otherwise could not afford it.</i>	250
17	<i>2385 (Melksham) Squadron ATC Reserved pending more information regarding their accounts, in particular the high amount of weekly petty cash; with a separate request that the funded radios could be called upon by the parish council in the event of a community emergency.</i>	250
18	<i>In2Sport Coaching and In2Play Therapy</i>	0

19	<i>Wiltshire West District Scout Council With caveat that funding must be used on training only and not uniform. With suggestion that they apply to Atworth Parish Council for any further funding as application is for setting up new Beaver & Cub Group for Shaw, Whitley and Atworth</i>	300
YOUTH TOTAL		2,250
SUPPORT GROUPS		
20	<i>Happy Circle Day Centre</i>	150
21	<i>Group Five</i>	300
22	<i>Melksham PHAB Club</i>	200
23	<i>Relate Mid Wiltshire</i>	150
24	<i>Melksham Community Bus Reserved pending more information regarding camera use and why needed.</i>	200
25	<i>Melksham Read Easy In addition, offer use of Pavilion free of charge</i>	100
26	<i>Wiltshire Mind</i>	150
27	<i>Wiltshire Sight In addition, offer use of Pavilion free of charge</i>	100
28	<i>Wiltshire Air Ambulance</i>	250
29	<i>Wiltshire Search & Rescue</i>	100
30	<i>Back on Track – Stroke Rehab Service In addition, offer use of Pavilion free of charge</i>	100
SUPPORT GROUPS TOTAL		1,800
COMMUNITY		
31	<i>Melksham & District Seniors 55+</i>	500
32	<i>Melksham Christmas Lights</i>	250
33	<i>Melksham Carnival</i>	150
34	<i>Melksham Food & River Festival</i>	150
35	<i>Melksham In Bloom Reserved pending clarity on the areas covered and where planting takes place</i>	250
COMMUNITY TOTAL		1,300
COMMUNITY INFO		
36	<i>Shaw & Whitley Connect</i>	250
COMMUNITY INFO TOTAL		250
TRANSPORT		
37	<i>Melksham Railway Development Group</i>	300
TRANSPORT TOTAL		300

CLUBS		
38	Melksham Cricket Club	250
39	AFC Melksham (Disabled)	100
40	Melksham Gardeners' Society	150
41	Enigma	0
42	Melksham Amateur Swimming Club	250
43	Shaw & Whitley Friendship Club	200
44	Shaw & Whitley Garden Club	100
CLUBS TOTAL		1,050
SECTION 137 GRANTS TOTAL		9,000
SECTION 144 (TOURISM) GRANTS		
TOURISM		
45	Melksham Tourist Information Centre	600
SECTION 144 GRANTS TOTAL		600
GRAND TOTAL		£17,600

Recommendation: The Council do not award Grants to the following organisations for the following reasons:

12. Melksham & District Girl Guides: Members felt that the organisation would be better suited applying to other organisations for larger capital projects against a business plan, for the refurbishment of their building, in line with the work done at the Scout HQ next door and the capital grants received for other local girl guiding projects such as Wiltshire South with £130k raised with only £40k from the girl guiding organisation and Steeple Ashton Guides with £15k of grants from the Area Board and Big Lottery funds. In addition, there is no indication as to the numbers of girls in the parish that the organisation has as members.

18. In2Sport Coaching and In2Play Therapy: Due to lack of supporting evidence (year end accounts) which does not comply with the Grant Aid Policy and lack of a detailed breakdown of request. Year end accounts had been chased on several occasions by email and 'phone. The council reply to say that they favour support and request that they include year end accounts and a breakdown of how the residents of the parish are supported in any application next year.

41. Enigma: Due to the application being for individual girls' uniform which members felt should be supplied by their parents/carers as this is not something that could be used by a wider pool of individuals for some time.

474/17

2018/19 Year End Accounts & Audit:

a) **Year End Accounts Preparation for Rialtas Omega Software:**

Recommendation: The council approve the quotation for year end close down by Rialtus for 2017/18 at £515 plus 45p per mile mileage costs.

b) **Notification of External Auditor appointments for 2017- 2022:** The SAAA (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd) has appointed PKF

Littlejohn LLP as external auditors for parish and town councils in Wiltshire for a 5 year period commencing with the financial year 2017/18. Fee scales for the Parish Council's income/expenditure band will be £600. The Annual Return will now be known as the "Annual Governance and Accountability Return" and will need to be completed in accordance with "proper practices" as set out in "*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, a Practitioners' Guide*" and then be published in accordance with applicable Transparency Codes.

- c) **Internal Auditor for 2017/18:** The members noted the detailed engagement letter for the appointed internal auditor IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd for the financial year 2017/18 which detailed roles and responsibilities, audit planning, reporting, independence and competence, access to information and remuneration.

475/17 **Banking arrangements:**

Recommendation:

1. *The Council arrange direct debits for their 3no. Water2Water Business accounts covering water supply at the two allotment sites and Bowerhill Pavilion as the Council regularly receives a "red" bill chasing payment as the council's monthly cheque run is unable to respond quickly enough to a request for payment. Payments will be taken every 6 months.*
2. *The Council arrange an annual direct debit to the ICO (Information Commissioners Office) for its registration as a Data Processor as there are fines if this is not done in timely manner.*

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman, 26th March 2018