

MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 9th January 2023 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices, Melksham Community Campus (First Floor), Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm

It was noted that due to changes being made to the Budget Working spreadsheets during the meeting that officers would need to double check the figures and spreadsheet formula calculations to ensure that totals were correct. Any figures that were changed as a result of this double checking are therefore highlighted green, and the correct figures captured in these minutes so that they correlate with the Budget working papers, and Precept calculations for the Full Council to approve on Monday 23rd January.

Present: Councillors. John Glover (Chair of Council & Committee), David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council), Alan Baines (Committee Vice-Chair, Richard Wood and John Doel.

On Zoom: Councillor Shea-Simonds and Councillor Holt.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk), Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer) and Lorraine McRandle (Parish Officer).

Housekeeping: Councillor Glover welcomed all to the meeting.

317/22 Apologies:

Apologies were received from Councillor Shea- Simonds who was self- isolating due to an upcoming operation and Councillor Holt who was ill. These reasons for absence were accepted.

It was noted that both Councillor Shea- Simonds and Holt were in attendance at the meeting via Zoom and would be able to take part in the discussions, however would not have any voting rights.

318/22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Glover subsequently declared an interest in the Chair's allowance, as this was a budget heading in the spreadsheet.

319/22 Dispensation Requests for this Meeting

None.

320/22 To note that Councillors living in the Parish have a dispensation for Precept setting.

It was noted that those Councillor living in the parish had a previously approved dispensation for setting the precept for the current Council Term, 2021-25 (Min 09/21b Annual Council 17th May 21).

321/22 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:

The Clerk advised that the budget spreadsheet (agenda item 10) included staff salaries, which had been blanked out to enable the spreadsheet to be viewed on the screen and recorded for YouTube. If members wished to discuss individual salaries, this would need to go into closed session. It was noted that the councillors had been provided with a separate paper copy, which did include the staff salaries and was reminded that this was confidential.

It was felt that agenda item 13 (Risk Register) would need to be discussed under closed session due to the fact that it exposed the council's weaknesses. Agenda item 17 would also need to be held in closed session due to the nature of discussions relating to debtors, which may be the start of legal action being required in the future.

Resolved: Items 13 and 17 to be held in closed session for the reasons provided above.

322/22 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

323/22 Internal Audit: To receive feedback from internal audit visit (1 of 2 for 2022/23) on Weds 21st December and consider report if received in time:

The Clerk explained that the first internal audit of the year was undertaken on the 21st December and went well overall, with only a few observations and recommendations made by the auditor. The auditor had highlighted that it was a requirement for the council to review the risk register each year, which was on the agenda for this evening's meeting. The Clerk explained that it was felt that the register should be looked at again once the council moved into the Campus, as this was a change of circumstances, that's why it hasn't been reviewed before now; and was reviewed last in January 2022. The Clerk noted in the auditor's comments that this could not be undertaken by a committee and had gone back to the auditor to advise that although the finance committee would be the ones to review it, the Full Council would approve it at their meeting on 23rd January.

The auditor drew to the attention of officers that the VAT registration dispensation in place from HMRC referred to a VAT limit of £1,000, which equated to £6,000 of gross income. He had noted that the council's sports field income now exceeded this limit, therefore the dispensation was no longer valid. He recommended that the council may wish to consider whether it should now be VAT registered. The Clerk explained to members that the dispensation was in place for things such as photocopying for organisations and sports field income. It was advised that there was a separate ten match booking rule specifically for sports field bookings, however this was only for non-commercial organisations, so would not be applicable for the commercial strand of the current youth football booking. Councillor Doel highlighted that there was also a monthly fee that would need to be paid, if the council registered for VAT and once VAT registered the council would be unable to de-register, even if the income was reduced. The Clerk explained that due to all of the variables involved with this, more investigation would be needed by officers to determine whether the council was required to be VAT registered and bring back to full council.

During the audit visit the auditor queried the large amount of funds the council currently held in reserves, as he could not see much movement during the financial year to date. The Clerk explained that the reserve movements would be undertaken at year end, when all movements were known. It was also noted for example, the circa £315,000, which was CIL received for the East of Melksham development was currently held in reserves and there had already been a resolution by the Full Council to transfer these funds to Melksham Town Council, as this development now fell in their area; and the spend on the new Berryfield Village Hall build. The auditor also questioned the high earmarked reserves that were held, as he explained that money should not be taken from parishioners for something that may be spent in 10 years' time, as they may not get the benefit of it. The Clerk explained that she had highlighted to the auditor that the council felt that it was prudent to plan for future expenditure that was known, such as the replacement of play equipment. For example, some time ago the council purchased a number of defibrillators and knew at the time that they would all need replacing at the same time, so a reserve was set up purely for this expenditure. This would then cushion the effect of such a large expenditure on the elector at that time of replacement. Councillor Glover had already queried with the Clerk whether there was any legislation or statutory guidance around sinking funds that the council needed to be made aware of. The Clerk had queried this with the auditor and he confirmed that there wasn't currently any legislation which prohibited councils from saving for future known expenditure. It was noted that this was not included in the auditor's observations, but was something that he would be looking at at year end once all of the movements in and out had been undertaken.

Recommendation: Officers to investigate whether the council are now required to be VAT registered and bring back the outcome to Full Council.

324/22 Berryfield Village Hall:

a) To note Final Account for build from Rigg Construction and outstanding payments in 2022/23 and 2023/24:

Members noted that the final account for the Berryfield Village Hall construction provided by the Cost Consultant, was £781,266.88. Along with the final account the Cost Consultant had also provided some supporting documentation, which included omissions and additions to the contract, which members were presented with as part of their agenda pack (Appendix 1). The Clerk explained that there was £500 outstanding to be paid in this financial year for seeding the area of the old village hall, following its demolition. This was due to the fact that there was frost and snow following the demolition, which meant that it was too cold to seed the area, therefore, the contractors advised that they would return in the new year to undertake this. The solar battery was also due to be arriving sometime in January 2023, so there would also be a cost of £5,905.07 to be paid in this financial year (this is the amount after 1.5% held for retention with the rest of the project). In March 2023, the council will also need to pay back £49,500 for the capital repayments for the public works loan as well as £2,475 in interest payments.

In terms of the next financial year, £11,719.03 would need to be paid to Rigg Construction, which was the 1.5% retention held back for things that may require remedial works during the first year following hand over. This amount will be due on the 5th September 2023, one year on from the hall handover to the parish council. In the

next financial year, the council will also need to pay back £99,000 for the public works loan capital as well as £4,022 in interest.

b) To note Total Spend on Project vs Budget

The Clerk explained that officers had put together the following summary document detailing the various estimates that had been made during different stages of the project and how they differed, as well as the spend to date figures. She advised that when putting together this document, she had included the estimated project income and expenditure figures from the Full Council minutes of 6th December 2021, where the council approved the revised Rigg contract figure. These figures could then be compared against the current revised estimate for the project, which took into account income and expenditure to date, as well as any estimated future income and expenditure for the whole project. The summary shows as per what was agreed at the 6th December 2021 meeting, it was expected that the council would receive £914,503.78 income (without public works loan) with £876,026.54 expenditure, giving a buffer of £38,477.24. The updated revised estimate for the project's income and expenditure (without public works loan) to date was £933,550.56 income and £877,005.04 expenditure. It was noted that the income was more than estimated due to receiving more CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) income than estimated, as it can be difficult to estimate the amount of CIL funds coming in. Members noted that the expenditure was only £1,000 more than agreed in December 2021, with a buffer of £56,545.52. It was noted that the council spent £40,000 more due to issues with the drainage connections, which was an unforeseen cost, but spent less due to not putting in things such as a projector screen and CCTV, which had originally been included in the budget costings.

There was also a column on the summary document, which detailed the revised estimate for the whole project, including the public works loan. The last two columns on the document showed the actual spend to date on the project, with the second from last column omitting the public works loan capital and the very last column including the loan for comparison. The actual figures to date (without public works loan) detailed the total income received as £838,550.56 with the expenditure being £842,516.44, with a deficit of -£3,965.88. These figures clearly demonstrate that the public works loan was required for ease of cashflow, as without it there would currently be a shortfall. The actual income and expenditure to date including the public works loan was £1,333,377.31 income with £941,516.44 expenditure, which gave a buffer of £391,860.87. The Clerk explained that this buffer was to pay back the remaining amount owed for the public works loan repayments, construction retention, solar battery and interest repayments. The figures have been shown with, and without, the Public Works Loan, so that they could be compared to the original estimates, but also with the Loan as that related directly to the figures in the bank account and recorded on the Rialtas accounting software. Officers had back up paperwork with them that demonstrated that the figures (including the Loan) directly correlated with the figures from Rialtas.

It was noted that there was still some c£90,000 (+ £60,00 to the CIL sharing pot) to come from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) from a proposed development adjoining the village hall site, PL/2022/01938 Land west of Semington Road; a 144 dwelling development by David Wilson Homes. This is intended to make up the shortfall of the funding needed to repay the Public Works Loan. Whilst it can not be

100% relied on at this stage, as the development may not go ahead, the developers attended a parish council Planning Committee on 19th December, with revised plans for their Reserved Matters application, which has to start on site within a year of approval, so this is anticipated to commence within the next financial year, with the first instalment payable then. Councillors are aware that if this development does not go ahead, funding from elsewhere will have to be found before the end of the Loan repayment period in September 2026.

	Original Estimates	Revised Estimates as at 6th December 2021 Full Council meeting when revised Rigg Contract approved for signature	Revised Estimate for whole project as at 05/1/23 WITHOUT Public Works Loan capital amount for comparison	Revised Estimate for whole project as at 05/1/23 WITH Public Works Loan as in place	Actual To Date figures as at 05/01/23 WITHOUT Public Works Loan capital amount for comparison	Actual To Date figures as at 05/01/23 WITH Public Works Loan
Total Income	£888,506.00	£914,503.78	£933,550.56	£1,428,377.31	£838,550.56	£1,333,377.31
Total Expenditure	£888,338.00	£876,026.54	£877,005.04	£1,372,005.04	£842,516.44	£941,516.44
Difference/Buffer	£168.00	£38,477.24	£56,545.52	£56,372.27	-£3,965.88	£391,860.87
					Demonstrates Public Works Loan was required for cashflow	Which is to repay the Public Works Loan (last payment Sept 2026) of £396,000 capital repayment plus retention, plus solar battery plus interest payments

c) To approve payment of start-up fund to new charitable trust and agree amount

The Clerk explained that included in the estimated figures at December 2021 was a start-up payment for the new Berryfield Village Hall Charitable Trust. This was based around the grants that were awarded to other village halls. The Clerk explained that the new village hall committee was aware of the parish council's grant deadline for grant awards from 1st April 2023 and would be submitting an application in due course. The old village hall bank account currently only had around £800 in and the feeling of the council previously was that the new Management Trust would need some start-up funding to get them going. It was also noted that they would need cashflow for utility costs which was currently unknown. The Clerk explained that there was currently £4,500 in the budget to give to the village hall trust and asked members whether they were happy for this amount to be transferred to the new trust. If so, at what stage should this figure be transferred over to the new Trust. It was noted that the hall

committee already had a constitution and had very recently been confirmed as a charitable trust. The only thing that hasn't been signed was the lease, which the parish council was still waiting for from their solicitors. Members felt that these funds should be approved to be transferred over to the new committee, subject to visibility of the constitution.

Recommendation: The council to transfer over £4,500 to the new Berryfield Management Trust, subject to having sight of the constitution

325/22 To note for background information: Minutes of Finance Committee 10th January 2022 (annotated where appropriate with agreed budget at following Full Council meeting).

Members noted the minutes of the budget meeting on 10th January 2022 as background information.

326/22 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

a) To note response to CIL queries raised with Wiltshire Council:

The Clerk explained that she had raised a number of queries with Wiltshire Council regarding CIL. One being whether CIL was applicable for strategic sites, as it was her understanding that development on these sites provided no CIL payments. Following her query on this, it had been confirmed that CIL would still be applicable for these sites, however the square meterage rate would be charged at a lower rate (£30 per sqm rather than £50). It was noted that this was the current rates, and this may change with Wiltshire Council's new Local Plan.

The Clerk also wanted to confirm with Wiltshire Council that there was no CIL applicable on sites that had 100% affordable housing. It was confirmed by them that the developer would have to apply for social housing exception to ensure that they have no CIL liability, therefore, no CIL would be applicable for these sites. The Clerk also queried whether the CIL amount due for the proposed 144 houses at land east of Semington Road was known, as the council had estimated their income from this development to be used for the Berryfield Village Hall project. It was confirmed that it needed to be approved at Reserved Matters before the CIL liability was able to be calculated, as this was when the square meterage was determined.

The Clerk explained that Wiltshire Council publish a spreadsheet which details all of the land charges for Wiltshire, in previous years it had been very difficult to sort out which developments were in the parish, as there was no option to sort by parish. Following feedback that she sent to Wiltshire Council there was now a sorting option on the spreadsheet that enables councils to sort via parish, which makes it much easier to spot new developments. Whilst checking the spreadsheet against the CIL income Wiltshire Council received and the amount that the parish council received, she noticed that on some developments, the CIL amounts did not seem correct. She explained that now that the parish council had a neighbourhood plan, the CIL income was calculated at 25% and not 15% as previous, however when calculating for both percentages the figures didn't correlate. She queried this with Wiltshire Council as the income for a number of planning applications did not seem to be adding up to the correct amounts. Wiltshire Council confirmed that this was due to surcharges being

added on, due to non-compliance of the CIL regulations. As these charges are part of the admin costs there is no CIL liability payable to the parish in these instances. These surcharges are however included on the spreadsheet in the amount of CIL payable to Wiltshire Council, as they are unable to show it any other way, which makes it really difficult to work out how much CIL is due to come in and whether the amount received is correct. The Clerk advised that she had fed this back to Wiltshire Council, as there is no indication in the spreadsheet as to whether the CIL payable to Wiltshire Council included a surcharge or not.

b) To note CIL income received in 2022/23, agree potential CIL income figure to include for 2023/24 and rationale of use of potential CIL income for 2023/24:

The Clerk reminded members that now there was an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, the council received 25% of CIL, however 10% of this was allocated to a CIL sharing pot with Melksham Town Council. This was clearly detailed on the CIL spreadsheet.

In May 2022 the council received a total amount of £1,655.29 for a single-story dwelling at the garden of 406c The Spa, the parish council's share of funding was £993.17 with a share of £662.12 going into the CIL sharing pot. Also, during this month £406.26 was received for 406C The Spa, with £162.50 going into the sharing pot and £243.76 being the parish council's 15% share.

It was noted that following non-compliance of CIL regulations, the self-build at Frogditch Farm was now required to pay CIL. The parish council received in August 2022 a total sum of £1,340.63 which was 25% of the CIL income. The parish council's 15% share of this was £804.36 with £536.25 going into the CIL sharing pot. In August 2022 £4,596.36 was received from land at 27 Beanacre with £1,838.54 going into the 10% sharing pot and £2,757.82 being the parish councils 15% share of the income.

In November 2022 the parish council received a total amount of £4,015.21 for Land rear of 39/40 Eden Grove. The parish councils 15% share of this funding was £2,409.13 with £1,606.08 going into the 10% sharing pot.

CIL income anticipated to year end 2022/23 (parish councils 15%)

Frogditch Farm, 225 Lower Woodrow (15/09689/FUL)	£ 804.38
Land rear of 39/40 Eden Grove (21/01791/FUL)	£2,409.13
27 Beanacre, Beanacre SN12 7PT (20/03543/FUL)	£2,757.82
Garden of 406c The Spa (18/03329/REM)	£ 993.17
406C The Spa (19/10934/FUL)	<u>£ 243.76</u>
	£7,208.26

CIL income anticipated to year end 2022/23 for 10% Sharing pot

Frogditch Farm, 225 Lower Woodrow (15/09689/FUL)	£ 536.25
Land rear of 39/40 Eden Grove (21/01791/FUL)	£1,606.08
27 Beanacre, SN12 7PT (20/03543/FUL)	£1,838.54
Garden of 406c The Spa (18/03329/REM)	£ 662.12
406C The Spa (19/10934/FUL)	<u>£ 162.50</u>
	£4,805.49

Total amount of CIL Income expected to year end 2022/23 £12,013.75

The income detailed above has already been received in this financial year.

There are a few small developments in the parish, which have planning permission and are CIL payable, however are yet to start on site, therefore, it cannot be foreseen when the CIL income will be received. As it is unable to be determined when the income will be received, they have not been included in the budgeted figures for this year or next year. CIL payments are made by Wiltshire Council quarterly, so there may still be a payment in March 23. These are for the following developments:

19/00221/FUL 63 Shaw Hill- Demolition of 63 Shaw Hill and replacement with three, detached four-bedroom homes and associated works. £1,396.47

21/01765/FUL The Barn and Store at Upper Beanacre Farmyard- Replacement of barn & store with 2 chalet bungalows £2,578.19

PL/2021/07622- 486A Semington Road- New dwelling £1,584.95

As these small developments are liable to pay 25% of CIL to the parish council, 10% of the figures stated above will move into the CIL funding pot once received.

For 2023/24 there is some visibility of when the development at land at Semington Road will be starting on site, as it must start on site within a year of the Reserved Matters decision, which is expected in the first quarter of 2023. The parish council looked at the revised plans for this development at their planning committee meeting on 19th December 2022. It has been anticipated that the council will receive at least the first tranche of CIL funding in the 2023/24, with further amounts coming on stream in future financial years. The CIL income for this development has been estimated at this stage and based on typical income from neighbouring developments, with a similar number of dwellings. As explained above under agenda item 7a (CIL queries), this is due to the fact that the square meterage needed to be worked out, so that a figure could be calculated and could only be done following approval at reserve matters stage. The CIL amount payable would be at 25%, therefore the 10% is shown on the spreadsheet under a different column, so that it clearly separates out how much the parish council will have and how much will be going into the sharing pot with Melksham Town Council.

<u>CIL income estimated to year end 2023/24</u>	
20/01938/OUT New 144 houses on Semington Road	£30,000
	£30,000
 <u>CIL income estimated to year end 2023/24 for 10% Sharing pot</u>	
20/01938/OUT New 144 houses on Semington Road	£20,000
	£20,000
 Total amount of CIL Income expected to year end 2023/24	£50,000

c) To note parish council's agreed uses of CIL and to consider more project specific spend for current and next financial year

The Clerk explained that all of the expenditure included in the CIL spreadsheet was based on decisions the council had previously made. It was noted that unlike s106 funding the spending of CIL monies do not need to be related to the development or the surrounding area. The council have previously made a decision that as CIL was a finite amount and had to be spent within 5 years of receipt, it was better for it to be used for capital items rather than items that required ongoing maintenance, which would be much more suited to come from solar farm funding.

With regards to the estimated CIL expenditure for 2022/23, the parish council agreed a list of costed projects and priorities in October 2022 for LHFID schemes (Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group). As per the list of schemes, which the parish council will have to pay 50% of the cost towards, it was anticipated that £5,250 will be spent this financial year. This does not include funding for the Falcon Way bus shelter, as this will now come from solar farm funding or for the Beanacre village gates, as it is anticipated that this will be in next year's round of funding.

It was budgeted at the Finance Committee on 10th January 2022 that the spend on natural flood management at Shaw and Whitley would be £500 for this financial year, however this does not appear to be any further forward, so this has now been revised to £0 for this financial year. The Clerk has suggested that this heading for expenditure should be removed as currently there were no plans for this work to be done.

There is one more interpretation board that was still outstanding for Shurnhold Fields, this is expected to be delivered and invoiced in this financial year. It has been estimated that this will cost £850 which includes an increase, as it has been some time since the original quotation.

It is anticipated that the public art street naming information board for the Pathfinder Place development from Shelley Signs will be completed in this financial year, so the CIL spreadsheet is showing an expenditure of £800 for this. The parish council purchased a second SID at a cost of £2,296.00 in this financial year, which had not been anticipated at budget setting.

The council purchased a drinking water fountain in the previous financial year; however, it was still awaiting to be installed. This was due to the fact that there was initially a hold up with arranging for a plumber to come on site and provide a quotation for the installation. There were then further complications discovered with the installation process, due to there being a requirement for an internal drain, which officers were not made aware of prior to purchasing the unit. A site survey has now been undertaken by the manufacturer of the fountain, who have advised the council on what options can be taken to get the unit installed. It is anticipated that the installation will cost £1,500, which will come from CIL.

The spend as at October 2022 for street furniture was £2,471.00, which was just below the amount that was budgeted and has been spent on replacement noticeboards for outside Shaw Village Hall and the Pilot Pub due to their age. The parish council also purchased a new noticeboard to go outside of the new Berryfield

Village Hall. It is not anticipated that there will be anymore spend in this financial year under this budget heading.

The spend on replacing Wiltshire Council bins is anticipated to be much higher than originally budgeted for this financial year. This was because as at October 2022 the council had already spent £1,134.00 on the replacement of two bins, which included the cost of the bin as well as for installation. The council agreed at their Full Council meeting on 24th October 2022 (*min 225/22b*) to increase the spend up to an additional £1,000 to the end of this financial year. This will give provision for the replacement of one more bin that has either been vandalised or burnt out.

The spend on village hall grants was slightly lower than budgeted for, however the budget for these grants had been increased by £5,000 for this financial year. This is because the council recognised that village hall income had been hit particularly hard due to covid over the past few years, so had anticipated that there may have been an increase in grant funding requests.

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The council received an offer from Wiltshire Council of some plainings from the A350 which were delivered to the allotment car park. The parish council's contractors spread them out in early December 2022 and it is anticipated that the cost for this will be £198.

Recommendation 1: The parish council revise their original budgeted spend from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) for 2022/23 to be as follows:

	2022/23 Budget Provision (agreed Jan 2022)	2022/23 anticipated expenditure (up to 31.03.23)
Contribution to LHFIG schemes	£ 5,500	£ 5,250
Flood prevention-ditch clearance	£ 500	£ 0
Shurnhold Fields capital	£ 0	£ 850
Public Art-Pathfinder Place	£ 0	£ 800
Speed Indicator Device (2 nd SID)	£ 0	£ 2,296
Drinking water fountain	£ 0	£ 1,500
Street Furniture	£ 2,500	£ 2,471
Replacing Wiltshire Council bins	£ 1,000	£ 2,000
Village Hall Grants	£15,000	£14,700
Ground works to level plainings At allotments from road surfacing on A350	£ 0	£ 198
	<u>£24,500</u>	<u>£30,065</u>

Members reviewed the estimated CIL spend for 2023/24, it was noted that due to the amount of funds left in the CIL pot, some items that in previous years had come out of this funding are now not able to, as there were currently not enough funds. These items have instead come from solar farm funding which will be detailed under agenda item 9. For the 2023/24 financial year £10,000 has been allocated to LHFIG schemes,

which includes the Beanacre Village gates, which is expected to be in that financial year.

The Bowerhill Sports Field and improvement project was still one of the objectives for the council, however this project has currently been deferred to a future financial year. Based on the anticipated spend for the 2022/23 financial year, £2,000 has been budgeted for the replacement of Wiltshire Council bins.

Recommendation 2: The parish council spend from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) for 2023/24 to be as follows:

	2023/24 Budget Expenditure
Contribution to LHFIG Schemes	£10,000
Shurnhold Fields Capital project	£ 3,500
Replacement of Wiltshire Council bins	£ 2,000
	<u>£15,500</u>

The balance of CIL funds at the end of each financial year is put into a Reserve as the funds are restricted to funding community infrastructure only and to aid tracking of the expenditure, which has to be annually reported to Wiltshire Council. Transfers from the CIL Reserve have been made to other earmarked Reserves, as detailed below.

Total in CIL reserve at end of 2021/22	£45,302.21
Confirmed CIL income for 2022/23	£12,013.75
TOTAL	£57,315.96
Anticipated Expenditure from CIL for 2022/23	£30,065.00
<u>Transfer CIL into ringfenced reserve</u>	
CIL Sharing with MTC Reserve (extra 10% CIL due to NHP)	£4,805.49 (Transfer 9)
<u>Transfer from CIL reserve into dedicated earmarked reserves</u>	
Transfer to Bowerhill Sports Field Long term Capital replacement Reserve	£5,000.00 (Transfer 8)
TOTAL in CIL reserve at end of 2022/23	£17,445.47
Total in CIL reserve at end of 2022/23	£17,445.47
CIL income anticipated for 2023/24	£50,000.00
Total	£67,445.47
Anticipated expenditure from CIL for 2023/24	£15,500.00

Transfer CIL into dedicated project/ ringfenced reserve

Berryfield Village Hall Reserve	£30,000.00 (Transfer 10)
CIL Sharing with MTC Reserve (extra 10% CIL due to NHP)	£20,000.00 (Transfer 11)
Total in CIL reserve at the end of 2023/24	£ 1,945.47

327/22 Reserves:

a) To review Financial Reserves Policy

The Clerk queried with members, following the comments made by the internal auditor regarding sinking funds, whether this policy needed to be updated to reflect the council's current position on this. Councillor Glover highlighted that it was already a long-standing policy for capital replacement of things, such as play equipment, to be budgeted for well in advance of it needing to be replaced. The council have previously felt that it was much better to financially plan for these items that they know will need to be replaced eventually, rather than put up the precept in the year when the item needed replacing.

Members highlighted that looking at their policy, it did state under the earmarked reserve section that 'specific reserves are often used to "smooth" the effects of certain expenditure commitments over a period of time thereby reducing the impact of significant expenditure in any one year'. Members felt that this clearly stated the council's policy on these types of reserves and this should be referred to in the response back to the auditor.

The Clerk explained that the council had previously included in the policy about ringfenced reserves, which was income that had been received typically from a legal agreement that could only be spent on a specific project. For example, the money for the Shurnhold Fields maintenance can only be spent on the maintenance of the field, so is held in a specific reserve specifically for that. Councillor Pafford queried whether there was a difference between ear marked reserves and ringfenced. The Clerk explained that ear marked reserves do not need to be spent on a specific project and could be moved around to be spent on another purpose, whereas ringfenced could not and must be spent on its intended use. The Clerk explained that income from CIL and solar farm funding also have stipulations on what they can be used for, however they usually have a wider range of uses. Funds for CIL for example, have to be spent within five years, otherwise they have to be paid back, therefore they need to be shown separately, so that there is clear evidence that they are being used within the time.

The Clerk explained that the General Reserve was the amount that was left over at the end of the financial year. It has previously been advised that councils should have between 3-6 months' worth of expenditure to keep the council running in an emergency, however the parish council do not need this level because they have adequate ear marked reserves. The Clerk went on to explain that the parish council's policy stated that the General Reserve should lie at one month's worth of expenditure, as virements from ear marked reserves can be made when necessary.

Members felt that this policy reflected what the council agreed, therefore, did not see a need for it to be changed.

Recommendation: No changes to be made to the current Reserves Policy. Officers to reference the reserve policy with regards to sinking funds in the response back to the auditor.

b) To consider contribution to Reserves and spending from Reserves for current and next financial year:

In this financial year the Berryfield Village Hall reserve is showing £425,998.00 coming into it, this was the 75% index linked s106 funding for Berryfield Village Hall. The 25% of funding for this was received in the previous financial year, so was already held in the reserve. In 2023/24 it was anticipated that the council would receive the first tranche of CIL for the new 144 housing development on Semington Road (20/01938/OUT), as the developers must start on site within one year of approval of Reserve Matters. It is expected that this will be done in the first quarter of 2023, therefore some CIL is expected in the financial year. Currently, it is unknown how much CIL the council would be getting, so this has been estimated based on a similar size development. So, the adjacent Bowood View development of 150 houses paid £112, 891.98 in total. It has been conservatively estimated that therefore this would pay c£90,000 as for fewer houses, and the housing sizes may be smaller. As this Bowood View CIL was paid at 15%, this would actually now be more like c£150,000 at 25%. This would be £90k for the Berryfield Village Hall reserve towards paying back the Public Works Loan and £60k in the shared CIL Reserve. As the Bowood View CIL was paid in three instalments, this is expected to be similar, with three payments of c£50k.

It has been estimated that the council will receive £50,000 of CIL from this development in 2023/24, with £20,000 of this being put into the 10% CIL sharing pot and £30,000 (Transfer 10) being transferred into the village hall reserve. There is also £5,000 being shown as coming into this reserve from the Beanacre battery storage, to contribute towards the solar battery at the village hall. It is expected that at year end there will be £672,617.50 spent from this reserve, this is based on £568,358.12 for the village hall construction including the solar battery less the 1.5% retention, which is due to be paid in the next financial year. There is also £99,000 to be paid back to the public works loan board, as well as £5,259.38 in interest repayments. Although, there is a separate reserve set up for the demolition of the old village hall, the total cost of demolition was £7,578.72, and was therefore more than what was held in the demolition reserve. This leaves a total of £2,578.72 to come out of the Berryfield Village Hall reserve with £5,000 of this coming out of the demolition reserve. With regards to expenditure for 2023/24 there is £114,721.03 showing as spent which is to pay £11,719.03 for the 1.5% retention due to Rigg construction on 5th September 2023, as well as paying back part of the loan capital and interest repayments.

The parish council had previously set up a separate reserve for the demolition of the old village hall, which stood at £5,000 following an estimated budget figure being given by a local contractor for this. In this financial year the old village hall was demolished in December 2022 following the successful completion of the new village hall, therefore this reserve is showing £5,000 being spent with no further funds being

put in. As noted above under the Berryfield Village Hall reserve, the actual total cost of demolition was £7,578.72, therefore the £2,578.72 has been taken out of that reserve. As this reserve was set up for a specific purpose, which has now been undertaken, there will be no further funds going into it in the 2023/24 financial year, therefore this reserve can be closed down.

There have been no further funds put into the Shaw Hall reserve for the next financial year, so this stood at £4,400.

The East of Melksham Community reserve still stood at £315,029.94, which was all of the CIL that the council received for the land East of Spa Road development (Hunters Wood/ The Acorns). Following a Community Governance review, this development was transferred into the Melksham Town boundary in April 2021. The parish council felt that this money belonged to the residents of that development and following a legal agreement put into place, detailing what the parish council expected the money to be spent on, namely the provision of a community centre, resolved to pay this in December 2022. The whole reserve amount was expected to be paid to Melksham Town Council in this financial year, therefore this reserve will stand at £0 in the 2023/24 financial year and will be closed down.

In August 2022 the parish council moved out of their temporary office accommodation at the Bowerhill Sports Pavilion and into the Melksham Community Campus. The total expenditure on the office relocation was £2,600 which has been shown as coming from the office relocation reserve. The remaining £256.53 has been put towards the legal fees for the campus lease, which leaves £0 in the reserve at the end of this financial year. As the council signed a 10-year lease in August 2022 no funds have been added into this reserve for 2023/24, leaving it standing at £0 at the end of that financial year.

The photocopier replacement reserve still stood at £1,200, it had been budgeted that this would be replaced in this financial year as part of the office move. This was reassessed prior to the office move and officers felt that it did not need to be replaced at that time as it seemed to be working well. There was also a question about whether the moving company would charge an additional fee to move the photocopier, as they did when the office moved from Crown Chambers to the pavilion. If this was the case it had previously been felt that it wouldn't be worth paying this fee as the photocopier was coming to the end of its life, so it would be more cost effective to purchase a new one. Following consultation with the moving company this was more to do with the access out of the Crown Chambers building, rather than the photocopier, therefore it has not been replaced. This reserve is showing the whole amount being spent out of it in 2023/24, following a conversation with the photocopying engineer it is understood that the manufacturer is no longer making parts for the model photocopier the council has. This means that it will become increasingly difficult for the photocopier company to obtain replacement parts. Following this new information, it is anticipated that a new photocopier will be needed in the 2023/24 financial year. As the parish council drive towards a more paperless environment, agenda packs are being sent out to most councillors electronically, the hope is that the council will not need to purchase such a high-capacity photocopier. Councillors asked officers to look into lease options as well as for outright purchase.

It has previously been agreed that for the Bowerhill Sports Field & Pavilion capital replacement reserve, the CIL from Pathfinder Place should be used for any works during the life of the housing development build. There is £5,000 (Transfer 8) shown as being transferred from the CIL reserve into this reserve for this financial year, however no transfers have been made into this reserve for the next financial year. Members felt that the £2,148.21 (Transfer 13) in the Covid grant reserve should be transferred into the Bowerhill Sports Field Maintenance reserve, which makes the total amount transferred into the reserve in this financial year £7,148.21. The Covid grant reserve will now be closed down. During this financial year the parish council replaced the CCTV at the pavilion, which had not been budgeted for, therefore £2,300 is being spent from the reserve.

The Bowerhill Sports Field Annual Sum is a reserve used for the projected annual shortfall between income and expenditure for the sports field. Whilst £18,000 had been budgeted as coming into this reserve for this financial year, it is acknowledged that any budgeted shortfall for the pavilion expenditure has already come out of the precept, therefore this was not required to be transferred into a reserve. In this financial year £2,520 has been shown as coming out of the reserve, which is £555 for the increase in gas prices, £500 for cutting back the hedge at the sports field and £1,465 for moving the middle pitch away from the hedges if this proceeds.

The Shaw Playing Field improvement project has no funds left in the reserve, as the money had been spent in the previous financial year. As this reserve was only set up for this specific purpose this can now be closed down.

The replacement play area safety surfacing and equipment long term capital reserve is for the future refurbishment of the play areas. For this financial year £15,084 has been shown as being spent, this is for works that may be required at the new Whitworth Play Area (Bowood View, Berryfield) for a tarmac path if not provided by Bellway Homes, and potentially for safety surfacing under the teen shelter. There is £5,000 being shown as spent in the next financial year for replacing equipment and surrounding safety surfacing at Beanacre Play Area, as the council have been monitoring for some time the wooden equipment at this play area. The council have not put any more funds into this reserve for the 2023/24 financial year, as the council have previously resolved to use CIL from future developments.

There have been no further funds put into the Shurnhold Fields capital reserve as any future funding will come from CIL. It is expected that the car park and improvement project will be completed in the next financial year, so £10,000 is showing to come from this reserve. It was noted that £5,000 of the money in this reserve was ringfenced from area board grant funding for this project, with the other £5,000 previously being put into this reserve by the parish council.

No further funds had been put into the Recreation & Sports Facility Enhancement reserve for next year. For the defibrillator replacement reserve, it is anticipated that all seven defibrillators will need to be replaced in the next financial year, so this reserve is showing all of the reserve being spent.

No further funds have been put into the General Highway & Footpath reserve as expenditure for LHFIG (Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group) contributions will come from CIL.

In this financial year £1,443.47 has been shown as spent from the legal fees reserve. This was for costs towards the Campus lease as well as £500 estimated for the Berryfield and Shaw Village Hall leases. There have been no additional funds added into this reserve in the 2023/24 financial year.

It was felt that as there was no real visibility of any flood prevention work being done in Whitley or Shurnhold, the funds from the Contribution to Wiltshire Council/Environment Agency reserve should be transferred into the Community Project/Match funding reserve. This reserve could still be drawn upon should these works ever come to fruition. There is £5,000 (Transfer 12) being shown as transferred to the Community Project/Match Funding reserve in this financial year. No further funds have been added into this reserve for the next financial year.

The Election reserve currently stands at £14,000 with no expected expenditure showing in this financial year. The Clerk advised members that she had received some communication from Wiltshire Council with regards to councils being required to contribute towards main election costs from the May 2025 elections onwards. It was however, currently unclear as to how much councils would be expected to pay towards these costs. Following the Clerk chasing this information up with the Wiltshire Council elections team, she had received an email earlier in the day which provided some detail. Wiltshire Council advised for contested elections it would be around £1.70 per elector, however this may be increased due to printing and postage costs. The Clerk advised members that if all parish elections were contested it would cost the council around £9,000, which was currently showing as going into this reserve for next year. She queried whether members wished to make provision for this in this financial year or the next. It was noted that for contested by-elections the parish council would have to pay the full amount and the £14,000 in the reserve was specifically for this purpose. Councillor Baines highlighted that within the £14,000 already in the reserve this was based on the council providing polling cards and wondered whether this was something the council needed to revisit. He explained that it didn't appear to significantly increase the turn out for elections and felt that it may be more cost effective to widely publicise the elections in the Melksham News. The Clerk advised that the Melksham News covers a large part of the parish area with the exception of Redstocks and Sandridge, but the council have hand delivered leaflets to these houses before. The Clerk advised that she would put polling cards onto the Full Council agenda for members to review their requirement. Members felt that the £14,000 already in reserves should be used for the May 2025 elections and if there was a by-election in the meantime, the council would have time to top up the reserve. The council therefore put no funds into the reserve for the next financial year.

For this financial year there is £220 showing as expenditure being spent from the Staffing Contingency reserve, which was for the additional hours for the Allotment Warden to undertake the ROSPA Play Area Inspector qualification and holiday cover for the Caretaker.

The Replacement of Council Assets (contingency) reserve is for the replacement of items that have not been insured due to their low value or for things like Wiltshire Council bus shelters that they will remove if damaged, not replace. In this financial year £645 was showing as expenditure for the Shaw brick bus shelter repair. No funds have been put into this reserve for 2023/24, however £2,000 has been shown

coming from this reserve for VE day planters which was still an outstanding action to do. It was agreed that perhaps this Reserve, which was used for repair, replacement, new items would be better renamed Street Furniture reserve.

No funds have been added into the General Contingency reserve, however £2,100 has been showing as spent for Neighbourhood Plan#2 expenditure, as the parish council have committed to funding anything additional out of this reserve. It is estimated that there will be an additional £7,500 to cover for the Neighbourhood Plan, which is outside the grant that is held by Melksham Town Council. The expenditure shown being spent from this reserve was the parish council's 30% share of the Neighbourhood Plan costs, with the remaining 70% of the cost being paid by Melksham Town Council.

The CIL reserve shows a balance of £7,208.26 coming into the reserve this year with one transfer going out and into the Bowerhill Sports Field Capital Replacement reserve (Transfer 8). For the next financial year there was £30,000 being shown as coming into the reserve with this being transferred out and into the Berryfield Village Hall reserve (Transfer 10).

For the CIL 10% sharing pot with Melksham Town Council £4,805.49 was being shown as coming into the reserve this financial year. There is £20,000 being shown as coming into the reserve in the next financial year, which is the estimated income for the 144 dwellings on Semington Road, but this is only a very rough estimate as the full CIL income is currently unknown.

The Sandridge Solar Farm reserve was showing £16,119.14 of income that has actually been received in this financial year, with £9,626.00 expected to be spent. For the 2023/24 financial year £12,000 has been shown as income coming in to the reserve with £32,766 expected to be spent. It was very difficult to estimate the amount that the council would receive each year, this was due to the solar farm funding being proportioned between different parishes depending on how many properties they have within the 2.75km radius. Members wished to be cautious when estimating the income for the next financial year due to the fact that it can fluctuate, therefore have estimated a lower amount of income for the next financial year as more houses in the eligible area are being built in the Town parish.

The Shurnhold Fields maintenance reserve is for funding that was ringfenced from a s106 agreement and is held by the parish council on behalf of the joint project with Melksham Town Council. There is no funding coming into the reserve this year or next, however there was expected expenditure of £2,000 this year and £2,000 next year. This was for things such as the annual grass cut, petrol for the mower and caretaking duties including bin emptying.

It is anticipated that the parish council will receive the £58,000 s106 funding for the Davey Play Area (Pathfinder Place) in this financial year. This money will be shown as a ringfenced reserve and only able to be spent on the maintenance of the play area. It is expected that this play area will be adopted this financial year, however no spend has been shown from this reserve as its not anticipated that any safety surfacing cleaning or inspections will be done and at this site there are no grasscutting or bin emptying requirements. In the 2023/24 financial year £176 is showing as being spent, which is for the ROSPA annual independent inspection and

quarterly play area inspections. This has not included any spend for safety surfacing cleaning as the council will trial not cleaning the surfacing at this site to see the condition of it in a few years' time, compared to the surfacing at Bowood View Play area where the surfacing will be cleaned.

Four new reserves have been set up this year which are all for ringfenced funds. There is a new reserve set up for any ring fenced funding from Wessex Water for a Beanacre Community Project reserve which is for any compensation received to the parish council for the planned sewage works. A reserve has been set up to show the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) money received for Melksham Community Support for the emergency planning from their SSEN Resilient Communities Fund. This reserve is showing the £8,361 that has already been received in the bank this year, with £7,000 expected to be spent. For the next financial year, it was expected that £680.50 will be spent.

There is a reserve that has been set up to show the Berryfield Public Art Fund from Wiltshire Council. There was still some money left over from the public art and it has been suggested that the remaining funds could be either transferred to the parish council or the new Berryfield Village Hall Trust to be spent on the maintenance of the art work. This reserve is showing £3,800 coming into the reserve this year with no money spent out of it this financial year or next.

Community Action Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) have enquired about the parish council purchasing a third speed indicator device (SID), so that it can be erected in areas around Shaw and Whitley more often. CAWS have offered to pay for the capital of the SID if the parish council paid for the ongoing maintenance. The Clerk explained that if it was decided that another SID was not purchased this would not impact the precept as it was shown as income coming in this financial year, with the expenditure next year showing as coming from that reserve.

Recommendation 1: The Full Council to consider whether they should provide polling cards for elections or whether alternative cost-effective solutions could be used; such as advertising in the Melksham News.

Recommendation 2: The parish council put the following into Earmarked Reserves at year end 31st March 2023.

Reserves for major project 2022/23

New Village Hall, Berryfield (From s106)	£425,998.00
CIL 10% Sharing Pot with MTC	£ 4,805.49
Sandridge Solar Farm Reserve	£ 16,119.14
Davey Play Area Maintenance Fund (From s106)	£ 58,000.00
NEW RESERVE SSEN MCS Emergency Plan	£ 8,361.00
NEW RESERVE Berryfield Village Hall Public Art	£ 3,800.00
NEW Reserve CAWS SID#3	£ 2,500.00
CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds received	<u>£ 7,208.26</u>
	£526,791.89

Recommendation 3: The parish council put the following into Ear Marked Reserves for the year 2023/24.

Reserves for major project 2023/24

New Village Hall, Berryfield (From CIL)	£ 5,000.00
CIL 10% Sharing pot with MTC	£20,000.00
Sandridge Solar Farm	£12,000.00
NEW RESERVE Wessex Water funding (Beanacre Community project)	£ 5,000.00
CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds received	<u>£30,000.00</u>
	£72,000.00

Members reviewed the spend from Earmarked reserves as they went through the individual line items on the budget spreadsheet. For more detailed information on the spend from reserves please refer to (min.329/22) on the budget review.

Recommendation 4: The parish council spend the following amounts from Earmarked Reserves in 2022/23.

Spending from Reserves 2022/23	2022/23 Budget Spend (aged Jan 2022)	2022/23 Anticipated Expenditure (up to 31/03/23)
New Hall, Berryfield	£854,259.38	£ 672,617.50
Disposal of Old Berryfield Village Hall	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00
East of Melksham Community Centre (Transferred to Melksham Town Council)	£ 0.00	£ 315,029.94
Office Relocation	£ 1,000.00	£ 2,856.53
Photocopier Replacement	£ 1,200.00	£ 0.00
Bowerhill Sports Field Long Term Capital Replacement	£ 0.00	£ 2,300.00
Bowerhill Sports Field Annual Sum Replacement Play Area & Safety	£ 0.00	£ 2,520.00
£ 0.00	£ 15,084.00	
Surfacing equipment capital replacement		
Legal Fees	£ 0.00	£ 1,443.47
Staffing Contingency	£ 0.00	£ 220.00
Replacement/ Renewal of council assets contingency	£ 0.00	£ 645.00
General Contingency	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,100.00
CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)	£ 30,065.00	£ 30,065.00
Sandridge Solar Farm Community Fund	£ 32,776.00	£ 9,626.00
Shurnhold Fields Open Space	£ 1,700.00	£ 2,000.00
Davey Play Area	£ 750.00	£ 0.00
NEW Reserve SSEN Ringfenced reserve For MCS in Emergency Plan	£ 0.00	£ 7,000.00
	£928,750.38	£1,068,507.44

Recommendation 5: The parish council spend the following amounts from Earmarked Reserves in 2023/24:

New Hall, Berryfield	£ 114,741.03
Photocopier Replacement	£ 1,200.00

Replacement Play Area Safety Surfacing & Equipment Capital Replacement	£ 5,000.00
Shurnhold Fields Capital Replacement	£ 10,000.00
Defibrillator Replacement	£ 10,850.00
Replacement/ renewal of council assets know renamed as Street Furniture	£ 2,000.00
CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)	£ 15,500.00
Sandridge Solar Farm	£ 32,776.00
Shurnhold Fields Open Space	£ 2,000.00
NEW Reserve SSEN Ringfenced reserve For MCS in Emergency Plan	£ 680.50
NEW Reserve SID 3	£ 2,500.00
Davey Play Area	£ 176.00
	£197,423.53

Recommendation 6: The parish council transfer the following amounts between Earmarked Reserves in 2022/23 & 2023/24:

Transfer T8- Move £5,000 from CIL to Bowerhill Sports Field Maintenance long term capital in 2022/23.

Transfer T10- Move £30,000 from CIL to New Hall Berryfield in 2023/24.

Transfer T12- Move £5,000 from Contribution to Wiltshire Council /Environmental Agency to Community Projects/ Match Funding in 2022/23.

Transfer T13- Move £2,148.21 from Covid Grants from Wiltshire Council to Bowerhill Sports Field Maintenance long term capital in 2022/23.

Summary of Reserves

Opening Balance of Reserves as at 01/04/2022	£1,309,037.31
Revised Reserves for Major Projects 2022/23	£ 526,791.89
Revised Spending from Reserves 2022/23	-£1,068,507.44
Revised adjustment to/from Reserves 2022/23	-£ 541,715.55
Total Reserves at end of 2022/23	£ 767,321.76

Opening Balance of Reserves as at 01/04/2023	£ 767,321.76
Reserves for Major Projects 2023/24	£ 72,000.00
Spending from Reserves 2023/24	-£ 197,423.53
Adjustment to/from Reserves 2023/24	-£ 125,423.53
Total Reserves at end of 2023/24	£ 641,898.23

328/22 Solar Farm Community Funding

- a) **To consider appropriate potential income figure for 2023/24 (fluctuates due to share of housing within 2.75km radius of Sandridge Solar Farm)**

It was noted the income that was received for the solar farm in 2022/23 was £16,119.14. The Clerk explained that it was very difficult to anticipate how much would be received from the solar farm funding, as it depended on the number of dwellings in the parish with the 2.75km radius. She explained that more houses from

the East of Melksham Development (Hunters Wood/ Acorns) are going to be in the radius, as these houses reside in the Town, this will reduce the parish council's proportion. It was felt that due to the fact that it was expected that the parish's proportion may be reduced, members wished to be cautious, therefore have estimated £12,000 as income coming in from the solar farm in the next financial year.

b) To consider spend of Solar Farm funding for current and next financial year.

It was noted that the council had already set out principles to spend solar farm income on maintenance items, such as the erection of the speed indicator device, as this was a long-term funding source. The Clerk explained that the council had previously resolved that any expenditure relating to the Bowerhill Sports Field improvement should come from CIL, however there was not enough CIL funds left for 2023/24, therefore this has been shown as coming from solar farm funding. It was also noted that some time ago the parish council felt that the Falcon Way bus shelter should come from CIL, even though it was capital expenditure as it fell within the 2.75km radius of the solar farm, so was a good candidate to come from this funding source.

Recommendation: The following spend from Sandridge Solar Farm to be on the following:

Balance brought forward from 31 st March 2022	£29,068.47
Amount received in 2022/23	£16,119.14
TOTAL FUND AVAILABLE	£45,187.61

Anticipated spend in 2022/23

Weedspraying	£ 2,407.00
Erection of SID on fortnightly basis (x2 for part of year)	£ 1,279.00
Play Area/ MUGA Safety Surfacing Clean	£ 3,300.00
Roundabout grass cutting and maintenance (ex Carson)	£ 2,640.00

TOTAL SPEND IN 2022/23 **£ 9,626.00**

Anticipated balance as at 31st March 2023	£35,561.61
Anticipated receipt in 2023/24	£12,000.00
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	£47,561.61

Anticipated spend in 2023/24

Falcon Way Bus Shelter & RTI	£16,500.00
Safety surfacing clean for play areas & MUGAs less trial site x 1 per year	£ 4,050.00
Tree Inspections and resulting tree work	£ 2,300.00
Roundabout grass cutting and maintenance (ex Carson)	£ 2,904.00
Weedspraying	£ 2,684.00
Erection of SID on fortnightly basis (x3 devices)	£ 1,838.00
Street Furniture	£ 1,000.00
Bowerhill Sports Field playing field improvement (2 x adult pitch vertidrain)	£ 1,500.00

TOTAL SPEND IN 2023/24 **£32,776.00**

Anticipated balance as at 31st March 2024

£14,785.61

329/22 Budget

a) To review and consider Budget for 2022/2023 against anticipated position at year end; and estimate for 2023/2024

Members reviewed the anticipated income and expenditure until year end for the current financial year and the proposals for the financial year 2023/24.

Income

The council had originally budgeted for £274,895.75 of income coming in this financial year, which is largely different from the expected income for this year which is £782,361.25 (figures include the precept). This is mainly due to the parish council expecting the £425,998.00 (75% index linked) s106 contribution for Berryfield Village Hall to come in the last financial year. The £58,000 s106 funding for the maintenance of the Davey Play area at Pathfinder Place was also expected to come in the previous financial year, however due to hold ups with Taylor Wimpey finishing the remedial works before the council take over the ownership of it, this income wasn't received. It is expected that the play area will be handed over before year end in the current financial year, therefore this amount has been shown as expected income. There was still £3,800 left over in the public art budget for the ongoing care and maintenance for the Berryfield Village Hall public art work, this was from the s106 funds held at Wiltshire Council. This amount has been shown as coming in this financial year from Wiltshire Council to be either held in a ringfenced reserve by the parish council or transferred over to the new Berryfield Village Hall Trust. There has been £31,000 estimated as coming in the next financial year, this is based on £20,000 coming from the Land at Semington Road (144 dwellings) for a footbridge from this development to the Bowood View development, however it was noted that this was still unknown at present, but was still being shown as budgeted for next year. Also, budgeted was £11,000 for playing field contribution from the land west of Semington Road planning application.

It is expected that the council would receive £5,000 from the Beanacre battery storage, which wasn't foreseen at the time of budgeting. It was also budgeted that £5,000 would come in from the Sandridge Solar Farm Community Funding in this financial year, however the actual amount received was £16,119.14. For the 2023/24 financial year **£27,000** has been estimated as coming in under the solar farm budget heading, this was made up of £15,000 coming in from JBM Solar projects for Wick Solar Farm in Beanacre and £12,000 as coming in from the Sandridge Solar Farm. As previously explained under Sandridge Solar Farm, it was difficult to anticipated the amount of funding that will be received from this each year, therefore the council have taken the conservative approach when estimating this income.

It has been estimated that the council will receive £500 in interest this year, this was not budgeted for at budget setting due to the interest rates being very low at the time. This was something that was verbally mentioned by the internal auditor when

he visited the parish council, as interest rates had now gone up. The Clerk had enquired with the bank what their interest rates were for Fixed Term Deposits and they are now much higher than during Covid, so would be worth doing. This was an agenda item later on in the meeting for members to discuss. For the 2023/24 financial year it is estimated that £2,500 would be received in interest.

With regards to grants and donations, in this financial year the council received £8,361 from Scottish and Southern Electricity for Melksham Community Response following a successful grant application. This was for the emergency plan element of the project, which included funding for making and distribution of fridge magnets with the emergency number on and funding for the phone line and lamplight database. There was also £2,500 estimated as coming in this year following a kind offer from a resident of Bowerhill, to fund a defibrillator at Pathfinder Way. For 2023/24 £12,500 has been estimated which is possible jubilee grant funding for the Bowerhill Sports Field outdoor gym equipment and £2,500 for the possible donation from CAWS for a third speed indicator device. It was noted that this has not been confirmed yet, but the expenditure for moving it every fortnight was budgeted for, therefore it was prudent to include this in the potential income coming in.

The income for the Bowerhill Sports Field was on par with what was expected to be received in this financial year. As covid restrictions were eased, football organisations were able to undertake their full programme of activities. For the 2023/24 financial year the income has been reduced, due to a number of unknowns with the number of bookings that the council may receive. Members wished to be cautious when estimating the amount of income, therefore have estimated £6,135 as coming in. There was also an unknown with regards to whether the council may need to become VAT registered as discussed earlier on in the meeting, which could affect the amount the council charge hirers. It was noted that later on this year the council will be reviewing their hire charges, therefore the amount charged may change, but this was difficult to predict at this time.

The allotment income is expected to be similar to what had been budgeted for this financial year, with the same amount of income budgeted for the 2023/24 financial year. The allotment year runs for 1st October until 30th September each year, so falls within two financial years. Accruals are made at year end transferring 50% of the amount received into the next financial year. It can also be difficult to anticipate the amount of income that will be received in any one year, as the council charge double the residential rate to residents who live outside of the parish. It is unknown how many plot holders will give up their plots each year, and how many non-residents will take over.

As per the internal auditor's recommendation in the last financial year, money received for joint projects cannot be netted off against the expenditure, therefore these are shown as income coming in.

General Account Income (Excluding Precept):

Budgeted for 2022/23	£ 65,560.00	
Anticipated for 2022/23	£535,084.75	
Proposed for 2023/24	£141,570.00	# error on spreadsheet omitting £50k CIL from the Income Column on main Budget

Jubilee Sports Field Income:

Budgeted for 2022/23	£	9,150.00
Anticipated for 2022/23	£	9,075.00
Proposed for 2023/24	£	6,135.00

Allotment Income:

Budgeted for 2022/23	£	2,483.00
Anticipated for 2022/23	£	2,512.50
Proposed for 2023/24	£	2,512.50

TOTAL PROPOSED INCOME FOR 2023/24: £150,217.50

Expenditure

The parish council's expenditure used the following three budget headings to reflect the information included with residents' council tax bills, namely; Administration, Parish Amenities and Community Support.

Administration Costs:

It is anticipated that £150 will be spent on members training in this financial year, this is a reduction on the original amount budgeted for. It is expected following the resignation of Councillor Mary Pile that the new co-opted councillor will wish to undertake some councillor training and it is expected that the councillor safety training, which was postponed in September will be rescheduled for early 2023. For next year £180 has been budgeted for members training.

Postage costs for this year are more than originally budgeted for, this was because at the time of budget setting, it was envisioned that the council would move to paperless agendas packs. This was only implemented in October 2022 following the council's office move; therefore, the costs are much higher than originally expected. It is anticipated that £850 will be spent this financial year on postage. It is noted that there will still be some cost for postage as the council still send out notices to the noticeboard volunteers each week as well as annual allotment letters. For the 2023/24 financial year it is anticipated that £600 will be spent on postage for the above reasons. Photocopying was also higher than budgeted for, with the expected spend at year end being £1,800 for the same reasons as described above under postage. Next year it is expected that the photocopying charges will be much less with £750 budgeted.

The office phone and broadband charges are expected to be lower than budgeted for this financial year, this was due to the council changing their phone system following the office move to a Microsoft system. This system works well with the council's Office 365 package and is an add on to the system. The charges for this new phone system are much lower than the previous phone system which has reduced the phone costs. The council also changed to Plusnet for their broadband when they moved to the Campus, the charge for this per month is £33.90 on a two-year contract. For the next financial year, the estimated costs under this heading have been significantly reduced with a budgeted figure of £850 which includes the phone and broadband costs.

Room hires and online meeting subscription costs are much higher than budgeted, this was due to the fact that the parish council had to leave their temporary meeting, which had been kindly provided as a community benefit and hold them at the Melksham Rugby Club until the Campus move. In 2023/24 £300 has been budgeted as the council would only need to pay for room hire for meetings that are held off site, such as the annual parish or planning meetings for large applications. Most of this budgeted cost was for Zoom subscriptions, the Clerk explained that there was a potential cost saving for this as MS Teams was within the council's Microsoft package so this could be used instead of Zoom. She explained that during covid Zoom was more user friendly for people to use, however Teams has now caught up, she suggested that this was something the IT Working party could consider when they next meet.

Following the move to the Campus, the council purchased some new equipment, such as a dishwasher, fridge and IT items to allow for online meetings. It was originally budgeted that the council would replace the photocopier in this financial year, but as already explained it was still working at this current time. In the next financial year, it was anticipated that the photocopier would need replacing so £1,200 was showing as being spent from reserves. Councillor Glover queried whether officers had looked into costs for leasing a new photocopier, the Clerk explained that she hadn't, but this was something that could be looked into.

The parish council have agreed a 10-year office lease with Wiltshire Council, which includes building repairs and utility costs. The estimated cost to the end of this financial year was £6,920 as the council moved in July, which was part way through the year. For 2023/24, £11,373 has been included in the budget as per the signed lease agreement with Wiltshire Council.

Due to the fact that cleaning materials for the office was such a small value cost code, members felt that this should be included in the admin and stationary costs and this cost code closed down. The Clerk explained that the cost code was only set up for when the council had an office cleaner at Crown Chambers, to distinguish between the costs of materials and the cost of the cleaner.

For staffing costs, it was noted that even though all staff received a £1 increase per hour on their hourly rate, the estimated year end was still within budget. As it was unknown with regards to any staff increase if any for the next financial year, these have been estimated at 2%. It was noted that the Caretaker and Allotment Warden's salaries were included under parish amenities.

Staff training was much higher than budgeted for this year, this was mainly due to the Allotment Warden undertaking a ROSPA course as well as funds available for the Finance and Amenities Officer to undertake the FILCA qualification shortly. For next year £200 has been budgeted for staff training.

Staff DBS checks are estimated to be more than budgeted for, this was because the Caretaker needed his renewed and at the Staffing Committee in late 2022 it was recommended that all staff members should have a DBS check. This means that the Finance and Amenities Officer would also need one as well. There was currently a hold up with regards to which check the staff should have done (either

enhanced or basic), following correspondence with Wiltshire Council advising that only specific job roles can have the enhanced check. This was still being investigated by officers to ensure that the checks that can be done are adequate for the council's requirements. In the next financial year there was some budget provision for the Parish Officer to have hers renewed.

Recommendation 1: The IT Working Party to consider the options around using Teams instead of Zoom for council meetings.

Recommendation 2:

Administration Costs (Including office staff):

Budgeted Expenditure for 2022/23	£151,511.00
Anticipated Expenditure for 2022/23	£146,258.00 with £4,300 coming from reserves
Proposed Expenditure 2023/24	£142,618.00 with £1,200 coming from reserves

Parish Amenities:

In this financial year the amount spent on defibrillators was expected to be over budget, this was due to the purchase of a new defibrillator at Berryfield Village Hall and the potential purchase of one for Pathfinder Way. As explained under income, the council have received an offer of donation for a new one on Pathfinder Way, so this will offset the overall spend on parish amenities. As previously explained any income received for a specific item was unable to be netted off of the cost code the expenditure has been attributed to, therefore has to go into an income cost code. It was expected that as at year end £6,750 will have been spent under the defibrillator cost code against a budgeted spend of £1,035. The other costs associated under this cost code were for the annual maintenance of the defibrillators, which included online access to the Webnos database system, replacement consumables and an annual service. The parish council have also previously resolved to arrange for some community access defibrillator training sessions to make the community more aware and give them more confidence in using one, which has come out of this cost heading. For the 2023/24 financial year it is estimated that £12,430 will be spent from this cost heading, with £10,850 coming from reserves. This is because it was highly likely that the defibrillators around the parish would need to be replaced, as they have a life span of around 8 years. The rest of the costs are for the annual maintenance and the potential for any replacement defibrillator to be relocated from the New Inn to the phone box near Berryfield Play Area.

The estimated spend this current year for safety surfacing cleaning was a lot less than originally budgeted for, this was because the parish council had originally expected that they would undertake two lots of safety surfacing cleaning, one in the spring to get ready for the summer usage and one in the autumn to get ready for winter. The surfacing clean was undertaken in the spring, however the council carefully considered this principle, whilst looking at quotations for the autumn surfacing clean and felt that this clean shouldn't be done this year. This was following some advice the Clerk had received, advising that it may be better for the council to invest in a safety surfacing repair kit due to the high cost of cleaning the surfacing twice a year. It was noted that the cost for the safety surfacing cleaning

was coming from Solar Farm funding, therefore, £3,300 has been shown as this was now the expected cost to year end. Following the decision made for this current year, £4,050 has been budgeted for the next financial year to come from solar farm. This is for the provision of one safety surfacing clean instead of two, including a rise for inflation. The council have also resolved to trial only cleaning one of the two new play areas to assess both their conditions in a few years' time which has been included in the budgeted cost. It was noted that as Whitworth Play Area (Bowood View) was much closer to a water source, as was near to the new village hall it would make more sense to trial this one and leave the Davey Play Area (Pathfinder Place).

The Parish Insurance was a little bit more than anticipated in the current financial year, this was due to additional items being purchased and requiring to be insured. For example, the council purchased an additional speed indicator device this financial year as well as new items for the office, which all needed to be insured. It was noted that the council were currently in a long-term agreement with their current insurance provider, however the current financial year was the last year of this agreement. For the next financial year, it has been anticipated that the parish insurance would be £5,234 which has allowed for an 11.5% increase due to the cost of inflation.

There wasn't anything budgeted for new equipment for amenities staff in this financial year, however the Allotment Warden has requested a new strimmer to use at the allotments due to the petrol one being too heavy to use effectively. He has asked for a rechargeable battery one, which he was happy to charge at home, therefore £150 has been budgeted for this. Councillor Glover explained that following his experience with this type of equipment, a spare battery may be needed as well, so this should be purchased with the new strimmer. It was not expected that any new equipment would be required by the amenities staff in the next financial year, therefore no amount has been budgeted.

The Clerk explained that the council undertook tree inspections on all parish owned trees every 27 months, so that it was always done in different seasons. This was due in the next financial year, so £2,300 has been budgeted in 2023/24. This is including for any tree work, which is required as a result of the tree inspections. The cost of the inspection and works are shown as coming from Solar Farm funding.

Repairs and maintenance in the parish was significantly more than the budgeted £300 for this financial year. This was mainly due to the parish council being handed back the maintenance of the ex-Carson Tyre roundabout, following the retirement of the contractor who was doing it for free as a community benefit. The £2,640 estimated amount for this is to come from Solar Farm funding. The council also repaired one of the brick bus shelters at Shaw at a cost of £645 which has been shown as coming from reserves. It has been budgeted that £3,904 will be spent in the next financial year with £2,904 for the roundabout maintenance to come from Solar Farm funding. Councillor Glover highlighted that this was such a large cost to the council to continue maintaining this roundabout and queried whether this could be handed back to Wiltshire Council. The Clerk explained that if the council wished to hand the roundabout back to Wiltshire Council, it would have to be put back down to grass. Members felt that the cost associated with re-seeding this ready for it to be in a position to hand back to Wiltshire Council should be explored. The

Clerk explained that she would also contact Dick Lovett to see whether they were still interested in sponsoring the roundabout in the meantime.

For Village Halls and Play Areas the budgeted amount of £15,000 was expected to be spent this financial year. There is provision for a tarmac pathway at the Whitworth Play Area (Bowood View), should the developers decide not to do these works, as well as replacing the surfacing under the teen shelter in this play area. This was following comments made by the ROSPA inspector for this play area regarding the surfacing around the teen shelter. The surfacing was currently concrete and the inspector felt that there should be safety surfacing underneath. The expenditure for this has been shown as coming from reserves, if the council do these works it is expected that it would be in the first quarter of 2023. For 2023/24 £6,500 has been budgeted for replacement of wooden equipment at Beanacre Play Area, which the council have been monitoring for some time, as well as some funds for picnic tables and benches. It is shown that £5,000 of this would be coming from the replacement play equipment and surfacing reserve.

The construction of the new Berryfield Village Hall started on 4th January 2022 and was handed over to the parish council on the 5th September 2022. The breakdown of costs associated with Berryfield Village Hall have been detailed under agenda item 5.

It was expected that the £315,029.94 for East of Melksham CIL would have been transferred over to Melksham Town Council in the last financial year, therefore there was nothing budgeted to come from this cost code for the current year. It was now expected that this money would be transferred over in this financial year, as the parish council resolved in December 2022 to hand this money over, following the signing of the legal agreement.

The original Shurnhold Fields maintenance budget was £1,700, it is expected that £2,000 will be spent to year end. It was noted that although Shurnhold Fields was a joint project with Melksham Town Council, the parish council was the lead council, so hold the maintenance fund which is held in reserves as a ringfenced fund. Most of the cost out of this were for caretaking duties, annual grassDcut and mower petrol. In the next financial year, it was estimated that £2,000 would be spent on the things detailed above.

Parish grass cutting, bin emptying, goal maintenance and line marking area are all per the contract with JH Jones which is a 3-year contract and commenced in April 2020. The cost of this contract per year is £16,046.55 excluding VAT. It was noted that the current year was the last year of the 3 year contract and discussions have already taken place with regards to the contract commencing from April 2023. The council very much felt that in the interest of fairness to both parties, it would not be fair to enter into a long-term contract due to the current rate of inflation. The council have agreed to a rolling contract for a year, with a 10% increase and review this in a year's time, to see whether inflation rates are more stable. As such the budgeted amounts under these headings for the next financial year include the 10% rise.

Originally budgeted for street furniture was £2,500, but the anticipated spend to year end is £2,471 which was all to come from CIL. For the next financial year £3,000 has been estimated with £2,000 coming from reserves and £1,000 coming

from solar farm funding. Part of the budget is for the VE Day planters which are an outstanding action to order.

The original budgeted amount for health and safety checks at the Bowerhill Sports Pavilion is on budget for year end. For 2023/24 the budgeted amount has gone up to include for the rate of inflation.

The pavilion electricity was originally budgeted at £2,100, however it was now estimated that £1,500 will be spent to year end. This was lower than originally budgeted for, however the council offices have moved out of the building, so not being used 5 days a week anymore, in addition the council have also entered into a fixed rate contract. For next year it is estimated that the electricity will be £2,000 which has included for additional bookings, such as for the kitchen and lounge area.

Originally budgeted for the pavilion gas was £1,100, however due to the big rise in gas prices it is now expected that £2,500 will be the true cost in this financial year. The council are now in a fixed rate contract, but is much higher than originally budgeted for. From reserves £555 has been shown as coming from the Bowerhill Sports Field maintenance reserve, with £845 being vired across from the Rates budget heading as the pavilion received 100% small rate relief for this financial year. For 2023/24 it is estimated that £3,000 will be spent on the pavilion gas.

The estimated year end spend for the pavilion cleaning is less than originally budgeted; it is expected that £2,500 will be spent in the current year against a £3,000 budget. At the time of budgeting for the current financial year it was unknown what covid measures may be put back into place or whether there would be a covid outbreak from one of the football teams, which would require a deep clean. For the next financial year £2,750 has been budgeted, which takes into account a possible increase in contractor charges.

The sports field hedge maintenance was more than originally budgeted for, this was due to the fact that the contractors charged for the hedge cutting undertaken in the previous financial year in this year and no accruals were made at the March 2022 year end for this. The council undertook this again in this financial year and the £500 cost of this is to come out of the Bowerhill Sports Field annual sum maintenance reserve. It is expected that the council will do the hedge cutting again in the next financial year, therefore £578 has been budgeted for this.

In this current year the parish council received 100% rates relief, however this cannot be guaranteed each year, so this still needs to be budgeted for. The budgeted amount for this has been vired across into the gas costs for the pavilion in this financial year. For next year £835 has been budgeted again, as it is unknown whether this cost will be payable or not.

Originally budgeted for the repairs and maintenance of the pavilion and sports field was £1,500, however the council have significantly gone over this budgeted this year with an estimated spend of £5,800. The council's CCTV system at the pavilion was faulty and unable to be fixed without replacing the cameras. Unfortunately, it was increasingly difficult to obtain spare parts due to them not being made for the council's system anymore, therefore the council decided to purchase a new

upgraded system, which had not been anticipated at the time of budget setting. The £2,300 for the new system is to come from the Bowerhill Pavilion long term capital reserve. The other costs coming from this cost code was for the fallen elm tree removal at the field. It is anticipated that the council will arrange for the ventilation system and water boost pump to be serviced. For 2023/24, £1,884 has been budgeted which is £1,000 for any unforeseen repairs required and provision for the annual ventilation and cold-water pump service.

The pitch improvement budget heading (formally JSF spiking, but has now been renamed) originally budgeted for £500 to be spent in this year, however £2,000 was now expected. Shown as coming from reserves was £1,485, which is the relocation of the middle pitch should the council undertake these works. For the next financial year, £1,500 has been budgeted, which is to verti-drain the two adult 11 aside pitches and is to come from solar farm funding if undertaken.

Originally budgeted for waste collection in the current financial year was £980, however it is estimated that the true cost at year end will be £1,030. This is slightly higher than budgeted for, but it was difficult to foresee how many extra waste collections may be required. The council have also recently entered into a new contract with a new contractor at a much lower cost, so the costs should be much lower in 2023/24. For 2023/24, £600 has been budgeted, due to the new contract price.

The council had recently installed Wi-Fi at the Bowerhill Sports Pavilion and the costs for this needed to be included in the budget. It was estimated that to year end £88 will be spent. For 2023/24, £264 has been budgeted for this provision. It was noted that there needed to be a phone line at the pavilion for the alarm and CCTV system.

The allotment account shows a similar level of expenditure as budgeted for this financial year. The salary for the Allotment Warden was slightly higher, however this was due to him attending the ROSPA course and holiday cover for the Caretaker. Some of the cost under this heading will come from the Staffing Contingency reserve. The repairs and maintenance this year for the allotments is higher, this was due to paying to level out the plainings, which were delivered to the allotment car park. The £198 cost of this will come from CIL. For the 2023/24 financial year it is expected that £2,230 will be spent, which is a slight increase on what was budgeted for the current year.

Recommendation 3: Officers to obtain quotations to re-seed the ex-Carson Tyre roundabout and bring back to the next asset management committee for consideration.

Recommendation 4:

Parish Amenities Costs (Including Allotment and Bowerhill Sports Field):

Budgeted Expenditure for 2022/23	£ 953,909.00
Anticipated Expenditure for 2022/23	£1,103,391.00*
Proposed Expenditure 2023/24	£ 274,386.03**

*Includes the transfer of £315,029.94 East of Melksham CIL reserve being transferred over to Melksham Town Council, so the real cost of anticipated expenditure for the current year is £788,361.06. Coming from reserves is £1,015,416.00 (£700,386.06 without East of Melksham CIL) and includes (£677,617.50 for cost on Berryfield Village Hall), £14,565.00 from CIL and £9,626 from the Solar Farm fund.

**With £147,267.03 coming from reserves (£114,741.03 for the Berryfield Village Hall project), £15,500 coming from CIL and £32,776 coming from the Solar Farm fund.

Community Support Costs:

For the current year the grant allocation was slightly lower than budgeted for, part of the reason for this was that a few organisations didn't come back to the council following questions raised about their applications. Also, due to covid affecting organisations, especially village halls in the previous financial year, the council increased their budget for this year. It was noted that the council had the General Power of Competence, therefore did not need to have separate budget headings between village halls and S137 etc, however was good practice in case the council ever lost this power. The budget for all grants this year was £30,800 (this was £15,000 for S137 grants, £15,000 for Village Hall grants and £800 for S144 grants) and the estimated spend to year end is £29,150. It was noted that the £14,700 for the village hall grants was to come from CIL.

20.57pm Councillor Pafford left the room for a short time while this item was discussed.

For 2023/24 discussions took place as to how much should be put in the budget for grants, bearing in mind the current rate of inflation which would be affecting organisations. It was felt that £17,000 should be budgeted under the S137 grant heading. With regards to the village hall grants £20,000 was budgeted, this took into account the new Berryfield Village Hall and the rates of inflation.

21.02pm Councillor Pafford returned to the room.

The Market Place public toilets was being discussed later on in the agenda, as the council were still awaiting to pay a bill from the last financial year. For the current year £7,500 was budgeted as this was the highest amount the parish council have agreed to pay towards them. For next year the amount is budgeted at £7,500 for the same reason.

No funds have been budgeted for Real Time Information signage in bus shelters for this year. This is because this is one of the projects that has been agreed to be funded by the 10% CIL sharing pot with Melksham Town Council, however there wasn't currently enough funds in the pot. The Clerk advised that she had spoken to the Town Council about how much was in their 10% sharing pot and they had around £8,000. It was noted that early indicative costs were around £6,000 per shelter. For next year nothing had been shown as being spent under this budget heading, this was due to the fact that, although the council expected some CIL income from the 144 dwellings at Semington Road this was not a given that this

development would happen. Members felt that nothing should be shown as being spent from this heading in the next financial year.

For the Neighbourhood Plan £2,000 had been budgeted for the current year, it was anticipated that the actual expenditure was going to be £2,100, which is to come from the General Contingency reserve. This has taken into consideration the council's 30% share of costs for additional work required from Place Studio, Melksham News adverts, possible Green Gap work and community engagement in February.

The anticipated spend for Melksham Community Support for the current year was notably higher than originally budgeted. It was expected that £7,000 will be spent this year, originally it was only budgeted that £200 would be spent. This is for the printed fridge magnets, leaflets, hotline rental and database licence which will be covered by the grant received from SSEN. It is expected that the bulk of this work will be done in this financial year with £680.50 budgeted as being spent from the grant next year. In 2022/23 it has been budgeted that there will be £11,500 of expenditure on this project. The parish council have agreed to fund part of this project to employ 0.5 FTE person to work on Melksham Community support with Age UK. The Clerk explained that herself and the Town Clerk had recently had a meeting with Age UK, who are currently producing a draft Service Level Agreement and a draft Job Description for the parish council to review at their January Full Council meeting.

**Recommendation 5:
Community Support Costs (Including Joint Ventures):**

Budgeted Expenditure for 2022/23	£ 42,250.00
Anticipated Expenditure for 2022/23	£ 40,452.00*
Proposed Expenditure 2023/24	£ 60,635.00**

*With £9,100 coming from reserves and £14,700 coming from CIL

**With £680.50 coming from reserves

TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURE FOR 2023/24

Administration Costs (including office staffing)	£142,618.00
Parish Amenities Costs (incl Allotment and Bowerhill Sports Field)	£274,386.03
Community Support Costs (incl Joint Ventures)	<u>£ 60,635.00</u>
TOTAL	£477,639.03

Of this expenditure £149,147.53 is budgeted to come from reserves, with £15,500 from CIL and £32,776 from Solar Farm Funding.

These headings do not analyse any profit or deficit against the Allotment or Sports Field account, as historically reported (although they do on the detailed budget spreadsheet) please see below the following figures for the analysis:

Allotments:

Income 2023/24	£2,512.50
Expenditure 2023/24	£2,230.00
Difference 2023/24	£ 282.50

This will inform the Asset Management Committee when considering whether the allotment rent should be increased from 1st October 2023.

Bowerhill Sports Field:

Income 2023/24	£ 6,135.00
Expenditure 2023/24	£33,714.00
Difference 2023/24	- £27,579.00

b) To recommend virements against Budget for 2022/2023

The Clerk explained that in this financial year the parish council received 100% rates relief, therefore the £835 budgeted was not required. It was suggested that this would be much better to be re-allocated to another budget heading and it was felt that as the pavilion gas was expected to be over budget this would be a good heading to make a virement to.

Recommendation: The council make a virement of £835 from the rates relief heading (4430) to pavilion gas heading (4312).

c) To recommend Budget for 2023/2024

The council recommended the budget for 2023/24 as per above.

330/22 Precept

a) To note “Town & Parish Councils Council Tax Factsheet Nov 2022”

Members noted the “Town and Parish Council Tax Factsheet Nov 2022.

b) To note confirmed Taxbase number for 2023/24

Members noted the taxbase number for 2023/24 of 2895.42.

c) To recommend Parish Council Precept for 2023/2024

For the forthcoming financial year 2023/24 the following Precept calculation was made. **Expenditure less Income = Precept**

Expenditure

Allotments	£ 2,230.00
Sports Field	£ 33,714.00
General	<u>£441,695.03</u>
Total Expenditure	£477,639.03

Adjustment to/from reserves	- £125,423.53
TOTAL	£352,215.50

Income

Allotments	£ 2,512.50	
Sports Field	£ 6,135.00	#Corrected figures:
General	£ 91,570.00	£141,570.00
Total Income	£100,217.50	£150,217.50
Shortfall to fulfil with Precept	£251,998.00	£201,998.00

It was noted that the precept for the current year (2022/23) was £235,689.05 with a tax base of £2782.41 which meant that the average contribution for an average band D was £84.71.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee recommend a precept of £251,998.00 for 2023/24 against a taxbase of 2895.42. This is an increase of £16,308.95 (6.9%) on last year's precept. An average band D household will be contributing £87.03 for the year, an additional £2.32 on last year, which is a rise of £2.74%.

POST MEETING NOTE: The figures were double checked, and the Clerk had omitted £50,000 of income from CIL in the spreadsheet calculations reviewed by the Finance Committee. This CIL had been shown all the way through the calculations (£30k to the Berryfield Hall reserve and £20k to the CIL sharing reserve) but the figure was missing from the income column on the spreadsheet. This means that there is £50,000 more income for the calculations than originally demonstrated. The figures above have been added to reflect the checked spreadsheet for the Full Council to review on Monday 23rd January. This does however, change the Precept requirement.

Revised Recommendation following Correction:

A precept of £201,998.00 for 2023/24 against a taxbase of 2895.42. This is a decrease of - £33,691.05 (-14.3%) on last year's precept. An average band D household will be contributing £69.76 for the year, less £14.95 on last year, which is a decrease of 17.64%.

331/22 Investments

a) To review Investment Policy

The Clerk explained that this policy was something that the council reviewed every year. She explained that it would be prudent for the council to start the fixed term deposits up again following the increase in interest rates. It may also be worth the council considering locking away some money for longer, to get more interest. The Clerk drew to the attention of members that this policy stated that investments could be no longer than 12 months. The policy also stated that all investments should only be made in UK banks and building societies, this therefore prohibits the council from putting it into government bonds such as CCLA.

The Clerk explained that members had previously said that they would re-look at investing some money once the Berryfield Village Hall was built and the East of Melksham CIL transfer made. She advised that it may be a little bit too soon for the

council to look at this, but could have a look at short fixed term deposits, such as investing between monthly payment runs.

The Clerk advised that the current investment policy did meet what the council was currently doing, it was just whether the council wished to do any longer-term investments (longer than 12 months) or invest in bonds. If so, these two clauses would need to be changed to reflect this.

Recommendation: No changes to be made to the Investment Policy

b) To consider making investments as a result of the review, and current bank account/committed funds

The Clerk explained that one of the things officers did when the budget review was completed was to spilt up the reserves into contingency, what was committed and needed in the next year, medium term and ring fenced. This would then give the council a better idea of what funds could be put away for a longer term. Members felt that they could not consider long term investment of funds until the reserve exercise was completed. This could be brought back to the next Finance Committee for members to review and consider what if any funds are invested.

Recommendation: Officers to undertake the Reserves Analysis so that the council could see what funds were available to be invested, and bring back to the Full Council to consider.

c) To consider making any Fixed Term Deposits

It was explained that the council usually sweep their funds between Full Council meetings to their fixed term deposit account at Lloyds Bank and arrange for the money to come back on the day of the following Full Council meeting. During covid this was stopped due to the interest rates becoming very low and not worth doing. Now that rates had increased the Clerk had phoned Lloyds just before Christmas to ascertain what the interest rates would be on a £600k deposit and received a range of rates depending on how long the deposit was in the account for, these were as follows:

1 month	0.55%	£ 298.36
3 months	1.00%	£ 1,479.45
6 months	2.50%	£ 7,479.05
12 months	2.60%	£15,600.00

The Clerk advised that the interest rates changed on the 15th December by the Bank of England, which was after she had 'phoned the bank, but this was a good indication of the type of interest the council may get.

Members felt that as the interest rates had increased significantly since the last time a fixed term deposit was done and the above interest rates looked promising, this should be restarted again.

Recommendation: The parish council start up the fixed term deposit to sweep funds in and out of Lloyds between payment runs. Officers to put together some figures for the Full Council to review and approve.

332/22 Risk Register: To review Risk Register

The Clerk explained that the council last looked at the risk register in January 2022 and rated it red, amber or green depending on how high of a risk each item was. It was noted that this was something that the council needed to look at each financial year. Now that the office had been relocated to the Campus the Finance and Amenities Officer had gone through the document and made any necessary changes. Members had this included in their agenda packs and did not feel that any more changes needed to be made.

Recommendation: The council approve the risk register.

333/22 Grant Aid Policy: To review Grant Aid policy (to consider new clause about returning funds if group fails, or change of use request)

The Clerk advised members that the council had no clause written in their grant aid policy regarding returning grant aid funds awarded to them if their group fails and queried with members whether they wished to include one. It was noted that organisations were currently applying for grants for the 2023/24 financial year. She explained that one organisation had previously handed back the grant aid money awarded to them due to their organisation folding. The Clerk has also seen organisations that have applied for a grant to do one thing, but have advertised to do another thing. She wondered whether there needed to be something included about funds being spent differently from what was originally applied for. She explained for example, Shaw Village Hall were awarded some grant money to repair the gable wall at the village hall, however their cooker was condemned so asked the parish council whether the left-over funds could be used to go towards the purchase of a new cooker. The council were happy for these funds to be used for this purpose, but there wasn't currently anything in the policy which required organisations to make this kind of request.

Councillor Pafford queried whether the change of clause would be for the grants that organisation was applying for now or for the following grant aid year. The Clerk advised that it could be for the 2023/24 grants, as it would not be fundamentally changing the policy just adding an addition. Members agreed that there needed to be something in the policy around this, as the council needed a fall-back position to protect the money of its parishioners.

Recommendation: The council amend their grant aid policy to include a clause which states the following: The council reserve the right to ask for grant funds awarded to organisations back if it is found that the funds are not being used for the purpose of which it was awarded for or if an organisation closes within the year. If organisations require the funds to be used for something different than what it was originally applied for, they must seek approval from the parish council first.

For this financial year organisations will be informed of this new clause upon receiving their grant award, for any future years this will be included in the grant aid policy.

334/22 Market Place Toilets: To consider for approval for payment the invoice from Melksham Town Council for 50% share of costs of Market Place Public Toilets for financial year ending 31st March 2022

The Clerk explained that an invoice of £4,091.17 had been received for the Market Place Public Toilets for the 2021/22 financial year. It was noted that this invoice did not include water charges as there was currently an issue with previous charges that are yet to be resolved. Councillor Baines explained that this particular bill had an anomaly on the electricity element, the electricity charges for 13th April, 12th May, 11th June and 9th July were around three times the amount charged for the following months. He explained that he had looked into the 2020/21 electricity costs and they seemed to be similar to the charges for the latter part of 2021, so there was obviously an issue with the charges for the early part of the 2021/22 financial year. He felt that there needed to be an explanation from the Town Council as to why these charges are so high and differ so much from previous electricity charges.

The Clerk explained that there had been a rates rebate of £2,620.50 on the Non Domestic Rates rates, which the parish council had previously told the Town Council to keep for maintenance things to do with the toilets, however this bill appears to be showing that this rebate has been taken into account. Councillor Baines also highlighted that the last public toilet meeting with the Town Council was in October 2021 where this was discussed and that a meeting should be scheduled every 6 months, but nothing had been scheduled since October 2021.

Recommendation: The council write to the Town Council to explain that the council are unable to approve the invoice for the public toilets as they are still waiting for an explanation for the discrepancies that have previously been identified. The Town Council should also be reminded about the joint public toilet meetings that should be scheduled on a six-monthly basis.

9.40pm Councillor Baines left the meeting for a short time.

335/22 Banking arrangements

a) To consider making a transfer from Lloyds to Unity Trust bank accounts

The Clerk explained that this was something that officers still needed to look at and would bring back to the Full Council meeting. She explained that this was to transfer funds from the Lloyds account to Unity Trust Bank for cashflow.

9.44pm Councillor Baines returned back to the meeting.

b) To note update on costs of Rialtas accounting software, and change of bank account payment details for new parent company

Members noted that the cost of Rialtas annual support and maintenance was £325 and depending on the outcome of the officers' investigations with regards to whether the council needed to be VAT registered, there may be an additional cost

of £100. The cost of the year end closedown is £755 which had been included in the budget. It was also noted that the bank account details for Rialtas had changed due to the new parent company and this was something that needed to be reported to the council.

336/22 C To consider future action on debtors

The Clerk explained that there were a few allotment holders who had not paid their allotment rent for the year 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023, therefore as of 1st January 2023 the Finance & Amenities Officer terminated their tenancy agreement. These plots are now vacant and are available to be rented out.

Recommendation: Councillor Pafford to visit the sports field to have a conversation with the hirers.

Meeting closed at 21.51pm

Signed.....
Chairman, Monday 23rd January 2023