

ITCHEN VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL
(Serving the villages of Avington, Easton, Itchen Abbas & Martyr Worthy)
Minutes of the Meeting
Finance & General Purposes Committee
October 24th 2013

Attending: Cllr Flemons Cllr Kennedy- Chairman Cllr Riley

8.1 Apologies

Cllr Robinson, Cllr Moffatt

8.2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st July 2013

Were agreed as a true record having been approved by Full Council and have been signed by the Chairman

8.3 Couch Green

The cricket club require a 25 year lease for the ground, however as the field is apparently owned held by Fields In Trust (IVPC are the managing authority), such a lease could be seen as a disposal of a community asset and we are unsure if we have the power to proceed. The committee does not want to dispose of the land at all. The Clerk is instructed to write to Fields in Trust and take advice. Any fees in this matter should be paid by the Cricket Club, as this may involve solicitor's costs. The committee feels that a 25 year lease with no income is not in the community's best interest.

FILO continue to play football and pay regularly, they wish to have the water reconnected, noting that their plumber has advised there is a leak in the pipes. How does the council wish to proceed? If the water is switched on would we need to agree that electricity may also be used, if only for the frost stat? We have allowed £750 to be spent this financial year for KGV maintenance and reinstatement of the pavilion, but do we wish to allow full use of the building and the utilities? The Clerk will explore the idea of a coin or preferably a key meter.

Noted that arrangements will be made for Mr P Allen to shoot rabbits on Couch Green.

8.4 McPherson Field- Lease/Insurance future plans.

We are custodian trustees only, not management trustees. In the past we have incurred costs on upkeep, insurance & safety checks and provision of equipment, which perhaps ought more properly to be the responsibility of the management trustees (as evidenced by the issue with payment of insurance this year, with probable duplication of costs between IVPC and management trustees). However, the management trustees do not have sufficient funds to cover all such outgoings.

In an attempt to resolve these issues it is proposed that a meeting be arranged between IVPC (represented by Chairman, Clerk and F&GP Chair) and the management trustees – F&GP Chair to arrange.

The Clerk passed to Cllr Riley the recommended maintenance & management schedule that the management trustees should be undertaking instead of the Parish Council.

Cllr Riley advised the committee that the management trustees had proposed the purchase of a Gravity Bowl instead of the originally proposed Slide – the IVPC contribution to cost would remain unchanged at £600. Noting that the issues of ownership, management and insurance coverage of such equipment remained to be resolved, the committee agreed that the Gravity Bowl should be ordered.

8.5 Lengthsman – applications and arrangements.

The Clerk will interview candidates with (hopefully) the assistance of Cllr Robinson (as “footpath guru”) and two others from Associate Councils. The scheme will run from 1st Jan – 31st Dec (approved by HCC). The Clerk is instructed to get on with it!

8.6 Accounts to be paid if any.

No accounts are to be paid but we note the application for £1200 for burial ground maintenance which is in the budget. There has been some confusion over a £25 cheque issued incorrectly to the Parish Council that should have gone to the Parochial Church Council. This will be rectified.

8.7 Budget Preparations 2014/15.

The Chairman produced a draft budget based on submissions from councillors and (where no submissions had been received) past history. F&GP noted that were IVPC to budget for such expenditure the precept would need to increase from just under £15,000 to just under £21,000, which might not be acceptable to councillors.

A copy of the latest forecast for the current financial year and a draft of a possible budget for the next financial year is attached to these minutes. F&GP recommend that Full Council should debate the budget issues at its November meeting and send the draft budget, with amendments, back to F&GP for updating with latest information from the current financial year – the revised budget can then be debated further and agreed at the December meeting of Full Council.

The budget issues identified by F&GP are as follows –

8.7.1 What might be an acceptable increase in precept, noting that the expenditure currently incurred by the council on non-discretionary items is almost as much as the current precept, leaving almost all discretionary expenditure needing to be covered by grants.

8.7.2 Is it correct to assume that there will be no additional contribution from WCC in the next financial year as a result of changes to the tax base (this is the view of F&GP).

8.7.3 The budget assumes income from letting KGV for football in the period September 2014 to March 2015. If the field is to be turned into a cricket pitch, this might start in the summer of next year although it may take some years before it is playable, in which case this revenue stream is likely to fail.

8.7.4 F&GP considers that expenditure shown in the "Committed" column of the draft budget is not capable of significant amendment, leaving any cuts required to be made as a result of reducing the currently calculated precept to be made from the two "Discretionary" columns and the Reallocation of Reserves.

8.7.5 Noting that the draft budget assumes all VAT incurred will be recovered, the major items that Full Council may wish to review following on from the point above are -

- a) Amount and allocation of s.137 expenditure (£2,150)
- b) Amount allocated for website enhancement (£300)
- c) Amount allocated in respect of bus shelter repair / replacement (£2,500)
- d) Amount allocated in respect of KGV pavilion maintenance and utilities based on use by football club (c.£500)
- d) Whether there should be any expenditure on footpaths over and above the £1,000 grant for work done by the lengthsman (the draft budget assumes that £500 will be necessary for emergency clearances and a further £500 has been allowed for other non-lengthsman work)
- e) Amount allocated to burial ground maintenance (£1,200)
- f) Amount allocated to Parish Plan (£750)
- g) Amount included in the 2014/15 precept to carry forward to future financial years for play equipment replacement (£1,000)

The Meeting closed at 8:40pm.