



# Fittleworth Parish Council

## Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion Building.

- Present:** Mike Allin (MA), Sarah Barstow (SB), Mark Saunders (MS), Peter Stenning (PS), Chris Welfare (CW) (Chairman), Glen Westmore (GW)
- In Attendance:** Gloria King (Clerk)
- Members of public:** 6 (John Butler, Mike Elliott, Richard Godfrey, Mark Packman, Mark Rapson, Sally Tanner)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed all in attendance.

### Action by

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John Barstow, Lucia Dean Taylor and Pat Deeble.

#### 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October were approved as a correct record and signed by CW.

CW gave a brief update on the village shop: Two councillors have met with the prospective buyer but he has not yet made a firm offer on the shop. He is also pursuing another source of finance which would not require him to seek investment from villagers.

#### 3. Public Questions

##### Mark Rapson – Youth Shelter

Spoke on behalf of residents of High Trees who are concerned about the siting of the proposed youth shelter which they believe would be too close to their properties.

CW explained that there will be a period of consultation regarding this matter. PS informed the meeting that his original plan to locate the shelter at the back of the Village Hall is no longer an option as it involves Village Hall land. He circulated a revised plan which shows the shelter nearer School Lane (the preferred option by the police) where it can be seen from the road. Councillors to visit the proposed site with PS to reach agreement. Any construction would not begin until the Spring. Quotes are currently being obtained.

MS pointed out that in order to qualify for a possible donation from Hyde Martlett, agreement on what is required must be reached April.

A public meeting to discuss the youth proposals is to be held in the Village Hall in January – the council is keen for the youngsters to attend as well. MS/GW to organise and set a date. An advert for the meeting to be published in the January Village Magazine (copy date 8<sup>th</sup> December). Mark Rapson offered to help organise and run the meeting.

**MS/GW**

##### Mike Elliott – Precept

Mike first thanked the Parish Council for their donation towards the refurbishment of the Village Hall toilets.

He then urged Members to consider a higher increase than usual to the Precept (a £1,500 increase was suggested). This follows his attendance at an Action in Rural Sussex meeting where Parish Councils were being recommended to increase their precepts as County and District Councils will not be allowed to.

He explained that the Precept is a very small element of the Council Tax (2.1%) and that only 3 other local parishes have precepts lower than Fittleworth.

John Butler – vehemently opposed the idea saying that there should be no increase at all and that the Council is sitting on a large reserve that should be used.

Patrick Scott (not attending but had called the Clerk to ask for the following points to be raised)

**Minutes** – Mr Scott asked why the minutes of the Council meetings were no longer being put on the notice board. The Clerk explained that this is because the minutes are usually 7-8 pages long and take up too much room – the council is required to put up certain statutory notices from time to time and there is no room for these if the minutes are on the board.

The clerk also pointed out that Parish Councils are not legally obliged to put minutes on notice boards. They do have to make them available to members of the public and it is now common practice by all councils to do this via their websites, which Fittleworth does too. There is a notice on the board which states that hard copies can be requested by contacting the Clerk and that these would be posted out (free of charge) but so far no-one has contacted the Clerk. MS asked the Clerk to redo the poster on the board regarding the website.

**Clerk**

**Sunday Bus Service** – Mr Scott also asked whether anyone had made any representations to West Sussex regarding the cancellation of the Sunday bus service – CW explained that he had written to WSCC complaining about the proposals but that Janet Duncton had advised that this is now a lost cause and that the services would be removed.

#### Mike Allin - Damage to Pavilion Building

Mike Allin then asked Mark Rapson and Mark Packman if they were aware of the smashed pavilion clock, damaged gutters and holes in fascia boards which appear to have been caused by footballs. Footballs are also being kicked against the Pavilion windows because the portable goals are there. Mark Rapson agreed that this is an on-going problem and that it is unlikely to be the football club causing the problem but they have no control over what happens to the goals at other times. The Council is now having to pay for the repairs which will be around £1,400. Mike Elliott stated that the Village Hall had had a similar problem but square drainpipes have helped the situation. Mark Packman offered to do the repair work if the Council provided the supplies. This was agreed – MA to liaise with Mark Packman. Mark Rapson suggested that if the height of the fencing around the playground were to be raised by 6ft, the small goals could be placed against this fencing, and damage to the Pavilion would be avoided. It was also agreed to raise this issue at the Youth Meeting in January.

**MA**

**GW/MS**

#### **4. Declaration of personal or prejudicial interest**

There were none.

#### **5. Planning – Status of recent applications**

One application (White Eaves) has been withdrawn as the tree was dangerous and has to be removed immediately which does not require planning approval. There were no objections to the other two applications at Bankywood and Fitzleroi farm.

The following is a summary of the list of new planning applications and decisions since the October meeting which was circulated to Members ahead of the meeting.

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>Application Details and Status</b>
<b>( ) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/04413/TPANP <b>NEW</b>	Ms Vicki Harper Bankywood, Lower Street, Fittleworth, Pulborough Reduce overhanging branches and remove small branch on lower stem on 1x Oak tree and fell 1x Goat Willow tree. Both trees within Area, A1 subject to FT/60/00494/TPO. <i>PC: No objections CDC: Awaiting decision</i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/04562/FULNP <b>NEW</b>	A G Gadd And Sons Fitzleroi Farm, Fitzleroi Lane, Fittleworth, Pulborough Installation of solar panels to south elevation of grain store roof which was permitted under FT/10/00320/FUL. <i>PC: No objections CDC: Awaiting decision</i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03508/DOMNP <b>IN PROGRESS</b>	Mr Ian Chalk Rascalls Cottage Upper Street Fittleworth Pulborough Replacement garage. <i>PC: No objections CDC: Awaiting decision</i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/04484/TCANP <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr Charles Williams White Eaves, Lower Street, Fittleworth, Pulborough Notification of intention to fell 1 no. Beech tree <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>WITHDRAWN (dangerous tree)</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03653/DOMNP <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr & Mrs Richard Nicholls Fortrie, Tripp Hill, Fittleworth Pulborough Replacement garage. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Permit</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03744/COUNP <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr Robert De Wesselow Old Orchard, Wakestone Lane, Bedham, Fittleworth Change of use of barn to form 1no. holiday let. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Refuse</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03743/LBCNP (Listed building) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr Robert De Wesselow Old Orchard, Wakestone Lane, Bedham, Fittleworth Change of use of barn to form 1no. holiday let. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Refuse</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03742/LBCNP (Listed building) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr & Mrs Edward Braham Fittleworth House, Bedham Lane, Fittleworth Proposed internal alterations to 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom accommodation to provide en-suite shower rooms and bathroom, with installation of conservation style rooflight to bedroom. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Permit</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03983/TPANP (Tree) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Nancy Allen Three Chimneys, School Lane, Fittleworth Removal of the lowest branch and remove deadwood on 1 Oak tree (T1) subject to FT/84/00501/TPO. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Permit</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/04261/TCANP (Tree) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Nancy Allen Three Chimneys, School Lane, Fittleworth Notification of intention to reduce crown by 40% on 1 Balsam Poplar tree. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>No tree preservation order</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/02986/FULNP <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr Adam Fuss Mants, Wakestone Lane, Bedham, Fittleworth Re-siting of approved single storey oak framed building for use as studio <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Refuse</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03504/LBCNP (Listed building) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mrs T Arden Daymens, Wakestone Lane, Bedham, Fittleworth Proposed oak frame glazed extension to existing studio. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Permit</b></i>
<b>(P) Fittleworth</b> FT/11/03849/TPANP (Tree) <b>CDC DECISION</b>	Mr Tony Riley Bramblings, 9A The Gardens, Fittleworth Reduce height on 8x. Lawson Cypress trees and on 7x. Leyland Cypress trees. All 15 no. trees are within Area, A1 subject to FT/71/00495/TPO. <i>PC: No objections CDC: <b>Permit</b></i>

## 6. Finance

### a) *Payment of invoices*

The following payment has been made as a matter of urgency:

FSCA (Sports Association) Overpayment of direct debit £900.00

**Clerk**

The Clerk was informed by the Treasurer of the Sports Association that their bank had, in error, sent the Parish Council two payments of £900 in one quarter instead of one. There has therefore been an overpayment of £900.

The following invoice has been approved for payment:

WSSC Clerk's payment September £353.53

**Total: £1,253.53**

The following invoice is in dispute:

Sussex Land Services\* Grass maintenance for October £412.18

\* Howards Garden Care & Leisure has now gone into liquidation and a new company has been set up in its place – Sussex Land Services. This company does not charge VAT hence the cheaper invoice. The invoice was not approved for payment because we are still waiting for settlement following the damage caused by lawnmowers to the cricket pitch. CW to contact Nigel Howard.

**CW**

### b) *Update on current Income and expenditure*

- The Clerk reported a current account balance of £5,083.57 @ 21.11.11, with £15,879.88 in the reserve account and £5,280.05 in the Birchwalks Wood account. The Clerk also circulated a budget v expenditure spreadsheet for 2011-2012.
- On the advice of the Internal Auditor, entries for transfers between the current and savings accounts have been deleted from the spreadsheet as they skew the totals. These are listed on a separate sheet of paper for accounting purposes.

#### *Other financial issues*

- Internal Audit  
The internal audit review for the first 6 months of this financial year has now been successfully completed with no reported problems.
- VAT Return – We have received the VAT return for £1,528.45.

### c) *Discussion of proposed budget*

The Clerk had previously circulated a draft budget to Members. CW explained that a more logical layout had been used, grouping items into categories, and including new ones. The following comments were made:

#### **INCOME**

- Precept  
We have been advised by SALC, Janet Duncton and our internal auditor to increase the precept more than usual as precepts are likely to be capped next time. An initial figure of £18,000 has been proposed. It was agreed not to make a final decision on this figure until December when a revised budget would be available. **ALL**
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme  
MA to respond to Rural England's questions with regard to our final payment of £496 under the scheme. MA advised that he is in discussions with DefRA and South Downs Park with regard to a new scheme which should come into operation next year. The money is given to us because we carry out maintenance on Hesworth Common. **MA**
- Insurance Repayments  
The Bowls club only seems to be contributing to this now – not the Sports

Association. Clerk to talk to Paul Stanforth as he led the negotiation to find out more. **Clerk**

- Scottish & Southern Electricity  
MA confirmed that this amount is what we are paid for allowing poles on Hesworth Common.

## **EXPENDITURE**

- Pavilion Building Maintenance  
It was agreed to increase the amount to £4,500 to allow for the building repairs and the probable electrical work that will need to be done next year.
- Hesworth Common  
It was agreed that the figure of £260 would be adequate for purchasing maintenance supplies such as spray and paying for the volunteer expenses. However, he pointed out that there are many old trees which could cause problems, both on the Common and in the village, and that adequate provision must be made for their removal which is costly. The Clerk confirmed that £3,117 of Reserve Account funds was allocated to Hesworth Common this year.
- Playground  
The table is dangerous and has been taped up. PS said he had been advised that it can't be repaired for public use, for health & safety reasons, but that it could be repaired and sold on for private use. MA wants to look at ways round the problem and talk to alternative suppliers before removing it. It was agreed that £2,000 should be allocated from the Reserve Account. **MA**
- Bank Charges  
We were being charged for the cheques we wrote to be returned. This is no longer required and the service has been cancelled.
- Chairman's Allowance  
It was proposed that this could be put towards the cost of a more social Annual Parish Meeting in May, to be held in the Village Hall on a separate evening to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council (the two are currently combined in May), where the villagers would be invited to attend the annual presentations, have the opportunity to talk to Councillors and find out a bit more about what the Parish Council does. Wine and nibbles would also be available. Agreement sought. **ALL**
- Election costs  
Provision not required until 2015 when the next elections are due, and then only if it is contested or we don't have enough councillors.
- Insurance  
We have a 3 year agreement with Aviva through Came & Co our brokers. It is indexed linked annually but the increase is only small.
- Legal & Professional Fees  
It was agreed that £500 should be allocated from the Reserve Account for this.
- Loan Repayment  
The Clerk advised that the loan for the refurbishment of the Village Hall is for 10 years and expires on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2015.
- Subscriptions  
Clerk to find out how much the SALC/NALC subscription will be and to look into rejoining Action in Rural Sussex. **Clerk**
- Training – Councillors  
£500 agreed for possible training courses next year eg Powers of Wellbeing, Localism, Neighbourhood Planning, South Downs National Park.

- Website  
MS confirmed that we pay an annual fee to Mr Site of about £50 for hosting the website.

- Donations  
*The following donations were made last financial year in January 2011:*

Minibus	150
Fittleworth PCC (includes £50 for Village Magazine)	300
Burton & Coates PCC	100
Fittleworth Playgroup	50
Fittleworth Over 60s club	50
Petworth Nursing Home	50
Purple Bus	50
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>750</b>

*The following donation will be paid in December:*

Village Hall toilet refurbishment	500
<b>Total donations to date for 2011-12</b>	<b><u>1,250</u></b>

It was agreed to give the Over 60s Club and the Playgroup £100 each.  
It was agreed to include the Purple Bus donation within Donations General and not list it separately.

Councillors to decide whether they would like to make any more donations eg School kitchen refurbishment?

**ALL**

- Community & Communications Working Groups

It was agreed to combine these.

- Neighbourhood Planning

It is likely that we will need to do something on this next year – awaiting legislation to come through on the Localism Bill. Possibly holding public meetings or sending out a questionnaire.

- Youth

The project is currently coming in at approximately £7,500 excluding VAT. Assuming that a grant/donation of £1,000 may be secured and £500 could be raised through village donations, it was agreed that £6,000 should be allocated from the Reserve Account for this project.

### **Agreed budget revisions**

#### Income

Countryside Stewardship Scheme	500
Donations/Grants (Youth)	1,000

#### Expenditure

Buildings Maintenance	4,500
Buildings Reserve	1,500
Election Costs	0
Travel Expenses (councillors)	100
Website	50
Youth	6,000
Donations – Over 60s Club	100
Donations – Playgroup	100

### **Reserve Account**

The following items will be allocated to the Reserve Account:

Buildings Reserve	1,500
Hesworth Common / Tree Felling (already allocated)	3,800
Playground	2,000
Benches	100
Bus Shelter	100

General Village Maintenance	200
Footpath Maintenance	100
Winter Management Plan	500
Legal & Professional Fees	500
Youth	6,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,300</b>

**7. Items for inclusion on the next Agenda**

- Budget
- Youth project
- Village shop

**8. Date of next meeting**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion Building.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed at 10.00pm. A closed meeting then followed where the Council discussed the proposal to increase the Clerk's hours, but failed to reach agreement. It was decided that they would address the question again when all members of the Council could be present.