

Loggerheads Parish Council
Loggerheads Community Fire Station
Market Drayton Road
Loggerheads
Market Drayton
Shropshire
TF9 4EZ

T: 01630 673426
W: www.loggerheadsparishcouncil.co.uk



Wednesday 8th June 2022

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend the **Finance Committee** meeting of **Loggerheads Parish Council** to be held at 7pm on Monday 13th June 2022 at Loggerheads Community Fire Station, Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 4EZ

Yours Sincerely,

B. Minshall

Parish Clerk

AGENDA

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (MAXIMUM 15 MINUTES)

1. **ELECTION OF A CHAIR**
To elect a Chair for the Finance Committee
2. **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR**
To elect a Vice Chair for the Finance Committee
3. **APOLOGIES**
To receive and consider apologies for absence
4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
To note declarations of Members' interests

Councillors must declare non-pecuniary, pecuniary or prejudicial interests in items on the agenda, and must leave the room for those items

5. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 13th December 2021
6. **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**
 - a. To note the year-to-date financial position for the Parish Council
 - b. To consider the current banking arrangements
 - c. To consider current IT provision
 - d. To consider the Internal Audit Report for 2021 – 2022 and recommend to Council
 - e. To consider matters relating to the Burntwood Container
 - f. To consider matters relating to the Winter Gritting Service for 2022 - 2023
 - g. To consider the lease for LV1
 - h. To note the license to Shropshire Homes

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To consider the frequency and dates of the **Finance Committee** meetings



LOGGERHEADS PARISH COUNCIL

Loggerheads Community Fire Station, Market Drayton Road, Loggerheads, Shropshire, TF9 4EZ

Telephone: 01630 673426 Email: loggerheadspc@btconnect.com

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 13th December 2021, 7pm at Hales Club

PRESENT: Cllrs Lee, Roberts, Swetman, Coulson, Fox, Vallings, Salmons, Coulson

ALSO PRESENT: Benn Minshall (Clerk); Cllrs Hodgkins, Henshaw

13/12/1 APOLOGIES

To receive and consider apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gibson, Swan, Butterworth and Dixon

13/12/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 13th September 2021

The meeting **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th August had been approved and signed as a correct record of proceedings.

13/12/3 PRECEPT AND BUDGET FOR 2022-23

To consider the budget for 2022-23 and recommend to Full Council on Monday 20th December 2021

- i. Maintenance of SIDs
- ii. Maintenance of Tinkers Lane

The meeting **resolved** to recommend to Full Council a budget of £70,000 – which equates to a precept of £35.32 for a Band D Household.

13/12/4 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

****FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED DUE TO COVID-19****

Meeting closed at 20:41pm

Signed:.....CHAIR

AGENDA ITEM 6(b)

REPORT STATEMENT

Report Purpose To consider current banking arrangements
Version Control V1
Author Parish Clerk and RFO

1. Report Summary

The report relates to the current banking arrangements.

2. Position

Public Sector finances are a niche market for financial institutions, and in many ways is still a developing practice, with large numbers of Councils being classed as Third Sector Organisations due to relatively low annual turnover.

The Parish Council current hold three bank accounts with a high street bank: -

- One Business Current account holding a portion of the precept as the primary source of funds
- One Business Current account which is dormant, and holds an inconsequential amount of funds
- One Business Reserve account holding a portion of the precept, and is used to top up the primary Business Current account to ensure that and the Business Reserve account maintain the same level of funds.

In conjunction with the abovementioned accounts, the Parish Council also hold a reserve account a high street Building Society as the primary reserve fund. It is a requirement for Councils to maintain a reserve. The primary purpose of this account is to supplement for any unplanned or unforeseen expenditure.

3. Financial Impact

It should be noted that where a Council satisfies the criteria set out in s382 Companies Act 2006, that Council is eligible for FSCS protection (Financial Services Compensation Scheme). FSCS offers protection against financial loss of up to £85,000 for all financial institutions regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Where it concerns amounts in excess of £85,000 there is a requirement to mitigate some of the risks associated with financial losses by spreading the precept (Council Tax) to ensure that it does not hold an amount in excess of £85,000 with any one financial institution.

Based on the qualifying criteria contained in abovementioned statute, Loggerheads Parish Council is eligible for FSCS protection.

4. Conclusions

The current banking provider is proving as of late they it can be a deal organisation to deal with; except for the staff in the branch, who offer a very noteworthy and individualised customer experience. But the levels of internal communication between interdepartmental

AGENDA ITEM 6(b)

elements have resulted in the Council being the subject of several issues relating to signatories, access and payment methods. There is the issue of the dormant Business Current account which requires a resolution. It is also the case that this bank does not offer dual-authorisation on payments, which does pose an element of risk to the Council, and also correlates to what could be perceived as a lack of robust and proper internal controls. The Council is currently in the process of updating signatories and access rights.

There are no pressing concerns with the primary reserve account except for the need to update the signatories following the local elections.

5. Considerations Sought

- To consider whether the current banking arrangements are fit for purpose, or if the Council wish to explore other options
- To consider the current position of the primary reserve account

AGENDA ITEM 6(c)

REPORT STATEMENT

Report Purpose To consider current IT provision
Version Control V1
Author Parish Clerk and RFO

1. Report Summary

The report relates to current levels IT provision

2. Position

The list of physical IT assets presently owned by the Parish Council is as follows: -

- One laptop
- One printer
- One landline telephone
- One broadband router
- One small projector
- One external hard drive

Further to this, the list of “ethereal” IT assets currently operated by the Parish Council is as follows: -

- One ‘btconnect.com’ email address which is utilised by the Clerk
- Nineteen ‘gmail.com’ email addresses which are utilised by Councillors
- One website, which is both a requirement and subject to hosting fees
- One Facebook page which utilises Facebook Messenger

The laptop is serviceable, albeit ageing and operating on software which is over ten years old, but the machine itself could benefit from maintenance to prolong operational stability.

The printer is also serviceable in terms of its operational stability. Operationally speaking it is adequate for preparation of monthly meetings, and items for the noticeboards; but has proven to be unsuitable for large-scale print operations such as document retention, which in certain cases is either a legislative or necessary requirement. In as much as it could be deemed a “domestic” machine it occupies little office space, but its print capacity is minimal and could prove costly in the long-term.

The landline telephone and broadband router are supplied by BT – with the telephone line being a domestic line; and the router being Business Broadband – which creates a sense of complexity in respect of monthly billing, for which we receive one bill, but the two composite elements are subject to different pricing tariffs. It should also be noted that the ‘btconnect.com’ email address currently used by the Clerk is a direct by-product of this service, and if there were to be a change in supplier, this could lead to loss of information and the need to reaffirm the primary contact details of the Parish Council with the local community and partner organisations. Furthermore, the ‘gmail.com’ email addresses which are used by Councillors are technically not Parish Council assets; can be the subject of malicious online activity, of which there has been a recent report; carry implications relating to GDPR; and, are outside the bounds of technical support other than that which is offered by Google.

The small projector is currently on loan to the Loggerheads Befrienders; and, the external hard drive is securely stored in the office.

AGENDA ITEM 6(c)

The website is currently hosted by Carrera UK Ltd. This is a very basic package in that it is strictly limited to hosting, with no email provision and little to no technical support. It could also be considered costly in the long-term, and offers no real benefit in the competitive marketplace.

The Facebook page is an incredibly useful, modern resource which facilitates instantaneous communication on the widest possible scale which allows for limitless dissemination of information. It is currently administered by the Clerk and two Councillors.

3. Financial Impact

The current total cost of IT provision on an annual basis is estimated to be in the amount of £2,683, which represents 3.8% of the total precept.

4. Conclusions

The laptop is serviceable, and is therefore adequate for the time being, albeit somewhat hampered by out of date software.

The printer is largely serviceable, albeit unsuited to large-scale print operations.

The telephone and broadband provision are costly, and there is no direct management as BT are the administrator and must be contacted in all instances – such as a change of password in some cases.

The hosting of the website is costly, and the operational email addresses pose a multitude of issues to the organisation in respect of services, technical support and data protection.

Both the projector and external hard drive are serviceable, operational and pose no issues.

5. Considerations Sought

- To explore options for telephone and broadband provision
- To explore options for website hosting and email access

AGENDA ITEM 6(e)

REPORT STATEMENT

Report Purpose To consider matters relating to the Burntwood Container
Version Control V1
Author Parish Clerk and RFO

1. Report Summary

The report relates to the Burntwood Container.

2. Position

The Burntwood Sports Ground is a 2.5 hectare site located adjacent to Eccleshall Road, with the main ingress and egress being at the end of Pheasant Walk, and is the subject of a lease between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Loggerheads Parish Council. The Burntwood Container is a purpose-built facility, situated in a clearing some 300 yards beyond the main access point, and consists of three interconnecting spaces – one changing room with wet room, a second changing room with wet room and a rest area with bench style seating.

At present, the primary use of the Container is that of sporting and recreational purposes by Loggerheads Football Club; although at one time there were discussions between the Parish Council and a local Scout group regarding infrequent use of the facility also. In addition to this the Container serves as the location for one of several defibrillators within Loggerheads parish.

3. Financial Impact

The funding for the purchase of the Container is based on borrowed capital from the Public Works Loan Board with a remaining balance of £29,081.37, which is taken twice yearly by direct debit in the amounts of £777.87.

Until January 2022, the Parish Council were covering the cost of cleaning services in the amount of £30.00 a time; however, this was sporadic and based on a verbal agreement.

The Container has a metered power supply which is currently supplied by Eon Next and is a variable direct debit in the region of £30.00 - £40.00 per month.

Furthermore, since the installation of the Container, there has been investment by the Parish Council in the amount of £3,000.

In total, the estimated annual cost of the Burntwood Container is in the amount of £5,395.74, if the amount of additional investment were maintained; however, this is unlikely to be the case, meaning that the estimated annual cost is in the amount of £2,395.74.

It should also be noted that, although there currently no formal agreement is in place, Loggerheads Football Club pay a rental charge of £400.00 per annum.

When taking that into consideration this places the annual estimated cost in the amount of £1,995.74

AGENDA ITEM 6(e)

4. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the Parish is well-served by having a purpose-built facility of this kind, and although the current use is limited to sporting and recreational purposes by one by a singular entity, there is an indeterminate degree of scope to expand on this, and ensure that the Container is delivered as a community asset.

There is a list of rules associated with the use of the container, which can be found on the inside of the door to the main changing room, although there has been several discussions concerning ongoing infractions of those rules; something which needs to be addressed in and of itself, but without question if the Container were to become more widely used by groups who could be considered vulnerable when considering any relevant safeguarding issues.

One potentially ongoing cause for consideration is the procurement of cleaning services. Following the withdrawal of services by the previous provider – owing to concerns which centred around both irregularity and personal safety – two other contractors were invited to quote for this provision; however, one never excelled beyond the initial contact due to personal reasons, and the other became unavailable due to capacity.

In light of rising inflation, there is little which can be done to mitigate the ongoing costs associated with utilities, and in reality is represented by a rather inconsequential amount of expenditure on an annual basis by comparison to other business needs.

The previous £3,000 of investment is comprised of assorted payments relating to cleaning supplies and hygiene products. It is not expected that any level of ongoing investment would remain at this current level, but there would be an inherently associated cost, especially if the Container were to become more widely used.

The estimated annual cost represents between 2.8% - 3.4% of the overall precept, so it can be considered to deliver value for money, although as previously stated the level of Return on Investment (ROI) can be significantly enhanced.

5. Considerations Sought

- To consider the need for formal written agreements concerning third-party uses of the Container
- To consider the ongoing costs associated with utilities
- To consider the procurement of cleaning services
- To consider any additional levels of ongoing investment

AGENDA ITEM 6(f)

REPORT STATEMENT

Report Purpose To consider matter relating to the Winter Gritting Service for 2022 – 2023
Version Control V1
Author Parish Clerk and RFO

1. Report Summary

The report relates to the provision of winter gritting services within the parish.

2. Position

Over the last fourteen years, the Parish Council has made provision within its budget for winter gritting services, which comprises planned routes and the annual replenishment of grit bins.

The current gritting routes provided for by the Parish Council are as follows: -

- Church Lane and Mucklestone
- Hunters Point – Badger Brow to the junction of Mucklestone Wood Lane – Chestnut Road – Loggerheads
- Pinewood Road – Sovereign Lane – Charnes Road – School Lane – Doctors Bank – Lower Road from the bottom of the Dale, Ashley

The list of Parish Council owned grit bins within the parish is as follows: -

Burntwood View x 2	Kestrel Drive, Burntwood
Chestnut Road x 2	Knighton
Chestnut Road, Meadowside	Reynards Rise
Derwent drive	Severn Trent, Sharpland
Eccleshall Road/Broom Lea by sub station	Sovereign Lane / Church Road Ashley
Eccleshall Road/Tower Road	St Johns Way, Ashley
Fox Hollow (on bend)	St Marys / Queen Margarets Road
Heathcote Ave, Hookgate	Sub Station Chapel Lane, Hookgate
Hugo School	
Hugo Way x 3 (including 1 that is County's)	
Hunters Point	

In more recent years, as a means of delivering the winter gritting service, the Parish Council has engaged the services of three separate contractors: -

- Adrian Marsh Ltd to procure and supply grit
- F. H. Martin & Co to replenish the Parish Council owned grit bins
- R. D. & T. Edwards Ltd to carry out a minimum number of agreed grit runs

As of April 2022, F. H. Martin & Co has withdrawn its involvement from ongoing service delivery. Furthermore, there is also ten tonnes of grit in the ownership of the Parish Council which is stored by the contractor in a 60 x 60 barn, and this facet of future service delivery has also been withdrawn. This created either a need to relocate this reserve of grit, or incur a rental charge of £20 + VAT per week. At the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022, the decision was taken gift this reserve of grit to Adrian Marsh Ltd. The Parish Council continues to maintain a reserve of grit having purchased an

AGENDA ITEM 6(f)

additional twenty-nine tonnes in October / November of 2021.

It should be noted that the Local Highways Authority for the area is Staffordshire County Council; however, the level of service which is currently provided differs significantly from that which is provided by the Parish Council.

The current gritting routes provided for by the County Council are as follows: -

- A53 – B5026 – Mucklestone to Croxton – B5415 Red Bull to Bearstone
- Ashley – Hungersheath Farm – two ends of Mucklestone Wood Lane (only in harsh winters due to this being a bus route).

The list of County Council owned grit bins within the parish is as follows: -

B5415 junction with road to Blore (Red Bull)	Gerrards Way
Birks Drive	Green Lane/Charnes Road
Brockhill	Jug Bank, Ashley
Burntwood Wood View (junction A53)	Kestrel Drive (junction A53)
Burntwood Wood View (at top)	Kestrel Drive (junction The Robins)
Burntwood View junction, Meynell Fields (only fill once)	Lower Road x 6 (piles only once)
Chestnut Road (junction Mucklestone Wood Lane)	Roundabout on Hugo way
Chartwood	School Lane /A53 (pile only once)
Chestnut Road Beech Grove	Sharplands x2
	Wharmadine Lane (Junction Church Road)
	Wharmadine Lane (x 2 piles once only)

3. Financial Impact

In respect of the budget line item for the provision of winter gritting services during 2021 – 2022 was set in the amount of £2,500.00. The total actual expenditure resulted in a figure of £4,885.39; and percentages overspend of 179.42%.

In addition to this, following the decision to gift away the ten tonnes of grit held in reserve during the May Council meeting, and costing that at the unit price of the secondary grit reserve, this equates to a financial loss of £395.00 in Parish Council assets. In total, that places the financial impact of winter gritting services for 2021 – 2022 in the amount of £5,280.39, and percentages overspend of 211.22%.

In respect of the budget line item for the provision of winter gritting services during 2022 – 2023 is set in the amount of £2,750.00. If that same percentages overspend of 211.22% is applied, then projected expenditure for 2022 – 2023 is in the amount of £8,558.55.

4. Conclusions

The previous decision of the Parish Council to enter into service delivery has no doubt inferred benefits upon the local community in terms of both reliance on local knowledge and pride of place. Service delivery in any context holds an inherent cost implication which is then reflected within the budget setting process; however, the significant percentage difference between budgeted expenditure, actual expenditure and projected expenditure makes the winter gritting service both unsustainable and undeliverable.

It is worth reiterating that there is currently no formal documentation which the Parish holds on file in respect of the winter gritting service, and as such there are no contractual arrangements with any contractors which have been commissioned.

AGENDA ITEM 6(f)

5. Considerations Sought

- To forgo delivery of a winter gritting service for 2022 – 2023
- To test the marketplace with a view to delivering a winter gritting service for 2022 – 2023
- To consider entering into a multi-year contract for the delivery of winter gritting services
- To consider enhancing the ownership of grit bins by the Parish Council to encompass all grit bins within the parish