

Worth Parish Council
Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee Meeting held on
February 6th 2023 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Phillips (Chairman)
Cllr Casella
Cllr Gibson
Cllr Stewart
Mrs J Nagy (Clerk)
Mrs E Smith (RFO)

Cllr Dorey
Cllr Mayer
4 members of the public

102 Public Question Time

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting: Cllr King was present as a member of the public.

103 Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted from Cllrs Coote, Cruickshank Hitchcock and Scott

104 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this point of the meeting.

105 Minutes

It was AGREED by all present that the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the General Purposes & Finance Committee meeting held on 9th January 2023 were a true and correct record.

106 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman had no announcements.

107 Correspondence List

The Correspondence List was NOTED.

108 Accounts and Financial Matters

There were two grant applications for discussion.

Donkey Field Preschool, Crawley Down for £750

The purpose of this grant is to part fund a sensory room; total cost of project £19,500.

The Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak; this was seconded by and agreed by all present.

The Manager of the Preschool was present at the meeting. She explained that they wanted to install a sensory room, not only for SEN children, but to provide additional space to have private one to one meetings. The increase in overall space allows them to offer places to 30 children, an increase from the previous 26. Due to limited places, these are offered primarily to Crawley Down children.

Cllr Gibson, in his capacity as County Councillor asked if they had access to any WSCC SEN funding; they had not. All children over 3 were entitled to subsidies funded by WSCC, which did not cover all their costs, but there was no SEN specific financial assistance. Cllr Gibson will take this up with WSCC.

The Manager said that many preschools in the area had closed, as had Children & Family Centres.

Donkey Field was the only one operating in the village.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson seconded by Cllr Dorey and AGREED by all present that a grant of £750 would be awarded to Donkey Field Preschool

Copthorne Scouts & Guides Gang Show for £750

The purpose of this grant is to purchase a marquee to use as a workshop to build props and sets for a stage production; total cost of project £1,732.00 (Please note the covering letter has cost at £1,132.50, the application form states £1,732)

The Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak; this was seconded by and agreed by all present.

The Treasurer was present at the meeting. He reported that the Gang Show was a regular feature, taking place at the Hawth Theatre. The marquee would be erected in a private garden whilst being used as a workshop.

The Chairman queried the cost of the project as there were two differing figures in the paperwork. The Treasurer confirmed that the cost was £1732, the additional cost was for the inclusion of a floor.

Cllr Gibson asked if only Copthorne Scouts and Guides were involved; the Treasurer replied that Crawley Down had its own Scouts and Guides troop.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was proposed by Cllr Casella seconded by Cllr Dorey and AGREED by all present that a grant of £750 would be awarded to Copthorne Scouts & Guides Gang show

It was NOTED that these two grants put the annual grant allocation over budget by £766; it was felt that this deficit could be covered by general reserves.

The Clerk will continue to accept grant applications before the end of the financial year, for consideration by this Committee.

Financial Information

The Chairman asked Councillors to consider details of income and expenditure, bank balances and reserves, as at 30th November and 31st December 2022 as presented in the meeting pack.

To summarise;

Total receipts for November 2022 of £1,133.47 excl. VAT
Total payments for November 2022 of £23,202.32 excl VAT
Bank Balances as at 30th November 2022 of £488,200.31 of which
Earmarked reserves of £139,706.94

Total receipts for December 2022 of £6,117.68 excl. VAT
Total payments for December 2022 of £24,585.01 excl VAT
Bank Balances as at 31st December 2022 of £467,829.42 of which
Earmarked reserves of £139,706.94

Councillors NOTED the latest financial situation

Income & Expenditure Analysis

The Chairman referred to the Income & Analysis sheet, prepared by Cllr Scott.

Councillors NOTED this report.

Street Light Electricity Supply

The RFO advised that she has the quote for a renewal of the supply contract which expires on

25th February. This will be presented to Full Council on 20th February for consideration.

109 Council Premises and Land

Nothing to report.

110 Copthorne Recreation Ground

The Chairman referred to the Clerk's report, and invited Cllr Dorey as leader of the Copthorne EIWP to give an update.

The Copthorne EIWP would like to redevelop the whole area, incorporating off road parking, with a larger play area, and new skate ramp behind. To the rear of the site, the possibility of installing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is being explored.

Copthorne EIWP has met with Michael Carter, from Sports & Play Consulting with a view to engaging him to assist with the process. He will be able to offer advice, assist with community engagement, assist with layout and design, draw up any tender and manage the submission process. If the Council decide to proceed, he can also assist with project managing the build.

He can provide this advice at a cost of £6,500 (VAT exempt) This is a considerable reduction on his usual fee of £10,500, as there are in fact three projects that of playground, skate park and MUGA.

Cllr Dorey met with Michael on site on 1st February to discuss the project.

It is proposed to fund the cost out of the CEIWP budget allocation. As at 31st December this was £6,512, the cost of the topographical survey £975 will reduce this to a balance of £5,537.

It was AGREED by all present to recommend to Full Council that Sport & Play Consulting would be commissioned to assist with the redevelopment of Copthorne Recreation Ground at a cost of £6,500, the deficit from the CEIWP budget allocation will be made up from CEIWP earmarked reserves.

111 Matters for Consideration submitted by the Infrastructure and Environment Working Parties

Crawley Down Pond

The Chairman referred to the Clerk's report in relation to the ongoing ownership of the pond and bank

As MSDC owns the land immediately adjacent to the pond, the Crawley Down EIWP would like to ask MSDC to take over the pond from WSCC, to take the necessary steps to restore it, and to manage and maintain it in the future. The WP would like to suggest to MSDC that monies from the New Homes Bonus could be used to fund this proposal.

Crawley Down EIWP suggests that should MSDC refuse to take over the pond, then Worth PC should consider taking on the pond and the bank, and ask for NHB money to cover ongoing works and maintenance.

The Clerk notes that whilst developments in the area have resulted in a deterioration of the pond, there is doubt as to whether or not the drainage issues in Hazel Rise have contributed to the recent worsening of the pond's condition.

The pond is part of a significant water course, and would be a huge responsibility for Worth PC to take on, with major implications for staffing and finances. A recent estimate for dredging was in the region of £40,000.

MSDC has indicated that NHB monies are not available to individual towns and parishes to use to fund local projects.

It was AGREED by all present that the Clerk would approach MSDC to suggest that it takes over ownership of the pond from WSCC, and that it uses current and future s106 monies to fund future maintenance.

112 Consideration of items for discussion by the Environment & Infrastructure Working Parties

There were no items suggested for future discussion

113 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on 6th March 2023

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____