



# Maresfield Parish Council

REPRESENTING THE VILLAGES OF MARESFIELD, NUTLEY & FAIRWARP

## DRAFT Minutes of the Maresfield Parish Council Finance & Administration Committee meeting held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllr M Craddock (Chair), Cllr T Lewin, Cllr Dr B Smith & Mrs C Goossens (Clerk)

1. **Public Session – None.**
2. **Apologies for absence.** Cllr D Watson.
3. **Declarations of interest.**  
Cllr Lewin – Maresfield Conservation Group  
Cllr Dr Smith - Governor, Nutley Primary School.
4. **Adoption of the minutes of the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**  
The minutes as circulated were **Agreed** as a true and accurate record.
5. **Review of months 8 Receipts and Payments and Bank Reconciliation.**  
Noted.
6. **To review NDP Steering Group request for continued funding and make recommendation to Council.**  
The following points were noted in discussion:
  - The minutes of the previous meeting clearly set out in detail the funding request for the NDP.
  - This time last year a reserve of £10,000 was created as this was the estimated completion cost of the NDP. This estimate is no longer valid in light of the WDC Local Plan being withdrawn in January 2020.
  - Much work has been carried out to date by the NDP SG.
  - The call for sites assessment work is a valuable exercise with no cost implication as it will be carried out by the NDP SG members. This work will enable dialogue with landowners and developers which will hopefully influence future development proposals and result in community dividends.
  - Future NPD costs would result from the commissioning of various reports, consultation with Parishioners, inspection by Wealden and a referendum.
  - It is anticipated that £3,000 of the existing reserve will remain at the end of the current financial year.
  - The value of the NDP SG so far can be demonstrated in that the Parish has had considerable influence on the applications which have made up the 50 homes as allocated in WDC's 2013 Core Strategy.
  - A spreadsheet outlining NDP expenditure to date was analysed and noted.

The Chairman proposed recommending to Council that the NDP SG continues with the Neighbourhood Development Plan and in particular site assessment work but does not at this stage allocate further funding in the 2021/22 Budget. Should any additional funding be required the NDP SG can request this from Council who would meet it out of reserves if approved. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.
7. **Grants/Donations – Bids for Parish Council funding 2021/22.**  
The Chairman proposed approval of grants totalling £15,090 as included in the proposed budget. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.
8. **Current Year forecasts 2020/2021 and new Budget/Precept 2021/2022.**  
The following points were noted in discussion:
  - The Forest Row Maintenance Team have provided an invaluable service and it is hoped that we can continue with two visits per month even through the winter months especially as there are a number of tasks



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requiring continued attention including the regular replacement of MVAS batteries. Provision was put in the current year estimate and next year's budget for this eventuality.

- Maresfield Recreation Ground accounts are running low in part due to the lack of income resulting from COVID 19 restrictions. The forecast for the current year was adjusted to increase Recreation Ground expenditure by £1,000.

The Chairman proposed a recommendation to Council that the 2021/22 Budget as agreed at this meeting in the sum of £100,210 be approved together with a precept requirement, after agreed adjustments to Reserves, of £93,688. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and **Agreed** unanimously.

**ACTION:** Clerk to add to Council Agenda.

**9. To note Internal Auditors Interim Report.**

Noted. The report reflects well on the Clerk and the systems being operated by the Parish Office. There are one or two minor points to address. The process for approving payments (not expenditure) was questioned. It is not possible to get the schedule of payments completed in time for Council meetings which take place on the third Tuesday of the month.

It was noted that it would be worthwhile reinstating regular ad-hoc audit of payments by F&A Committee Councillors. **ACTION:** Clerk to rearrange once COVID restrictions permit.

Ad-hoc change of payment authenticator. **ACTION:** Clerk to arrange.

**10. To note Wicksteed Quarterly Playground Inspection Report.** Noted. The Environment Committee has discussed items requiring attention and is arranging requisite repairs/replacement parts.

**11. To consider and recommend that Council approve the following policies:**

- a) Lone Working Policy**
- b) Performance Management Policy**
- c) Recording of Public Meetings Policy**

The above policies were reviewed, and all considered to be too involved for the purposes of Maresfield Parish Council. **ACTION:** Clerk to re-draft simplified policies and circulate to F&A Committee members for comment prior to presentation to Council for approval.

**ACTION:** Clerk to ascertain if members of the public attending meetings are required to provide their name.

**12. Investment of surplus funds.** Due to the time that has lapsed since it was agreed to invest additional funds with Hodge Bank, the Clerk needs to revert to see what products are currently on offer. **ACTION:** Clerk.

**ACTION:** Clerk to investigate Unity Bank.

**13. Transparency code.** The Internal Auditor is satisfied that the Parish Council is going above and beyond transparency requirements for a Council of its size.

**14. GDPR update.**

The Clerk reported she needs to carry out a "Data Cleanse" when time permits.

**15. To consider Website Accessibility Audit.**

This was discussed and considered to be a worthwhile exercise to ensure our new website is indeed fully accessible. It was **Agreed** to proceed with this audit at the cost of £99.99. **ACTION:** Clerk to make appropriate arrangements.

**ACTION:** Clerk to send details of Website Accessibility Auditor to Nutley Primary School.

**16. Matters arising from the meeting for public communication.** None.

**17. Correspondence.** None.

**18. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20.50.*