

**MINUTES OF A MEETING (22) OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE OF CAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT CAWSTON COMMUNITY
HALL ON TUESDAY 11TH MAY 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

Members in attendance:	Councillors S.Bestwick, M. Cool and M Winterburn
Guests in attendance:	None
Minutes:	R. Nash (Clerk)
Officers in attendance:	Mrs V. Moody (Facilities & Communication Manager)

Cawston Parish Council, Scholars Drive, Rugby, CV22 7GU

F21.1 Election of Chairman

The Chair was taken for this meeting only by Councillor Bestwick. It was agreed that the election of a Chair of the Committee for the year 2021/22 be deferred to the next scheduled meeting in view of the absence of Cllr Bishop from this meeting. **Action: Clerk**

F21.2 Apologies

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Richard Bishop and Murali Natarajan

F21-3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this time.

F21-4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (20) held on 9th March, 2021, were considered. As only one member of the Committee present at the meeting on 9th March was present tonight, it was agreed that approval of the Minutes be deferred to the next scheduled meeting to take place.

F21-5 Finance Reports

A report setting out payments arising during the month of April together with the Bank account reconciliation had been circulated and were considered. The Clerk clarified the position in relation to electricity consumption charges.

Only one long-term debtor remained outstanding and it was anticipated that this would be settled in the near future.

RESOLVED

- (1) that current account payments arising in the sum of £4511.33 are approved;
- (2) that the bank account reconciliations for the period to 30th April are noted and approved
- (3) that the position in respect of aged debtors is noted.

Action: Clerk

F21-6 Cawston Community Hall

The Facilities and Communications Manager reported that resumption of most group activities would occur from 17th May in accordance with the relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions. The Community Hall would continue to adhere to distancing requirements and this meant that a maximum of 28 people could be admitted to the main hall at one time.

The Committee was updated on progress in relation to various routine maintenance matters including the outstanding work to comply with the recommendations relating to the lightning protection system. It was hoped that this would be concluded in the next few weeks.

With regard to generating quotations for the upgrading of the rear access to the main hall and general redevelopment options, the FCM advised that only one response had been received from among the various designers invited. The submission of options was also being hindered by the unavailability of CAD drawings of the original Community Hall; further inquiries would be made with the architects who were originally commissioned to provide this information.

Action FCM

The Committee discussed various potential options for the future of the Community Hall and it was evident that before embarking on any remodelling proposal it was essential that the Council determine the primary purpose of the Hall and the main drivers of demand from the community. It was also necessary to understand the implications of the maintenance and security considerations which would have a bearing on any proposals to expand further the use of the Community Hall.

RESOLVED that the Council is recommended to conduct a survey of Parishioners and users of the Community Hall to assist in determining the scope for future development of the building.

Action: Clerk (Agenda)

F21.7 Review of Out-of-Hours Caretaking of Community Hall

Consideration was given to a Report prepared by the FCM regarding the management of the building including liaising with hirers on basic safety and security, meeting and greeting and locking up the building after events.

It was suggested that Members consider the various options set out in the Report and provide their views to the FCM for incorporating into a final report for the Council. This could include the direct employment of a janitor based on an annualised hours arrangement.

RESOLVED

- (i) that a report is submitted for consideration of the Council reflecting the observations of Members of the Committee; and
- (ii) that the position regarding indemnity for volunteers is clarified with the Council's insurer's.

**Action (i) Members of Fand GP
(ii) Clerk**

F21-8 Investment Strategy

Consideration was given to a Report by the Clerk setting out the alternatives in relation to the investment of the balances held by the Council which had arisen principally from revenues generated by the receipt of monies under Section 106 agreements.

The Committee had been asked by the Council to consider recommending a course of action which took account of the following alternatives:

- 1) early repayment of one of the loans with the Public Works Loan Board;
- 2) A lump sum investment purchasing units in the CCLA Property Fund;
- 3) Investment in a diversified portfolio managed by a Fund Manager.

It was noted that the current loans with the PWLB entailed a combined payment of £25,400 per annum of which over £20,000 was interest payments. Whilst repaying one of the loans in full would incur a substantial penalty, the saving to the Council in interest payments was significant over the life- time of the loan.

The Committee was agreed that at this time, exposure to a Portfolio based on commercial property values was a risk that the Council should not undertake. Funds remaining after the repayment of the loan were to be considered for possible investment in a more diverse portfolio, based on advice from a specialist in this area of finance.

RESOLVED to recommend the Council:

- (i) That loan No PW504208 subject to an interest rate of 3.72% in the sum of £268160.84 is repaid subject to payment of an early repayment premium of £151636.32;
- (ii) That the balance of funds within the Council's reserve account, remaining after repayment of the loan No PW504208, are considered for investment following further consideration of options and appropriate financial advice.

Action: Clerk

F21.9 Appointment Process – Parish Clerk

The Clerk reported that he had confirmed with Local Councils Consultancy (LCC) that they would undertake a grading evaluation exercise of the Posts of Clerk and Facilities and Communications Manager, to establish appropriate base line salaries. The second stage of the process would be to agree the advertisement and timescale for the appointment process of the new Clerk. It was intended that the analysis of both posts would be undertaken remotely with both current employees before assessment with Members of the Council.

It was agreed that the review of Job Descriptions needed to take account of the way in which the duties of both posts might evolve in the future.

RESOLVED that Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee are invited to take part in the Grading Evaluation exercise.

Action: Clerk

F21-10

Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

There were no additional matters raised by Councillors.

Officers updated the Committee on the following items outstanding since the last Council meeting:

Road Barges – a response had been received from the Green Space Manager at Rugby Borough Council advising that any repairs or work to the road barges was a matter for agreement between the Parish Council and Warwickshire County Council. A discussion on how best to proceed would take place with the County Council in due course.

Welcome to Cawston signage – There was no further progress to report as the land where the new feature is to be installed must first be transferred from the developer to the Borough Council.

Bus routes – these were to be reviewed by the operator as soon as the roads in the new Cawston extension were completed for the passage of through traffic.

F21-11

Date of next meeting:

Date of next meeting to be determined by the Council in the light of changes to regulations regarding hosting public meetings.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.