

**Minutes of the FEOCK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Finance & General Purposes Committee
held on Tuesday 20th June 2023 at 7pm at Feock Parish Council Offices**

Councillors present: WARDS	CARNON DOWNS	DEVORAN	FEOCK
	M Woolcock	M Steel	L Fitt
			R Brickell
			K Hambly-Staite

In attendance: Debra Roberts, Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Chairman: Councillor Steel

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman introduced everyone present at the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

There had been no apologies received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The member of the public present asked for the figure of the Council's current reserves and were there any reports to support the discussion on reallocating reserves.

The Clerk said that the current reserve levels would be covered under item 9 on the agenda and she had produced a Clerks Report which was issued with the agenda.

5. DIRECT DEBIT LIST

The Clerk had circulated to all Councillors the list of direct debits the Council had which were as follows:

Cobalt Communications (phone/broadband); EDF Energy (Devoran Park electricity supply); Clearbooks (accounting software); Grenkeleasing (VOIP system); Information Commissioners Office (ICO fee); Public Works Loan Board (loan); Ricoh UK (photocopier); Southern Electric (Market Hall electricity); SSE Gas (Market Hall gas)

It was noted that the utility contracts needed to be looked at later in the year when our current agreements finished.

RESOLUTION: CLLR WOOLCOCK PROPOSED THE COMMITTEE APPROVE THE ANNUAL DIRECT DEBIT LIST, SECONDED BY CLLR BRICKELL AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2022/23

The Clerk had circulated her report and outlined her comments on the actions raised in the report as follows:

Risk – investment strategy to be reviewed at a future Finance & GP Meeting

Budgets – In future the Clerk would ensure there was a separate agenda item for approving the budget and not do this as part of the Precept agenda item. The Auditor had mentioned the budget had been set quite early, the Clerk explained that the Council set the budget as part of the Precept setting process, the request for the Precept had to be in by the end of December so felt it made sense to also set the budget at the same time as the budget discussions fed into the Precept discussions, the Clerk would check with the Auditor what he meant by this.

VAT – there was a discrepancy between year end claim and Clearbooks accounting system balance for the VAT figure, this was related to timing of receipt of invoices and VAT claim being made. The balance was now correct. The Clerk would advise the Committee of the discrepancy figure.

Final Report 2017/18 – minimum and maximum level of free reserves being included in budget setting process, this was included in the discussions for 2022/23 budget/precept.

Interim Report 2018/19 – certification of individual invoices by Clerk/RFO, not implemented but Clerk/RFO does sign Summary of Payments which is presented to each Parish Council meeting, together with signature by Chairman and resolution by Council to approve list of payments. This was discussed and it was felt the current process was adequate.

RESOLUTION: CLLR FITT PROPOSED THE COUNCIL ACCEPT THE INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT AND CLERKS COMMENTS ON ACTIONS, SECONDED BY CLLR HAMBLY-STAITE AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. PUBLIC WORKS LOAD

The Clerk advised the current balance on the loan was £87,013.72. The annual payment was £7625 (of which £3K was interest with the remainder capital repayment). The interest rate was 3.35%

The Clerk would supply the details to the Committee of the last overpayment made with details of fees and seek advice from CALC on early repayment of PWLB.

8. BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES &

9. ALLOCATION OF RESERVES

The Clerk advised the bank balances were as follows:

Lloyds (Carnon Valley Woodland)	£90.50
Lloyds (Community Infrastructure Levy)	£40,279.23
Lloyds (Market Hall Maintenance fund)	£14,000
Unity Trust Bank (including 3 months running costs)	£55,016.20
Lloyds (Current Account)	£100,446.48
Cornwall Council Deposit Account	£1,110.81
Lloyds (historical)	£6,552.42

The Clerk advised that the amount of reserves that were unallocated was £30,164.32, in addition there was £45K in the Unity Trust bank which was 3 months reserves and the recommended best practice amount to be kept aside.

The Clerk advised there were a number of projects included in allocated reserves (£17,995.59) that the Council may wish to reconsider or look at applying for external funding for. There were also a number of projects the Council had discussed but not yet agreed or allocated funding for which needed further discussion as to whether they would go ahead.

The Clerk would circulate the Business Plan the Council had previously put together with a view to the Council updating it. The clerk would add Good Growth funding to the July Parish Council agenda as

some of the footpath surfacing works identified in allocated reserves may be able to be transferred to the Active Travel project and be eligible for outside funding. Cllr Hambly-Staite said that the Access & Amenities Committee did not have a devolved budget but this would at times be useful and speed up actions to be taken. It was also noted how much money Councillors save the Council by volunteering rather than the Council having to employ a contractor to carry out work.

10. GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL GROUPS

The Clerk had circulated details of the last local group funding scheme (Your Choice) that the Council had run pre-Covid but had not run since the pandemic. The Clerk asked that the Council consider if they wish to re-start a grant funding scheme and if so did they want her to include figures in the 2024/25 draft budget. The Committee were of the opinion that they did wish to support this participatory budgeting scheme but were mindful of the admin work for the Clerk compiling the votes. They did like the presentation element of the scheme and the aims of it.

Cllr Hambly-Staite said he would like to use the Post Covid re-opening grants that were in the allocated reserves to give a budget to the Wellbeing Adviser so she could support local groups if they needed help. The Clerk advised that a criteria would need to be agreed to detail what could and couldn't be funded and the type of groups to be funded as this would be an audit requirement. Cllr Hambly-Staite would write a paper for consideration at a future meeting. The Clerk would investigate if there was a less onerous system for voting.

The member of the public left the meeting at 8pm as the meeting moved into the closed session.

There being no further business the meeting closed 8.05pm.