Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 5th May 2022 at 9.45am

Present: - Councillor G Chapman, Councillor M Jervis, Councillor S Brookes, Councillor P Lewenz, Councillor K Critchley and Councillor B Kidley.

Clerk, Mrs J Monks.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Councillor S Brookes welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor C Critchley, Councillor M Marshall and Councillor J Freeman had sent their apologies for the meeting.

Councillor C Critchley had contacted the clerk to nominate Councillor B Kidley in her absence as substitute member.

2. Members Code of Conduct

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Matters Arising

The following update was given from the previous Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on Thursday 31st March 2022.

The clerk reported that she had been sent an email from the Treasurer of Appleton Thorn Preschool stating that following a meeting with the Trustees they wish to withdraw their application for a grant from the Parish Council.

The clerk had received an email dated 5th April 2022 from the Environmental Services Manager of Warrington Borough Council with regards to the breakdown of where the tree funds from the Inland Border Facility had been spent. He had confirmed that Warrington Borough Council had received £105,000 from HMRC for tree planting. £5000 has been transferred to Appleton Thorn primary school to be used for a project agreed between the forest school and HMRC and forty-five trees had been planted in the following pre-agreed locations. The locations were as follows;

Thirty at Grappenhall Lane, one at Owens Corner roundabout, eight at Spinney Gardens, one at Blackcap roundabout, five at Tarporley Road layby. Following planting and a three-year establishment period the remaining funds are to be retained by Warrington Borough Council for continued future maintenance of the forty five planted trees.

The Environmental Services Manager of Warrington Borough Council confirmed that there were no plans or available funds to replace street trees on Broomfield's Avenue, Greenfield Drive and Hall Drive. The tree stumps are removed in batches however there is no budget allocation for this work at this time.

The clerk was asked to contact Warrington Borough requesting more detail and the cost of replacement trees for Appleton.

4. Parish Hall roof

The clerk confirmed that a survey of the roof had been undertaken on Monday 28th March 2022 and the clerk and Councillor P Lewenz were present. The survey report has been circulated.

The surveyor recommended the following;

That the main roof is replaced.

Three quotes are obtained from roofing contractors

The surveyor noted the following that;

Building Regulations will be required, and this would have to be budgeted for. Warrington Borough Council will have to be notified prior to any work commencing. The cost of this is unknown and the appointed roofer will have to be made to be responsible for notifying Warrington Borough Council and liaising with Building Control. Payment for the roof cannot be made until the Building Control certificate has been received by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council will need a thirty-year manufacturers guarantee.

The Parish Council need to consider access by the roofing company, including noise and consider possible closure of the Parish Hall during the works.

The Parish Council will have to all quotes are in writing, obtain references and ensure receipt and guarantees and a Building Control certificate are issued upon completion.

The appointed contractor will also need to provide adequate professional and personal liability insurance for a commercial premises prior to undertaking any work.

The appointed contractor will have been responsible and be aware of the asbestos which is in the roof.

The clerk has provided three quotes for the work however only one quote includes the removal of the asbestos and specialist firms are required for this.

Recommended that;

Further quotes which included the asbestos removal and insulation were sought for consideration at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Recommended that;

the Parish Council was asked to approve the expenditure for the cost of replacement roof, asbestos removal and possible insultation up the amount of £24,999 (under the tender limit).

Recommended that;

the Parish Council delegate the responsibility to appoint a contractor to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Recommended that;

the clerk should try and apply for a National Lottery grant, however if this is refused the Parish Council will have to fund the costs of up to £24,999.

5. Bawming the Thorn grant application

The clerk confirmed that the Parish Council has now been provided with a copy of the account and a recent bank statement from the Bawming Committee.

Recommended that;

A grant of £500 was made to the Bawming Committee towards the specific costs of the insurance for running the Bawming event in June.

The grant contribution was asked to be recognised by the Bawming Committee.

6. Parish Hall Income and Expenditure

The report on income and expenditure for the Parish Hall for 2021/2022 is as follows;

Parish Hall		Income	Accumulative	Expenditure		
Apr-21		0		Caretakers wage		815.39
		330.74				
		-2084.1	-1753.37	Parish Hall Improvements	563.51	
		-1753.4		Utilities	653.49	
Loss			-1753.37	Window Cleaning	0	
				Safety Inspections	0	
				Refuse	51.72	
					1268.72	1268.72
						2084.11
May-21	Furlough	266.02		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-1313.8		Parish Hall Improvements	180	
		-1047.7	-1047.73	Safety Inspections		
			-2801.1	Window Cleaning		
				Utilities	254.76	
				Refuse	63.6	

					498.36	498.36
						1313.75
Jun-21	furlough	406.24		Caretakers wage		815.39
	Hall hire	1,005.30		Parish Hall Improvements		646.07
		1,411.54		Utilities		252.57
		-1765.8	-354.21	Window Cleaning		0
		-354.21	-3,155.31	Safety Inspections		0
				Refuse		51.72
						1765.75
Jul-21	Furlough	248.76		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-1961.6	-1712.84	Parish Hall Improvements		351.47
		-1712.8	-4,868.15	Utilities		496.14
				Safety Inspections		
				Window Cleaning		
				Refuse		51.6
				Training associated with Hall		70
				Booking System		177
						1961.6
Aug-21	Furlough	304.49		Caretakers wage		815.39
	Storage	291.7		Parish Hall Improvements		653.66
	Parish Hall	180		Utilities		71
		-1716.8	-940.58	Safety Inspections		
		-940.58	-5,808.73	Window Cleaning		113
				Refuse		63.72
						1716.77
Sep-21	Furlough	163.92		Caretakers wage		815.39
	Parish Hall including storage	902.68		Parish Hall Improvements		320
		-1271.6	-205.02	Utilities		84.51
		-205.02	-6,013.75	Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		0
				Refuse		51.72
						1271.62
Oct-21	Furlough	160.69		Caretakers wage		815.39
	Parish Hall Income	1878		Parish Hall Improvements		180.61

		-1361.3	677.4	Utilities		288.97
		677.4	-5,336.35	Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		0
				Refuse		76.32
						1361.29
Nov-21	Parish Hall Income	1158		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-1782.1	-624.12	Parish Hall Improvements		711.87
		-624.12	-5,960.47	Utilities		203.14
				Safety Inspections		
				Window Cleaning		0
				Refuse		51.72
						1782.12
Dec-21	Parish Hall Income	1644		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-2706.4	-1062.43	Parish Hall Improvements		1012.52
		-1062.4	-7,022.90	Utilities		816.6
				Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		0
				Refuse		61.92
						2706.43
Jan-22	Parish Hall Income	1869		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-3099.7	-1230.74	Parish Hall Improvements		1226.5
		-1230.7	-8,253.64	Utilities		949.13
				Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		45
				Refuse		63.72
						3099.74
Feb-22	Parish Hall Income	1722		Caretakers wage		815.39
		-3035.6	-1313.62	Parish Hall Improvements		792.72
		-1313.6	-9,567.26	Utilities		1365.67
				Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		0
				Refuse		61.84
						3035.62

Mar-22	Parish Hall Income	2070		Caretakers wage		986.63
		-2907.8	-837.79	Parish Hall Improvements		851.25
		-837.79		Utilities		899.63
			-10,405.05	Safety Inspections		0
				Window Cleaning		113
				Refuse		57.28
						2907.79

The clerk reported that the Parish Hall had only re-opened following Covid on 1st September 2021 as such prior to this date had no Hall Hire income.

The Parish Council was also not eligible for any Covid grant assistance from Central Government from 1st April 2021.

Bookings at the Parish Hall were starting to improve however more bookings were for one hour only rather than a three-hour block.

Additional costs had been incurred to make the Parish Hall covid secure, gas prices have soared in the last year and the additional cleaner costs are being taken from the Parish Hall improvement and maintenance budget.

The overall income and expenditure for 2021/2022 for the Parish Hall had resulted in a £10,405.05 loss, due to Covid.

The clerk was asked to rename the Parish Hall improvements budget to Parish Hall maintenance budget.

Recommended that;

The report was approved by the Parish Council.

7. End of Year banking reconciliation

To confirm the end of year banking reconciliation as at 31st March 2022.

The clerk confirmed that the bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2022 was as follows;

Bank Reconciliation	31/03/2022
Balance b/f	£294,986.79
Plus Receipts	£2,702.46
Less Payments	-£12,891.46
Balance c/f	£284,797.79
Bank Accounts	
Natwest	£49,760.94

Mansfield	£85,000.00
Nationwide	£65,036.85
Hanley BS	£85,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	£0.00
Other adjustments	£0.00
	£284,797.79

This had been signed by the Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor K Critchley and checked along with the quarterly banking reconciliation by Councillor P Lewenz.

Recommended that;

The banking reconciliation was approved by the Parish Council.

8. Budget review for all income and expenditure for 2021/2022

The income and expenditure for 2021/2022 is as follows;

Payments	**Budget 2021/22**	**Actual 2021/2022**	**Budget Balance**
-			
Staff Costs	100000.00	89022.48	10977.52
Maintenance of Parish Council Assets	2000.00	1565.52	434.48
Utilities	6000.00	6184.51	-184.51
Insurance	2000.00	1504.28	495.72
Safety Inspections	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
Office Supplies	2800.00	3377.43	-577.43
Annual Subscriptions	1000.00	1316.16	-316.16
Advertisements	300.00	0.00	300.00
Elections	5000.00	0.00	5000.00
Website	0.00	225.00	-225.00
Grants	6000.00	3950.00	2050.00
Chairman's allowance	400.00	1.99	398.01
Training	1500.00	959.50	540.50
Refuse Collections	1200.00	683.84	516.16
Window cleaning	900.00	316.00	584.00
Equipment	1000.00	1132.22	-132.22
Parish Hall Improvements & maintenance	5000.00	7420.05	-2420.05
Bank charges	250.00	193.70	56.30
Environmental Working Group	8500.00	3397.00	5103.00
Media budget	1000.00	0.00	1000.00

PCSO	18000.00	16640.00	1360.00
Youth	2000.00	0.00	2000.00
Ranger costs	4000.00	2126.99	1873.01
Community projects	1000.00	0.00	1000.00
Library	150.00	0.00	150.00
General Contingencies	1000.00	25.00	975.00
Emergency Grass cutting	3000.00	0.00	3000.00
Events Committee budget	3000.00	971.40	2028.60
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
Net Payments		141013.07	36986.93
VAT		3932.09	
Total Payments (excluding ear marked reserves)	178000.00	144945.16	
Total Payments (including ear marked reserves)		150882.06	

Expenditure

The following were overbudget for the financial year 2021/2022.

Utilities
Office supplies
Annual subscriptions
Website
Equipment
Parish Hall improvements and maintenance

As previously advised at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 3rd February 2022; *The staffing budget will be under budget at the end of the financial year as this budget did include the hiring of a new cleaner for ten hours per week from 1st April 2021. However, the Parish Hall did not re-open following covid until 1st September 2021 and the Parish Council decided to hire a contractor for 4 hours per week. As this is not a staff member the expense for this will have to be taken from the Parish Hall improvements and maintenance budget.*

It was previously advised at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 6th October 2021 the following;

It was noted that the Parish Hall Improvements and Expenditure budget was slightly over at the end of the second quarter. The Assistant Clerk advised that there had been more than expected expenditure for the Hall, due to making it covid ready for re-opening.

__It was noted that the annual subscription budget was in excess by £142.50. This was due to the Parish Council agreeing to join Cheshire Association of Local Councils, earlier in the year, which had not been budgeted for.__

Receipts			
	Budget 2021/2022	**Actual 2021/2022**	**Budget Balance**
Precept	166500.00	166500.00	0.00
Bank Interest	0.00	1055.12	-1055.12
Parish Hall	10000.00	12882.68	-2882.68
Other	0.00	28536.43	-28536.43
reserves	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net		208974.23	-208974.23
VAT	1500.00	3491.40	-1991.40
Total Receipts	178000.00	212465.63	-34465.63

The clerk reported that although the Parish Hall had been closed for the period 1st April 2021 to 31st August 2021, (five months of the financial year) the end of year accounts show income of £12,882.68 which is higher than what was budgeted for and higher than expected.

There had been a significant amount of other income which had not been budgeted for and this was £28,536.43. The breakdown of the 'other' income is as follows;

Furlough money £1,880.86

History of Appleton booklet £5.00

National Lottery funds for Queens Jubilee £1,500

Bank error compensation £126.40

Refund for incorrect goods delivered £24.17

Inland Border Facility payment from Warrington Borough Council £25,000.

Recommended that;

The review of the budget for 2021/2022 was approved at the next Parish Council meeting.

9. Ear Marked Reserves

The earmarked reserves as at 31st March 2022 were as follows;

Ear-Marked Reserves 2021/2022	Reserve brought forward	Utilised Reserve	Reserve carried forward
Elections (ER)	6000	924.02	5075.98
Parish Hall (ER)	60000	0.00	60000.00
Youth Work (ER)	30000	0.00	30000.00
Parish Ranger Van Replacement (ER)	4000	0.00	4000.00
Environmental Improvement Schemes (ER)	8000	0.00	8000.00
Community Scheme/ consultant costs for PDO (ER)	25000	4891.88	20108.12
South Warrington Library, Stockton Heath (ER)	15000	0.00	15000.00
Contingencies (ER)	75,000	0.00	75000.00
Inland Border Facility Payment from WBC (ER)	25000.00	0.00	25000.00
Queens Jubilee Lottery Grant (ER)	1500.00	121.00	1379.00
		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
Total	249500.00	5936.90	243563.10

The amount of £4891.88 has been paid for the Parish Council's contribution to the Local Plan costs and £121.00 has been used for the Queens Jubilee event.

Recommended that;

New earmarked reserves to be known as Public Safety and Public Amenity were to be created and the Inland Border Facility payment earmarked reserve was to be removed. The funds from the Inland Border Facility payment were to be split, £12,500 into Public Safety and £12,500 into Public Amenity.

The clerk stated that the internal auditor states that the general reserves should be between 25% and 100% of the precept as per the internal audit report for 2019/2020.

Recommended that;

The Contingency's earmarked reserve was reduced to £45,400, this being just above 25% of the precept.

Recommended that;

the reserves for 2022/2023 were amended to as follows;

Ear-Marked Reserves	Reserve brought forward	Reserve for 2022/23
Elections (ER)	5075.98	10000
Parish Hall (ER)	60000	50000
Youth Work (ER)	30000	30000
Parish Ranger Van Replacement (ER)	4000	20000
Environmental Improvement Schemes (ER) inc tree planting	8000	10000
Community Scheme/ consultant costs for PDO (ER)	20108.12	40000
South Warrington Library, Stockton Heath (ER)	15000	3000
Contingencies (ER)	75000	45400
Inland Border Facility Payment from WBC (ER)	25000	0
Queens Jubilee Lottery Grant (ER)	1379	1379
Public Health	0	37500
Public Amenity	0	37500
Total	243563.1	284779

10. Investment Strategy, Authorised Persons for Banking and Bank Transfer for future payments

RESOLVED that;

The current banking arrangements and interest rates were as follows and no action was required.

NatWest	No interest – bank charges apply
Nationwide	0.05% instant access
Hanley Building Society	0.50% - 90 day notice
Mansfield Building Society	0.10% instant access

The interest rates will be reviewed at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and the clerk was asked to investigate different types of accounts available in order to invest funds.

The Clerk had confirmed the following were authorised signatures for the bank accounts.

Currently:

NatWest account

Mrs J Monks, Clerk
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk
Councillor J Wheeler
Councillor P Walker
Councillor P Lewenz
Councillor M Marshall
Councillor S Brookes

Mr D Pearce, Parish Ranger has debit card only.

Nationwide account

Mrs J Monks, Clerk
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk
Councillor J Wheeler
Councillor M Marshall
Councillor G Chapman
Councillor S Brookes

Mansfield account

Mrs J Monks, Clerk
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk
Councillor P Walker
Councillor M Marshall
Councillor G Chapman
Councillor S Brookes

Hanley account

Mrs J Monks, Clerk
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk
Councillor J Wheeler
Councillor P Walker

Councillor M Marshall
Councillor G Chapman
Councillor S Brookes

RESOLVED that;

The clerk was asked to transfer the amount of £20,000 from the NatWest current account to the Nationwide savings account to bring the balance up to £85,000

11. Five Year Review of income and expenditure

The clerk had circulated the five-year review of income and expenditure which included the agreed budget for 2022/2023.

It was noted that a 3% increase had been used year on year for the review which the Parish Council may want to consider in the future, however this was variable as there will a considerable number of new houses built in Appleton in the near future.

Recommended that;

The five-year financial review was to be approved at the Parish Council meeting,

12. Wildflowers

The clerk has received an email dated 22nd March 2022 from the Area Manager of Warrington Borough Council with regarding to the planting of wildflowers.

The Parish Council paid Warrington Borough Council £1,680 plus VAT to plant wildflowers in various locations around the Parish in 2019.

Recommend that;

The Parish Council does not pay Warrington Borough Council to plant wildflowers around the Parish this year and a planned approach was needed with regards to areas to plant and residents would need to be consulted. This will be looked at by the Environmental working party.

13. Parish Van

RESOLVED that;

The following expenditure was approved.

(a) Annual service and MOT up to £400.00 plus VAT.
(b) Annual road tax up to £300 for twelve months
(c) Annual van insurance up to £800.00 plus VAT.

14. Parish Hall

(a) Update on bookings and to discuss any Hall related matters. The clerk reported that bookings had been slowly increasing at the Parish Hall. Lymm Ladies Bridge club had not paid the Hall hire fees for April and a reminder for payment had been sent.

(b) **RESOLVED** that;

the purchase of two storage trolley for tables with the cost not to exceed £500.00 each plus VAT was approved.

(c) Request for Parish Hall hirer to retain a slot due to maternity leave. The clerk had received a request for a Parish Hall hirer to retain her slot whilst on maternity leave.

RESOLVED that; if the Parish Hall hirer wished to retain her slot whilst on maternity leave the hall hire charge would have to be paid for the duration of her absence.

(d) Warrington Borough Council are employed to undertake contract cleaning at the Parish Hall for two hours on a Monday and for two hours on a Wednesday.

The clerk reported that no cleaner turned up on Monday 14th February but the Parish Council had still received a bill for cleaning on this date.

From November if there was a bank holiday on a Monday, the clerk has changed the days the cleaning would be undertaken. As such the Hall has been cleaned twice a week every week and the charge has been for this each month.

The clerk had now been informed that from Monday 2nd May the days cannot be changed without incurring an extra charge and that the Parish Council is expected to pay the charge for all the Monday bank holidays from now on, but the Hall will not be cleaned. However, if the Parish Council change the day for example to a Tuesday the charge will remain the same.

RESOLVED that;

The charge for Monday bank holidays would have to be paid, even though it was not being cleaned and the clerk was asked to look at alternative suppliers.

15. Parish Hall routine maintenance

RESOLVED that;

The following expenditure was approved.

(a) Annual PAT Testing, up to £60.00 plus VAT

(b) Boiler service and annual gas inspection up to £250.00

(c) Fire Risk Assessment up to £300.00

(d) Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting maintenance is £193.60 plus VAT (this is for quarterly inspection of fire alarm and for one yearly Emergency lighting check.

16. Purchase of new paediatric pads for defibrillator at the Parish Hall

RESOLVED to;

purchase new replacement paediatric pads for the defibrillator at the Parish Hall as the current ones expire on 12th May 2022. The expenditure of up to £150.00 plus VAT was approved for these.

17. Retention Policy

Recommend to;

Approve the draft retention policy and for the destruction of old documentation in line with this policy.

18. Annual review of Internal Financial Controls

Recommended that;

The Internal Financial Controls are confirmed as follows;

a. All payments are raised in accordance with a payment schedule, which includes agreed direct debit and bacs payments, with supporting documentation available, are signed at the Parish Council monthly meeting.

b. Details are then again provided to Members as a schedule for formal approval with the subsequently produced Parish Council Meeting minutes which includes a copy of the relevant payments Schedule for the month.

c. The Chair at the next Parish Council meeting reconciles the Receipts & Payments Schedule and the Bank Statement by signing the Account Balance Summary.

d. With regard to internet banking the payment are input on the Parish Council's internet banking account by the Assistant Clerk and then are checked by the Clerk. Once input each payment needs dual authorisation from two Parish Councillors to approve and authorise the payment in accordance in payment schedule. Once a payment has been input and approve by either party it cannot be amended in any way by the internal banking system it can only be cancelled. Payments are made in accordance with the Financial Regulations adopted by the Parish Council.

e. Four samples of payments are selected at random each month and these invoices are cross-matched with the internet banking payments in order to match the bank details on each invoice with the payments being made.

19. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Recommend that;

The current Standing Orders and Financial regulations are confirmed by the Parish Council.

20. New Bins around the Parish

This item was deferred until potential locations had been received.

21. Portable speed indicator devise

The Parish Council currently have two portable speed indicator devices, one was purchased in March 2015 and cost £2,500 plus VAT and is fixed at 40mph. The other was purchased in March 2017 and cost £2,800 plus VAT and you can change it so it can work on 30mph and 40mph roads.

All speed indicator devise are now fixed ones on lampposts. There is Section 106 funds which Warrington Borough Council will received for three fixed ones for Appleton. One firm however does portable variable devices.

Recommend that;

The clerk was asked to contact the Beat Manager to ask them for their opinion of which one to purchase.