



**Laverstock & Ford Parish Council**  
Incorporating Milford, Bishopdown Farm, Old Sarum & Longhedge

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**

**Meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022  
at River Bourne Community Farm**

**MINUTES**

Councillors present: Baker (Chair), Maskell, Schneider, Tucker, Waller. Cllr Smith was also present in a non-voting capacity. Cllrs Lynn and Vanstone were in attendance as trustees of the Old Sarum Community Centre.

In attendance: Prince (RFO).

Five trustees of the Old Sarum Community Centre CIO were also in attendance for item FGP.22.049. They were Burditt (Chair of Trustees), Lynn, Redman (Treasurer). Vanstone, Wilson (Hon Sec).

The meeting opened at 7.05pm.

**FGP.22.046 Apologies.** There were no apologies.

**FGP.22.047 Declarations of Interest.** Nil.

**FGP.22.048 Approval of Minutes.**

**Resolved:** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022.

**Resolved:** To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**FGP.22.049 Old Sarum Community Centre and Hampton Park Pavilion.**

**Old Sarum Community Centre**

The Chair invited Councillors and Trustees to introduce themselves.

Mr Burditt described the current arrangements with trustees and the volunteers who work for the Old Sarum Community Centre (OSCC). He summarised the financial position. A large increase in energy costs, especially gas, will result in an annual deficit of about £13,000. Mr Burditt said that he will be resigning as Chair at the end of 2022 and that the charity needs more volunteers and trustees. He had met with the Clerk and RFO and discussed a greater participation by the Council in the running of OSCC.

Mr Wilson said that financial reserves had greatly reduced since Covid, and this will make it difficult to carry out the maintenance required in the Lease of OSCC from the Parish

Council. Mr Redman explained that the OSCC had recently increased hire fees by 25%. The main source of income was the Old Sarum Nursery who have preferential rates. These preferential rates had also been increased.

Discussion followed on details of usage, income, and costs. Options for the future were discussed. These included the dissolution of the CIO and the surrender of the Lease, and the employment by the Council of a new member of staff with management and marketing responsibilities. These could be shared with other community buildings in the Parish.

Cllr Tucker said the Council must be cautious about taking on the liability for operating the OSCC. The Chair requested that the OSCC provide the Council with as much information as possible about energy use, income, and expenses. It was noted that the £13,000 deficit does not include the energy cap that currently expires in March 2023. The three longest-serving trustees said that they wanted to step down by the end of 2022 and that a decision on the future of the OSCC must be made by then.

### **Hampton Park Pavilion**

The Chair summarised the current situation. The Pavilion is still owned by Mr Pearce and is leased to Wiltshire Council on a full insuring and repairing Lease that ends on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Wiltshire Council in turn have a management Agreement with the Hampton Park Pavilion Company, which is also a charity. This expires on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The Company's liability for repairs is limited to £2,000 and it is not responsible for insurance.

The Chair reported on a recent meeting held with Mr Pearce at which various options were discussed. Mr Pearce's initial preferred option was to Lease the Pavilion to the Parish Council on similar terms to the current Lease. Later in the meeting he said he would consider a freehold transfer but would need a business plan from the Council. The Clerk has produced a report on the current operation of the Pavilion, which has been circulated to Councillors.

Discussion followed on whether the Council should consider taking on the freehold and how it might be operated. The possibility of a common business model including Old Sarum, and Hampton Park should be explored. The Clerk was requested to investigate and report on the options for both community buildings in time for the November meeting of the Full Council.

**ACTION CLERK**

The Trustees of OSCC CIO left the meeting at 8.08pm.

**FGP.22.050 Review of Action List.** This item was deferred.

**FGP.22.051 Councillor Expenses Policy.** This item was deferred.

**FGP.22.052 Working from Home Allowance.** The background to this item was briefly discussed. The provision of an allowance was intended to compensate staff for increases in energy costs and the cost of living. The item was deferred. The RFO reported that the National Joint Council announced on 2<sup>nd</sup> November that the 2022-2023 pay award had been agreed. The award was an extra £1 per hour for all grades backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 and would be included in the November payroll. (It varied from 10.4% for the lowest grades to 2.4% for the highest grades.)

### **FGP.22.053 Accounting System – Transfer to Scribe.**

The RFO had circulated a report on this item to the Committee and answered questions from Councillors. The Committee was disappointed that so much time and money had been wasted on Rialtas, but most Councillors supported the recommendations of the RFO. The Chair said that describing the adoption of Scribe as a 'purchase' was incorrect. It is a subscription service as are most cloud-based systems. Cllr Maskell said that he was fundamentally opposed to the adoption of Scribe and gave his reasons.

The Committee said that the RFO should seek independent advice on Scribe from other councils. They would also like to see a trial period so that if Scribe is found not to be suitable it can be stopped without cost to the Council.

**Resolved:** To accept the Report and agree to the adoption of the Scribe Accounting System subject to further independent references and an agreed trial period.

**ACTION RFO**

The vote was: For 4, Against 1, Abstentions 0.

**FGP.22.054 Draft Financial Regulations.** The RFO reported that these were not complete. The Chair requested that the section on 'Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments, be brought to the Council as soon as possible so that the new practices for online payments are approved.

**ACTION RFO**

**FGP.22.054 Budget Proposals.** The RFO said that the draft Tax Base will be published today, 7<sup>th</sup> November. The Chair requested that the first draft of budget proposals be brought to the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> December. It should then be possible to produce a final draft for the December Council meeting, prior to the Budget Setting Extraordinary meeting in January.

**ACTION RFO**

The Chair reminded Committee Chairs that their proposals for the 2023-24 FY must be available by the end of November. Cllr Maskell said that a proposal for community centre management and/or financial support must be agreed at the November Council meeting.

The Chair requested that the RFO determine the VAT liability for hall hire if the Parish Council were to take over the operation of a community building.

**ACTION RFO**

**FGP.22.055 Draft Agenda Full Council Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022.** A draft Agenda was circulated. The meeting will be chaired by Cllr Maskell.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm.

SIGNED :

DATE: