

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Personnel Meeting held at the Oval Office,
St Peters Business Park, Westfield on
Wednesday 20th January 2016 commencing at 7pm

Present: Cllr P Wilkinson (Chair), Cllrs D Cooper, K Docherty, R Hopkins,
A Seaman-Moss and P Williams (Vice-Chair)

Absent: R Moss and B Wallbridge.

In Attendance: Mrs E Merko (Finance Officer)

98. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Moss and Wallbridge.

99. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

100. Minutes

Resolved: that the Minutes of the Finance & Personnel meeting held on 17th
December 2015 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

101. Budget variation update

The report on budget variances was noted.

102. Monthly Accounts

Resolved:

- a) that the December monthly statement for the Current Account be agreed;
- b) that the December monthly statement for the Corporate Treasury account be agreed;
- c) that the December monthly statement for the Fixed Rate Savings account be agreed;
- d) that the petty cash imprest sheet for January be agreed.

103. Schedule of payments requiring authorisation

In accordance with item 5.2 of the Financial Regulations, the schedule of payments was circulated with the agenda.

Resolved: that the schedule of payments for January be agreed (attached as Appendices 1 and 2) and that the BACS authorisation sheet and cheques be signed, within the meeting, accordingly.

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104. Schedule of payments due on a regular basis

In accordance with item 5.6 of the Financial Regulations, a list of payments which arise on a regular basis as a result of a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation was circulated with the agenda.

Resolved: that the schedule of payments be agreed (attached as Appendix 3) and that the BACS authorisation sheet and cheques be signed within the meeting accordingly.

105. Verification of bank reconciliations

In accordance with item 2.2 of the Financial Regulations, the bank reconciliations had been verified against the bank statements by Cllr Docherty and were confirmed as correct.

106. Budget 2016/7

There was discussion of the budget for chain of office. It was agreed that the budgeted figure of £1700 should remain as there was not yet a firm quote for the new suggested chain. As WAGS had confirmed that they could not look after the coal truck planters for 2016 this reference was to be removed from the notes.

Resolved: a) that the budgeted and earmarked funds for Community Plan should re-allocated to the Neighbourhood Plan as the Community Plan was no longer in operation;
b) that the budget as amended above, be recommended to Parish Council for approval on 1st February 2016.

107. Precept 2016/7

The need to be cautious about freezing the precept for a fourth year in a row was reiterated. The Committee was conscious that the loss of the Parish grant income was significant and noted that a 2% increase in the precept would balance the loss almost exactly whilst being only a small monetary increase for households. It was felt that a small increase this year would allow for a smaller increase or freeze in future years when factors such as additional properties and the change in Business Rates in the Parish might give potential for additional income.

A revised version of the precept leaflet explaining the need for an increase was considered.

Resolved: a) to recommend to Parish Council on 1st February 2016 a precept figure of £179,900 which would represent a 2% (£1.93) increase on a Band D council tax property;
b) to recommend to Parish Council on 1st February 2016 the amended precept leaflet (attached as Appendix 4).

108. Grants 2015/16 - second round

Resolved: that Cllrs Wilkinson, Williams and Cooper would form a sub-Committee to consider applications for the second round. The

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sub-Committee would meet on 16th February at 2pm and make recommendations to Parish Council on 7th March.

109. Fixed Assets

The list for 2016 was reviewed and approved.

110. Financial Risk Management 2016

The Committee received and considered the strategy document, the Financial Risk Management Report and the Annual Review of the Insurance Schedule.

Resolved: to agree the documents and review again in 12 months' time.

111. Update on bad debt of team FC Norton

A letter had been sent to the team representative as requested at the last meeting. No payment had been received by 12th January so the request for judgement form had been returned to the court in time for the expiry deadline of 17th January. Further updates would be reported at the next meeting.

112. LGPS Deficit payments

The advice of Derek Kemp, accountant advisor to the Parish Council, was received and noted. It was also noted that 2016 was a valuation year and that the next report of the Actuary could be expected in November / December. It was asked that the Actuarial assessment of the employees rolled to the Parish Council's pension fund be sought and considered for further reporting at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

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APPENDIX 1

Schedule of invoices for payment in JANUARY

Invoice Date	Supplier	Details	Nom code	Chq no	£ net	VAT	£ gross
30/11/2015	Lamps & Tubes Illuminations	Festive Lights (next installment) plus attendance at Switch-on event	4223/202	B#253	£1,295.00	£259.00	£1,554.00
11/12/2015	C&R Fencing	New fence at Norton Hill Rec	4062/308	B#255	£4,029.00	£805.80	£4,834.80
15/12/2015	Apex Alarms	Annual service of alarms and emergency lighting at Pavilion and Garage	4062/308	B#256	£60.00	£12.00	£72.00
15/12/2015	Apex Alarms	Annual service of CCTV	4063/308	B#256	£85.00	£17.00	£102.00
14/12/2015	Colin Grubb	Repairs to noticeboard	4227/202	200889	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
17/12/2015	Luckington Carnival Club	4 marshalls for christmas lights switch-on	4223/202	B#258	£70.00	£0.00	£70.00
16/01/2016	MSN&Radstock Silver Band	Playing at Christmas lights switch-on	4223/202	B#265	£175.00	£0.00	£175.00
						TOTAL	£6,837.80
This amount plus regular scheduled monthly payment							
Added since agenda was distributed							
Highlight if over £5000 as this requires full Parish Council approval							

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APPENDIX 2

BIG LOCAL: Schedule of invoices for payment in JANUARY

*Big Local payments are administered by Westfield Parish Council as the Locally Trusted Organisation.
Payments are made from the Big Local funds and are in no way connected to Parish Council funds.*

Invoice Date	Supplier	Details	Nom code	Chq no	£ net	VAT**	£ gross
15/01/2016	Robert Wicke	Community worker Dec/Jan	580/0	B#264	£960.00	£0.00	£960.00
15/01/2016	Sarah Westell	Community worker Dec/Jan	580/0	B#266	£450.00	£0.00	£450.00
						TOTAL	£1,410.00
<i>** VAT cannot be claimed on Big Local payments</i>							
Added since agenda was distributed							
Highlight if over £5000 as this requires full Parish Council approval							

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APPENDIX 3

Schedule of regular payments 2015-16 (payments are all NET)

Supplier	Details	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Apollo Technology	IT Support (quarterly)	£0.00	£0.00	£286.75	£0.00	£286.75	£0.00	£0.00	£286.75	£0.00	£0.00		
Apollo Technology	Remote Back-up (quarterly)	£0.00	£0.00	£90.00	£0.00	£90.00	£0.00	£0.00	£90.00	£0.00	£0.00		
Apollo Technology	Hosted excahnge	£14.85	£0.00	£29.70	£14.85	£14.85	£14.85	£14.85	£14.85	£14.85	£14.85		
Avon Pension Fund	Office staff	£1,065.65	£1,065.65	£1,065.65	£1,065.65	£1,305.77	£1,065.65	£1,065.65	£1,145.34	£1,075.60	£1,075.60		
Bristol Wessex Water (DD)	NH Pavilion	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£276.95	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		
Eclipse (DD)	Broadband	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95	£19.95		
First Office	Photocopier & Maintenance (quarterly)	£0.00	£211.24	£0.00	£0.00	£173.25	£0.00	£0.00	£180.60	£0.00	£0.00		
GPS Telecoms (DD)	Office phone and fax	£34.98	£36.31	£26.50	£29.81	£29.31	£28.24	£25.97	£29.90	£26.97	£26.65		
Greensward	Ground maintenance	paid in March	£1,645.41	£1,723.77	£1,882.95	£1,806.23	£1,804.59	£1,804.59	£1,644.59	£1,644.59	£1,644.59		
HMRC	Tax and NI office	£212.55	£212.75	£212.55	£170.15	£460.66	£201.95	£84.15	£256.58	£187.71	£187.91		
Oval Commercial (SO)	Office Rental	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45	£486.45		
Oval Commercial	Use of Boardroom	£0.00	£0.00	£120.00	£60.00	£60.00	£0.00	£130.00	£60.00	£160.00	£80.00		
Public Works Loans Board (DD)	Westhill Play Area	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,686.72	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		
Salaries (and expenses)	Office staff	£2,287.29	£2,258.09	£2,258.29	£2,300.69	£2,962.87	£2,268.86	£2,432.14	£2,532.82	£2,497.92	£2,883.28		
Southern Electric	NH Pavilion	£0.00	£0.00	£85.54	£0.00	£0.00	£293.87	£0.00	£0.00	£104.40	£0.00		
Southern Electric	Christmas Tree Lights	£0.00	£0.00	£20.96	£0.00	£0.00	£20.96	£0.00	£0.00	£19.99	£0.00		
Total Gas and Power (DD)	NH Pavilion	£0.00	£8.36	£0.00	£0.00	£0.44	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		
Total		£4,121.72	£5,944.21	£6,426.11	£6,030.50	£11,383.25	£6,482.32	£6,063.75	£6,747.83	£6,238.43	£6,419.28	£0.00	£0.00
This amount plus one off payments													
Highlight if over £5000 as this requires full Parish Council approval							this includes use by BANES which has been recharged						
added since agenda was distributed							this includes use by Big Local which is recharged to the Big Local account						

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APPENDIX 4

PRECEPT 2016/17 WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

This year, Westfield Parish Council has introduced a very small increase in its Band D equivalent on the precept which will amount to a £1.93 increase per annum on the 2015/6 rate for a Band D equivalent home. The precept tax for a Band D equivalent home for the year 2016/17 will be £98.72. This is taken from a total precept for Westfield in 2016/17 of £179,900.

The purpose of this leaflet is to set out the main areas of our work and to highlight where the public money is spent within the Parish Council.

Why have we increased the Band D Equivalent this year?

Westfield Parish Council faces the same inflationary increases in the cost of products and services as all organisations. In recent years the increase in new homes built in the Parish and the corresponding additional Parish Council Precept income has meant that our increased costs could be met by the increase in homes. However, 2015/16 has not seen the same high increase in new homes and this, coupled with the staged loss of vital income from a Local Government grant, means that our increased costs cannot be so easily offset by our income. With careful budget planning and monitoring the Parish Council is pleased to have kept the increased cost to residents down to a very small 2% increase on last year whilst still maintaining the high service and planning projects of benefit to the Parish.

Exactly what services does the Parish Council offer?

The Parish Council manages **sports and leisure facilities** at Norton Hill Recreation Ground and Westhill Recreation Ground. These facilities offer football pitches, a tennis court, play areas, BMX track, table tennis, boules, basketball and bowling (with one rink open to non-bowling club members). It manages the emptying of most of the dog bins in the parish and maintains some of the benches.

It supports the **parish environment** by funding the Christmas Lights, the hanging baskets and the planting schemes in the decorative pit trucks around the parish, the raised beds at Jubilee Green shops and the curved end of the raised flower bed outside the Westfield Methodist Church. The Parish Council also supports **local organisations** through grant funding.

The Parish Council provides a local voice on **planning applications, highways and environmental matters**. It is working with Bath and North East Somerset Council towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Westfield, which, once approved will guide future developments in the Parish.

How did the Parish Council perform in the last year?

In June 2015 the Westfield Fun Day exceeded even the previous year in its success. It was attended by a record number of residents and visitors and offered a variety of entertainment and activities.

Equally well attended and well received was the second visit of the Fun Fair at Norton Hill Recreation Ground which came for four days during May and was attended by many hundreds of residents and visitors to the area. The Parish Council was pleased that the recreation ground returned to its former high standard in a very short time.

Improvements were made to our hanging basket trees by installing automatic watering systems and the Parish Council linked up with Westfield Allotments and Gardening Society (WAGS) and Fosse Way School to plant and maintain the flower beds and coal truck planters. Meanwhile the second annual Front Garden Competition saw the number of entrants doubled with neighbours as well as individuals nominating Westfield's finest displays. In the Autumn a hardy group of volunteers met to plant 4000 daffodil bulbs along the green areas at Wesley Avenue and Jubilee Green so that the main road through the Parish will be awash with colour in the Spring.

The Parish Council was successful in being granted £9,300 by Awards for All which, matched with Parish Council reserves, is being used to add new and improved play equipment at Westhill Recreation Ground.

We were delighted to have achieved Quality status in the new Local Councils Award Scheme this year. The award is a mark of the Parish Council's high standards of working and commitment to the community.

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This award led to the Council being awarded Council of the Week by the National Association of Local Councils in November.

The Parish Council's quarterly newsletter The Westfield Warbler was given a new lease of life in 2015 when it was taken on by Ignyte Publishing. It now boasts a bumper 30 pages with glossy photographs, articles and advertisements.

We continue to work with Big Local Radstock & Westfield to provide banking and financial support in our role as Locally Trusted Organisation and the fee for this work has helped to fund community events such as the Fun Day and the Christmas Craft Fair.

In the office, the administration of payroll was brought in-house which has been a considerable saving for the Council and the electronic payments system has saved a great deal of time and money on postage and administration.

Finally, in November the Christmas Lights were enhanced by decorations on lampposts through the Parish which brightened up the dreary evenings as well as providing some daytime Christmas cheer with their colourful designs. The switch-on event was the best attended yet with music from the Silver Band and Westfield Ladies Choir, mince pies, mulled wine, an address from newly-appointed Rev Jan Tate and, of course, a visit from Father Christmas.

What is new for the next financial year?

Westfield is now moving forward with work on its Neighbourhood Plan which will see Councillors and residents come together to create a vision for the future of the Parish. In its first phase, residents will be surveyed for their views on the housing needs of Westfield. If you would like to take an active part in the Plan, please contact the Parish Council office.

We hope that our community events and initiatives will continue to flourish as they start to take their place in the annual Parish calendar. A new contractor has been appointed for delivery and maintenance of the hanging baskets and we look forward to this summer's beautiful displays.

The unfortunate rise in anti-social behaviour and vandalism at both recreation grounds has seen the need to budget more for repairs and for the installation of CCTV at the Westhill ground.

Your Parish Council is working to provide the best possible environment and services for the people of Westfield. We positively encourage your views and suggestions for the future of our Parish.

Westfield Parish Council

The Oval Office, Cobblers Way, Westfield BA3 3BX

01761 410669

council@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

www.westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk



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