

Helen Broughton Clerk to the Council
65 Court Road
Caterham Surrey CR3 5RH

Tel: 01883 708310

Email: clerk@caterhamhillparishcouncil.co.uk

Website: www.caterhamhillparishcouncil.co.uk



**Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 11th October 2023
at the Westway Centre, Chaldon Road, Caterham**

Present: Cllr Chris Botten (Chair), Cllr Helen Bilton, Cllr George Dennis, Cllr Geoff Duck, Cllr Maria Grasso, Cllr Vicky Robinson.

In attendance: County Cllr Jeremy Webster, Mrs Helen Broughton (Clerk), Mr Andy Parr (Parish Warden), Cllr Leena Sowambur (attending remotely)

F23/11	Apologies for absence Cllr Leena Sowambur (who attended remotely) and Cllr Derek Carpenter
F23/12	Declarations of interest and dispensation requests There were no declarations of interest or dispensation requests.
F23/13	Public forum There were no members of the public present.
F23/14	Minutes It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 th September 2023 be signed by the Chair as a true record.
F23/15	Reserves and banking <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Reserves Policy Members considered and unanimously adopted a reserves policy.ii. Investment Strategy Members considered and unanimously adopted an investment strategy.iii. Public Sector Deposit Fund The Clerk had circulated a paper recommending the opening of a Public Sector Deposit Fund account and transfer of £80,000. A concern was raised that this was less secure having an element of risk, which a deposit in one of the major High Street banks would not have and a councillor considered that the interest rate would be similar. It was agreed to obtain advice from an independent financial advisor and consider diversification of funds further at a future meeting.iv. It was unanimously agreed to approve Cllrs Carpenter and Sowambur as signatories (with view, authorise access) to the Unity bank account, subject to their agreement, and to extend the view access to Cllr Grasso.

F23/16	<p>Grants The following grant applications were considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Soper Hall A grant application had been received from the Soper hall for a £1,000 contribution towards replacing toilets. It was resolved to seek additional details regarding the sources of funding for the remaining project costs and to confirm whether payment upon the completion of the project would be a feasible arrangement. ii. Westway Centre A grant application had been received from the Westway Centre for £24,000 towards a sustainability project. It was resolved to request a meeting between the Westway and Councillors to obtain more information before a decision was made at a future meeting.
F23/17	<p>Just Giving The possibility of creating a Just Giving account to manage funds raised during Christmas events was considered. It was agreed that the Parish Council refrain from setting up its own Just Giving account. Cllr Robinson had scheduled a meeting with the Westway Centre to determine the most suitable allocation of donations and the possibility of making donations directly to the Westway Centre would be discussed at this meeting.</p>
F23/18	<p>Financial and Administrative Risk Assessment The Financial and Administrative Risk Assessment and changes relating to bank statements and the debit card were considered. This included all councillors having access to bank statements via sharepoint. The Risk Assessment was unanimously approved.</p>
F23/19	<p>2024/25 budget and audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The 2024/25 budget was considered and unanimously approved. ii. It was agreed to appoint Town and Parish Council Audit Services as the internal auditor for 2023/24.

F23/20	<p>Payments</p> <p>Cllr Grasso agreed to query the invoice for parish council aluminium plaques with the supplier. Invoices had been circulated by email. The following payments and income were noted and approved.</p>																																										
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F23/21	<p>Parish Council website</p> <p>It was agreed that Cllrs Sowambur and the Clerk meet to review the website and bring recommendations to a future meeting.</p>																																										
F23/22	<p>Funding for Queens Park Trees</p> <p><i>This item was brought forward on the agenda to follow F23/12.</i></p> <p><i>It was reported the Cllr Botten would be Chairing a meeting being held on 19th October between the Deputy Chief Executive of Tandridge District Council, The Friends of Queens Park, the County Councillor and Parish Councillors regarding Queens Park.</i></p> <p>There was some discussion regarding the purchase, planting and maintenance of trees in Queens Park with concerns raised regarding the cost of ongoing maintenance, particularly cost of watering. It had been suggested that a bouser be purchased to reduce the costs of watering. It was agreed that the County Councillor be asked to contribute £5,000 from his allocation and that the Parish Council contribute £10,000 from CIL earmarked reserves for the purchase and maintenance of trees in Queens Park.</p>																																										

F23/23	<p>Funding for litter bins</p> <p>Various locations had been suggested for new litter bins at Town End, Coulsdon Road and Grahams Walk. It was agreed to purchase 4 litter bins from CIL earmarked reserves and that the Parish Warden be delegated authority to liaise with Tandridge District Council on the locations and siting of these bins.</p>
F23/24	<p>Winter Maintenance</p> <p>The Parish Council had a budget for winter maintenance and commissioned local farmers to grit side roads and additional roads as required during icy weather. Volunteer Snow Angels had been recruited by the District Council in previous years to help with gritting pavements. The Parish Council push along gritter now required replacing.</p> <p>It was agreed to purchase a push along gritter to grit the pavements in shopping areas during icy weather from CIL earmarked reserves.</p> <p>The Parish Council would advertise for volunteers and the Lions Club approached. It was noted a risk assessment would be required.</p>
F23/25	<p>It was noted that the date of the next F&GP meeting was 7th February 2024.</p>
F23/26	<p><i>It was resolved to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.</i></p>
F23/27	<p>Staff Matters</p> <p>i. It was noted that the Clerks annual appraisal has taken place and recommendations made in a confidential report which included a change to the Clerks hours of 24 hours per week and an increase in pay of 8% per annum, with a parish council pension contribution of 15% of gross salary. This was approved.</p>

The meeting closed at 7.48pm