

**DRAFT SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THIS COMMITTEE AT THE MAIN
COUNCIL MEETING OF 7TH JANUARY 2025**

**FELPHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
HELD AT FELPHAM COMMUNITY HALL
ON TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2024 AT 5.30 PM.**

PRESENT: Chair: Glen Hewlett, Vice Chair: Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear
Councillors: Emma Aylward, Antony Bassett, Bob Budd, Kirsty Halls, Jules Verhulpen
Pat Young

F 66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

None

F 67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

F 68. QUESTION TIME FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

None

F 69. RFO/CLERK'S REPORT:

The Clerk reported that two of the three solar lights on Felpham promenade are not working and that quotations will be requested for repair.

F 70. CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

F 71. FELPHAM EMERGENCY RESILIENCE GROUP MONTHLY UPDATE:

'On Tuesday 19th November Inspector Mike Butler from Sussex Police gave a talk on how the police manage and deal with a major incident. There was a good turnout for this talk which I think everyone found interesting.

Unfortunately, the presentation associated with the talk could not be displayed as the HDMI connection on the wall did not work. It was found on examination that HDMI cable from the ceiling outlet is not connected to the ceiling mounted projector.

The inability to use the projector was disappointing and we hope that the council considers what actions may be taken/required to enable the projector to be suitable for

use. We are already lining up our training for 2025 and wish to avoid a similar situation occurring if possible.

Successful grant application.

I am pleased to report that we submitted a detailed grant application to SSEN which has been successful. A grant of £7721.00 has been awarded. As with all grants there are strict criteria attached to the grant so the management of it and how it is used will be very carefully managed.

Crucially we had to demonstrate that the grant supported our own efforts, including the funding contributed by the council and that this was an ongoing commitment from the council for the future'.

F 72. COMMUNITY HALL REPORTS:

These had been circulated to all Councillors, prior to the meeting, for information.

The RFO reported that the rear hall window and hall lighting had now been repaired.

F 73. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS OF THE COUNCIL FOR NOVEMBER 2024:

These were circulated to all Councillors, prior to the meeting, for information.

It was requested that the meeting formally approve the financial accounts of the Council as a true and accurate financial record for the month of November 2024.

It was RESOLVED that the accounts as presented, be approved as a true and accurate record and that bank balances were agreed against reconciliation and to recommend to Main Council the expenditure as shown on the report.

F 74. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Clerk reported that there is an upcoming electoral review taking place in Arun and they have enquired whether there are any Parish Councils within the area that would like to request a community governance review as part of the process.

Councillors discussed this proposal, and it was agreed that in light of potential increases in electorate numbers since the last review and the fact that there were no associated costs to Felpham Parish Council, they would like to be included in this review.

Clerk to advise Arun District Council of this decision

F 75. PUBLIC CONSULTATION – REMOTE MEETINGS AND PROXY VOTING

Councillor Glen Hewlett advised councillors that currently, all local councillors are required by law to attend Parish and Town Council meetings in person. The Government is now consulting on introducing powers for Parish and Town Councils to apply to the relevant authority for a dispensation to attend formal council meetings remotely and vote

by proxy in certain circumstances. Felpham Parish Council can submit an agreed response on behalf of the Council to this consultation. Equally all Councillors can also submit a response individually.

It was agreed that councillors may respond individually, and Councillor Russ Marsden-Sear stated that his personal view was that debate/discussion would be stifled and that he was against the proposal for this reason.

F 76. FERG LICENCE AGREEMENT

Councillor Glen Hewlett outlined details of FERG/Felpham Community Hall Hire Agreement and accompanying plans, which were circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and agreed with Arun District Council. There were no associated costs to either party with break clauses incorporated and no tenure agreed.

Councillor Bob Budd proposed that Felpham Parish Council authorise the FERG/Felpham Parish Council Community Hall Hire Agreement. This was seconded by Councillor Antony Bassett and unanimously agreed.

F 77. TO CONSIDER IT SUPPORT OPTIONS

The RFO reported that the IT renewal quotation for the next financial year from the current provider was substantially higher. Alternative quotations have been received and these lower costs have been incorporated in the budget setting process.

F 78. BUDGET SETTING – TO APPROVE THE BUDGET DOCUMENT FOR RATIFICATION BY MAIN COUNCIL

Councillor Glen Hewlett advised councillors that following unavoidable cost pressures, an increase to the current budget had been planned and agreed in principle by members of the Finance and Administration Committee, with approval scheduled for this meeting subject to no unforeseen costs.

On Thursday 21st November, Arun District Council Elections advised Felpham Parish Council that a valid request for a by-election had been received from ten residents of Felpham with accompanying estimated costs of £12508.00. Councillor Glen Hewlett advised councillors that following this, £25,000 had now been added to the budget to account for these costs and the possibility of a further by-election should any councillor lose their seat prior to the next election and another by-election be called.

Additional and unavoidable cost increases to the upcoming budget were outlined and included:

- By-election costs £25000
- Election Costs of £10,000 per annum over the next two years for 2027 elections
- National Insurance increases following the recent budget of £2800
- IT support £500
- Utility Costs and Standing Charges £4000

- Car parking charges – increase allowed for any potential uplift in donations made by Felpham Parish Council to maintain free parking in Grassmere/Links Avenue Car Parks
- Bus Shelter repairs
- Staff salary annual increase
- Community Hall costs

Where possible, budget areas have been cut including FERG, Project events budget, trees, grants and planters.

Reserves, which were previously highlighted as being too high despite being earmarked, had now been spent including £8000 on Community Hall roof repairs, a donation of £10,000 towards the new King George V playground, 2023 election costs and Felpham in Focus.

A budget of £193,000 is now proposed for the forthcoming year.

The average Parish Council Tax precept based on a Band D property is £66.00 whereas Felpham Parish Council's Band D Council Tax will be £38.87 despite Felpham being one of the largest parish councils in Arun.

It should be noted that election costs will be £10,000 for two years and this will then drop to £5000.00 per annum. It is hoped that the by-election cost will not be repeated, although allowance for a further unexpected by-election has been made.

Community Hall hire charges will be increasing by 10% for all hirers in April.

Councillor Bob Budd proposed that councillors approve the budget document which will now proceed to Main Council for ratification. This was seconded by Councillor Antony Bassett and unanimously agreed.

Councillor Glen Hewlett thanked the RFO and Clerk for their work.

Clerk/Chair to prepare a statement for next Felpham in Focus article.

F 79. MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE (WITH THE PRIOR CONSENT OF THE CHAIRMAN):

None

The meeting closed at 6.03 pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 7th January 2024 at 5.30 pm

Approved.....

Date.....