



# WILLAND PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022 AT WILLAND VILLAGE HALL AT 7PM.

**Present:** Councillors Bartlett, Grantham, Little, Major, Mastrolacasa, Phare, Warren and Wilcox.

**In attendance:** Clerk B Bodkin

### **1. Election of Chairman of Finance and Administration Committee**

Councillor Warren chaired this item. Councillor Wilcox was nominated by Councillor Phare and seconded by Councillor Bartlett. There were no other nominations. Councillor Wilcox confirmed she was willing to continue as Chairman and was duly elected, with all Councillors voting in favour.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Glover.

**3.** Declarations of interest from Members would be made at the appropriate agenda item.

**4.** There were no items brought forward from the Chair.

**5.** There were no public questions on any of the agenda items.

**6.** The minutes of the meeting Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on Thursday 17 March 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

### **7. ADMINISTRATION**

a) Annual review Press & Media Policy: members agreed there were no amendments to be put forward for approval by Full Council.

b) Annual review of the Social Media Policy: the Chairman reminded Parish Councillors to adhere to the policy as failure to do so could be in breach of the Code of Conduct and result in a referral to the MDDC Monitoring Officer. Members agreed there were no amendments to be put forward for approval by Full Council.

**19.09 hours: Councillor Mastrolacasa joined the meeting.**

c) Review of the Emergency Plan. There was discussion on the role of the Community Response Team. Councillor Warren said the plan had been written consistent with the powers of what a parish council can do.

**19.13 hours: Councillor Major joined the meeting.**

Further discussion resulted in a proposal from Councillor Bartlett that the Community Response Team should meet before the next Finance & Administration Committee meeting to go through

the plan and bring back a recommendation, seconded by Councillor Little and passed with four votes in favour and four abstentions. **ACTION: Community Response Team members**

d) Training

i) Councillors Grantham, Major and Warren and the Clerk gave verbal updates on training attended since 17 March 2022. The Clerk had completed the SLCC's ILCA course and would be looking to begin CiLCA in the Autumn.

ii) Future training for Councillors and Clerk was discussed, including the next MDDC Town & Parish Training session covering "Biodiversity net gain" via Zoom on 21 July, for which the Clerk would send out a reminder. **ACTION: Clerk**

e) Councillor Wilcox reported that she was still researching options to open an additional instant access savings account. **ACTION: Councillor Wilcox**

f) Councillor Wilcox and the Clerk reported on research into appropriate software for use by the Clerk for the Parish Council's accounts administration. Two suppliers offered a free trial period but one was significantly cheaper than the other. If the Allotment software option was included, it might be necessary to pass on costs to the allotment holders. It was agreed to proceed with a month's free trial with Easy PC and report back. Advantages of using specialist software included streamlining of time e.g. by inputting data just once, flexibility to export to Excel if needed and Councillors having read-only access. **ACTION: Councillor Wilcox and Clerk**

g) Jubilee Field Regulations: Councillors reviewed the wording of Condition 10 in the light of the PSPO which states "dogs on a lead" rather than "under control". Councillor Warren proposed that the wording at the beginning of the first sentence of Condition 10 should be amended to read, "Dog owners are expected to make sure that their animals are on a lead at all times....." The proposal was seconded by Councillor Grantham and was passed with five votes in favour and three abstentions. **ACTION: Clerk**

## **8. FINANCE**

a) Councillors had received an overview of the bank account balances as at 21.6.22. It was noted that Nationwide savings were at the FSCS guarantee limit. Councillor Wilcox was already looking at alternative savings accounts.

b) A report showing income and expenditure as at 21.6.22 had been circulated and there were no questions arising. Councillor Warren observed that a separate application would need to be made for S106 money due in respect of the Chestnut Drive Play Area.

c) Allocation of the 2021-22 underspend: this item had been deferred from the April Full Council meeting. The Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee reminded Members that the Reserve Funds had been allocated for AGAR purposes which had already been agreed by Full Council. Following a brief discussion on the reserves funds, grant funding and S106 money, Councillor Wilcox proposed from the Chair that the allocations be accepted without amendment, and this was agreed unanimously.

d) Annual Review of Financial Regulations (not Standing Orders, as stated in error on the agenda), with any agreed changes to be reported to the July Full Council meeting.

i) Under Section 1, General, 1.5, Willand Parish Council's Financial Regulation currently reads:  
*1.5. Once a year at the March meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.*

The Clerk had circulated the Model Regulations (per NALC) as a suggested alternative:  
*1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.*

Councillors agreed to amend the wording of the Financial Regulation to that contained within the NALC Model Regulations to enable the review to tie in with receipt of the Internal Auditor's report which would not be available until April at the earliest. **ACTION: Clerk**

ii) Under Section 2, Accounting and audit (internal and external), 2.2, Willand Parish Council's Regulation currently reads:  
*2.2. At each Full Council meeting monthly year to date accounts shall be produced and approved. At each financial year end, our internal auditor shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Clerk. The internal auditor will confirm this in his report to the Council, including any exceptions, and this will be noted by the Council.*

After consideration of the Model Regulation 2.2. (per NALC), and a review of the current practices followed by Willand Parish Council whereby no expenditure can take place without the authority of 3 signatories, the bank accounts being checked monthly by the Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee, and the Clerk reconciling all bank accounts monthly, it was unanimously agreed that no change would be made to Financial Regulation 2.2.

iii) Under Section 5, Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments, Councillors agreed that they would not adopt the additional model regulation 5.7 (per NALC) due to the level of signing off and authorisation arrangements per current practice.

iv) Under Section 8 Loans and Investments, 8.3, Willand Parish Council's Regulation (which is also included in the NALC Model Regulations), reads:  
*8.3. The Council will arrange with the Council's Banks and Investment providers for the sending of a copy of each statement of account to the Chairman of the Council at the same time as one is issued to the Clerk.*

Councillor Wilcox confirmed that the Lloyds Bank statements could be viewed online, Nationwide statements are received annually and when transfers occur; also noted that Nationwide transfers could only be made back to the Lloyds accounts. Councillors agreed to recommend to Full Council that Financial Regulation 8.3 be amended to read "may arrange" instead of "will arrange". **ACTION: Clerk**

e) Following discussion on whether to form a Working Group to review the Asset Register including all leased play areas, it was agreed that Councillor Warren and the Clerk would work on this, with help as required from other members. **ACTION: Councillor Warren & Clerk**

**9. Councillors' Roundtable:** to receive any further information from Councillors and to highlight future agenda items.

i) Councillor Grantham reported that some of the new hedge trees in the cemetery appeared to be dying. It was agreed that the Cemetery Working Group would monitor the situation and that they be delegated the power to approve the instruction to the handyman to water the trees as paid work. **ACTION: Clerk & CWG**

ii) Councillor Major indicated that a traffic survey could cost £5,000 and he would bring quotes forward to Full Council. **ACTION: Councillor Major**

iii) It was agreed that Councillor Wilcox would draft a form so that residents who wished to access the Parish Council's Community Events Fund would have an idea of the information required by the Parish Council on which to base their decision. **ACTION: Councillor Wilcox**

## **10. Planning applications**

### **a) 22/01148/TPO**

Proposal: Application to remove 6 of the lowest branches on 1 Oak tree protected by Tree Preservation Order 08/00004/TPO

Location: 8 Chestnut Drive Willand Cullompton

Response due: 5 July

Councillors agreed to the following response being submitted by the Clerk, with one abstention.

"Willand Parish Council are unable to support this application in the absence of any evidence of disease, danger to persons or damage to property. The application form only refers to shading of the garden. The Parish Council will support the findings of the MDDC Arboricultural Officer."

**ACTION: Clerk**

### **b) 22/00901/FULL**

Proposal: Change of use of part of building from Class B8 (Storage and distribution) to Class E (Light industrial)

Location: Storage Building Tanyard Farm Willand

Response due: 6 July

Councillors agreed unanimously in favour of the following response: "Willand Parish Council supports the application."

**ACTION: Clerk**

20.44 hours: there being no further business, the meeting closed.