

WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE

HELD ON Monday 17th April 2023

Present: Alan Grant (AG), Jim Richmond (JR), Bill Evans (BE), Bill Gayler (BG) and Steve Dunford (SD)

In attendance: K Carpenter (Clerk) P Holland (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr A Grant thanked all those present for such a good turnout.

	<u>Finance & Staffing Committee</u>
1	Apologies Cllr A Bruce, Cllr J Dale, Cllr S Francis and Cllr S Yeates
2	Declaration of Interest None
3	Minutes of the last meeting AG read through the headings and gave a brief overview of each as only one other councillor present had been at the previous meeting. Agreed as an accurate record.
4	Budget Monitoring KC talked through the budget and where we stood on the New Year. SD asked if the project reserves were on top of the normal reserves. KC informed all present that there was £30,000.00 in project reserves, £84,000.00 in normal reserves and this totalled £114,000.00. JR asked what percentage the normal reserve was, and KC advised it is approx. 45 percent. JR informed all present that as per authority given by Full Council on 29 th March 2023 he had continued to negotiate with FODDC regarding the Five Acres Field Project and was happy to confirm that FODDC will be paying all legal fees for WDPC. KC advised that there is a budget of £10,000.00

	for this project. SD asked how much budget had been put aside for the upcoming elections and KC stated £12,265.00 had been agreed at Full Council and as all ward elections had been uncontested this money would be placed into sinking funds for roof and playpark projects in the next financial year. BE asked what was in the training budget and KC advised £2,200.00 BE asked if this was adequate as WDPC will need to provide training for councillors, KC advised that WDPC has a training pack available for all councillors so this budget should be enough. SD suggested that the first part of the Annual Parish Meeting at which all new councillors will be in attendance have the first 45 minutes as a “Social” so that everyone can introduce themselves and all declarations of acceptance and other required forms can be completed. KC to put this as part of the Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting on 10th May 2023.
5	WDPC Grant Awards The meeting discussed the 10 applications individually to ensure that the criteria for the awards was met and to deliberate the monies to be allocated. Friends of Worcester Walk/Berry Hill Community Orchard - JR confirmed that after speaking to the applicant it was only Friends of Worcester Walk who were applying for a grant, so Berry Hill Community Orchard was removed from the list. There was discussion on the material costs for this application, SD suggested that perhaps Friends of Worcester Walk should be advised to contact E Highfield as materials left over from Parkend Community Orchard may be available to them. AG raised the £45 uplift in case of increase in material costs and suggested that they could source cheaper from other suppliers. It was agreed that it be put into the award letter that any monies underspent should be returned to WDPC. It was agreed to award £829.44 Bream Cricket Club - There was some discussion on the need for artificial grass on the decking, but all presents were in favour of the benches. It was agreed to award £1120.00 for the disabled benches. Bream Rugby Club – There was some discussion on the increase in popularity of this sport. It was agreed to award £3000.00 Canopy – After discussion on the breakdown of this application BG suggested that WDPC advise Canopy to contact the Red Cross in Cinderford as they hire out equipment and may be able to assist. It was agreed to award £1250.00 Forest New Life Church Baby & Toddler Group – After discussion on the services this group offer it was agreed to award £1102.41 Forest of Dean Children’s Opportunity Centre – After discussion on the vital support that this organisation offers to those children with learning difficulties and special needs it was agreed to award £1500.00 Lydbrook Community Care – Lydcare – There was some discussion on this application and the PA note at the end of the fund request, it was suggested that perhaps Lydcare should approach FODDC to see if there was any funding available through the Community Grants Scheme. It was felt that it would not be an option for WDPC be seen to set aside budget from future years. It was agreed to award £500.00 for this year and suggest to Lydcare that they contact Cllr Hiatt and that WDPC would be happy to receive future applications.

	Mierystock Tunnel Society – After some debate on the state of the paths and the lack of project plan it was felt that this application was premature. It was agreed that a polite letter be sent advising that this application was premature and to apply again once the project was further along. Royal Forest of Dean Orchestra – there was noted that this organisation had been running for approximately 30 years. It was agreed to award £661.00 Sling Playing Fields – After discussion SD suggested that this could be the first application to come out of the “Sinking Fund” which is in the West Dean Parish budget. It was agreed to award £464.97. It is recommended to Full Council to award the West Dean Parish Council Spring Grants to the values set out above.
9	Date of the Next Meeting – As Required.

Meeting finished at 13:10