

## GREAT WYRLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE held at Great Wyrley Community Centre, Landywood Lane, Great Wyrley which commenced at 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 and recommendations to Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.**

**PRESENT:**

**(Chairman)  
Cllr. J. C. Jones**

Cllr. A. J. Kelsey Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE
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Cllr. R. J. Perry Cllr. Mrs. S. M. Wood
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**1/2022 APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies on this occasion.

**2/2022 ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was **resolved** by all Councillors to adopt the Terms of Reference relating to the Constitution of the Annual Governance and Audit Committee.

**3/2022 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Following discussion, it was **resolved** by the Councillors present that a Chairman should be elected to chair each meeting selected by alphabetical order. On this occasion Cllr. J. C. Jones took the Chair.

**4/2022 BUDGET REPORT FOR EARMARKED FUNDS RE: FUTURE PROJECTS**

At the meeting of the Parish Council dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2022 it was agreed by all Members that the Budget Report would be considered in full by the Annual Governance and Audit Committee with a view to reporting back to the next meeting of full Council. All proposals for ratification by the Council should there be any changes to the original document.

Please see items highlighted below. Any observations or alterations are shown in bold italic underneath the issue it concerns.

<b>ONGOING PROJECTS</b>		
<b>Memorial Wall at Great Wyrley Cemetery</b>	The Parish Council still holds in its reserves an amount of £5,000 to provide a brick built Memorial Wall for Great Wyrley Cemetery. The wall is to be constructed with the purpose of providing an area for reflection for the bereaved along with a dedicated structure to which plaques can be attached commemorating a person whose ashes have been scattered in the Cemetery. This project is now expected to be commenced in the	<b>£5,000.00</b>

	<p>near future as a master builder has now offered to quote for the works required and the Parish Council should be in a position to move forward quite soon. This project is also planned to provide an additional income stream via the sale of commemorative plaques.</p> <p><b><i>Having considered this matter fully the Annual Governance and Audit Committee agreed that this matter should be progressed as soon as possible.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The only reason this project had not commenced already was due to the fact that South Staffordshire Council Planning Department was having difficulty deciding whether or not the structure required planning permission.</i></b></p>	
<b>Olympic Torch Commemoration</b>	<p>The Parish Council still has in its reserves an amount of funding set aside to provide a feature to commemorate the fact that the Olympic Torch came through the village in 2012. This was a great honour for Great Wyrley, however, it has proved to be extremely difficult to actually secure a company which is prepared to fabricate the structure to the Parish Council's specification; this is due mainly to the stringent rules put in place by the International Olympic Committee. However, this matter is hoped to be getting closer to fruition due to the ministrations of Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE who has been able to locate a Blacksmith who is prepared to tackle the project.</p> <p><b><i>Having considered this matter fully the Annual Governance and Audit Committee agreed that this matter should be progressed as soon as possible.</i></b></p>	<b>£2,000.00</b>
<b>Replacement of children's play area at Landywood Lane</b>	<p>At the present time the play area has been fully refurbished and is being well used. Funding for this type of project is currently extremely difficult to source; most funding is being channelled towards Covid Recovery.</p> <p>This matter may stay on the back burner for a while, however, I believe the capital fund earmarked to donate towards this project should remain.</p>	<b>£10,000.00</b> <b>This sum to be drawn from Capital Account and not the main reserves. Accordingly it is not included in</b>

	<p><b><i>Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE advised the meeting that she had recently visited The Hollybush Garden Centre and had seen the brilliant new play area they have constructed for customers.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The play area is exceptional and prompted Cllr. Mrs. Perry to ask the question of the Garden Centre owners of how much it had cost to construct. Cllr. Mrs. Perry was expecting the figure to be a great deal higher than the £12K it had actually cost. This sum relates to the equipment and not any ground works which would be included. On this basis Cllr. Mrs. Perry advised the other Members of the Sub-Committee that now may be the time to look at closing the other play areas within the Parish and concentrating on providing a really exceptional play area on Landywood Playing Field. Following discussion it was agreed by Members that this suggestion be put to Full Council at the next available meeting.</i></b></p>	<p><b>the grand total of expenditure</b></p>
<p><b>Portable CCTV Camera</b></p>	<p>Members included in last year's budget funding for portable CCTV cameras to highlight crime hotspots within the Parish. The cost involved in this project is a great deal more than was originally envisaged. Accordingly, the Parish Council contacted the District Council and is now on a list of Parish Councils waiting to borrow the portable CCTV cameras in the ownership of South Staffordshire Council. There may be a rental fee involved in this project and on this basis I would retain the £1000 in the earmarked budget for this purpose.</p> <p><b><i>Following discussion it was agreed by all Members that should the Parish Council choose to go forward with the project outlined above then it may indeed be even more necessary to have CCTV. On this basis the Clerk was to research the exact guidelines surrounding the use of CCTV where children would be present. The Clerk was to contact Maggie Quinn of South Staffordshire Council to establish exactly where the Parish Council stood in the queue to hire portable CCTV cameras.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£1000.00</b></p>

<p><b>Roof to the Community Centre</b></p>	<p>The roof to the Community Centre is still not presenting a problem at the moment, however, I think it may be prudent to continue to earmark an amount of £2,000 per year towards its eventual replacement in the future. The £4,000 represents two years of earmarking.</p> <p><b><i>Following discussion Members agreed that the Clerk should arrange to have the condition of the flat roof of the Community Centre assessed by an independent roofing contractor. In the event that the condition of the roof is fairly healthy then the funds set aside for its replacement can be reviewed with a view to a possible saving. Cannock Roofing Specialist are sending me a quote to carry out a safety survey during the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2022.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£4,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Changes to the configuration of the Community Centre garage.</b></p>	<p>This project is already in the pipeline and is not expected to be overly costly on the basis that the main expense would have been a new door. A door has now been procured by the builder who has agreed to carry out the works on behalf of the Parish Council. I would estimate £2,000.</p> <p><b><i>Members may recall that this project came to fruition in order to house the large trailer used by the ground staff when collecting items to go on the Annual Bonfire Event. In hindsight, may I suggest that the Parish Council review this decision. I am an unsure in terms of security that it is a good idea to have the garage door so easily accessible from the side of the building. The configuration of the garage at present provides enhanced security for not only the fuel tank stored in the garage but also to members of staff when clearing detritus from events and leaving the building clear of rubbish etc.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>In view of the fact that the envisaged purchase of the plant and machinery on offer from Cheslyn Hay Parish Council is now no longer a possibility there is no need to create additional space at the Pavilion. On this basis I believe the new door should be fitted to the garage but in its original position and not outside the security railings surrounding the rear of the Community Centre.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£2000.00</b></p>

<p><b>Flood defences on Landywood Lane Playing Field</b></p>	<p>These works are expected to be part funded by DEFRA under a joint working project with Staffordshire County Council. I am unsure of the exact amount the Parish Council would need to contribute towards this project but would suggest an amount of £5,000.</p> <p><b><i>Members are aware that £5,000 was placed in its reserves as the Parish Council's contribution towards a new scheme being drawn up by Severn Trent Water, Staffordshire County Council and DEFRA.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>This scheme was being drawn up by Mr. Andrew Brett, who works for a number of Local Authorities as their Flood Risk Officer. At the time of the scheme's inception it was mooted that a business case would need to be put forward to DEFRA to fund a number of flood defences within the Parish which was expected to be extremely costly. Part of the defence system was to create bunding around the Landywood Lane Playing Field in order to create a reservoir. This is expected to be able to hold flood waters back in extreme conditions and protect the properties surrounding the area. One of these properties is, of course, Great Wyrley Community Centre.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>As Members know there is shortly to be a meeting held at the Community Centre by Severn Trent and Staffordshire County Council to forge a way ahead.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>It would now seem that the agencies involved with this project have also been working closely with the developer of the Landywood Lane site, Cameron Homes. Cameron Homes has agreed to the construction of attenuation ponds on the new housing development which is expected to contain a considerable percentage of the runoff from that area of land. This when added to the fact that a number of alterations are to be made to the course of Wyrley Brook which are expected to slow down the flow of flood waters is set to make a much welcome decrease in the risk of flooding within the Parish.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£5000.00</b></p>
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	<p><b><i>It would now seem that because the flooding situation within the village was discovered to be far more serious than was first envisaged by the Flood Team the responsibility for its funding would seem to have shifted onto the agencies involved with the remedial works.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>On this basis, if the £5,000 the Parish Council holds in its reserves for this purpose is not required it could be put towards the enhancement of Wyrley Brook.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Great Wyrley Brook Project</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council agreed in 2019/20 that it would provide funding towards the Great Wyrley Brook Project in conjunction with Severn Trent Water, Staffordshire County Council and various other agencies. Members will be aware that Wyrley Brook is in need of constant attention to ensure that it is both running freely and properly maintained. Members may not be aware that there are several agencies involved in the responsibility of Wyrley Brook. Severn Trent Water is responsible for the watercourse only. South Staffordshire Council is responsible for the upward sides of the Brook itself and Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire Housing Association is responsible for the verge which runs alongside the Brook dependent upon its specific location. All of these agencies are responsible for any funding required to keep Wyrley Brook in good condition.</p> <p>However, the Parish Council embarked upon a project to enhance the appearance of Wyrley Brook some years ago and held funding in its resources for when the project could finally come to fruition.</p> <p><b><i>For Members information following thorough research, the Members of the Sub-Committee were made aware that there was a far bigger project which had been taking place over the last three years which included a massive injection of funding from DEFRA.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>In the event that the Parish Council agreed to transfer the funding which would have been required to be put towards the project outlined under Flooding Defences to the enhancement of Wyrley Brook instead it may lead to</i></b></p>	<p><b>£2000.00</b></p>

	<p><b><i>an opportunity to make a real difference to the appearance of the brook itself following the major works which are to be carried out by the agencies involved.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>This situation will become clearer following a meeting with those agencies which is being organised to take place in early April.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>New Equipment for ground works</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council had originally resolved to purchase two items of second hand equipment from Cheslyn Hay Parish Council for the sum of £17,000. This proposal is no longer on the table as Cheslyn Hay Parish Council is not now in a position to sell the equipment and has part exchanged its existing vehicles in order to procure new plant.</p> <p>The Parish Council's existing tractor which had become unacceptably unreliable has now been effectively repaired and I am assured by the Parish Council Ground Staff that it is still fit for purpose and they are happy to keep it for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>However, the Ground Staff are in desperate need of a new, more powerful ride-on-mower. As the ride-on mower which would be suitable for the work involved is coming in at approximately £18,957. I would appreciate Members views on whether we should add the extra funding required to purchase the mower or whether we should remove this project from earmarked funds altogether in favour of looking at leasing equipment instead.</p> <p><b><i>Following thorough consideration the Members of the Sub-Committee requested the Clerk to research the possibility of leasing the equipment required by the Parish Council ground staff. Thus making an immediate saving of almost £20,000. The Clerk has now secured a lease with Buxtons for the Ride-on-Mower of choice for the sum of £408 per month. Unfortunately, the vehicle will not be available for approximately five months. However, the lease will not commence until September when the charges will come into effect. In the meantime the mower being used by the Ground Staff at the present time has needed expensive repairs (approx. £1000) to replace its</i></b></p>	<p><b>£18,957.00</b></p>

	<p><b><i>gear box and deck. This machine will now tide the Parish Council over until the new equipment becomes available and will be retained as back up for the future.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Repairs to Great Wyrley Wooden Skate Ramps</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council is presently awaiting works to be carried out to the wooden skate ramps on Landywood Play Area and these are estimated to cost in the region of £8000 over a projected six month period.</p> <p><b><i>The Clerk explained that these works were commenced on 31<sup>st</sup> March, and were expected to take up to two weeks to conclude.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£8,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Replacement Boiler to the Community Centre</b></p>	<p>It would appear that the problem with the central heating boiler to the Community Centre may have now been resolved due to the diligent works of a different central heating engineer. Members may wish to consider whether they would still wish an amount to be earmarked for this purpose in the future. £12,900 including VAT.</p> <p><b><i>Following discussion the Members of the Council present requested that the Clerk go forward with this project as the most important aspect was to ensure reliable aftercare. Members agreed this sum should remain in the earmarked resources and three quotes for the works obtained as soon as possible.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£12,900.00</b></p>
<p><b>Unforeseen Expenses</b></p>	<p>Bearing in mind the percentage of the Parish Council's funds which have been expended on unforeseen legal expenses, insurance claims and increased level of staff working hours over the last two years I feel it prudent to ensure that a sum is earmarked for unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p><b><i>Following full discussion Members agreed that the amount of £10,000 should remain in the earmarked resources at the commencement of the financial year but should reduce on a monthly basis through the year should it not be required.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£10,000.00</b></p>



<p><b>Emergency Tree Works</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council had now adopted a policy that all the trees in its ownership are subject to an annual inspection. This action is to ensure their stability and the safety of the public. I feel that based on the expenditure incurred for this purpose during the last two years an amount of £7,000 should be placed in earmarked funds.</p> <p><b><i>Following full discussion Members agreed that the amount of £7,000 should remain in the earmarked resources at the commencement of the financial year but should reduce on a monthly basis through the year should it not be required.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£7,000.00</b></p>
<p><b>Purchase of Peugeot Expert Van</b></p>	<p>I am still in the process of attempting to secure a price for the purchase of the vehicle presently on lease from Leaseplan. The Lease Company do not appear to be in any great hurry to cancel the lease and it is presently being paid for on the original terms. I had not envisaged that the Van would be worth a great deal as it was already 8 years old when I began this process. However, it is low mileage and in the present climate where new vehicles are not readily available second hand vehicles are now commanding exorbitant prices. The Parish Council can either continue with the existing lease or enter into a new lease should it take the decision not to purchase the existing van.</p> <p><b><i>Since the meeting of the Parish Council when this matter was discussed and its further consideration by the Sub-Committee it has come to light that due to the serious shortage of commercial vehicles available to the Lease company. Due to the present situation the Lease Company is prepared to continue with the existing lease at the reduced rate of £125.00 per month which represents a saving of £39 per month. The new arrangement also includes the added bonus that the lease company fund any repairs required to the vehicle over time. This arrangement would seem to be an ideal solution particularly in view of the fact that the sale or lease of diesel and petrol vehicles will be banned from 2030 onwards.</i></b></p>	<p><b>£5,000.00</b></p>

For Members information I have also set out earmarked funds for annual donations and expected expenditure other than normal running costs which have remained almost the same.

<b>ANNUAL DONATIONS AND REGULAR EXPENDITURE</b>		
Annual Bonfire Event	<p>Bonfire and Fireworks display including hiring of WC's, First Aid Provision etc. This is based on 2019 figures and should it go ahead this will need to be increased to include heightened health and safety and security measures.</p> <p><i><b>In view of the fact that the Annual Bonfire Event has been cancelled for this year it was suggested that the £5,500 earmarked for the event could be transferred to the Jubilee Celebrations.</b></i></p>	<b>£5500.00</b>
Great Wyrley Scouts and Guide Movement	<p>Contribution towards refreshment etc. for the New Year's Day Walk</p> <p><i><b>No Change</b></i></p>	<b>£100.00</b>
Great Wyrley Carnival Committee	<p>Donation towards Great Wyrley Carnival Event</p> <p><i><b>No Change</b></i></p>	<b>£400.00</b>
Senior Citizens Welfare Committee	<p>Annual donation towards to the running of the Senior Citizens Welfare organisation.</p> <p><i><b>No Change</b></i></p>	<b>£1100.00</b>
Annual Tree Assessment	<p>Cemetery, Star Land and the Memorial Gardens</p> <p><i><b>No Change</b></i></p>	<b>£1,000.00</b>

## **5. DAY TO DAY BUDGET**

### **5.1 REVISION OF CEMETERY CHARGES**

Following discussion, which included ever increasing oncosts and the fact that there had been no percentage increase in the preceding two years it was proposed by the Members of the Sub-Committee that Cemetery Charges should be raised by 5% rounded up to the nearest pound. Any proposal made was to be ratified by Full Council. **Please see appendix A**

### **5.2 REVISION OF COMMUNITY CENTRE HIRE CHARGES**

Following discussion which included ever increasing oncosts and the fact that there had been no percentage increase in the preceding two years it was proposed by the Members of the Sub-Committee that Community Centre Charges should be raised by 5% rounded up to the nearest pound. Any proposal made was to be ratified by Full Council. **Please see Appendix B**

### **5.3 REVISION OF CURRENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR HIRE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Following full discussion it was proposed by all Members of the Sub-Committee that for the future there should be no allowance made for free time to set up an event. Members also agreed that there should be a different rate applied to all hirings which were from customers who were not residents of Great Wyrley or Cheslyn Hay. Members agreed that any discount would not be made public until such time as proof was provided of the residency status of any hirer. i.e. the Parish Council should not advertise any price difference at the outset.

Following consideration of a number of comparable Community Centres' scale of charges it was proposed that there should be a fee set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, (no matter what the length of the event actually was) on the basis that taking a booking for an event which would last 1.5 hours would preclude the Council from being able to take a booking for a full evening and this would result in an unnecessary loss.

### **5.4 REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Clerk presented a copy of the new Financial Regulations to the Sub-Committee for their observations prior to seeking adoption at the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Sub-Committee **resolved** that they did not wish any amendments to be made the draft Financial Regulations and wished them to be presented to Council without amendment. **Please see appendix C**

### **5.5 ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Clerk presented a copy of the Financial Risk Assessment to the Sub-Committee for their observations prior to seeking adoption at the next meeting of the Parish Council. The Sub-Committee **resolved** that they did not wish any amendments to be made the draft Financial Risk Assessment and wished the document to be presented to Council without amendment. **Please see appendix D.**

### **5.6 REVIEW OF BANKING FACILITIES**

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that it appeared that Natwest had gone forward with its imposition of bank charges onto the Parish Council's Bank Account

despite its assurance that this would not take place. The Clerk was to pursue Natwest regarding this issue.

The Clerk also explained that there was now a need to ensure that the Parish Council had some acceptable way of procurement of goods on behalf of the Parish Council and sought permission to sign up to the debit/credit card.

The Clerk also explained that there was now a clear need to ensure that the Parish Council was able to take payment for services in some form other than cash. The Members of the Sub-Committee agreed that this matter needed to be ratified by the Parish Council with their recommendation that it be approved.

## **5.7 PRINTING AND PHOTOCOPYING SERVICE**

The Clerk explained to the Sub-Committee that it was no longer either practical or cost effective to continue to provide a photocopying service to the general public. This was due to the fact that the nature of the paperwork which was in need of copying had changed over the last ten years or so and the length of time now required to provide such a service was very much out of proportion with the charges made for it.

This proposal is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the residents of the Parish as Great Wyrley Library now has a functioning photocopier. Accordingly, the Parish Council now no longer needs to offer the service which was only designed to be on a temporary basis until the Library's photocopier was either replaced or repaired.

The Parish Council has now received a very competitive quotation for a photocopier/printer which is attached for Members information. The Parish Council has dealt with a number of photocopier service providers in the past and has not found them to be completely principled or dependable. The quotation attached is from a provider that the Parish Council has dealt with in the past and has reason to believe in their dependability in terms of both set up service and aftercare.

Should the Parish Council agree to the cessation of the offer of a photocopying service to the general public it is intended to relocate the printer/photocopier into the Clerk's Office. This can be easily accommodated and would not only free up space in the main office but also avoid any difficulty if asked to take photocopies by an insistent customer. **Please see Appendix E**

## **5.8 SPECIFIC BUDGETS**

Following discussion it was agreed by all Members of the Sub-Committee that for the purposes of the new Scribe Computer Package there was a need for budgets to be set over and above the general running expenses for the Parish Council. These budgets are to cover:

- Play Areas Cost (Code 15)
- Trees - Memorial Garden (Cost Code 17)
- Trees - The Star Land (Cost Code 18)
- A34 Planters (Cost Code 36)
- Trees - Cemetery (Cost Code 29)\*
- Cleaning supplies (Cost Code 10)\*
- Platinum Jubilee (Cost Code 64)

\*It would be misleading to set a budget on the use of cleaning supplies from last year's figures as the last 15 months do not represent a normal year in terms of cleaning.

\*It would be misleading to set a budget for tree works using last year's expenditure as a guide as the last 12 months do not represent a normal year in terms of tree maintenance.

Please refer to example highlighted budget sheets attached.

**ALL THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN THIS REPORT REQUIRE RATIFICATION BY FULL COUNCIL.**

In the pursuit of openness and accountability a number of the items detailed in this report have been listed as separate items on the Agenda i.e. Financial Regulations, Financial Risk Assessment, Community Centre Terms and Conditions of Hire, Review of Community Centre Hire Charges, Review of Cemetery Hire Charges and Review of Photocopier/Printer.

Copies of the documents referred to above are attached to this report.

The background information for each separate agenda item listed above is all included in this report.

Sian McGlue  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2022