

MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 10th February 2025 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices, Melksham Community Campus (First Floor), Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors John Glover (Chair of Council & Committee), David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council), Alan Baines, Richard Wood, Councillor Shea-Simonds (Committee Vice-Chair) and Councillor Holt and John Doel.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer)

Housekeeping: Councillor Glover welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that as there were no members of the public in the room, the housekeeping message did not need to be read out. Everyone was aware that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on YouTube following the meeting and deleted once the minutes were approved.

409/24 Apologies:

None.

It was noted that all members of the Finance Committee were present at the meeting.

410/24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Glover declared an interest in the Melksham Transport User Group grant application as he was on the committee.

Councillors Holt and Wood declared an interest in the Berryfield Village Hall grant application as trustees of the village hall.

411/24 Dispensation Requests for this Meeting

None.

412/24 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:

The Clerk advised that agenda items under 7 needed to be held in closed session in relation to discussions about the grass cutting and bin emptying contract tenders, as this was still confidential until the Full Council approved the contract. Councillor Glover felt that item 8a, Bowerhill Sports Field fees and charges, may need to be held in closed session depending on discussions. This is in line with Standing Order 3d: "That in the view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.". Reasons: b) terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiations for contracts.

Resolved: To hold items 7 and 8a in closed session for the reason as detailed above.

413/24 Public Participation:

It was noted that Councillor Harris was present on Zoom; however, he was not a member of the Finance Committee and was at the meeting as Chair of the Bowerhill Village Hall Trust. There was one other member of the public present who was at the meeting on behalf of the Melksham Transport User Group who had submitted a grant application. He explained that the Melksham Railway Development Group has been running for around 30 years and, after a hiatus, has now come back as the Melksham Transport User Group following the success of the development side. There are now 30 members of the group, including the committee. He explained that the AGM was scheduled for April and was intending on deciding on how this group moves forward. Councillor Glover asked whether members had any questions. Councillor Pafford asked whether this group had also applied to the Melksham Town Council. It was confirmed that they were in the process of doing so.

414/24 Grant Aid:

a) Grant Aid policy:

Members noted the grant aid policy.

b) Budget provision for Grant Aid 2025/26:

Members noted the following budget provisions for grant aid:

S133 Village Hall Grants	£22,000
S137 General Grants	£20,000
S144 Tourism	£ 700
Total	£42,700

There was also £10,875.67 available in the Community Projects/ Match Funding reserve.

It was noted that the parish council had the General Power of Competence and, therefore, did not need to be tied to a maximum spend under S137 of the Local Government Act. The parish council has previously agreed that it would be wise to keep these budget headings, as they may be required again in the future if, at the May 2025 election, not enough members are elected. It was noted that for a council to gain the General Power of Competence, at least 80% of its members must be elected, not co-opted.

c) Grant Aid applications for 2025/26

Councillor Glover advised members that 43 applications for funding had been received with requests totalling £51,868.17.

	TYPE	ORGANISATION	Awarding in 2025/26
	SECTION 133 GRANTS (HALLS)		
1	Other halls	Bowerhill Village Hall Trust	£5,000
2	Owned by MWPC	Shaw Hill Playing Field and Village Hall	£9,250
3	Owned by MWPC	Berryfield Village Hall	£1,700
	SECTION 133 GRANTS (HALLS) total		£15,950
	SECTION 137 GRANTS		
4	Action Groups	Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)	£450
5	Action Groups	Berryfield & Semington Rd Action Group (BASRAG)	£500
6	Action Groups	Community Emergency Group (CEG)-Whitley and Shaw	£220
7	Action Groups	Community Action Whitley Shaw (CAWS)	£2,250
	Action Groups Total		£3,420
8	Youth	4Youth (South West) - formerly Young Melksham	£3,000
9	Youth	2385 (Melksham) Squadron ATC	*£300
10	Youth	Bowerhill Baby & Toddler Group	£1,500
	Youth Total		£4,800
11	Support Groups	Group Five	£500
12	Support Groups	Melksham PHAB Club	£500
13	Support Groups	Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity	£1,000
14	Support Groups	South Western Ambulance Charity	£500
15	Support Group	Age UK Wiltshire	£300
16	Support Group	Alzheimer's Support	£450
17	Support Group	Read Easy	£100
18	Support Group	Meadowbrook (Wiltshire) CIC	£300

19	Support Group	RUKSAK45218	£0
20	Support Group	Wiltshire Search and Rescue Team	£500
21	Support Group	Friends of Giffords Surgery	£700
22	Support Group	St John Ambulance Devizes and Central Wiltshire Network	£250
23	Support Group	FearFree Charity (Formally Splitz Support Service)	£750
Support Groups Total			£5,850
24	Community	Melksham Food & River Festival	£400
25	Community	Shaw & Whitley Community Hub Ltd	£1,000
26	Community	that meeting space administered by GoodNews Church	£250
27	Community	Crimestoppers Trust – Wiltshire Volunteer Committee	£150
28	Community	Melksham Carnival	£90
29	Community	Melksham & District Historical Association	£300
30	Community	Melksham Man Down	£350
31	Community	Friends of Shurnhold Fields	£0
Community Total			£2,540
32	Community Info	Shaw & Whitley Connect	£250
33	Community Info	Melksham Remembers	£317
Community Info Total			£567
34	Transport	Melksham Transport User Group	£400
Transport Total			£400
35	Clubs	AFC Melksham (Disabled)	£300
36	Clubs	Melksham Gardeners' Society	£300
37	Clubs	Melksham Amateur Swimming Club	£300
38	Clubs	Shaw & Whitley Garden Club	£250
39	Clubs	Melksham WI	£100
40	Clubs	Avon Bowls Club	£200
41	Clubs	Melksham and Corsham Gateway Club	£200
42	Clubs	Shaw and Whitley Art Group	£200
Clubs Total			£1,850

	Section 137 GRANTS Total		£19,427
43	SECTION 144 GRANTS (TOURISM)		
	Tourism	Melksham Tourist Information Centre	£600
	Tourism Total		£600
	Grand Total		£35,977

1. **Bowerhill Village Hall:** The Clerk highlighted that she had noted that the village hall was paying council tax in their accounts and queried with Councillor Harris whether this was business rates. He confirmed that it was. The Clerk advised that the village hall was eligible for 80% rates relief and can apply for relief on the 20% that was discretionary from Wiltshire Council. Members agreed that the Clerk could discuss this with Bowerhill Village Hall outside of the meeting.

2. **Shaw Village Hall:** Members agreed that the requested amount should be awarded to this organisation; however, wished to add a caveat that they apply to other organisations for funding towards their costs. The Clerk advised that the village hall lease was due to expire in April this year, so it was much harder for them to obtain grant funding because they were unable to show that they had longevity at the hall. It was noted that the new lease with a much longer timeframe was currently in the process of being prepared. It was noted that they would still be able to obtain funding from the area board, and the Clerk confirmed that they have done so previously. It was noted that accounts had not been received with this application due to some unforeseen circumstances that had been communicated to officers prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the funding would be pending the receipt of accounts.

***9. 2385 (Melksham) Squadron ATC:** The Clerk advised members that this applicant was requesting funding for a mobile defibrillator. She explained that following the replacement of the Bowerhill Village Hall defibrillator, the parish council currently held the old one in their office. It was advised that it was still in working order and could be used as a mobile unit as it had a carry case. It was noted that some of the consumables may be out of date and would need to be replaced. Members agreed that rather than providing this organisation with a grant to purchase a new defibrillator, the parish council could donate the old defibrillator, that was previously located inside of Bowerhill Village Hall. Members agreed that they should replace any out-of-date consumables prior to handing the defibrillator over to the organisation. As such, the council agreed to allocate £300 for officers to purchase consumables up to this amount. For clarity, this was not £300 to be awarded to the organisation, only for the purchase of the necessary consumables by officers that need to be replaced upon inspection of the machine.

10. Bowerhill Baby & Toddler Group: Councillor Holt was concerned about the storage of the new equipment that this applicant was applying for; from her experience as trustee of Berryfield Village Hall, storage is always an issue and must be limited for each group in order for all hirers that require storage to have access to it. It was noted that this group was based at Bowerhill Village Hall. Councillor Shea-Simonds advised that he had noted in the application that this organisation wished to purchase around 15 scooters, which he had spoken to

Bowerhill Village Hall about as parish council representative on the committee. He reported that the village hall was concerned about storage for the new equipment as this group was already using a level of storage at the village hall. He wished to reiterate that this organisation was very well run and felt that the application submitted was presented very well, so he was not against awarding this group a grant in principle but wished for members to consider the practicalities of the amount of equipment the funding was being requested for. It was noted that there was no reference in the application about where the scooters were going to be stored. After a discussion, it was felt that £1,500 should be awarded to the group, but this is subject to village hall confirmation that they are able to store these items.

11. Group Five: Members noted that this organisation has not provided details about what support they have specifically given to residents of the parish. It was felt that the council should provide some funding to this organisation but should be alerted to the fact that if they do not provide specific details about how they support residents of the parish in future applications, i.e., how many residents they have supported, the council would be unable to provide them with funding regardless of the good work this organisation undertakes.

Recommendation 1: The parish council donate the old Bowerhill Village Hall defibrillator to the 2385 (Melksham) Squadron ATC and replace any consumables that are out of date up to a value of £300.

Recommendation 2: The Council award grants to organisations as per the list detailed above.

Recommendation 3: The Council do not award Grants to the following organisations for the following reasons:

19. RUKSAK45218: Councillor Glover highlighted that this organisation provided individuals with money, which was in contravention of clause 7 of the grant aid policy. It was noted that clause 7 states, 'Grants may not be awarded to organisations which themselves issue grant aid or distribute funds to help other groups.' Members were unable to identify in the accounts how much money this organisation was distributing to individuals. The council is therefore unable to provide award funding to this organisation.

31. Friends of Shurnhold Fields: It was noted that this group had applied for funding for additional tools to aid the maintenance of Shurnhold Fields. The Clerk explained that as this was for the maintenance of the field, expenditure for this could come out of the s106 maintenance contribution, which was held in the parish council's accounts for the joint project with Melksham Town Council. It was noted that the town council did not give any delegated powers to the Shurnhold Fields working party to approve spend so any new spend from this fund would have to be considered by the town council. As it is considered that this funding request could come out of the maintenance fund, the parish council refuses this application. It was agreed that the council would contact the town council for their approval to spend money on items as detailed in the group's application for the maintenance of the field.

It was noted that the grants agreed totalled £35,977 against a budget of £42,700. Members agreed that the £6,723 left over in the budget should be vired into the community match funding reserve.

Recommendation 4: To vire £6,723 from the grants budget into the community match funding reserve.

415/24C Grass cutting and bin emptying contract:

These items were held in closed session:

a) Outcome of the tender evaluation process and tender clarifications:

This item was held in closed session.

b) Removal of check and re-seeding pitches at end of the season out of the contract:

The Finance & Amenities Officer reported that under section 9.5 of the contract (goal mouth and pitch repairs), it requested a price for pitches to be checked and seeded, if necessary, at the end of the season. She did not feel that this was a maintenance activity that was required and had been put in the contract as an error following the pitch power assessment report. It was noted that a separate section requests for the goalmouths to be checked and seeded at the end of the season, so this additional maintenance was not required. It was also highlighted that this was one of the elements that some of the contractors did not provide costings for, with one noting that it was difficult to provide a cost until the pitches had been assessed at the end of the season. As such, this item had been discounted from the contract pricing in any case because not all contractors had provided a cost for this element. Members agreed that this task should be taken out of the contract.

Recommendation: The council removes the requirement for checking and seeding the pitches at the end of the season out of the contract.

c) Shaw Play Area grass cutting:

The Clerk explained that following the approval and issue of the contract specification, it was discovered that the grass cutting inside of Shaw Play Area had been missed off the contract. Officers had looked back at previous contracts, and this was also missing from them as well; however, the current contractor was still doing this task. The Clerk wished to draw members attention to the fact that this would need to be negotiated with the chosen contractor.

Members noted this.

d) Grass cutting and bin emptying contract length (3 or 5 years):

Following the agreement at this meeting to remove the requirement to check and re-seed the pitches, members were presented with the costs of both the 3- and 5-year contracts with this item taken out.

Recommendation: The parish council agree a three-year contract term with the option to extend for a further two years at the end of the initial term.

e) Recommend contractor and contract:

As per the reasons discussed above members agreed that the contract should be awarded to JH Jones.

Recommendation: The parish council award the contract for the parish grass cutting and bin emptying contract to JH Jones & Sons Ltd starting from 1st April 2025.

f) Contract amount following any additions or exclusions from the specification:

Resolved: Officers to contact JH Jones & Sons Ltd and ask for a price for the grass cutting inside of Shaw Play Area in order for the Full Council to approve the final contract price.

g) Budget in place for contract and agree any additional amount that needs to be used from CIL/ Solar Funding:

As per the above until the council knew the final contract amount, they were unable to agree the total amount coming out of CIL and solar farm funding. This will be agreed at the Full Council meeting.

416/24 Bowerhill Sports Field:

a) Fees and charges for the 2025/26 football season starting 1st August 2025

It was noted that Chippenham Town Council had increased their charges for Stanley Park by 3% for the next financial year. Members agreed that while they did not want to price themselves out of the market due to an increase in maintenance costs, a small increase was necessary. It was discussed how much the council should increase their charges, and it was agreed that these should be increased by 3%. The cost for 2025/26 are as follows:

Football Pitch	2025/26
Club – per match – adult with use of pavilion	£71.00
Club- per match – adult without use of pavilion	£41.00
Club – per match – junior 9v9 pitch without use of pavilion	£35.50
Club – per match – junior 7v7 pitch without use of pavilion	£30.00
Club – per match – junior 5v5 pitch without use of pavilion	£23.50

Blanket Booking- Future of Football FC (FoF FC)	£118.50 per weekend (For the use of Youth Pitches only)
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Hire of outside toilet and car park for training sessions	2025/26
Under 25 people	£17.50
From 26-50 people	£24.00
Over 50 people	£35.50

Hire of 11 aside moveable goal posts for training (Note this is for the hire of the goal post equipment only and does not include use of car park or pavilion facilities)	2025/26
Hire of 11 aside moveable goal posts for training	£10.50 per training session

Training Camps for Future of Football Ltd	2025/26
Includes use of car park, changing rooms to store bags for the day and outside toilet	£118.50 per session

Bowerhill Bomber race	£88.50
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Hire of Kitchen and games room	2025/26
To charge an hourly rate of £6.00 per hour with a minimum charge of £12.00 per session.	
1 hour hire	£12.00
2-hour hire	£12.00
3-hour hire	£18.00
4-hour hire	£24.00
5-hour hire	£30.00

Members agreed that a price for Colin Fitness to hire out one changing room was no longer required and therefore could be removed from the list of charges.

Recommendation 1: The charge for Colin Fitness to be removed from the list of charges as this is no longer required.

Recommendation 2: The council increase the sports field and pavilion hire charges to the fees listed above for the 2025/26 football season, to come into effect from the 1st August 2025.

b) Correspondence from legionella contractor on current contract structure and consider suggested change.

Councillor Glover reported that officers had received some correspondence from Aquasafe Environmental, the legionella contractor, asking whether the council wished

to amalgamate the contract into one cost so that the council paid twelve equal monthly payments per annum. It was noted that currently the contractor carries out monthly visits and takes water samples, with equal monthly payments being paid for this service. An additional cost is incurred once a year for tank chlorination and testing of the TMVs (thermostatic mixer valves), and the suggestion is that this cost is spread over 12 months rather than paying the one-off fee at the time. It was noted that if the council were to agree to this way forward, there would need to be a contract in place because the council would be paying for something up front rather than when the works have been undertaken. After a discussion, members felt that it should be kept as it currently is.

Recommendation: The council continue to pay for the testing of the TMVs and tank chlorination once the work has been undertaken rather than paying the cost of this service over 12 months.

c) Quotation for Hot Water Boiler repair

The Finance & Amenities Officer explained that the legionella contractor had contacted her while he was on site, advising that there was no hot water. While he was there, one of the hot water heaters started to work and got up to temperature, while the other unit did not work and had a fault message. She had contacted the council's contractor who services these units, who had attended the site on Friday. At the time of this evening's meeting, officers had not received any feedback from the contractor with regard to what the issue was and whether something needed to be replaced. This was being chased and would come back to Full Council. It was noted that if this is a serious fault that needs to be dealt with outside of a council meeting, the Clerk has delegated powers under the Financial Regulations.

417/24 Audit:

a) Consider response to queries raised by Internal Auditor:

The Clerk reported that she had not received any responses to her queries to date.

b) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2025/26:

The appointment of the internal auditor for the forthcoming financial year was something that the council reviewed on an annual basis. The Clerk advised that the internal auditor had to be independent and competent and have relevant knowledge of the public sector. She had included information from the JPAG (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) practitioners guide on what the council should be looking for when appointing an internal auditor and a list of what records the current auditor reviews. It was noted that the council had previously looked at other auditors but felt that some of them at the time were not independent because they resided in the parish.

Members agreed that the council received good service from the current internal auditor, who had relevant knowledge of the public sector and was both independent and competent and therefore should be the internal auditor for the 2025/26 financial year.

Recommendation: The council appoint IAC Audit and Consultancy as the internal auditor for the 2025/26 financial year.

Meeting closed at 9.34pm

Signed.....
Chairman, Monday 17th February 2025