

Godstone Parish Council

(incorporating the Villages of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath)

Clerk to the Parish Council

S Endersby

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MINUTES

of the Meeting of Godstone Parish Council Finance Committee held on **Wednesday 23 June 2021** at **6pm**
at **The Bounty**.

Members: Cllrs C Farr, C White, B Davis and S Farr
Apologies: Cllrs D Stone
In Attendance: S Endersby (Clerk)

Questions from Members of the Public - There were no members of the public present and the formal meeting commenced.

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr D Stone due to health reasons.

RESOLVED – The committee noted the apologies, and the meeting was deemed quorate.

2. Declaration of Interest

2.2 The committee noted that all members live in the Parish.

3. Minutes

3.1 Review and agree minutes of the meetings held on 16 December 2020 and 30 December 2020.

RESOLVED – The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting and that they be signed by the committee chairman.

RESOLVED – The committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 30 December 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting and that they be signed by the committee chairman.

3. Committee Terms of Reference –

3.1 The committee noted the Terms of Reference set by the Parish council which were circulated in advance of the meeting.

3.2 Matters specified in the Terms of Reference as delegated to the Finance committee by full council were acknowledge and detailed below:

1 *Review and agree annually, and effect any changes required:*

1.1.1 *All fees and charges made by the Council.*

1.1.2 *Salaries of all employees and motor mileage rates.*

1.1.3 *Chairman's Allowance*

1.1.4 *Asset Register and Parish Council Insurance cover.*

2 *Agree budget and precept for the following year for recommendation to the Parish Council meeting in January.*

3 *Review and agree annually the Financial Risk Assessment and monitor effectiveness of the system of internal control for recommendation to the Parish Council.*

4 *Review and agree annually the Financial Regulations for recommendation to the Parish Council.*

5 *Monitor budget spend and agree any virement.*

6 *Consider and agree action upon any Internal/External Audit recommendations.*

7 *The Committee is authorised to pay accounts outstanding for the current financial year, including staff salaries and consider applications for grants to local organisations and pay if budget permits.*

5. Audit - Internal Auditor

5.1 Consider recommendations of the Internal Audit for year ended 31 March 2021.

5.1.1 The committee noted that the Report circulated by the clerk to full council by email on 17 May 2021.

5.1.2 It was noted by the committee that the Internal auditors reported raised no serious concerns, but the matter of general reserves held as of 31 March 2021 (£68,085.94)

was raised as it is above the recommended amount to be held in general reserves of 50% of the precept.

This is included on page 6 of the report and that the Finance Committee intended to review the overall level of reserves.

- 5.1.3 The committee discussed that the uncertainty surrounding the car park project currently and the complications the project is facing, that if the project is able to proceed it was quite possible that additional funds may have to be allocated from the reserves.

RESOLVED - The committee resolved that it could not currently make any long-term decisions in relation to the level of reserves until there was more certainty about if the car park project would be able to proceed and potential additional costs due to issues faced. The committee would revisit the level of reserves once a the pending final decision on the car park project was taken.

- 5.1.4 There was a draft proposal of matters that the allocation of funds could be considered by the committee:

£ est.	Details
3,000	Bounty funds (purchase/care of)
3,000	Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Godstone
3,000	Platinum Jubilee celebrations, South Godstone/Blindley Heath
3,000	Addressing Wayleave matters (Greenspaces Sub Committee)
15,000	Wagon Pond (Long term Care)
3,000	Legal Fees
3,000	Maintenance/Godstone Defences
1,500	Restoration of wooden sign, Godstone
1,000	Drain survey, Bounty/Pavilion
3,000	Care of footpaths across parish
10,000	Treatment/improvement of grass, Godstone Green
5,000	Repairs and improvements, Blindley Heath
2,000	Long term planning for Burial Ground - Start of a ringfenced fund for the burial ground (then 5% from surplus Burial Ground income each year)
7,000	Tree survey and any resulting works, across parish
1,000	Allocate funds for Grants, across parish

ACTION FC 6/21 – 1 – Once it is clear if the car park project will or won't be able to proceed, the committee to review the level of reserves and areas/projects that funds could be designated to.

6. Burial Ground Charges

- 6.1 The committee noted the request to consider what charge for the extension of the Exclusive Rights of Burial should applied.
- 6.2 The committee noted the examples for comparison and noted that as the burial authority the parish can agree what fees are set.

ACTION FC 6/21 – 2 – The Clerk to prepare information to confirm what 5 years at 15% and 10 years at 12% of the current charge to purchase a grave space would be for discussion at the next committee meeting.

7. Asset Register - To review asset register and agree any changes.

- 7.1 The committee noted the matter delegated to it, a review of the inventory of land and other assets and consider (following information from the Clerk/Auditor about rolling revaluation of assets) revaluation of assets and the councils insurance policy.
- 7.2 Current Asset Register Circulated with meeting papers and information on the asset area totals against the insurance categories totals.
- 7.3 The matter of the Pavilion of Godstone Green on the asset register was discussed and what would the rebuild cost be if this was ever necessary.

RESOLVED - The committee resolved that a working group of Cllrs C Farr and S Farr review the asset register/values of assets.

ACTION FC 6/21 – 3 – The Clerk to send current asset register to Cllrs C Farr and S Farr to enable them to start the review process and report back to the committee as soon as practical (the size of the task was noted).

8. Insurance Cover - Prepare for insurance cover and agree any changes.

- 8.1 It was noted that the renewal fell due from 1 October 2021 and that 21-22 is the last year of a 3yr discount arrangement with the insurance company.
- 8.2 The committee were not aware of any material changes to the asset register that should be considered in relation to the FY21-22 insurance policy. The committee noted that the review of the asset register should be completed in time for the FY22-23 insurance policy renewal.

9. Review of Financial Position – FY2020-21 and FY2021-22

9.1 Accounting Statement and receipts and payments reports reviewed regularly at monthly full parish council meetings.

- i. No virements to discuss.
- ii. Designated Funds information noted.
- iii. Restricted Funds information noted.

9.2 Review current provision of a 3-year budget plan

ACTION FC 6/21 – 4 – The committee to review the action to create a 3-year budget plan following a decision on the car park.

9.3 Confirm statement of Parish Councils Administration and Financial position for publication – The proposed statement detailed below was considered by the committee for publication:

From time-to-time Godstone Parish council receive questions about its finances and what it does with all the money it gets from the rates. Many of the questions are based on misconceptions and in order to set the records straight we felt it worthwhile to publish a short note to hopefully answer some of these questions.

Godstone Parish council is a civil local authority and is the lowest tier of local government. We are an elected corporate body and are responsible for the three villages of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath. We are made up of 9 unpaid councillors who are elected to serve for four years. We receive funding by levying a "precept" upon the council tax paid by the residents of the parish to the Tandridge district council.

The administration of the Parish Council is managed by our Clerk, a part time paid employee appointed by the council and is supported by a part time paid administrator. The Clerk acts in a combined statutory role of Proper Officer (secretary or chief executive) and Responsible Financial Officer (treasurer).

Godstone Parish has approx 2,510 households and for the financial year 2021/22 the precept agreed was £67,633 which amounts on average (not taking account of house banding) to just under £27 per annum per household (52 p per week)

In addition to the fixed precept the council receives variable (and not guaranteed) additional income from the burial ground, wayleaves; rents; donations and CIL which has been budgeted at £19,924 for this financial year so giving a potential total income of £87,557.

The administrative cost of running the council and managing our assets in FY2020-21 was £34,266 which included things such as salaries, fulfilling audit requirements, Public Liability insurance, office expenses and rent, all of which enable us to deal with the many and varied issues that are directed to the Parish council as well as the statutory obligations. For FY2021-22 these areas of the budget are £35,803 from the precept.

In addition, we have other semi fixed costs for Grass cutting and maintenance of parish land, the care of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Blindley Heath and the burial ground, which in FY2020-21 was £19,345. For FY2021-22 these areas of the budget are £24,451 from the precept.

So for the current year, the parish council then has £7,379 left from precept funds plus any additional income to spend across 3 villages on all of the other areas for which we are responsible and

These responsibilities are many and can be divided into hard and advisory activities. The hard activities include additional issues related to caring for areas, the SSSI, Tilburstow Hill Common, all of the hundreds of trees on Parish council land, Godstone Green and the wagon pond; Blindley Heath common, war memorials and poppies, providing and maintaining car parks, allotments, a children's playground, grants to support local organisations and charities, benches and at Christmas we light up the villages.

The advisory activities include giving views, on behalf of the community, on planning applications and other proposals that affect the parish. We undertake projects and schemes that benefit local residents, and we alert

relevant authorities to problems that arise or work that needs to be undertaken within the Parish and we help the other levels of local government to keep in touch with their local communities.

We try to do all of this with our limited resources, so when you perhaps wonder why the Parish Council hasn't done "this or that" please have a thought for our limited administrative and financial resources which deal with the vast range of Parish matters.

RESOLVED - The committee resolved that the statement be approved for publication and information for parishioners.

10. Budget for 2021/22 - To discuss, consider and agree any changes to budget set in December 2020.

RESOLVED - The committee resolved that there would be no changes to the current budget, but that they would consider potential changes and/or virements of funds dependent on the car park projects future.

11. Finance Regulations – Updated finance regulations for consideration

11.1 The committee noted the delegated action to review the Finance Regulations for adoption as it was acknowledged that the current regulations are older than the more recently published model finance regulations.

ACTION FC 6/21 – 5 – The Clerk and Councillor C White to liaise and review a comparison document and provide a report at the next committee meeting for consideration.

12. Expenditure Under Section 137 - Review of expenditure

12.1 The committee noted the delegated action to review the Expenditure Under Section 137.

12.2 The committee noted the total Expenditure Under Section 137 was £95.50 for FY2020-2021

Royal British Legion	Wreaths and large poppies	95.50
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13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The date of the next meeting to be confirmed.

13.2 The provision of CCTV in the future and the expense to be covered by the precept was raised by Cllr C Farr as something for discussion with the community in the future.

----- Meeting ended 7.30pm -----

Signed

Dated