



# Minutes of the Finance & General Committee meeting held Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

**Present Councillors:** B. Clark (Chair), E. Humphreys, C. McCartan, D. Oxley (4 councillors present)

**Apologies were received from Councillors:** C. Walker

**There were no members of the public in attendance.**

**The meeting started at 6.30pm**

**FG/2023/41 To receive and approve reasons for absence.**

**Resolved:-** The council received and approved the reasons for absence from C. Walker.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

**FG/2023/42 To receive declarations of personal and pecuniary interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**FG/2023/43 To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests  
(if any)**

No requests for dispensations were received.

**FG/2023/44 To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate**

No dispensations to be granted.

**FG/2023/45 To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October  
2023**

No matters were raised on the minutes.

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the meeting held Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be approved and file  
copy was signed by the chairperson of the meeting.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.



---

# Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

**FG/2023/46 To identify any agenda items which may be considered following the exclusion of the press and public, due to the confidential nature to be discussed. Under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, S1 (2))**

No items were identified for exclusion of the press and public.

**FG/2023/47 Public Participation Session**

No members of the public were in attendance.

**FG/2023/48 To receive and note the payment schedule to be considered by next full council on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

The Clerk and RFO presented the payments list for approval by the council. It was noted that the payments have been checked by two councillors and no issues were highlighted with the payments. Three payments were received after the payment list was created and these will be internally checked before approval at the full council on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

**FG/2023/49 To receive and note the bank reconciliations for October 2023**

The Clerk presented the latest bank reconciliation that was checked by two councillors for accuracy between the Scribe Accounting system and the Bank Statements from The Co-Operative Bank. The balances matched and no issues were highlighted.

**FG/2023/50 To discuss and consider the draft budget for the next financial year 2024-25**

The Clerk presented the proposed draft budget for consideration by the council. The budget has taken into consideration the data of the last couple of years, and the current climate of inflation and energy costs.



---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

---

The Council should be aware the Internal Audit it made reference to the need for cost codes to be more meaningful, as they appear to be generalised. A move towards a break down of cost centres and cost codes has been incorporated to show the budget is for the council and no committees have a budget.

The overall cost centres have been renamed and broken down;

- Allotments – Budgeted £1100
- Central Admin – Budgeted £11,962
- Civic – Budgeted £350
- Events – Budgeted £13,200
- Football Pitches – Budgeted £4000
- General Operations – Budgeted £2970
- Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall – Budgeted £27,718
- Grants and Donations – Budgeted £7000
- Horticulture - £29,300
- Lengthsman - £2260.00
- Open Spaces - £12,400
- Personnel - £107,903
- Recreation - £6,200
- Thurcroft Cemetery – Budgeted £26,632 (offset by £24000 income)
- Training and Development - Budgeted £1750

The Clerk made council aware that the current proposed draft budget is £210,186.81 (net) without any changes to the budget as it currently stands. The Clerk is only budget at this stage until the tax base is received from the principal authority in mid-January.

The Clerk advised that if the council opt to raise the precept amount by the current proposed budget, the Council will need to increase the parish council tax by 19%. Due to the Council Tax not increasing



---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

for the parish for several years, the budget will need to be carefully considered on the parish councils options.

As the Council currently have a considerable amount in reserves, the council can use reserves to make up the difference in the precept from this year to the next financial year. However, this shouldn't be a long-term solution.

Looking at the Reserve amounts for next year, there are some reserves which have been spent such as Thurcroft Library and some that have been inflated and are currently in place with no business case. Therefore, a proposal to reduce the amounts to the appendix you have would be more suitable to bring the Reserves into an acceptable level with current projects.

The Committee discussed the budget and made the following recommendations.

- Remove the budget of £5000 from 'Election Cost' cost code due to £15000 in Reserve.
- Chairmans Allowance (Member Subsistence) should be £500 for the next year.
- Increase the General Eventing budget to £10,000
- Investigate individual figures for pitch marking from external contractors.
- Incorporate £10,000 budget for GBMH repairs.
- Review the cost code CCTV and Security
- Investigate Professional Subscription fees as a council.
- Remove the duplication of Recruitment from the budget.

**Resolved:-** That the committee recommend to council the new financial structure of cost centres and cost codes, and draft budget for consideration by council including the committee recommendations. That a report is produced for council to ease councillors understanding of the changes.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

**FG/2023/51 To discuss and consider the business continuity plan for the council**



---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

The Chair of the meeting raised that this had been picked up on the Internal Audit. It is a standard business continuity policy that covers the events of an employee on long term sick, or any problems with the facilities.

The policy was praised and is needed for the council. The Committee recommended additional amendments to include Vice-Chair's contact details under the key contacts, that the key contacts include information of who is a key holder and that a working party be developed for emergencies.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to the council to approve the Business Continuity Plan incorporating the recommendations made by the committee.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/51 To discuss and consider the Publication Scheme for the council**

The Clerk shared with the committee that public authorities must publish under their publication scheme any dataset they hold that has been requested, together with any updated versions, unless they are satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so. So far as reasonably practicable, they must publish it in an electronic form that is capable of re-use.

The document that has been tailored from the ICO website covering different class of information that must be available. Where possible we have electronic copies to make it easier for public to access information. It will also clarify where hard copies are kept.

The Committee had no recommendations to add to the policy and agreed to accept the update to the Publication Scheme document previously held on the website.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to the council to approve the Publication Scheme document and for it to be displayed under the policy page of the website.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/52 To consider the following policies for recommendation to full council -**



---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

### **FG/2023/52A Reserves Policy**

The Clerk outlined that the policy hadn't changed from last year. The policy is for the councils reserves and the uses of our General Funds and outlining how to properly earmark reserves. Further work has been identified to be completed to bring the Reserves in line with the policy and ensure that we have a business case for each earmarked reserve amount.

The committee agreed to make no changes to the Reserve Policy but mark the policy as reviewed for this year.

**Resolved:-** That the committee recommend to council to approve the review of the Reserves Policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/52B Rules of Public Session Policy**

The Clerk shared that the policy remains the same and hasn't been changed for this year. The Committee agreed that the policy should remain the same. The Clerk will update the information to show the next adoption date for review purposes.

**Resolved:-** That the committee recommend to council to approve the review of the Rules of Public Session Policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/52C Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy**

The Clerk highlighted that this has been highlighted from the Internal Audit report received this year. The policy is to highlight the systems that are being put in place to detect fraud and safeguard the council to ensure that the procedures are fit for purpose. All policies with this work hand in hand to promote the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy – along with the Whistleblowing Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff, Internal Controls Policy, Financial Regs and Standing Orders.

The committee welcomed the policy and made the following recommendations;



---

# Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

- That the use of the word members and councillors be consistent throughout the policy.
- That where there are allegations of gross misconduct the employee is dealt with under the disciplinary procedure not the Whistleblowing policy.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to council to adopt the Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy with the following recommendations incorporated as part of the policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

## **FG/2023/52D Whistleblowing Policy**

The Clerk highlighted this was a recommendation from the Internal Audit received this year. The policy highlights what a staff member or anybody working on behalf of the council may do if they believe there is misconduct happening within the council. The procedure for raising a complaint and how this will be dealt with is also explained throughout the Whistleblowing policy.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to council to adopt the Whistleblowing policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

## **FG/2023/52E Internal Controls Policy**

The Clerk introduced the Internal Controls policy that outlines the various Internal Controls that are in place and a checklist that will formalise the internal checks performed by councillors to ensure that processes are transparent, and any errors are highlighted early. It will also formally record the checks being taken in one document that provides an audit trail for the council.

The Committee agreed that the policy will help with internally checking all areas of the council and ensuring that there is a standard process approved by the council.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to council to adopt the Internal Controls policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

## **FG/2023/52F Officer Code of Conduct Policy**



---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

---

The Clerk has developed this policy as another recommendation from the Internal Audit for this year. Whilst there is already a Code of Conduct in place for councillors, there is no policy to cover employees of the council. This will ensure that employees adhere to the same standards as councillors. There will also be an additional process for employees to declare personal or pecuniary interests within the council to ensure that the council are aware.

A councillor raised that we need to review the gifts and hospitality part of the policy to ensure that there is a clear process for gifts over a certain value.

The Committee recommended to review the gifts and hospitality be put forward as part of the policy to council.

**Resolved:-** That a recommendation be made to council to adopt the Officer Code of Conduct with the recommendation on gifts and hospitality policy being incorporated into the policy.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/53 To consider a grant application from Thurcroft Hub Luncheon Club**

The application was made to the council to cover the cost of renting the space, as well as prizes and outings for the group. The Committee discussed the application and felt that a grant should not be made to cover rent costs.

**Resolved:-** That the application be deferred and the Clerk speak to the applicant regarding their application to see if there are any other projects they may wish to fund.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted in favour.

### **FG/2023/54 To consider a grant application from Smiler**

The Clerk raised concern that this application is from an individual and not a group. The policy states that applications will be made to groups. The council does not have General Power of Competency and is unable to make award grants to individuals, S137 also does not support awarding grants to individuals.





---

## Thurcroft Parish Council

---

Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, Green Arbour  
Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham, S66 9DD

e: [clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

w: [thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://thurcroftparishcouncil.gov.uk)

---

The Committee spoke of the merit of the application and the work this individual completes through the parish. It was recognised that the individual has a huge impact on the parish, however, we must make sure that applications that are granted are lawful.

**Resolved:-** That the application is deferred and the Clerk makes contact with the applicant to explain the process for the council.

**Voting:-** 4 councillors present. All councillors voted for.

### **FG/2023/55 To notify the clerk of matters for inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting**

No matters were raised for inclusion at the next meeting.

### **FG/2023/56 To confirm the date and time of the next ordinary meeting of the Finance & General Committee on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.30pm**

The Chair confirmed the meeting will take place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6:30pm.

**The meeting closed at 20:11pm.**